

Dementia training for the housing support sector

An overview of Homeless Link's 2017 project

Funded by the Department of Health

Let's end homelessness together

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Homeless Link Training

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Introduction

With the increase in ageing in the population, there is a corresponding increase in those living with some type of dementia. Dementia care has been traditionally been provided by specialists often in expensive residential settings, but with interest from policy makers in people with dementia being supported to live fulfilling and independent lives for as long as possible, there is a need to develop the potential of the housing services sector to work more effectively with dementia.

The aim of Homeless Link's Dementia Training Project (October 2016 - March 2017) was to up-skill the housing support sector, enabling them to provide support that improves quality of life for older people with dementia, and reducing the need for more intensive and expensive forms of care and support.

Dementia in England

There are an estimated 670,000 people in England living with dementia and numbers are expected to double within 30 years. An estimated one third of people with dementia live in residential care and two thirds live at home. It is estimated that the cost of dementia in England is £19 billion a year. In the response to this, March 2012 saw the Government's creation of the Challenge on Dementia, with the aim to make a real difference to the lives of people with dementia, their families and carers. Three dementia challenge groups were established to take the work forward. At the heart of this work is the understanding that people living with dementia want to remain independent for as long as possible, that they want to have choice and control over their lives through all stages of their dementia and that, with an early diagnosis and the right support, they can achieve this.

The Dementia & Housing Working Group

Homeless Link (and Sitra, prior to merger) chairs the Dementia and Housing Working Group (D&HWG). Set up in 2008, the D&HWG aims to promote the contribution of the housing sector to improving the health and wellbeing and quality of life for people living with dementia. It brings together a wide range of stakeholders to focus specifically on housing and dementia with a view to promoting the role of the housing sector in enabling people with dementia to live independently in a suitable home environment in accordance with their needs and aspirations. The D&HWG comprises housing providers, professionals and trade bodies working alongside the Alzheimer's Society, academic researchers, representatives of government departments and the health sector, including Department of Communities and Local Government, Homes and Communities Agency, Department of Health, NHS England and Public Health England.

Research to support workforce development carried out in 2014 showed that, whilst a range of workforce development activities are available, these were not being effectively utilised by the housing sector. Through consultation with stakeholders and the sector, it became apparent that this was, in part, due to gaps in the applicability of existing materials to everyday staff experiences. The research concluded that content should be tailored to the housing context and, preferably, the specific organisation e.g. its ethos, service offers, customer base and core training provisions. An outline training framework was developed.

Dementia training for the housing and support sector

Our project drew on the framework in the D&HWG research in order to develop five training courses (described below), which were piloted with frontline staff and managers from supported housing and homelessness services. The courses are designed for staff who are not dementia specialists, and who may have little or no previous training about dementia. Participants included housing officers, support workers, senior managers, and maintenance and facilities staff, from Housing Associations, charities and Local Authorities. We revised the courses in light of feedback before delivering the courses regionally.

Homeless Link

This resource pack includes information about each course, and details of who to contact to book an-house training session in your organisation. We have also published materials from two courses, Legal Aspects of Dementia and Dementia and Housing, to help providers develop and deliver their own training sessions.

Dementia training – course outlines

Legal Aspects of Dementia

Aims

The course will provide participants with an awareness of the main legal aspects of supporting people with Dementia in a housing setting. This is a level 3 course, suitable for frontline staff and managers and those responsible for delivering policies, procedures and strategies

Objectives

By the end of the session, participants will be able to:

- Define their responsibilities under the Mental Capacity Act and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards. These include application of the 5 principles, capacity assessments, best interest decision-making, signing tenancies and awareness of Powers of Attorney.
- Explain their safeguarding responsibilities under the Care Act. These include awareness of the signs and symptoms of abuse, recording and reporting procedures.
- List their responsibilities under the Equality Act to avoid and eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation; and also to promote positive action and equality of opportunity in service provision.

For bookings contact: training@homelesslink.org.uk or 020 7840 4488.

Dementia and Housing

Aim

Provides an overview general of dementia for staff working within the housing sector, including how to recognise different types of dementia, provide an appropriate housing service and access resources that can help.

Objectives

By the end of the session participants will be able to:

- Give an overview of dementia and understanding of how it affects people
- Describe the other conditions that may be mistaken for dementia
- Recognise the common types of dementia, plus signs and symptoms
- Practice person- and relationship- centred approaches to people with dementia, including language, communication and dignity
- how effective ways of responding to behaviours that challenge, including false realities, signs of ill-being and well-being
- Contact the local and national services available that support clients with dementia and their families.

For bookings contact Homeless Link training: training@homelesslink.org.uk or 020 7840 4488.

Communicating with people living with dementia

Aims

To understand what wellbeing in dementia means to the person, to understand how different care and communication approaches can improve a person's wellbeing, and to practice communication techniques that can enable co-production of services and positive risk-taking.

Objectives

By the end of the session participants will be able to:

1. Explain why good communication is central to good dementia care and be able to communicate better with the person with dementia, recognising the influence of body language in communication.
2. Describe the vital importance of REAL communication (Reminiscence, Empathic engagement, Active listening and Life story) in the care of older people with dementia – one sentence at a time.
3. Assess the Senses Framework (Nolan et al 2006) and how its elements can promote a person's wellbeing.
4. Co-produce housing services with people with dementia.
5. Identify tools to enable people with dementia to engage in positive risk-taking.

For bookings contact Homeless Link training: training@homelesslink.org.uk or 020 7840 4488.

Assistive Technology and Home Adaptations

Aim

A blended learning course that explores the effective use of assistive technology to support people living with dementia to live independently and live well for longer. Includes real examples of the effective use of assistive technology by care and support providers, demonstrations from suppliers of assistive technology, and the Housing LIN/telecare LIN research. For housing and support officers and home visiting, technical, repairs or maintenance and HIA case workers

Objectives

By the end of the session, participants will be able to:

1. Practice in a way that helps to sustain occupancy for as long as possible
2. Assess, minimise (not eliminate) and manage risks to safety and security
3. Work in a way which promotes autonomy and independence
4. Understand the range of aids, adaptation and assistive technology available and how it can be applied to support people to live independently for longer
5. Understand the assistive technology that specifically supports people living with dementia

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Dementia Friendly Homes

Aim

This course will explore how we can respond to the challenge of creating dementia friendly homes for independent living, introducing a wide range of practical improvements, many of which are low cost and easy to implement. These include the better use of colour and contrast, space and signage, design and decoration. The course is suitable for housing professionals involved in the design, upkeep and improvement of their organisation's housing stock and for those supporting people with dementia, including housing/neighbourhood officers, sheltered and support staff, maintenance and asset management and development teams.

Objectives

This course will:

- Give an awareness of challenges those living with dementia can experience in the home
- Explore design elements and details that can improve the home environment for those living with dementia
- Consider how scale, layout, fittings, furniture and decor have an impact
- Explore prompts, reminders and recognition aids
- Consider the designing of space to protect privacy and strengthen the sense of home.

For bookings contact University of Worcester: g.dutton@worc.ac.uk
www.worcester.ac.uk/discover/dementia-masterclasses.html

Further information and resources

Housing LIN – Innovations in Housing and Dementia

A range of resources on topics including legislation, commissioning, personal stories, workforce and communities

www.housinglin.org.uk/Topics/browse/HousingandDementia/

Housing LIN – Dementia and Housing Working Group

www.housinglin.org.uk/housing-networks/dementia-and-housing-working-group/

MAKING A START – Dementia – Skilling The General Needs Housing Workforce

www.housinglin.org.uk/Topics/type/MAKING-A-START-Dementia-Skilling-The-General-Needs-Housing-Workforce/

Dementia Action Alliance

www.dementiaaction.org.uk/

Skills for Care

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Topics/Dementia/Dementia.aspx

Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE)

www.scie.org.uk/dementia/

Prime Minister's challenge in dementia 2020

www.gov.uk/government/publications/prime-ministers-challenge-on-dementia-2020



What we do

Homeless Link is the national membership charity for organisations working directly with people who become homeless or live with multiple and complex support needs. We work to improve services and campaign for policy change that will help end homelessness.

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