

Dementia Strategy Briefing

We have a long history of supporting people with learning disabilities, who develop dementia, to lead fulfilled and engaged lives in their communities. Often we will have supported people for many years prior to them developing dementia and we are committed to adapting and developing people's support to meet their changing needs. We have also developed a range of new support services for people, with or without a learning disability, already living with dementia.

Our Track Record

- We currently support around 50 people who have a diagnosis of dementia and this number is steadily increasing. Some of the people we support do not have a learning disability but their family or care manager has approached us because they feel the individual will benefit from our person centred and highly personalised support services.
- We individually tailor each person's support to their unique circumstances in ways which maintain their independence and complement support available from other sources.
- We provide a wide range of support to people in their own homes, the community and to enjoy short breaks.
- We have considerable experience of supporting people with dementia to remain in their own homes thus reducing the need for the person to move into unfamiliar care settings.
- We have a highly skilled workforce who receive training tailored to the person they are supporting. Our in-house dementia specialists and accredited positive behaviour instructors provide on-going support to teams.
- We are experienced at supporting people and their families with end of life care.
- We design and cost each service individually and are experienced in Self-Directed Support (SDS) and other funding arrangements.



“ We believe Key is very good at what it does. Although technically Raymond was, to Key, a service user, he became so much more. He was a person who was loved, respected, and cared for with marvellous skill, professionalism, dedication and commitment. As a family we thank Key for enhancing the final days of his life and hold all the staff who cared for him in the highest regard. ”

Family member

Our Approach

Our approach to supporting people with dementia is aligned with both Scotland's 'National Dementia Strategy, 2013-2016' and the 'Charter of Rights for People with Dementia and their Carers in Scotland'. Underpinning our approach are the following elements:

1. Person-centred and outcome-focused planning

Working in person-centred ways, we aim to provide just the right amount of targeted support to enable the person to enjoy the best possible quality of life and continue to be as independent as they can be. Maintaining strong links with family, friends and any interests and activities the person enjoyed prior to the onset of dementia is vital, therefore we work creatively and flexibly to keep the person engaged and active.

We work exceptionally hard to support the person to live safely in their home environment for as long as they can. Understanding and respecting any wishes the person or their family may have around end of life care is also crucial and explored where this may be required.



“ To have removed him from his home would have been very detrimental. His quality of life would have been severely adversely affected because he would have lost all contact with carers who through long experience knew how to work with him and to whom he responded. ”

Family member

2. Understanding the impact of dementia

Our dementia friendly support is uniquely tailored to each person and how dementia impacts on their everyday life. Support plans detail people's diagnosis, routines, interests and communication preferences along with the things that help the person cope with day-to-day challenges. We recognise the importance of understanding that all behaviour is a form of communication; responding positively and creatively when challenging or difficult situations arise.

Dementia friendly support requires dementia friendly environments; providing calm, quiet and familiar surroundings within which the person can thrive and enjoy life. By making best use of assistive technologies and information about how the person perceives people and objects within their home, we can design surroundings which minimise sensory confusion, reduce anxiety and enables the person to safely remain in their own home for as long as possible.

“ ..we came to feel that the staff at Key were quite uniquely skilled in caring for people who have both learning disability and dementia. ”

Family member



3. Partnership working

We recognise the importance of active participation of partners in delivering good quality, joined-up services for people with dementia. We proactively engage with multi-agency colleagues in accessing their knowledge and expertise in providing individualised support to each person. We have a reputation for building positive, solution-focused relationships with relevant professionals.



“ I was very impressed with the standard of care being delivered and the knowledge base and skills of all support workers. ”

Clinical Psychologist

“ We felt as a family at all times able to engage with the workers. ”

Family member

4. Highly skilled, committed staff

We ensure that every worker who supports a person with dementia has received dementia specific training to enable them to offer high quality, person-centred support. This training is aligned with the National Dementia Framework: Promoting Excellence and reflects the Dementia Informed and Dementia Skilled levels.

Often we will have enjoyed a longstanding relationship with the person before they developed dementia, meaning their worker team is able to provide familiarity, consistency and knowledge of the person, alongside what and who is important to them in their life.

“ The training gave me an insight into how someone with dementia sees the world. The training was directly linked to the man I was supporting – it helped me understand the changes he is going through. ”

Course participant



5. Learning and adapting as the person's needs change

No one's life stays the same and the nature of dementia means that a person's needs will change as their condition progresses. Therefore, all individual services are regularly reviewed and stakeholders are actively encouraged to provide their comments on service quality and improvement. We also undertake regular training audits to ensure that workers' skills and knowledge base are up to date and relevant to the people they support.



“ He needed more than ever to be maintained in his familiar home surroundings..Key understood this and responded with a plan they had negotiated to keep Raymond in his home. ”

Family member

Our Strategy



We are committed to continually improving and developing our services for people with dementia. We have a comprehensive organisation-wide Dementia Strategy which outlines our commitment to:

- Developing and adapting each person's support to meet their changing needs to enable them to safely remain in the familiarity of their own home for as long as is possible.
- Extending our delivery of highly personalised support services to people with dementia across Scotland.
- Working in partnership with multi-agency colleagues to ensure people with dementia can benefit from the greater choice and control afforded by SDS. All of our services are individually costed and therefore easily transferable to SDS funding options.
- Train all staff who are supporting a person with Down's syndrome aged 35 or over and all staff supporting a person with learning disability aged 60 or over to Dementia Informed level.
- Train all staff supporting a person with a diagnosis of dementia to Dementia Skilled level.
- Developing the skills and expertise of our experienced managers through a Dementia Community of Practice, thus providing a valuable knowledge base for the organisation.
- Collate data on the numbers of people with dementia we support, as well as gathering feedback on individual support and outcomes to inform quality assurance and future service planning.

Get in touch

This briefing is supported by our Dementia Strategy, our Dementia Training Strategy and Dementia Support Planning Practice Guidance, as well as a leaflet for individuals and families. We welcome the opportunity to discuss further development of our services for people with dementia in more detail. Contact us for details of the Area Manager for your local authority:

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