Dementia Care
Supporting ‘The Silent Crisis’
Dementia – the facts

Dementia is a term that is used to describe a collection of symptoms including memory loss, problems with reasoning and communication skills, and a reduction in a person’s abilities and skills in carrying out daily activities such as washing, dressing, cooking and caring for oneself.

Often referred to as “the silent crisis”, there are around 800,000 people with Dementia in the UK and 44 million of us affected worldwide with that number set to triple by 2050.

To support patients with Dementia, Carillion has a portfolio of interventions that will allow customers to select which of these they wish to implement. All of these options can be implemented as part of the facilities management service and all are relatively low cost or even better some are cost neutral.

HEALTH

Carillion has a significant presence in the health sector through providing facilities management and construction services. One of our key customers is the NHS in the UK where we support the delivery of safe and effective care to over 3 million patients each year.

STRATEGIC IMPERATIVE

It is estimated that a quarter of hospital beds in the UK are occupied by patients who are Dementia sufferers. In response to the Prime Minister’s Dementia Challenge (March 2012), which included “improving the skills and awareness needed to support people with Dementia - and their carers”, Carillion has worked closely with the James Cook University Hospitals NHS Trust Dementia Care team. The team has developed a range of interventions which both individually and collectively have a significant positive impact on the experience of patients suffering from Dementia. The suite of interventions is set out in the remainder of this booklet and in summary is:

- Awareness training for facilities management staff
- Nutrition and hydration
- Visual impact – signage, clocks and sanitary ware
- Sensory stimulation.

This programme is available to all Carillion customers from Summer 2014 with the core elements being deployed to meet the local needs of each hospital.
Staff Awareness Training

Facilities Management staff are an important part of the wider care teams in a hospital. Cleaners and porters in particular have numerous daily contacts with patients and their relatives. In contributing to the patient experience it is important that these staff recognise the signs of Dementia and have an understanding of how best to communicate and interact with patients who are suffering from the condition.

The training that we recommend is based on “Dignity in Care Champions”. These champions are trained in how to report or deal with a situation where they feel a patient is being compromised or in danger of not being treated with the level of care or dignity they deserve. Following training these staff are able to recognise when a patient requires extra support. This may be in respect of a simple task such as covering an exposed patient with a blanket or informing a member of nursing staff that a patient is in need. This approach has an additional benefit of increasing the productivity of nursing staff as Domestic Staff contribute towards modest non-clinical tasks (safe tasks).

At South Tees hospital this training has been extended to embrace the entire patient pathway within the hospital environment; this includes Porters and Housekeepers as well as Domestics. Each group training session takes 90 minutes and is designed to cover day care as well as in-patients.

“Without your support, and the participation of your staff in the Dementia and Learning Disability Awareness sessions, we would not have been able to reach out to as many people with Dementia, their families and carers as we have so far. The team look forward to sessions with Carillion and we always learn something ourselves.”

Helen Robinson, Clinical Educator Dementia
Nutrition & Hydration

**SENSORY IMPAIRMENT, COGNITIVE DIFFICULTIES AND MEMORY LOSS**

During dining times, Dementia patients can display symptoms of sensory impairment, cognitive difficulties and memory loss, expressing symptoms such as:

- not recognising foods
- forgetting what food they like
- refusing or spitting out food
- resisting being fed
- requesting strange food combinations

If this results in poor nutrition the consequence is often extended recovery times for patients and more intensive use of valuable NHS resources. Another consequence is high levels of food wastage.

Provision of nourishing food is critical for all hospital patients. However other factors also come into play with care for the elderly and those with Dementia. Dementia sufferers need to be able to ‘recognise’ the food they are presented with in order to encourage them to eat it. Recognition is linked to both food memory and vision. Studies have shown that food served on either white or dark coloured plates is difficult for elderly patients to see. Our research has concluded that use of a primary colour is most suitable, as this contrasts with the colour of the core patient meals, which have many lightly coloured or white components (e.g. fish, potato, rice pudding).

As part of routine crockery replacement light weight primary coloured crockery can be introduced on wards that have a high proportion of Dementia sufferers. Changing the colour of trays and table cloths can also make a significant difference to the visual impact of a meal.

In terms of hydration, primary coloured beakers can be introduced rather than clear beakers. Hydration can also be aided through the use of half size water jugs which are more readily managed by the infirm hence allowing them to be more confident in pouring a drink for themselves.

Implementing these changes has resulted in reductions in food plate wastage of close to 30%. This means that Elderly and Dementia Care patients are getting enhanced nourishment which undoubtedly contributes to their recovery. By providing assistance to eat and drink independently the improved service also contributes to enhancing dignity and self-esteem for this patient group.

Also under development is a personal bedside patient fact sheet containing information relating to the patient and completed by a relative, carer or close friend identifying important dietary information, including:

- Preferred bed time drinks
- Meal portion size
- Foods I dislike
- Preference for eating alone or in company

This information supports staff including caterers and housekeepers in providing a more personalised and responsive service to each individual patient.
Visual Impact

Brightly coloured signage with bold typescript can make way-finding more prominent particularly to those who may be confused and have other cognitive impairment. Orientating the patient from the start of their journey within the hospital site avoids creating significant anxiety and confusion.

Colour can also be used to make the different elements of a room stand out and to differentiate between components of linen and laundry. We can provide bed linen, towels, soft furnishings and wallpaper and paint in bold colours rather than pastels.

The colour of seats on toilets can be used to contrast with the remainder of the room allowing easier identification of the toilet. There is also some evidence that for some Dementia sufferers the use of blue toilet seats assists in stimulating the need to pass water.

For a Dementia patient keeping track of time can be confusing and create a sense of anxiety. An analogue clock face shows the same time twice a day with no indication of the day of the week or the passage of time measured by changing dates. Replacement of analogue clocks with digital calendar clocks that include time, day and date make a positive contribution to removing this source of anxiety.

“Without the help and support of our Carillion colleagues at the James Cook Hospital in Middlesbrough we would not have been able to implement many of the dementia friendly service improvements to our environments and processes. Our partnership working and shared training is making a significant difference to patient care and experience”.

Beth Swanson RGN, BA(HON), PgC, MSc.
Dementia Project Manager / Lead Nurse
Quality Assurance and Academic Directorate

Sensory Therapy

Sensory blankets developed by a Carillion sewing room team provide a unique visual and tactile experience for adults with Alzheimer’s Dementia and individuals with visual impairment needing sensory stimulation. Made from various tactile fabrics, including a transparent pocket for a photograph or reminiscence objects, they also have zips, toggles and buttons to operate. For extra comfort the blankets have soft fleece fabric on the underside. The blankets offer a welcome distraction from stresses and frustrations and help patients to focus, relax and engage with their environment. To many of us this may seem trivial – to a Dementia patient these are activities that help pass the time of day.

Some patients function more on a sensory level rather than an intellectual level. To support eating there can be benefits from introducing pump dispensers that can introduce smells such as fresh bread and apple pie with operation being triggered just before meal times.
Dementia Care Champion

Dementia is a major issue for society in general and for the healthcare service in particular. Our work demonstrates that collaborative working brings sustained improvements in care for Dementia patients. John Carr who has led the work on behalf of Carillion at the James Cook Hospital is now also taking the role as our Dementia Care Champion. John will keep abreast of learning in the health care market and will support us in making best practice available for all of our customers.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

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