

# Practice Exemplar – The North Ayrshire Partnership Working Programme (Supporting People with Dementia)

## Name and Timescales

The North Ayrshire Partnership Working Programme (Supporting People with Dementia) started in June 2015 and ran for just over 12 months in which time 500 referrals were received that were carried forward to HFSVs for those identified. In March/April 2019 the Area plans to extend this previously successful initiative to all three Local Authorities within Ayrshire.

## Summary

In the original scheme, joint training was carried out to ensure people with dementia were safe from fire and other risks in their homes, targeting preventative interventions at those most vulnerable and at risk to fire. Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) worked in partnership with North Ayrshire Council (Health and Social Care, Older People Housing Management), North Ayrshire Dementia Support Service, Anam Cara Respite Services and NHS Ayrshire and Arran.

## Need for Initiative

SFRS will continue to focus considerable efforts on reducing fire risk and preventing avoidable harm within households and much of this work has been undertaken alongside a range of partners. It has been recognised that further improvements to public safety could be made by working more closely with health and social care partners, particularly through improving co-ordination and joint working protocols.

SFRS and East, North & South Ayrshire Dementia Services have therefore placed more focus on identifying people suffering from dementia and other ailments with the aim of reducing fire risk and ensuring that older people are safer in their homes. The following statistics support the need for focussing on this group:

- Scotland's pensionable age population is projected to increase by 25% from 2016 to 2041
- In 2017, just under one in five people (19%) in Scotland were aged 65 and over, compared with 16% in mid-2007. This figure is expected to increase to 59% by 2037.
- People aged 75 and over are projected to be the fastest growing age group in Scotland.
- 90,000 people in Scotland are currently living with dementia

## Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of the initiative are to:

- Educate all agencies on how to deal with the needs of people with cognitive impairment
- Reduce fire casualties, fire deaths and accidental dwelling house fires
- Reduce risk to individuals and local communities from Falls and Unintentional harm
- Increase people's knowledge of dementia and related illnesses
- Increase peoples knowledge of home and fire safety
- Establish access to multi agency referral pathways
- Establish relationships with partner agencies which represent and care for dementia sufferers.

The initiative is linked to the Community Safety Engagement Framework where personnel will:

- Ensure an early detection of fire
- Provide a safe environment for vulnerable residents
- Reassure families and carers
- Protect housing stock, including neighbouring properties
- Reduce unwanted fire alarm signals.

## Delivery

Referrals will be received from partners such as Local Authority service providers and Ayrshire Dementia Support Services. SFRS personnel and Community Action Teams (CAT) will supply and fit smoke and heat detectors while carrying out a home fire safety visit. Health and Social Care colleagues within Dementia Services will provide training to fire service personnel free of charge, dementia service staff will in turn receive training from SFRS on keeping people safe in their homes.

Referrals from partner agencies, operational crews and the Community Action Team will be collated by the CAT; they will audit the number of referrals for future review and evaluation and control the allocation of HFSVs to operational crews so as to specifically target those most at need on a risk based assessment. The initiative will look to effectively manage a large volume of referrals without overwhelming crews with an unachievable number of visits on their individual station pending lists. These visits are likely always to be rated in the high risk category for delivery.

## **Successes and Challenges**

### Successes:

- The programme should act as a foundation (benchmark) for SFRS and other partner organisations to provide support and services to people with cognitive impairment and their carers.
- SFRS personnel should gain an understanding of the services that our partnership agencies provide which can help in their awareness of Dementia and further assist them to reach out and connect with people with cognitive impairment who may require their services.
- Partnership organisations will learn from each other, ensuring that we jointly provide the best practice possible to the communities we serve.
- Those classed as being at high risk of accidental dwelling fires, falls and unintentional harm will now be known to SFRS when they otherwise may not have been.
- A joint communication strategy will not only prevent duplication of messaging and visits, but also ensures home owners whose condition deteriorates or who move to another address will be contacted and visited at the earliest stage possible.

### Challenges:

- The biggest challenge will be how to cope with the number of potential referrals that must be translated into HFSVs within the three Ayrshire Local Authority areas. To ensure the scheme starts in a controlled environment Dementia Services will only refer to SFRS on new cases where dementia has been identified.
- Financial restraints may affect the services ability to provide smoke, and particularly heat detectors. This would require to be balanced against the cost of dwelling fires.

## **Impact/Change**

The partnership carries out 3 month reviews of the initiative to look at its effectiveness, the numbers of referrals received and any other feedback. Reciprocal training takes place with all partners, which is monitored through feedback received to ensure that it continues to be effective.

A drop down option stating “Dementia Services Referral” is utilised on CSET by SFRS.. CSET is an interactive ICT based toolkit designed to support the administration and performance management of community safety activities - mostly around Home Fire Safety Visits, activities and initiatives in areas, and gathers mostly quantitative information. There has been an increase in the number of people identified and cared for through additional partner referrals; for example an operational crew referring to Dementia Services following an incident attendance or a standard HFSV.

## **Reflections**

The next step for this partnership is to arrange a plan for joint training which will commence in March/ April 2019, involving all three Local Authorities in Ayrshire. The undertaking of joint visits will assist with this process by allowing all agencies to work together to understand each other’s priorities.

A communication network will be established where information added can be accessed by all agencies; this will eliminate duplication whilst developing an understanding of relevant contacts for individual’s

needs. This process will adhere to and support Information Sharing Protocols (ISPs) and GDPR requirements

Housing and social care staff will prioritise homeowners most at need and put visitation arrangements in place. Initial visits will be attended by Community Safety Action Teams (CAT) who in turn will assist in the education of operational staff for future visits.

This planned training will give crews and other SFRS personnel an understanding of dementia and how it affects daily lives together with knowledge of the local community services and support and how to quickly access that information.

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