

Welcome

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to this spring edition of the HSE National Dementia Services (NDS) newsletter 2024. Across the National Dementia Services team we are working on a wide range of projects to increase awareness, offer education, and improve access to services.

An additional Regional Specialist Memory Clinic (RSMC) is now operational at the Mercy University Hospital, Cork. This brings the total number of operational RSMCs to three. Our Memory Assessment and Support Services (MASS) are also progressing with Cavan/Monaghan recently becoming operational.

In terms of improving awareness and community inclusion, I would like to highlight that the Dementia: Understand Together campaign is celebrating 1000 community champions. These champions volunteer their time to support people with dementia and their communities and this is a phenomenal achievement. The Dementia: Understand Together Campaign is a national partnership between the HSE, the Alzheimer Society of Ireland, Age Friendly Ireland, Age & Opportunity, Dementia Services Information and Development Centre and Healthy Ireland.

We have also been steadily progressing the availability of dementia education and training nationally. I am excited to announce that the Dementia Care and Support: Homecare Education Programme, which is a QQI Level 5 special purpose award has progressed from a pilot project across three CHOs to a national rollout in 2024. We are currently working through final preparations but registration will open very soon. The Facilitator Education Programme: Implementation of National Clinical Guideline No. 21 has moved from the theory and design phases to implementation. The programme has been delivered across three acute hospital sites where feedback has been gathered, synthesised and will be incorporated into delivery at future sites.

We are making excellent progress in our Brain Health project with plans to conduct research on public attitudes in relation to Brain Health. We will offer further updates in the summer edition. On the topic of Brain Health, I would like to highlight Creative Brain Week 2024, a Global Brain Health Institute (GBHI) innovation at Trinity College Dublin, presented in association with the Jameel Arts & Health Lab, in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO) and with support from Creative Ireland and the Atlantic Institute. The event takes place between Monday, March 4th to Saturday, March 9th and interestingly, explores the themes of "Attention, Connection and Love" through art, science and activism.

I hope my introduction gives you a flavour of some of the work being undertaken by our team and you enjoy reading about these initiatives in greater detail in this edition of the NDS Newsletter. If you would like further information on any of the topics outlined in the newsletter or indeed would like to know about the on-going work of the office, please feel to contact us at dementia.office@hse.ie

- Paul Maloney

Programme Manager, National Dementia Services, Enhanced Community Care Programme & Primary Care Contracts

QUICK UPDATES

Migration of Dementia Pathways website to HSE

The Dementia Pathways website provides resources and information in relation to providing care to people with dementia for health and social care professionals across all settings. The website (www.dementiapathways.ie) has recently been migrated to the HSE website and is updated and maintained by the HSE National Dementia Services. This migration aims to improve the user experience when viewing information, publications or resources. Please contact our office through dementia.office@hse.ie with any queries or suggested inclusions for the website.

HSeLanD module: Non-cognitive symptoms of dementia

The HSE National Dementia Services launched a new HSeLanD Module entitled "Support pathways for people with non-cognitive symptoms of dementia" in December 2022. This 30 minute module will help you to determine the best person-centred supports for a person with non-cognitive symptoms of dementia and to recognise the risks of unnecessarily prescribing a psychotropic medication. The module is suitable for all healthcare professionals who provide care to people with dementia across all settings. As of February 2024, more than 3,200 people have completed the module and the feedback to date has been very positive. Please search "non-cognitive symptoms of dementia" on the HSeLanD website to find this module. The module can also be found in the "clinical skills" section of the course catalogue on HSeLanD.

Conferences & Presentations

- Dr Mairéad Bracken Scally presented a poster on the development of education to implement National Clinical Guideline No. 21 at the Irish Gerontological Society Annual Scientific Meeting in September 2023. She also provided an oral presentation at the Alzheimer Europe conference in October 2023 on this topic.
- Fiona Foley provided the Dementia awareness session for Health Promotion Officers, spoke about the Dementia: Understand Together campaign at the Leitrim Age Friendly Alliance meeting and presented on the national inclusive community symbol at the Engaging Dementia Café coordinator meeting.
- Fiona Foley was also a panel speaker at the launch of AIB becoming dementia inclusive, the Irish Dementia Working Group 10 year celebration, Trinity College Dublin Culture Night and the Bantry Inclusive Community Event.
- Fiona Foley recorded a Health & Wellbeing podcast on the campaign and dementia inclusive communities, which went live in September and can be accessed [here](#).
- Kate Brennan presented at the Alzheimer Europe conference in Helsinki in October 2023 on the Pilot Phase of the Dementia Care and Support programme and plans for the evaluation of this programme.

Recent advertising campaign

Dementia: Understand Together aims to create an Ireland that embraces and includes people living with dementia, and displays solidarity with them and their loved ones. To raise awareness for dementia and the impact of social connection on health and wellbeing, the Dementia: Understand Together campaign started off the year with a local radio partnership with 14 stations. Listeners heard from a wide range of experts including people with lived experience of dementia, health professionals and community champions about the actions everyone can take to help create a community which is inclusive of all its members.



The campaign highlighted the Dementia Inclusive Community symbol which all organisations and groups can display as a sign of solidarity and support of people with dementia.

For more information on the campaign visit www.understandtogether.ie

All campaign and symbol resources can be ordered free of charge from www.healthpromotion.ie select dementia from the drop down menu.

A 20-second promotional video also ran during programming on Virgin Media One from 30th January until 12th February, you can view the promotion here; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wVFFfnHkJU>

In addition, the campaign is highlighted in washrooms at the Aviva Stadium on dates throughout 2024 including the sold out Six Nations Championship fixtures (11th February and 16th March).

Community Champions

Dementia: Understand Together is celebrating 1000 community champions. Champions come together to make their communities dementia inclusive. To welcome all new champions, the campaign is hosting two further online Community Champion Welcome Workshops.

These workshops are specifically for new champions, as we explore the practical actions we can take to ensure people living with dementia can stay connected and included in their communities, and hear from people living with dementia and champions about their own experiences.

You can register for either March 13th or September 26th from 12pm to 1.45pm by emailing understandtogether@hse.ie

Brain Health

Think Brain Health

“Discover how healthy behaviours support your incredible brain”

This webinar was hosted by HSE Healthy Ireland and the National Dementia Services.

Sarah Mc Cormack, HSE Healthy Ireland Lead, Health & Wellbeing was joined by Dr Sean O’Dowd, Consultant Neurologist, Tallaght University Hospital and Clinical Lead, National Dementia Services along with other expert panellists to discuss our brain and the healthy behaviours we can adopt to look after it. Topics covered included physical activity, healthy eating, sleep, social connectivity, avoiding harmful use of alcohol and not smoking.

Panellists were:

- Cathy McHale, Advanced Nurse Practitioner, Institute of Memory & Cognition, Tallaght University Hospital
- Professor Brian Lawlor, Professor of Old Age Psychiatry and Site Director of Global Brain Health Institute, Trinity College Dublin

- Catherine Blake, Dean and Head of the School of Public Health, Physiotherapy and Sports Science, University College Dublin

You can watch it back [here](#)

Brain Awareness Week

This year Brain Awareness Week takes place from March 11th-17th. It is the global campaign to increase public awareness of the progress and benefits of brain research. A partner pack with key messages and social media assets will be available on www.understandtogether.ie to be shared with all networks throughout the month of March.

Brain Health Research

Research into the public’s awareness of and attitudes towards Brain Health is being conducted on behalf of the National Dementia Services by Empathy Research.

The aim of this research is to highlight:

- Public awareness of how to protect brain health
- Public understanding of the risk factors for dementia
- Public understanding of other conditions linked to brain health
- Barriers and motivations for people to take actions to reduce dementia risk factors.

The HSE will use the findings to develop health information content and tools to raise awareness for the dementia risk factors and steps to take to maintain brain health.

UPDATE ON THE REGIONAL SPECIALIST MEMORY CLINICS AND MEMORY ASSESSMENT AND SUPPORT SERVICES

The Dementia Model of Care was launched in collaboration with the HSE and Minister Butler on the 31st of May 2023. The Dementia Model of Care (MOC) builds on work undertaken to date in relation to the National Dementia Strategy (2014), the HSE Corporate Plan (2021-2024) and has developed in line with Programme for Government Objectives - Sláintecare (2020-2023) and the health reform agenda, where delivering the right care, in the right place, at the right time, given by the right team, is a central principle.

The MoC provides guidance on:

- Dementia assessment and targets for diagnostic services
- An outline of the dementia diagnostic pathway and the required infrastructure, describing three levels within the assessment and diagnostic pathway
- Guidance on best practice and key steps in disclosing a diagnosis of dementia
- Recommendations on the key elements of personalised care planning, including brain health principles for those with SCI/MCI
- Targets and recommendations on early post-diagnostic support

The MOC provides for a diagnostic model utilising the following three levels of assessment:

Level 1

GP delivered assessment which may include support and information from any of the Enhanced Community Care (ECC) Programme services; CHN/Primary Care Teams, Community Specialist Teams for older people, Community Specialist Teams for chronic disease and Community Intervention Teams (CIT). The decision on appropriateness of referral to Memory Assessment and Support Service or Regional Specialist Memory Clinic is at the discretion of the primary care physician.

Level 2

Assessment in a Memory Assessment and Support Service (MASS) (or/other specialist service) Diagnostic assessment in a MASS is generally for older persons with a typical and clear presentation.

Level 3

Assessment in a Regional Specialist Memory Clinic (RSMC). Based in tertiary care, diagnostic assessment in a RSMC is generally for younger, atypical or unclear presentations that require a more detailed assessment.

All of the above assessment services will not only be integrated with each other, but more importantly will be integrated with all older people's services (including voluntary) within their community. This is critical to ensure that the person living with dementia is signposted to the right service, in the right place and at the right time.

To date three RSMCs are now operational in St James's Hospital, Tallaght University Hospital and more recently, the Mercy University Hospital, Cork. We are hoping that the RSMC at University Hospital Galway will become operational later in 2024. From a MASS perspective, good progress has been made but significant recruitment is required in order to increase the number of operational MASS sites. Mayo, Sligo/Leitrim and the Cavan/Monaghan MASS sites are now operational which are fantastic developments for the respective geographical areas. We are fully committed to developing further MASS sites in 2024.

FACILITATOR EDUCATION PROGRAMME: IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL CLINICAL GUIDELINE NO. 21

The Implementation Programme for National Clinical Guideline No. 21 (NCG No. 21; appropriate prescribing of psychotropic medication for non-cognitive symptoms in people with dementia) commenced in 2022. A Facilitator Education Programme has been developed and has been piloted in a number of acute hospital sites. Learning from the delivery of education in pilot sites has been used to amend the materials for national roll-out which is currently underway.

The Facilitator Education Programme is a one day programme of education (accredited by the NMBI) which will be delivered in sites by Project Facilitator(s) from the HSE National Dementia Services. Staff who attend this education programme will become Local Facilitators for the Implementation of NCG No. 21. Following completion of the Facilitator Education Programme, the primary role of the Local Facilitator is to deliver the following education sessions (each of which have received NMBI accreditation):

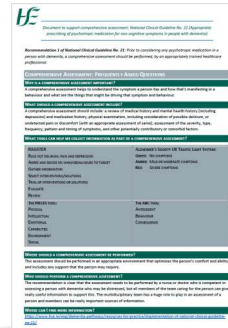
- Delivering Person-Centred Care for Non-cognitive Symptoms of Dementia: This 90 minute session is targeted at all staff who provide care to people with dementia.
- Prescriber Education: Implementation of NCG No. 21: This 60 minute session is targeted at all staff who prescribe psychotropic medication.
- Using Quality Improvement Methodology to Support the Implementation of NCG No. 21: This 60 minute session is targeted at all staff who will conduct an audit of psychotropic prescribing within their setting.

Local Facilitators are provided with ongoing support from the Implementation Programme Team in the National Dementia Services. To find out more about the Implementation Programme for National Clinical Guideline No. 21, please see [here](#)

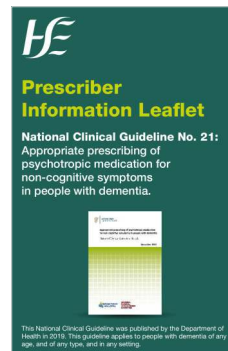
If you are interested in becoming involved as a Local Facilitator for the local implementation of NCG No. 21 in your setting, please contact our office on dementia.office@hse.ie

RESOURCES DEVELOPED IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL CLINICAL GUIDELINE NO. 21

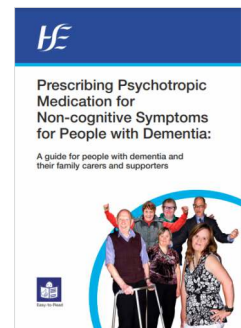
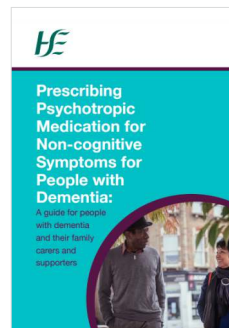
One of the primary goals of the Implementation Programme for National Clinical Guideline No. 21 is the development and delivery of a comprehensive education and training programme. This encompasses the development and dissemination of a range of resources which, to date, includes:



- A document to support comprehensive assessment. Prior to considering any psychotropic medication in a person with dementia, a comprehensive assessment should be performed, by an appropriately trained healthcare professional. This document supports this comprehensive assessment by providing the answers to a number of frequently asked questions.



- A prescriber information leaflet. This information leaflet is targeted at those prescribing psychotropic medication for non-cognitive symptoms in people with dementia and provides information on the recommendations and good practice points in NCG No. 21, as well as information on comprehensive assessment and links to relevant resources.



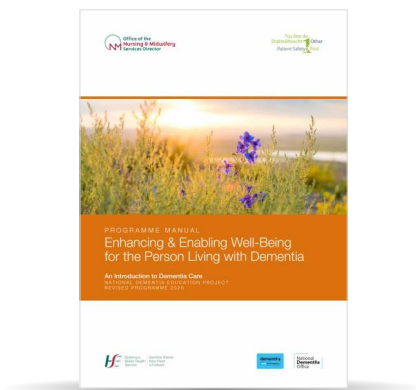
- Prescribing Psychotropic Medication for Non-cognitive Symptoms for People with Dementia: A guide for people with dementia and their family carers and supporters. This is available in both [Plain English](#) and [Easy Read](#) versions. This guide explains what psychotropic medications are and when they might be prescribed for you as a person with dementia. It tells you about: the possible side effects of using these medications; why you need regular reviews of the medication; and where you can find more information.

All of these resources and further information about the Implementation Programme for NCG No. 21 can be accessed [here](#)

EDUCATION & TRAINING

Dementia Education: Education and training is a priority area of the National Dementia Strategy, with a number of education programmes available across the country. These are:

- Enhancing and Enabling Well Being for the Person Living with Dementia - 2 Day Programme



- Enhancing and Enabling Quality of Care with the Person with Dementia - Acute Care Programme



The philosophy underpinning the programmes is based on the values and beliefs that personhood is central to the well-being of people living with dementia. In person centred care all behaviour has meaning and the language/words we use can strongly influence how others treat or view people living with dementia. Now more than ever dementia education and awareness is paramount when engaging with people living with dementia and their families. For course(s) details and dates contact your local Centres of Nurse and Midwifery Education Departments.

HSeLanD Module: Support Pathways for People with Non-cognitive Symptoms of Dementia: This eLearning module will help to determine the best person-centred supports for a person with non-cognitive symptoms of dementia and to recognise the risks of unnecessarily prescribing psychotropic medication. The new eLearning module contains 3 key topics: non-cognitive symptoms of dementia; tailored person-centered support; and risks of psychotropic medication. Target Audience: All staff who provide care to people with dementia across all settings

Dementia Care in Primary Care: The aim of the programme is to ensure a general basic knowledge of dementia across the disciplines working in a primary care setting. It aims to support participants in reviewing relationships between their professions, enhance mutual understanding and explore ways to combine their expertise towards improving delivery of services for people with dementia and their families. For course(s) details and dates contact your local Centres of Nurse and Midwifery Education/Education Departments.

The Early Identification of Memory Problems in Older Persons is an E-Learning programme. This short online course introduces participants to the experience of those with memory problems. The programme looks at memory problems within a broader social and personal context. It also differentiates between different types of memory problems including Dementia and Delirium. It is available through HSeLanD www.hseland.ie

Dementia Enhanced Home Support E-Learning Programme: The programme focuses on exploring how health care support assistants can adopt an enhanced supporting role to better enable people living with dementia to remain engaged and active in their homes and in their community. Building on existing person centred approaches health care support assistants already use in their day-to-day work, the programme explains how enhanced home supports can help meet the needs of people living with dementia. The programme contains four parts to support the development and enhancement of a more personalised approach to home care provision for people with dementia and includes real-world stories, video content and scenarios. It is available through HSeLanD www.hseland.ie

Dementia Elevator Programme: Dementia: Understand Together has training options for individuals, communities and businesses who wish to learn more about dementia and how to engage with and support people with dementia. Access more information [here](#)

Dementia Elevator is an online Dementia Awareness Training for staff members working in retail, financial services and transport to appropriately support customers with possible dementia. Access more information [here](#)

Training for individuals: The Dementia Services Information Development Centre (DSIDC) offer a number of online introductory awareness course for individuals and can be accessed at [e-learning](#).

For further information go to: www.understandtogether.ie
X @dementia_office email: dementia.office@hse.ie