

A National Conversation to Inform a New Dementia Strategy

In 2022 we submitted a response to the Scottish Government's consultation of 'A national conversation to inform a new Dementia Strategy', we would like to highlight the Scottish Government's response to this consultation and their plans moving forward.

From the intelligence provided by our members we outlined to the Scottish Government that there is an increasing number of service users being supported with dementia, across a broad age range. This has increased the need for a higher complexity of care and support being delivered as people are supported at different stages of life and at various stages of progression right up to and including end of life care. We recognised the value of our care providers and called for more investment to support the contributions of social care in aiding wellbeing and enabling people with Dementia to live a full and fulfilling life. We urged the government to make improvements to properly:

1. Equip and up-skill the social care workforce,
2. Invest in progressive models of care and
3. Utilise data and technology to advance choice and assist in the independence of people with Dementia.

In our consultation

- 1.) We urged that any new Strategy must recognise that equipping and up-skilling the workforce is essential for the delivery of effective dementia support and care. This upskilling has to accept aim to improve the limited capacity of organisations to free up their staff to take the training and develop their practice. In the face of rising costs and reductions in fees it is difficult for providers to equip their staff to achieve dementia excellence, because the very existence of their services is under threat. Furthermore, educational, and experiential opportunities should be provided to develop skills and practice around dementia support. This must reflect and be sensitive to the context of social care delivery, whilst also driving improvement and supporting career consolidation and progression.

The difference the government has promised to make.

- Staff working across care settings to have access to specialist training to meet the needs of people with advanced dementia, and people living with advanced dementia and their care partners are supported through established and integrated care pathways which step up the intensity and type of support as needed.
 - The 'dementia workforce' accesses specialist education and training, benchmarked against the Promoting Excellence Framework, and is supported to implement best practice across all settings and professions.
- 2.) We called for investments to be made in more progressive models for care and support based in individuals' homes, in care homes, and in other community-based supports such as day opportunities. We linked this with the wider issues such as the inability of care home residents to access all Self-directed Support options in directing their care and

support and how this hinders meaningful progress for the rights of access and opportunity for people living with dementia in any new Strategy.

The difference the government plans to make:

- People diagnosed with dementia to have access to appropriate Post-Diagnostic Support in a setting in which they are most comfortable, irrespective of their location, age or stage of dementia.
 - People have access to a diagnosis in their localities through a process that recognises their preferences and needs, alongside enhanced emotional support and a treatment plan with regular monitoring.
- 3.) In the context of technology and data, we advised the Scottish Government that that developments in this area should advance choice, enable greater control, and promote independence for people living with dementia and their families. More importantly, to ensure that technology is adopted as an enhancement, never as a replacement for human support. We explained that it is crucial that approaches and initiatives are developed with people and consider all aspects of choice, inclusivity, and access. This must also include how to equip, train, and support the social care workforce to utilise technologies tailored to individuals' needs, choices, and preferences.

The difference the government has promised to make:

- People to be supported to live actively in their community, with an enhanced range of community networks and spaces, have access to co-ordinated care, and are informed around how to make adaptations to their home to remain in their setting of choice as long as possible.

To achieve this 'Difference the government has promised to:

- Better utilise their investment in dementia treatment, care and support, evaluating their investments, with a focus on upstreaming investment in community settings to support people to live their best possible lives in their communities.
- Collaborate and deliver on these long term aims – With partners, they will develop 2-year delivery plans, starting from the end of 2023. This should focus resources and hold them all accountable for realising the vision and ambitions this strategy sets out.
- Addressing the experiences of Scotland's minority communities – Through the lifespan of this strategy, the government plans to enhance their focus on equalities issues, working with others to help to minimise the structural barriers to participation, diagnosis, treatment, support, and care, regardless of ethnicity, race, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation and additional disability or neurodivergence. They will include a focus on economic disadvantage and the specific issues for remote and rural communities.

The government envisions 'a Scotland where people living with dementia and their care partners have their strengths recognised, their rights upheld, and are supported to live an independent life, free from stigma and with' person led treatment, support and care when and where they need it. They acknowledged in their response to the Dementia Strategy Consultation that the human rights of people living with dementia and their care partners must be upheld throughout their dementia journey. As an organisation we will continue to promote advocate for the necessary investment into social care to ensure that the human rights of service users, social care workforce and social care providers are fulfilled and progressively realised.