

QUICK UPDATES

Engaging Dementia Conference

Engaging Dementia held their Annual International Dementia Conference in October. The theme was “Opportunity out of Adversity” The event featured insightful and educational presentations, delivered by Irish and international speakers, engaging panel discussions and interactive sessions. You can view a summary of some of the presentations [here](#). The full recording will be available in April.

Policy & Practice Forum and Report

As part of the Engaging Dementia Conference, Dementia Research Network Ireland, in partnership with the National Dementia Office, hosted a Policy & Practice Forum titled Gender & Dementia Care; Aspects in Family Caring. A recording of the forum is available on the DRNI YouTube channel [here](#).

Carers Guarantee

Funding has been made available through the National Service Plan to support the implementation of the National Carers Strategy. The funding will improve equality of access to supports for carers and promote the development of services to protect the physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing of carers. The annual grant funding has been allocated to organisations working with family carers.

Dementia Model of Care Update

A Draft of Ireland’s first Dementia Model of Care went out for public consultation last autumn and the NDO held workshops with the Irish Dementia Working Group and the Dementia Carers Campaign Network. The model, which sets out a range of targets and practice recommendations across assessment, diagnosis, disclosure, care planning and post-diagnostic support, is now being updated. The development of the model is led by the NDO in partnership with the Dementia Services Information and Development Centre and the Centre for Economic and Social Research on Dementia in NUI Galway.

Diagnostic Imaging Requirements and Disease Modifying Treatments Working Group

The NDO set-up this working group in 2020 which incorporates two subgroups. The first is examining the current dementia diagnostic imaging requirements to facilitate timely diagnosis and likely future requirements. It is also mapping existing imaging resources. The second working group is to consider future dementia modifiable treatments (DMT) and associated requirements, as these are currently in development and may be approved as a treatment for early Alzheimer’s disease in the near future.

National Dementia Office updated publication list

The NDO has updated its list of publications. You can view the list [here](#) and all publications are available on www.dementiathways.ie



Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to the spring 2022 edition of the National Dementia Office’s newsletter. Since our last newsletter we welcomed two new staff members. Mairead Bracken Scally took up post as project lead for the implementation of the clinical guideline on appropriate prescribing of psychotropic medications and Kate Brennan joined the team to lead on education and training and on projects related to family carers and implementation of the dementia new service developments.

In November Professor Suzanne Timmons stepped down as clinical lead connected to the NDO as she returned to clinical practice. Suzanne has made a tremendous contribution to dementia during her four year tenure with the office and we would like to sincerely thank her for her dedication and commitment to dementia and proactive development of needed services.

In August we received funding for the development of dementia services as part of the National Service Plan (NSP) 2021 and over the last number of months we have been busy working with colleagues from across the HSE and beyond to support implementation of the NSP actions. You can find out more about the new service developments in this issue.

Brain Awareness week runs this week from March 14th to 20th. A national working group on risk reduction/brain health led by the NDO and colleagues in Health and Wellbeing has reconvened and there will be a national brain awareness campaign during this time highlighting the 12 risk factors for dementia. You can read more about brain health below.

I hope you enjoy this issue of our newsletter and as always, please contact us with any comments or suggestions at dementia.office@hse.ie

Kind regards,

Emer Begley
Interim General Manager, National Dementia Office

DEMENTIA NEW SERVICE DEVELOPMENTS

Funded under National Service Plan 2021

Dementia services received funding as part of the HSE's National Service Plan last year; with funding becoming available to support service development in August. The below provides details on some of the services and programmes which are being funded and outlines current progress around their development.

Development of Memory Assessment & Support Services (MASS)

Towards the end of 2021 work commenced on the establishment of four Memory Assessment and Support Services (MASS). These are located in areas where there is currently no, or very limited, specialist services; located in Sligo, Mayo, Waterford and Wexford. The MASS address gaps in specialist provision of not only assessment and diagnostic services but also appropriate post-diagnostic support and brain health services. Each MASS has a comprehensive multi-disciplinary team providing a comprehensive pathway of care for the person from assessment to post-diagnostic support. Sites are currently recruiting staff to be operational later in the year.

Regional Specialist Memory Clinic (RSMC) in Cork

The RSMC in Cork is also in development. This is the first clinic of its kind in the south of the country. It will have a highly specialist multi-disciplinary team who will provide comprehensive assessment and diagnostic service to people who have very complex or unclear presentations of dementia. This service, in particular, will be very important for younger people with dementia.

Enhanced Memory Technology Resource Rooms

Since the establishment of Memory Technology Resource Rooms (MTRR) in 2018 the service has been shown to support people with dementia and their families and engagement (Cullen, 2020) with the provision of practical solutions through demonstration and matching of technology along with strategies and advice. This includes compensatory techniques, environmental adaptations and education are the keystone of the service. The MTRRs received additional funding in the NSP 2021 to enhance the service and further funding in 2022 will enable MTRRs to go from part-time to full-time service; providing the occupational therapist who manage the MTRRs with opportunities to develop additional key post-diagnostic support services including cognitive therapies, psychoeducation and psychosocial supports to people living with dementia in the community.

The enhancement of the MTRRs is providing an opportunity to collaborate and work with other healthcare workers and in particular the Alzheimer Society of Ireland's Dementia Advisers, to support integration and create continuity of care for people living with dementia. Such collaboration has commenced in some areas with the development of social groups including dementia cafes, singing groups and walking groups. For further information on your local MTRR visit [here](#).



Minister Mary Butler officially launching the 30th MTRR in Tralee last year

Implementation of "Appropriate prescribing of psychotropic medication for non-cognitive symptoms in people with dementia" (NCG No. 21)

The Irish National Dementia Strategy (Department of Health, 2014) identified psychotropic prescribing as a key issue. All psychotropic medications have potential adverse effects, for example 1:100

people with dementia who receive an antipsychotic drug die as a result (Banerjee, 2009). In response to this we convened a group to develop the National Clinical Guideline (NCG) on "Appropriate prescribing of psychotropic medication for non-cognitive symptoms in people with dementia" (NCG No. 21), published by the Department of Health in 2019.

The national roll-out of the guideline is now commencing with funding for a two-year implementation programme through the National Service Plan. The implementation aims to improve health outcomes for people with dementia, reduce variation in practice and improve the quality of clinical decisions that healthcare professionals have to make. The primary aim of the project is to implement the guideline on a phased basis across settings, including acute care, residential care for older people, and within community settings.

If you would like more information on the implementation programme contact mairead.bracken@hse.ie

These services will be further built-on in 2022 as additional funds become available through the 2022 National Service Plan process.

Dementia New Service Developments National Service Plan 2022

Brain Health Programme
Implementation of the Dementia Registry
3 year Assistant Director of Nursing post for Dementia Quality Improvement
Acute Hospital Audit co-ordinator
National Intellectual Disability Memory Service in Tallaght University Hospital
5 new Memory Assessment & Support Services
1 x Regional Specialist Memory Clinic
Further enhancement of Memory Technology Resource Rooms
Four additional clinical nurse specialist roles
Additional home support hours for people living with dementia

TRAINING & EDUCATION

Education programme update with statistics

Since 2019, 1,784 people have completed the Dementia Enhanced Home Supports online programme and 6,491 people have completed the Early Identification of Memory Problems programme. This programme can be accessed here www.hseland.ie.

Dementia Care & Support group in Kilkenny

As part of the pilot to roll-out the QQI accredited Dementia Care & Support: Homecare Education programme, a first round of 16 learners have completed the programme in Kilkenny, with 17 Cork learners mid-way through the programme. COVID presented challenges in the roll-out of the pilot but further learners will be undertaking the programme in the coming months. Feedback from learners who have completed the programme has been overwhelmingly positive.

DSiDC online programmes

Dementia Services Information and Development Centre (DSiDC) announced the launch of their free dementia e-learning modules for Speech and Language Therapy (SLT) and Occupational Therapy (OT) practice in dementia care. These modules were developed in partnership with the NDO and the PREPARED project.

- The SLT module was designed specifically for newly graduated and graduated Speech and Language Therapists who are working with people with dementia. This programme was designed by a team of experienced Speech and Language Therapists.
- The OT module was designed specifically for OTs of all levels, from entry level to those with significant experience. However, the information within the modules may also be useful for those working with people with a mild cognitive impairment or those who have an intellectual disability.

You can get more information on these programmes [here](#).

LAUNCH OF EXPANDED DEMENTIA ADVISER SERVICE

In November 2021, the Alzheimer Society of Ireland and the National Dementia Office launched the expanded National Dementia Adviser Service. The role of a Dementia Adviser is to be a 'point of contact' for anyone concerned about their cognitive health or for people who have received a dementia diagnosis. Dementia Advisers provide support, practical assistance, advice, information, and 'signpost people with dementia and their carers to appropriate services and supports'.

Funding was approved for 10 Dementia Adviser posts in September 2020 with a further 11 posts funded in 2021. This is a free service now available in every county.

Minister of State with responsibility for Mental Health and Older People, Mary Butler officially launch the expanded service and said the service is a perfect example of the type of support needed for people living with dementia in Ireland. The former CEO of ASI, Pat McLoughlin added that the Dementia Advisers offer a lifeline to people in their communities.

Janette Dwyer, Assistant National Director, HSE Services for Older People, Change and Innovation outlined the HSE's commitment to the delivery and enhancement of Dementia Services and the National Dementia Advisory Services. A key part of the success to date, has been the ongoing collaboration with the Alzheimer Society of Ireland and other important stakeholders across the country. This has ensured the development and promotion of an emerging care pathway for people living with dementia.

The expansion of the Dementia Advisory Service is one of the key deliverables of the HSE National Service Plan 2021 and the National Dementia Strategy. In addition to the ASI dementia advisers, Western Alzheimer's runs a dementia adviser service in Co. Mayo.



Minister Mary Butler who launched the National Dementia Adviser Service with Janette Dwyer, Assistant National Director, Services for Older People, HSE.

DEMENTIA UNDERSTAND TOGETHER UPDATE

Dementia: Understand Together works closely with over 40 national partners and 400 community champions to change the dementia landscape in Ireland and make our communities' dementia inclusive. In a recent radio campaign 22 people with dementia, families and community champions spoke about the importance and value of hobbies, social connection and community. They highlighted the actions that people in local communities can take to help create a dementia-inclusive community.

National partners have also taken action to support those living with dementia. The Men's Sheds, launched their "Your shed and dementia" manual and are running workshops on dementia for its members as part of the Sheds for Life programme. Local libraries participated in dementia training and have stocked 25 dementia book titles in all of their libraries across the country. An initiative of Healthy Ireland at Your Library, the collection features a mix of titles on the subject of dementia, from slowing the onset of the disease to ways to improve our brain health, from first-hand accounts of people living with dementia to ways to improve life through nutrition, music, the arts, and more.

A new [Sporting Memories Handbook](#) has been developed to support local sports organisations in setting up Sporting Memories groups. An initiative of The Alzheimer Society of Ireland, Sporting Memories groups are intended to provide a forum for people with dementia, families, supporters and friends to reminisce and talk about bygone sporting days as well as encourage participation in physical activity. You can order your handbook at <https://www.healthpromotion.ie/>



Awareness, understanding and empathy are needed for change and training plays an important role in that. Another national partner initiative from Boots has seen over 98% of their staff members trained in dementia awareness.

People with dementia have also joined the user disability groups of national transport providers. In the campaigns' year end survey of national partners and community champions, 88% of champions and 83% of partners strongly/somewhat agree that their actions have raised awareness and understanding of dementia in the wider community/their organisation. This is mirrored by the results of the 2021 campaign National Public Attitude Survey which showed that "Attitudes towards those living with dementia are changing for the better".

Dementia Understand Together is a HSE-led programme in partnership with the ASI, DSiDC, Age Friendly, Healthy Ireland and Age and Opportunity. For more information on Dementia: Understand Together in Communities contact fiona.foley1@hse.ie



DEMENTIA RISK REDUCTION WORKING GROUP

A crucial part of the overall approach to dementia in Ireland is trying to reduce, prevent or delay the onset of dementia in a person, by tackling modifiable risk factors for dementia. The National Dementia Strategy (2014) included a commitment to support the implementation of Healthy Ireland by highlighting the modifiable lifestyle and cardiovascular risk factors which can impact on risk and time of onset of dementia. In response the National Dementia Office (NDO) co-convened a working group with HSE Health and Wellbeing to focus on Dementia Risk Reduction. The first meeting of the group took place in May 2019.

Since this first meeting the World Health Organisation has issued guidelines on risk reduction of cognitive decline and dementia (2019) and the Lancet 2020 report outlined 12 known risk factors for dementia accounting for up to 40% of all dementia prevalence worldwide. The following has been shown to increase the risk of dementia:

- Physical Inactivity
- Diet
- Hypertension
- Diabetes
- Head injury
- Lower levels of education
- Smoking
- Infrequent social contact
- Obesity
- Alcohol
- Air pollution
- Depression

Source: *Lancet Commission Report 2020*

In 2019 a factsheet for healthcare professionals on dementia risk reduction was developed by this group. This factsheet is available [here](#) and includes key messages on dementia risk reduction based on the WHO guidelines. It was widely disseminated and continues to be promoted.

In March 2022 a campaign on dementia risk and brain health is running as part of Brain Health Awareness week. The campaign includes a social media campaign, newspaper articles, press releases and a partner pack. Health and Wellbeing programmes, the Dementia Understand Together Campaign, the Alzheimer Society of Ireland and other members of the expert group will take additional steps to promote brain health messaging during this period.

NEWS FROM AROUND THE COUNTRY

Enniscorthy Age Friendly Town

Work has begun on the process to make Enniscorthy Co. Wexford's first Age Friendly town. As part of this a walkability audit of the town took place on 13th October 2021. This involved bringing together a group of individuals with different abilities and needs through the town, and documenting any issues encountered. Members of Wexford Older People's Council were among those participating as well as the Town Engineer and Technician, Senior Planner, Special Projects and WCC Access Officer and Age Friendly Programme Manager & Regional Programme Manager. The results will be examined by an Implementation Team and a plan put in place to carry out recommended works from this project.



NEW TEAM MEMBERS JOIN THE NATIONAL DEMENTIA OFFICE

Kate Brennan joined the NDO in November 2021 as Senior Project Manager. Kate will primarily lead the NDO's education and training programme and also the family carers' portfolio which falls under the NDO's remit. Kate will also be working with colleagues across the HSE to support new service developments. Kate has many years' experience working in the health care sector including posts with The Alzheimer Society of Ireland and Family Carers Ireland. You can get in touch with Kate at kate.brennan2@hse.ie



Mairéad Bracken Scally joined the NDO in January 2022 as Senior Project Manager for the implementation of the clinical guideline on appropriate prescribing of psychotropic medication for non-cognitive symptoms in people with dementia. This is a two year programme which will focus on the guideline implementation in residential and acute settings. Most recently Mairéad was National Audit Coordinator for the Second Irish National Audit of Dementia care in acute hospitals (INAD-2). You can contact Mairéad at mairéad.bracken@hse.ie



LOCAL RADIO STATIONS TO HIGHLIGHT DEMENTIA

A series of broadcasts on local radio stations across the country occurred in November on the topic of dementia, as a result of a partnership between Dementia: Understand Together campaign and IRS local radio.

The broadcasts aim to raise awareness in communities about the ways that we can all reach out, support and engage people with dementia, their families and supporters, and to remind people that services are now opening again.

There are 13 radio stations in the partnership: Clare FM, East Coast Radio, Highland Radio, KCLR, KFM, Midwest Radio, Midlands 103, Ocean FM, Radio Kerry, Shannonside, Northern Sound, South East Radio, Tipp FM.

The stories highlighted:

- Personal experiences of people who have been affected by dementia. This might be their own experience or a family member or friend of someone with dementia
- The importance and value of hobbies, social connection and community for people who are living with dementia
- The supports that are available for people who are affected by dementia
- The helpful actions that people in local communities can take to help create a dementia-inclusive community

This work was supported by The Alzheimer Society of Ireland, Irish Dementia Working Group and Dementia Carers Campaign Network who reached out to people who have personal experience of living with dementia.

To keep up-to-date on NDO and related dementia news follow us on



dementia.office@hse.ie