

Specialist Older People's Services Newsletter

Celebrating innovation. Offering dignity and hope.



ISSUE 1

Welcome to this our first Newsletter

Our intention is to let our patients, staff, visitors, referrers and other professionals know about all the positive changes and innovations that are taking place within Older People's Services.

With the Care Quality Commission putting the spotlight on the quality of older people's nursing care and the recent launch of the National Dementia Strategy older people's services are rightly demanding dynamic staff, quality environments and the same level of funding that other mental health services receive.

With these things in mind we have launched a training and development strategy aimed at moving our services forward in four domains:

- Service Development
- Dignity in Care
- Psychological Awareness
- Social Inclusion

Our belief is that while our cognitive and physical abilities sometimes deteriorate as we progress through life our quality of life does not have to. Furthermore that old skills can be rediscovered and new ones learnt.

Chris Dawson
Clinical Service Manager

Service Development

Older People's Services expands providing more choice and improved pathways for patients.

Our services now have two new services to its existing male and female challenging behaviours services: George Jepson and Katherine Allen.

Katherine Allen ii provides 10 beds for patients who have been assessed as able to benefit from interventions that are targeted at reducing social isolation and improving independent living skills. Daily community meetings and regular activities in the community contribute to patients who have spent long periods in hospital living empowered and fulfilling lives.

Blair Atholl formerly part of Complex Mental Health Recovery Services has joined Older People's Services. While this reflects the age profile of the patients it will continue to provide a community based residential rehabilitation service for older adults (50+).

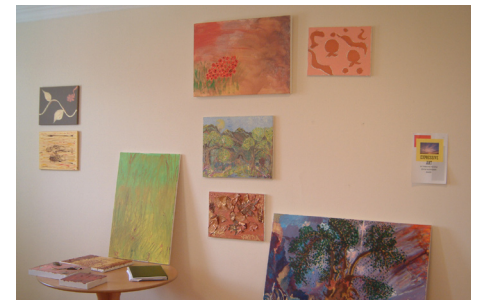
These four services enable the service to provide both continuing

care and rehabilitation options responsive to the needs of the people who use our services.

As we look to the future we are also keen to forge partnerships with other providers in the area as we move to a more community based service.

Dementia Awareness Week provides opportunity to celebrate creativity in older people.

On 8th July an open afternoon was held on the newly opened Katherine Allen ii unit. Displays highlighted key components of the strategy and demonstrated how the services were addressing the goals. However the highlight of the afternoon was a display of paintings done by the patients.



Dignity in Care

Support workers lead initiative to provide protected meals and nutritional advice.

NVQ level 3 support workers have championed initiatives to improve the patient's mealtime experience. This includes limiting traffic on the unit, not dispensing medication during the meal and ensuring the environment is conducive to a civilised and enjoyable meal. Mary Atkinson said "Sometimes mealtimes can be very busy and noisy and we know that this can be very off-putting for some of our patients which makes it difficult for them to eat properly."

"Indeed, in some other hospitals patients have become under-nourished as they have not eaten properly during meal times."

"Here at The Retreat we have looked closely at our meal times and worked towards protecting this time to make it quieter, more relaxing and more special for our patients."



Sensory Garden provides haven of tranquility.

A sensory garden has been created to help older people recover, thanks to a special £3,000 donation from the family of a former patient.

‘Renee’s Garden’ was designed by Belinda Noda, a MSc student from Sheffield Hallam University, in consultation with staff and patients. It aims to stimulate the senses and offer people a quiet, beautiful environment in which to relax and recover. Special plants for sound, tasting and scent have been used in the garden.

Occupational Therapist Joyce Latimer explained: “Sensory gardens have proven therapeutic value, particularly for people with sight problems and dementia. Older people will be able to enjoy nature in a safe and tactile place – we see it as an outdoor equivalent to our Snoezelen Room.”

Psychological Awareness

Museum artefacts provide materials for Reminiscence Group

A Reminiscence Group set up by psychology assistant Antonia Koskina has used pieces provided by a local museum to stimulate discussion.

While the group helps to keep people’s mind active, it’s also a lot of fun as staff and patients dress up in clothes from their youth and remember the good old days.

Developing psychological therapies for use with older age adults.

Inspired by a talk given by Sarah Dexter-Smith Maureen Horsley, OT, and Nicky Surgenor, Clinical Team Leader, are keen to talk with other professionals who may have used CBT formulation and techniques with an older population. The long term desire is to develop a training package suitable for all the staff working in Older People’s Services.

Meanwhile earlier in the year staff were inspired by a lecture given by the therapists and nursing staff facilitating our male and female psychotherapy groups for older age adults. “Sex, Death and Chocolate Cake” tells the moving and often witty account of how the psychotherapy groups have helped even the more unwell patients make connections to the past the present and each other.

Making a difference and positive practice Awards 2009.

Over 100 Retreat staff turned out in force for our first ever Awards Ceremony, at which the guest was BBC TV presenter Harry Gration.

Staff and patients nominated individuals and teams whom they thought deserved special recognition for ‘going the extra mile’ to enhance the quality of life for our patients.

Congratulations goes to Katherine Allen unit for Team of the Year.



Social Inclusion

Flying out of the Institution

A life-long dream of flying came true for a Blair Atholl patient when he took to the skies over Sherburn-in-Elmet at the tender age of 79. Les Popely, Activities Co-ordinator, arranged the flight as one of the ‘wish for a day’ initiatives. “It was very exciting, especially the take off where I held my breath” quoted A.... on his return.

Regular Activities

As part of group and individualised activity programmes these are examples of some of the activities our patients have had an opportunity to take part in 2009:

- A trip to the Yorkshire show
- Swimming trips
- A caravan holiday to Reighton Sands
- Pie and peas evenings
- Regular pub outings.

“The Good Life” at Blair Atholl

Blair Atholl’s Gardening Club has combined with its Healthy Living group to provide such tempting morsels as spinach with garlic sauce. Ingredients are grown in the house’s own garden and greenhouse and then jointly prepared by patients and staff for home cooking of the highest order.

More details of our Older People’s Services can be found on our web site or by contacting
Chris Dawson
 t: 01904 420913 or email
cdawson@theretreatyork.org.uk