

Press Release

11 December 2014

NHS staff in Worcestershire contribute to new national guidance on dementia

Members of Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust's Early Intervention Dementia Service have been involved in a leading national study aiming to help improve the care provided to people living with dementia.

Friday 5th December saw the launch at the British Psychological Society's Division of Clinical Psychology Annual Conference of a new study aiming to reduce stigma and uncertainty around dementia and promote best practices to enable people to live well with dementia.

The Clinical Psychology in Early Stage Dementia Care Pathway and A Guide to Psychosocial Interventions in Dementia were developed by the Faculty of Psychology for Older People (FPOP) in collaboration with people living with dementia, voluntary organisations and a range of experts including Jenny La Fontaine, Melanie Palfrey, Tanya Knibbs and Anna Buckell from Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust's Early Intervention Dementia Service.

The papers highlight the importance of personalised pre-assessment counselling, skilful cognitive assessment, sympathetic communication of the diagnosis and appropriate post diagnostic support and access to relevant psychosocial interventions.

Anna Buckell, Clinical Psychologist for Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust, said:

"There are over 8,000 people living with dementia in Worcestershire, including about 400 younger people. Developing dementia could happen to a significant number of us. Most types of dementia can't be cured, which is why it is so important to enable people with dementia to live well with the condition.

"The suite of papers are innovative in drawing together recent research, clinical practice experience and the perspective of people with dementia and their family members to provide best practice recommendations to professionals working in the early stages of dementia care, particularly around assessment, diagnosis and early stage support."

Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust's Early Intervention Dementia Service was set up in July 2010 in response to the needs of the local population. It is available to people of any age, registered with a GP in Worcestershire who are experiencing memory problems and do not have a formal diagnosis of dementia. The team is based at Kidderminster Hospital but has locally based clinics around the county to see patients. It has already helped over 2,500 people across the county receive an earlier, timely assessment.

By intervening early in the illness before cognitive deficits affect mental capacity, the service encourages patient choice and autonomy, helping the individual and their family adapt to the

illness and start making plans for the future.

The documents can be downloaded from the BPS shop <http://shop.bps.org.uk/> or the FPOP website www.psig.org.uk.

For more information on dementia, please visit <http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/dementia-guide/Pages/dementia-choices.aspx>