

### **Dicconson Group Practice – Dementia Carer Support Group**

#### **Background**

When reviewing our PPG Action Plans back in August 2016, it was agreed that we should have two projects to take forward as something that would benefit our patients. It was decided that one of the projects could be dementia and carers, as it was news worthy and one of the Prime Minister's (David Cameron) Challenge on Dementia 2020 (DOH 2015).

David Cameron also wanted carers of people with dementia to be made aware of and offered the opportunity for respite, education, training, emotional and psychological support so that they feel able to cope with their caring responsibilities and to have a life alongside caring. The Challenge included that GPs playing a leading role in ensuring coordination and continuity of care for people with dementia, as part of the existing commitment that from 1 April 2015 everyone will have access to a named GP with overall responsibility and oversight for their care.

#### **Next Steps**

First, we decided on a lead person who then arranged a meeting with the lead GP for dementia care and the Practice Supervisor to discuss our proposal for a dementia carer support group.

Following this meeting and discussion within the PPG, we produced a short postal survey which was sent out to those on the carers list held by the practice. The survey asked for their thoughts about attending a carer support group, best times to hold a group morning or afternoon and permission to be contacted by the lead person. The response was positive, therefore, once we knew that there was a need we looked at what was required to take this project forward.

The Practice Supervisor arranged a dementia review clinic with the lead GP who briefly spoke with the carer about the support group. If the carer was interested, they spoke with a member of the PPG in private in a room next to the GP, whilst another PPG member chatted with their

Many thanks to Dicconson Group PPG for sharing this case study

**Contact: [shapeyournhs@wiganboroughccg.nhs.uk](mailto:shapeyournhs@wiganboroughccg.nhs.uk) or 01942 482711 (Ref: CS3)**

### Way Forward

Finally, following a few months of attending other PPGs to investigate what others were doing, resourcing a venue and producing a timetable, it was time for our first support group meeting booked for January 2017.

There are two PPG members who regularly facilitate the group; although this is not exclusive and other PPG members attend the group as they wish with the agreement of the support group.

It was very much our goal for this to be a support group led by its members, with the facilitators taking a more liaison and coordinator role. This has worked well so far, as the carers just want a place to discuss their concerns and offer advice to others. We have had a few speakers covering topics that carers are interested in i.e. Age UK, The Alzheimer's Society and a lawyer specialising in mental Capacity and the Law.

After six months a satisfaction survey was given to the carers asking for feedback and we were pleased with such a positive response.

We continue to have a core group of 8-10 carers after one year, although due to their circumstances in caring for their relative they cannot always attend every group meeting. We meet monthly in Tesco's community room in the super store in Wigan. The lead GP has conducted 2 further dementia review clinics and we have gained 2 more carers. It was decided by the carers that we might need to look at the future if more carers want to join as people need the time to talk. Therefore, we have currently put the dementia review clinics on hold as we need to assess if we are able to accommodate an increase in numbers if everyone attends.

### What is the impact for our patients

This group of patients who happen to also care for someone living with dementia have a space to talk in the knowledge that others truly understand their concerns and feelings. Due to carers being at differing stages with their loved one's dementia, the group members say they have learnt a lot from other carers in the group and value the support. We are now entering our second year and hopefully it will continue to be of as much value and support as the carers say it is. The feedback from the lead GP and Practice have been encouraging too.

Many thanks to Dicconson Group PPG for sharing this case study

**Contact: [shapeyournhs@wiganboroughccg.nhs.uk](mailto:shapeyournhs@wiganboroughccg.nhs.uk) or 01942 482711 (Ref: CS3)**