

## **6.9 Dementia**

Dementia is a term associated with memory loss that is not a part of the normal ageing process. Old age does not cause dementia but is a factor in developing the condition. The probability of an individual developing dementia increases with age but not everyone will develop dementia in old age.

Dementia describes a set of symptoms caused by a number of different illnesses or diseases that affect the brain including Alzheimer's disease.

When a person has dementia the nerve cells in the brain are damaged and die faster than normal. When the nerve cells die they cannot be replaced. Different parts of the brain may be affected or the brain may be affected in different ways. Dementia is a progressive condition for which there is currently no cure, although in recent years some promising treatments have been developed.

(Draft Strategy for Improving Dementia Services in Northern Ireland February 2010)

## Overarching Standard 43 – Dementia - early assessment, investigation, treatment and support

A person who experiences a change in cognitive performance should have access to early diagnostic assessment, investigation, treatment and support.

### Rationale

Early assessment, diagnosis, treatment and support helps a person maintain optimum function, prevent avoidable deterioration and enables social and legal planning.

### Evidence

DHSSPS (pending) Improving Dementia Services in Northern Ireland

DOH (2009) Living Well with Dementia: A National Dementia Strategy  
[http://www.dh.gov.uk/prod\\_consum\\_dh/groups/dh\\_digitalassets/@dh/@en/documents/digitalasset/dh\\_094051.pdf](http://www.dh.gov.uk/prod_consum_dh/groups/dh_digitalassets/@dh/@en/documents/digitalasset/dh_094051.pdf)

Bamford Review: Living Fuller Lives: Dementia and Mental Health Issues in Older Age Report (June 2007) [http://www.rmhdni.gov.uk/living\\_fuller\\_lives.pdf](http://www.rmhdni.gov.uk/living_fuller_lives.pdf)

National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) (2006) Dementia: Supporting people with dementia and their carers in health and social care  
<http://guidance.nice.org.uk/CG42>

Graaf M et al (2007) Community occupational therapy for older patients with dementia and their care givers: cost effectiveness study *BMJ* 336:134

### Responsibility for delivery/implementation

Health and Social Care in partnership with voluntary and community organisations

### Quality Dimensions

**Person Centred** – provides a coordinated approach to meet an individual's agreed needs

**Timely / Effective / Efficient** – providing services in a timely manner will increase the likelihood of problems being dealt with earlier to minimise negative impact

**Equitable** – available throughout Northern Ireland

**Safe** – minimises risk to self and others

Performance Indicator	Data Source	Anticipated Performance Level	Date to be achieved by
Review of arrangements for early assessment, diagnosis, treatment and support for	HSC Trust report User/carer feedback	All HSC Trusts	March 2013

people who have change in cognitive performance	General Practice / Primary Care feedback		
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## Overarching Standard 44 - Dementia – Information, Education and Support

A person with dementia, and their carer, should have access to information, education and support including a regular review of their physical and mental health needs. Alternatives to neuroleptic prescription should be offered in line with regional and national guidelines.

### Rationale

A large proportion of people with dementia are within the moderate to severe stage of the illness and while the current focus is on early diagnosis and access to anti-dementia therapies. Improving the quality and range of services and support would enhance the care and wellbeing experienced by the individual with dementia as well as their family and carers.

### Evidence

DHSSPS (pending) Improving Dementia Services in Northern Ireland

DOH (2009) Living Well with Dementia: A National Dementia Strategy

[http://www.dh.gov.uk/prod\\_consum\\_dh/groups/dh\\_digitalassets/@dh/@en/documents/digitalasset/dh\\_094051.pdf](http://www.dh.gov.uk/prod_consum_dh/groups/dh_digitalassets/@dh/@en/documents/digitalasset/dh_094051.pdf)

Bamford Review: Living Fuller Lives: Dementia and Mental Health Issues in Older Age Report (June 2007) [http://www.rmhdni.gov.uk/living\\_fuller\\_lives.pdf](http://www.rmhdni.gov.uk/living_fuller_lives.pdf)

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Graaf M et al (2007) Community occupational therapy for older patients with dementia and their care givers: cost effectiveness study *BMJ* 336:134

### Responsibility for delivery/implementation

Health and Social Care in partnership with other statutory organisations, the independent sector and community groups

### Quality Dimensions

**Person-centred** – allows for the person to stay at home for as long as possible and helps to ensure that institutional care, when required, is a positive experience

**Timely / Effective / Efficient** – Providing appropriate interventions and care environments when required will improve mental health and wellbeing and minimise stress for the person and their carers

**Equitable** – Addresses ageism and inequality

**Safe** – Minimises risk to self and others

<b>Performance Indicator</b>	<b>Data Source</b>	<b>Anticipated Performance Level</b>	<b>Date to be achieved by</b>
Percentage of patients diagnosed with dementia whose care has been reviewed in the previous 15 months	QOF	To be determined	March 2013