

Experiences of Dementia and Memory Support Services in North Tyneside

Summary

This report is based on 61 people's experiences of older people's dementia and memory service. This includes service users, family members and carers. We chose to focus on this issue because people had told us about possible issues. We have worked in partnership with North Tyneside's Mental Wellbeing in Later Life Board who are reviewing mental health pathways.

Within the report, we reflect what people told us about their experiences of mental health support, the current National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE) Guidelines and National Government's commitments on Dementia.

The key issues we have identified are: access to information and support for individuals with memory issues, families and carers, and improving care coordination and planning.

We have suggested 19 actions that would help improve the experiences of older people in North Tyneside. Our recommended actions focus on:

- Early identification and referrals
- Involving families/carers
- Access to support
- Improving care coordination
- Reviewing changes to people's needs
- Advance care planning
- Supporting people to live at home
- Supporting people whilst accessing non-dementia services
- The role of carers
- Crisis planning

Members of North Tyneside's Mental Wellbeing in Later Life Board have been incredibly supportive of this project and helped us to talk to the users of their services. Particular thanks should go to Age UK North Tyneside, North Tyneside Carers' Centre, Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, North Tyneside Council and our Clinical Commissioning Group.

The evidence was gathered between August 2019 and January 2020 and reflects experiences and service delivery before the coronavirus pandemic. Since then, the Mental Wellbeing in Later Life Board have helped share the final recommendations, reviewed the drafts of this report and have already begun to act on some of the recommendations. Although progress, and this report, have been delayed by the pandemic, a full action plan will be developed by the Board.

Finally, thank you to all of the people who shared their experiences with us so that services can be improved for everyone. Healthwatch North Tyneside is gathering experiences during the pandemic and will publish a summary separately.