



Promoting Excellence and its impact on social service settings

A second booklet of dementia learning journeys from across Scotland

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 **Scottish Social
Services Council**

Promoting Excellence

In 2011 the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) and NHS Education for Scotland published **Promoting Excellence: a framework for all health and social service staff working with people with dementia, their families and carers.**

People with dementia will often have contact with care and support services, therefore education and lifelong learning across the social service workforce is essential.

The four practice levels within the framework represent the type of knowledge and skills that workers should have according to their role and practice setting. The minimum required practice level does not relate to a worker's seniority within their profession or organisation. Instead it relates to the contact that a worker has with people with dementia, families and carers, and their particular responsibilities in care, treatment and support.

➤	➤	➤	➤
Informed	Skilled	Enhanced	Expertise
<p>The dementia informed practice level outlines the baseline knowledge and skills required by everyone working in health and social service settings, including in a person's own home.</p>	<p>The dementia skilled practice level outlines the knowledge and skills required by all workers that have direct and/or substantial contact with people with dementia and their families and carers.</p>	<p>The enhanced dementia practice level outlines the knowledge and skills required by workers that have more regular and intense contact with people with dementia, provide specific interventions or manage services.</p>	<p>The expertise in dementia practice level outlines the knowledge and skills required for workers who by virtue of their role and practice setting play an expert specialist role in the care, treatment and support of people with dementia.</p>

You can access free Promoting Excellence learning resources online. Guidance resources are also available to help you explore the relationship between Promoting Excellence, reflective practice and work-based learning and qualifications.

Visit www.sssc.uk.com/promotingexcellence.

Foreword

I'm delighted to share this second booklet of learning journeys with you. It showcases positive ways the Promoting Excellence resources are impacting on dementia care in social service settings.

The contributors represent a growing team of Dementia Ambassadors and social service Dementia Champions across Scotland, from Shetland to Galloway, and Ayrshire to Orkney. As the Scottish Government publishes a third Dementia Strategy, it is important that a key objective of the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) continues to be embedding Promoting Excellence learning by supporting Dementia Ambassadors and social service Dementia Champions to access and implement resources.



The collaborative work between the SSSC and NHS Education for Scotland (NES) makes sure the Promoting Excellence in dementia learning resources are responsive and relevant, as the sector goes through transformation and reform.

This booklet celebrates the fantastic work done so far and demonstrates how the Promoting Excellence framework is making a significant, positive difference to personal outcomes.

We'd like to thank all the contributors. Their personal accounts and shared experiences are inspirational and show examples of creative and innovative leadership in supporting people who live with dementia.

Reflecting on the first booklet last year, it is clear the workforce is embracing Promoting Excellence. We are greatly encouraged by and proud of the work of all Dementia Ambassadors and Dementia Champions.

Anna Fowlie

Chief Executive, SSSC

Dundee and Angus College: Blended learning

Claire MacKay, Health and Social Care lecturer

I lecture across a range of subjects, levels and courses, all within social care and health, and have been in this role for 15 years.

I came to Dundee and Angus College with both a personal and professional interest and experience in dementia. I became a Dementia Ambassador in 2013, as I felt it would reflect my commitment to promoting dementia learning in my role and my manager supported this. I have a real passion for sharing dementia learning and knowledge with the students, especially as so many will experience supporting people living with dementia as part of the future workforce.

Using Promoting Excellence materials

I use Promoting Excellence materials to supplement the learning already provided in the courses I teach using a blended approach, incorporating Promoting Excellence resources with the course curriculum. I appreciate that the framework and resources are flexible.

I mainly use the informed level DVD, as well as some of the [Dementia Skilled Improving Practice](#) resources with higher level classes and find the resources beneficial as they also support other learning delivered as part of the college curriculum.

I find it helpful for the students to understand that there is a framework of learning about dementia to support them as they move on to a career in social care and health. This is valuable knowledge for them to further their own professional development. Knowledge around communication and stigma of dementia are two of the key learning points that students find very helpful and which positively challenge their assumptions.

Impact

The impact of my Dementia Ambassador role and use of Promoting Excellence is wide-reaching and varied. Students gain knowledge and understanding of dementia – often having had no background or knowledge at all. I've seen that access to Promoting Excellence materials means students change their career path, choosing to work with people with dementia once they finish their course. Other students are already working in care while studying and for them increased knowledge means positive changes for the people they support. My Dementia Ambassador role is vital in ensuring that dementia is a key part of students' learning across social care and health. With the numbers of people living with dementia supported by social care and health services continuing to rise, students need to have good knowledge of what best practice is. There are 'lightbulb' moments for students who increase their dementia learning when they realise the capacity that people with dementia have. This increases understanding of the need to practise with a person-centred value base, which the Promoting Excellence material does.

I will continue to use Promoting Excellence resources to support students' learning so the emerging workforce have real understanding and knowledge to support people and their families to live well with dementia.

Stirling and Clackmannanshire: The impact of developing Promoting Excellence training

Lisa Dunbar, Learning and Development Advisor

I'm a learning and development advisor working with teams across two local authority areas, Stirling and Clackmannanshire, to support, design and deliver learning and training across adult services. I have experienced the evolution of dementia care in my personal life and am now at the forefront of developing dementia learning in social care in my professional role.

Dementia learning

Me and my colleagues found the Promoting Excellence framework and resources very useful when developing a dementia learning plan for the councils. It was easy to put into place quickly and we appreciated the consistency it provided, alongside the fact that we didn't have to start from scratch.

We developed a programme to cover the skilled level, which is mandatory for all our social service workers, which is about 250 staff. We created an interactive programme based on the resource, to ensure a positive impact on day-to-day practice.

Everyone who attends gets a copy of the [Dementia Skilled Improving Practice](#) resource and we cover all the modules in two workshops. We include activities designed to stimulate discussion and reflection. These include a dementia myth busting quiz, an ageing simulation and group discussion focused on supporting people to be well.

Between the two workshops we ask staff to complete an environmental audit of how dementia friendly their service is. After the workshops we give staff a bronze certificate for attending, a silver certificate if they pass a test one month later and a gold certificate for completing a reflective account three months after the training. This focuses on how they have made a change based on what they have learnt at the workshops.

Initially we piloted the programme in a care home and management noticed positive changes and impact very quickly. We then rolled it out across the council. We now plan to return to the pilot care home to take further steps and ask residents and families to feed back what is important



Lisa Dunbar
Learning and Development
Advisor

to them. We will incorporate this in the training. From 250 staff, 100 have already completed the training and our plans to continue it are a high priority for the coming year. We also use the **informed** resource as part of induction training for staff such as administrators, to help them support people with dementia.

Supportive management played an important role in making sure we rolled out this programme of training so quickly and it has been warmly welcomed. Staff can already see the impact of their learning; with one staff member reflecting on how they changed their approach in supporting one person which resulted in clearer communication. They said how their own anxiety about how to support the individual had been hugely reduced and recognised this benefited the resident as well.

‘Not only has the Skilled Practice Programme affected how people communicate and support people with dementia, it has also led to staff taking the initiative to review and improve a number of service areas, including the review of care paperwork to make it even more outcome focused, person-centred and service user friendly.’

Hazel Chalk, Registered Manager, Allan Lodge Short Term Assessment Care Home, Stirling

Dementia Ambassadors

To complement the dementia learning programme, I also plan to create a local network of Dementia Ambassadors, so there will be at least one in each team. Stirling Council started with five ambassadors and they now have 15, with an aim to have 25. We created a flexible role descriptor to help support their development within the council. Dementia Ambassadors can be involved in low-level activity, such as being the ‘go to’ person for dementia learning in their team and have to share their learning somehow, whether through one-to-one support or team meetings. Others receive some facilitator training to support staff through their skilled learning. The workshops have helped develop Dementia Ambassadors, as I can identify people who have a real passion for sharing their experience, knowledge and learning about dementia.



**Clackmannanshire
Council**



Meallmore Care Homes Scotland: Developing dementia learning with Promoting Excellence

Wendy Adams, Learning and Development Facilitator and social service Dementia Champion

My personal dementia learning journey began at Meallmore over 12 years ago when I started work at St Modans care home in Fraserburgh as a carer for people living with dementia.

Because of my passion to support staff to ensure better quality care for our residents with dementia I took up the post of learning and development facilitator in 2012. Meallmore's training strategy was updated to integrate the Promoting Excellence framework into our existing training and improve outcomes for people with dementia, their families and carers. This has involved sharing best practice between homes and having at least one Dementia Ambassador in each.

Key steps with Promoting Excellence

Using the [Dementia Skilled Improving Practice](#) resource I developed an elearning module as the first section of our learning programme. This captured three subjects:

- understanding dementia
- person-centred care and community connections
- health and wellbeing for dementia.

The second section is a three-hour **Understanding stress and distress in dementia** video conference session which explores how best to meet an individual's care needs and introduces alternative methods of managing stress and distress.

The final section is a two-hour video conference session called **You can make a difference** which combines use of the **Darkness in the afternoon** dementia learning video and resources.

Recruitment of Dementia Ambassadors took place across Meallmore's care homes in October 2013. New Ambassadors attended workshops to increase their understanding about dementia. They then delivered awareness sessions for staff and offered colleagues peer support.

All care staff must now complete the **Dementia Skilled Improving Practice** resource with nurses and senior care workers also completing Promoting Excellence **enhanced** level.

We have created an online resource library for all staff where they can find up to date resources on dementia. They can find videos and links to good practice websites as well resources and information available from the SSSC, the Care Inspectorate and Alzheimer Scotland.

I introduced sessions to help family members understand more about dementia and to stay connected with their loved ones which proved to be very successful.

One daughter said to me: 'because of these sessions I can now have a conversation with my mother...the best we have had in years'.

New Meallmore resources

We developed our **Who am I?** resource by involving key workers, who know an individual well, and family members to compile a pen picture of the person and how best to support them.

Using this resource helps new and agency staff understand what's important to the person by including details such as treasured possessions, preferred routines, sleep patterns, hearing and eyesight, personal care, clothes choices, medication and eating and drinking.

Since introducing **Who am I?** medication use has dropped from 40% to 10% in one home as staff know what helps individuals feel better if they become anxious. Families and staff gave 100% positive feedback in our survey on the **Who am I?** resource. They particularly said that communication was much more meaningful.

To encourage residents and their families to tell us about any activities they'd really like to do, we introduced Wishing trees.

Here are some examples of the wishes we have received so far:

'I would like to visit the fishing harbour.'

'I wish I could go out shopping.'

'I would like to have a family dinner.'

'I wish I could visit the seaside.'

None of these are big wishes but they are important to the person. Staff arrange for the wishes to be granted, with family members who want to join in, then we update the wish tag on the tree by taking a picture of the wish being achieved. It's lovely to see the photos on the tree showing everyone enjoying the activities they wished for.

One Dementia Ambassador wanted to improve care of the residents so raised funds to open the Sma' Glen bar, a coffee shop in the care home in 2016.

The Sma' Glen hosts regular bar lunches and a coffee shop where families can spend time with their loved ones. We now use puppet therapy at mealtimes which has helped residents to enjoy eating and gain weight.

With Meallmore's support and commitment to improving practice, me and the manager at Kincaid Care Home in Greenock completed the social services Dementia Champions programme in 2016.



Wendy and Meallmore Director, Aiden Hennassay, celebrate their success at the Scottish Care Awards

Becoming a social service Dementia Champion has inspired me to drive forward dementia learning and practice at Meallmore. Our improved training has opened staffs' eyes to all that can be done to enhance the quality of care for people with dementia.

The icing on the cake for me was being nominated for Scottish Care's national award for learning and staff development. I was overwhelmed to win and proud to receive my plaque at the award ceremony held in Glasgow in November 2016. This recognition has renewed my commitment to continue my learning journey and be part of Meallmore's ambition to improve our dementia practice.



River Clyde Homes: Our dementia learning journey

Angela Montgomery, Supported Services Team Leader

My story started over 10 years ago when, through close family experience, I wanted to know more about different types of dementia. My need to learn became a desire and a passion to help colleagues to improve their understanding of dementia, so I became a Dementia Ambassador in 2013.

I manage eight sheltered housing complexes for River Clyde Homes (RCH) across Inverclyde. We aspire to very high standards to support people living with dementia. I feel privileged to work in my role with a wonderful team of 20 staff who are dedicated to self-leadership and supporting people living with dementia, family, friends and carers.

Our community approach to Promoting Excellence

In 2015 I was asked to represent RCH collaborating with Inverclyde Community Health Care Partnership and colleagues representing Police Scotland, Alzheimer Scotland, Dementia Carers Group and Your Voice who were working to create a Dementia Friendly Inverclyde.

I joined the Community Learning and Development group as a novice and with their support I now confidently deliver **Promoting Excellence Informed** about dementia sessions. We have delivered this workshop to over 800 staff doing a variety of roles across Inverclyde. The key achievement for me is that by spring 2017 my RCH staff will have completed the **Dementia Skilled Improving Practice** resource.

In recognition of partnership work and its positive impact on the wider community, the group won an Our people award at the NHS/Inverclyde Community Health Care Partnership awards of excellence 2016.

I have been involved in activities to improve Gourock shops and services using an environmental impact assessment involving people living with dementia. The Cardwell Garden Centre has made substantial improvements and embraced the project. Along with a vast number of others they have also become our local Dementia Friends.

Another firm, Dallas Carpets in Greenock, trained their staff which means we have carpet fitters who are better equipped to communicate with people living with dementia and also feel more empowered and able to raise any concerns. As a result of sharing my little bit of knowledge of the impact of colour difference along with patterns/designs, Dallas Carpets were able to advise and influence a better choice of carpet for a local care home which was Dementia Friendly by design – well done to them!

Making a difference

After attending a **Dementia Informed** session, a plumber with RCH noticed the behaviour of someone living in the community was out of character and called to alert me of his concerns. As a result of this call the individual was diagnosed with early onset dementia and is now on the right path to support.

Through our partnership connections local social work services contacted me to make arrangements for a lady in hospital who needed support due to Lewy Body Dementia. Following a meeting with the lady, her family, all the partnership services and hospital staff, the lady is now living in one of our sheltered housing complexes, a move which has greatly improved her quality of life.

What are your next steps and why?

The Promoting Excellence framework and resources are amazing tools which I have used with my team to enhance their skills and knowledge. It is important to me to support my team towards registration with the SSSC in autumn 2017.

I have also found the SSSC Learning Zone marvellous as it includes learning resources from partners which I like. I attend as many events as I can to learn from others and share best practice and find this invaluable.

All credit has to go to RCH for being a caring housing provider which continually empowers staff and involves the people who use our services to inform future developments. I have to commend the staff and my colleagues for their commitment to improving the quality of life for those living with dementia from a housing and housing support perspective.

I am excited about RCH's future and am confident we will continue to enhance the social, emotional and environmental aspects for all people who use our services, particularly those living with dementia.



Angela Montgomery
Supported Services Team Leader

'If someone said three years ago that I would be delivering training independently, influencing positive outcomes through sharing my skills and knowledge and successfully improving the lives of people other than my family, I would have said "no, not me".'

'I guess I have firstly my family to thank for giving me the passion and secondly my Director at RCH for having confidence in me and supporting me to progress to where I am now. I'd love to open a sensory room in one of our complexes and I'm determined to keep making a difference, learn all I can and share this knowledge to improve the experience of people living with dementia.'



Leading dementia learning at Bon Accord Care

Julie Suttar, Balnagask Care Home Manager

After attending an SSSC Leadership event, I wanted to know more about the Dementia Ambassador role and Promoting Excellence resources and following a discussion with my manager, I applied to become a Dementia Ambassador. I felt I needed to do this as a commitment to improving care and support for people living with dementia. Following an ambassador induction day in March 2016, 20 members of Bon Accord Care staff committed to undertaking the Dementia Ambassador role.



Julie Suttar
Balnagask Care Home
Manager

Why did we develop the Promoting Excellence training for our services?

We created a group of Bon Accord Dementia Ambassadors to explore the most effective way to use the Promoting Excellence framework in services. The group considered how the Promoting Excellence framework could shape an in house strategy for dementia care and education. The group identified that current in house dementia training had potential for development to incorporate reflective practice for participants.

What did we do?

The group considered how Bon Accord Care could adopt and integrate the Promoting Excellence resources in their services, while considering the needs of individuals using services and staff groups' knowledge and skills. From this, they developed dementia training around the Promoting Excellence resources and a strategy to support Bon Accord Care to adopt and embed the Promoting Excellence framework across the organisation.

The strategy includes the pledge that 'everyone with direct contact and support for individuals living with dementia will be trained to skilled level'.

Bon Accord recognised that dementia learning and development for staff was essential to ensure they met policy requirements. Bon Accord Care carries out full day introduction sessions for **Dementia Skilled Improving Practice** resources for team leaders, activity coordinators, assistant managers and direct care staff. A supervisor supports them for six months to complete the skilled resource. This requires them to complete the necessary reflective accounts throughout the modules. Once completed, they submit a reflective account to their supervisor, detailing how the learning resources have shaped and influenced their work, service, organisation or community. Staff are awarded a Bon Accord Care certificate of completion when they have successfully completed the skilled resource. Individual staff are also supported to identify any further learning needs through staff appraisals. Staff who are undertaking their Social Services and Healthcare SVQ qualification are supported by in-house SVQ assessors to use their reflective practice in the skilled resource as evidence towards their SVQ qualification.

What it looks like now

There are currently over 20 Dementia Ambassadors working in Bon Accord Care services. The Ambassadors meet every few months to share ideas, good practice examples and identify further learning and development needs. Recently, through these regular meetings, Bon Accord did an innovative workshop for people with dementia and their carers titled The Garden in partnership with a story telling theatre group called Spare Tyre.

The workshop gave individuals the chance to experience the outdoors inside, using multisensory and non-verbal methods of communication, responsive to each individual's communication and physical ability. One resident later described it as a 'lovely day dream'. This innovative experience would not have been possible without encouraging the development of the Dementia Ambassador role by using Promoting Excellence resources, encouraging staff creativity, engagement and development. At Bon Accord Care we are aware that personalised support techniques may differ between services, with one (Kingswood) day centre currently reviewing environmental aspects to enhance individuals' experience of mealtimes.

Feedback

Staff who are currently undertaking the skilled resource have reflected that they feel engaged, motivated and empowered to develop their learning and influence change, while also noticing that using Promoting Excellence has increased their confidence in making professional links. Staff who are waiting to start the skilled resource having completed the **Informed** level say they are 'hungry for more!'.

Evidence of the wider impact of staff completing Promoting Excellence skilled is Balnagask Care Home forming strong connections with the Torry Older People's Health and Wellbeing group, which now meets here. This gives residents the opportunity to contribute to the community group. Some community members now volunteer in the home and have recently taken part in the **Informed** level of Promoting Excellence to support their understanding of dementia. Residents and family members said they wanted a friends, family and resident steering group, which staff support individuals to take part in. The group meets regularly, engaging and encouraging family contributions to the home.

The future

Everyone is very excited about the future.

As an organisation, we strive to be leaders and experts in the dementia field. We cannot underestimate the future demands – our workforce needs up to date information and ongoing dementia learning.



Methilhaven Home: Supporting staff with dementia learning

Nanette Graham, Senior Social Care Worker

I work as a senior social care worker at Methilhaven Home, a residential care home for up to 32 residents.

I provide support for a staff team who are working through the [Promoting Excellence Dementia Skilled Improving Practice](#) learning resource. I organise training and discussion times for all staff groups who work in Methilhaven Care Home and at these sessions there is a mixture of staff with different skills and roles. A typical learning event would include social care staff, care assistants, domestics, cooks and day care staff. I find this helps people see their role in the team and how they can contribute to quality of life for our residents.

Having open discussion also supports some staff who may find written work difficult. Every member of staff contributes to the wellbeing of our residents, so it is very important to have continued training to support them. I support social care workers through the five modules in the learning resource, as their role requires this level of knowledge. I encourage care assistants to work on the first two or three modules at a pace that suits them and other team members such as domestics and cooks are supported to engage at this level.

Reflections

I meet with staff at eight week intervals to see how their work book is progressing or if they need further help. I ask the staff team to think about their own practice and complete the 'Reflections: Life Experience' sheet with five activities. Feedback from this is really impressive, as staff have obviously put a great deal of thought into their work practice and how they have improved since completing training. Feedback is also collected by seniors who observe practice and also provide support where required.

I also arrange training with Vision Call, who take care of residents' eye care. They have a good learning and development programme, which involves using spectacles to allow staff to know how different people with sensory impairment see things. Staff find this really beneficial, as they see immediately what the difficulties are which encourages greater empathy and understanding of people living with dementia.

Future learning

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I have gained a great deal of knowledge from the [Promoting Excellence Skilled](#) resource but also using my own initiative by visiting other websites and printing off material to help staff. For example, I found using slides of Carolus Horn paintings very effective. Horn was an artist whose paintings reflected the cognitive and visual changes that someone going through the dementia journey experiences.

For my own professional development, I am currently working through the Dementia Professional Development Award. Learning is always changing and improving but using Promoting Excellence is how we can continue support people with dementia to have a better quality of life and live well with dementia.



Nanette Graham
Senior Social Care Worker with a resident of Methilhaven Home

Care Inspectorate: Supporting staff through learning and development

Heather Edwards, Dementia Consultant

One of the highlights of my job is meeting and talking with staff who care for and support people living with dementia day in and day out. People working in these positions are not looking for an easy job; they know only too well what it takes to deliver support in a way that meets the needs of the individual and their family as well as all the other tasks needed to keep the service running well.

There are around 70,000 people working in the social service sector supporting and caring for people living with dementia and their families and friends. The staff in these jobs make a huge difference to people's lives, from giving practical care and support to offering reassurance at a time when people can feel afraid and vulnerable. Staff also encourage and support people to regain skills and be as independent as they can be to enjoy and live life in a way that is important to them.

The Care Inspectorate believes every person in Scotland should receive high quality, safe and compassionate care that reflects their rights, choices and individual needs. With over 90,000 people living with dementia in Scotland, many of whom are receiving care and support services, this can be challenging. It is a challenge however that many staff have responded to with a passion and motivation that can be used to spread best practice and innovation across the sector.



Heather Edwards

Dementia care and support

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During the inspection year of 2016/17 we focused on dementia care and support in care homes for older people. During these inspections we have been keen to see how staff use their learning and development to make a difference in the lives of the people they support. While we have not yet analysed all the inspection findings we have seen that where staff are encouraged to use their learning to make improvements they are motivated and engaged. I often talk about maintaining and developing wellbeing and resilience for people using services but I think that it is equally important that staff are given the same opportunities; learning and development is a major way of achieving this.

Keeping learning and development alive and fresh and something that is for everyone is not always easy. Sometimes the pressures of just getting the job done seem to take up all available time and energy. It is important for staff to be given the opportunity to reflect on their practice and grow, as well as feeling connected to others in similar jobs. A positive and empowered workforce can only be good news for people using services; after all person-centred care is for everyone in the care relationship.

‘Using Promoting Excellence to drive improvement is a great way to keep staff engaged and passionate about the work they do and allows them to develop into leaders and fantastic role models.’



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