

BRIEFING NOTE: SUTTON COLDFIELD DISTRICT COMMITTEE

DISTRICT NEIGHBOURHOOD CHALLENGE - DEMENTIA

Background:

The national picture concerning dementia is an alarming one:

- There will be 1 million people with dementia in the UK by 2025. This number is expected to rise to over two million by 2050.
- The proportion of people with dementia doubles for every five year age group.
- One in six people aged 80 and over have dementia
- 60,000 deaths a year are directly attributable to dementia
- Two thirds of people with dementia are women.
- Dementia is now the leading cause of death among women in the UK with 13.27% of deaths per year attributed directly to the condition
- The financial cost of dementia to the UK is £26 billion per annum
- Two thirds of people with dementia live in the community

With the District of Sutton Coldfield having the highest prevalence of dementia in the City, the District Neighbourhood Challenge was set to analyse the current situation and to determine what actions could be taken (if any) to address the issue.

The Approach Taken:

The first stage of this was to accumulate as much statistical and local knowledge as possible as this was to act as a catalyst for a Sutton District Conference which would be utilised to engage all local agencies statutory / voluntary and the private sector with the voices, wishes and concerns of local families and careers being at forefront of discussions.

The conference had a remarkably high uptake with over 40 different agencies in attendance all keen to contribute on the issue and to look at local ways of making a difference.

Actions Identified & Progress to date:

Map local providers and their service offer.

The conference highlighted that not all of the participating groups and agencies were aware of each other and that there was a need to map local providers and the services on offer. A simple data base has been devised and was circulated in April 2017 to partner organisations and groups that identifies all local activities and the groups who are working locally in the field of dementia and what their speciality is. This is to be supplemented shortly with a “speed dating” morning where all of the agencies will be given a roving 5 minutes to engage with each other in order to promote partnership working while raising awareness of each other’s services and highlighting the potential benefits of working outside of a silo framework.

Provide Dementia Friend Training to key partners.

This training is to be prioritised in the coming months. It is a training initiative that can change people’s perceptions of dementia. It aims to transform the way people think, act and talk about the condition. A number of these sessions have already been run over recent months including sessions with the larger statutory agencies such as the fire service and local police teams who will potentially come into contact with residents

suffering from dementia. More sessions will be arranged for key workers in partner organisations. In doing so, this will give the local workforce a better understanding of the condition and, importantly, give them the skills to understand what action they are able to take in any given situation.

Identify & Expand the number of Dementia Friendly Cafes

The first Alzheimer Café was launched in the Netherlands by the Dutch psychiatrist Bere Miesen in 2004. The project has been remarkably successful with worldwide recognition and the “café” model being replicated across the globe. Dementia cafes are vital element in the treatment of dementia. It instigates social stimulation which for a dementia patient is vital. Shared Activities can bring enjoyment and pleasure. By remaining involved and active, a person with dementia can maintain their skills and independence for longer. Activities can help people to express how they are feeling and relieve the symptoms of anxiety and depression. Activities can increase social interaction and reduce isolation. Sharing an activity with others may promote shared interests, increased interactions and understanding. An activity may help a person feel important and valued. Shared activity can promote a sense of belonging

Dementia cafes are not just a haven for those suffering with dementia but they are also a wonderful opportunity for the carers to have a respite but more importantly they have a chance to engage with fellow carers developing mutual support and advice. Our findings have indicated that carers no matter how dedicated and nurturing they are, often feel frustrated, isolated and tragically in a number of cases they feel they are letting their loved ones down and should be able to do more. Our aim is to identify cafés that already are, or are willing to be, dementia friendly cafes and to provide support with training to café proprietors and staff and also assist where possible with promotion of the café to the wider dementia community.

Explore the potential to attract external funding for dementia related initiatives

As the finances available to the City Council and Health Authority have diminished dramatically it is imperative that external funding be sought, wherever possible, to support and progress local dementia related activities and initiatives. As a pilot a local church running a dementia café was supported to formulate a Big Lottery bid for the sum of £9,800. Big Lottery has confirmed that that will be awarding this grant which may now enable us to ‘lift and shift’ the process to alternative organisations and groups running dementia cafes and thereby increasing the external funding available that will support the overall dementia program.

The Four Oaks Ward are also looking to utilise some of its Local Innovations Fund and a project is currently being developed that will likely create new and innovative measures of working with dementia patients and their carers in and around Four Oaks Ward.

Promote a dementia friendlier retail experience.

A task and finish group is to be established that will work with leading local retailers and explore the part they can play in ensuring Sutton Coldfield becomes a dementia friendlier area. This may include intensive training for the workforce that would enable the retail staff to better understand the issues that face an individual with early onset of dementia. Coupled with this will be an analysis of pilot initiatives in other retail places, such as alternative “slow” lanes or tills for those who do not want to be rushed, and consideration will be given to replicating such schemes in selected Sutton stores. The West Midlands Police are also exploring the potential to set up a data base of vulnerable adults with dementia (that may include a profile of a photo / issues facing

the patient and emergency next of kin.) If the project gets the green light discussions will ensue as to how this can be shared with the retailers and any other relevant partners.

Raise greater public awareness of dementia.

Raising public consciousness of dementia is a key element of the strategy with better local understanding of the project this will lead to a greater understanding, better tolerance and more open debate of the issue. Already, without financial outlay, it has been possible to secure relevant published articles in the local "observer" that may hopefully become a regular feature.

Support Inter-generational Work

Although mainly prevalent in the elderly, dementia affects the lives of everyone across all ages, from the patients, to the families around them and anyone who comes into contact with a resident suffering with dementia. This has been recognised and over 100 scouts have already been trained and now tasked with becoming dementia friend ambassadors. Their role is to champion the cause of dementia working with their peers to help improve tolerance and understanding within their communities. We will explore the potential for additional be-spoke training to be provided to younger people in the coming months.

Share best practice with other Birmingham Districts and beyond.

There is some learning arising from our work in Sutton Coldfield that may be appropriate for sharing with neighbouring districts - such as Perry Barr (who have already started looking at best practice in order to start a new pathway of activities to assist and help shape the current work in the District) Erdington / Hodge Hill and Selly Oak – all of whom have chosen 'mental health' as their neighbourhood challenge topic. There is some overlap and common themes emerging between Sutton Coldfield's work on dementia and other districts work around mental health that would benefit from further exploration and collaborative working. The City's *Health & Wellbeing Board* may also welcome a copy of this briefing so it can be better informed and track progress with the actions arising from Sutton Coldfield's Neighbourhood Challenge.

The Next Stage:

Building up a strong and resilient dementia partnership is critical and our third sector and retail partners will have to be the driving force for local activities as the City Council's capacity is now much reduced.

It is inescapable that funding will at times be a significant limiting factor in what can be delivered (although as seen from the above positive activities and actions can be created and progress without necessarily a financial outlay) and our key partners may have to be trained so they are able to identify opportunities and draw down the relevant external funding required to enable them to make a concerted impact.

It is expected that further verbal progress reports on the dementia neighbourhood Challenge actions can come to Sutton Coldfield District Committee later this year with a more formal tracking report at the year- end, March 2018.

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