

Appendix A

Report title: Dementia Diagnosis: Dementia Strategy overview and Community Support services as part of the diagnosis pathway	
Report to: Health Overview Policy and Scrutiny Committee	
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County Divisions affected: Not applicable	

1. Introduction

'The committee have asked for an update on dementia services, specifically in relation to diagnosis rates and the delays that have been reported in this article <https://apple.news/AMGUMTjUqQg-kL1aBj7Ej0w>'.

Dementia is fast becoming the defining health issue of our time, with the numbers of people living with the condition projected to increase rapidly and no treatment to prevent, slow or cure the underlying diseases.

The number of people with dementia is **predicted to rise to 1.1m by 2030** and will reach 1.6m by 2050.

<https://visualisation.polimapper.co.uk/?dataSetKey=aruk-dementia-prevalence&client=alzheimersresearch>

2. Background

This paper provides an update on the Dementia Strategy, care and support provided across Essex for people living with/affected by dementia, particularly in relation to support throughout the diagnosis period.

There are various diagnostic pathways across Essex including in Primary Care, Acute Trust, Nurse Lead Identification, Young Onset pathways amongst others. For complex diagnostic pathways EPUT is the main provider, this includes the formal Memory Assessment Service Pathways which operate across Essex.

Post diagnostic support is provided by clinical services across Essex with regular review of their care plan and with local variation in provider, to meet local demographic and align with the locality variation in other service provision.

The Essex County Council commission the Essex Community Dementia Support Service (CDSS) and jointly commission Community Dementia Support Team (CDST) in Castle Point & Rochford work flexibly with local clinical services across Essex. The services seek to empower and support people living with and affected by dementia, their families, unpaid carers and professionals, throughout their journey with dementia, with the aim of giving people the tools to remain independent, and as part of their community for as long as possible, avoiding crisis at any stage of their journey with dementia

3. Update and Next Steps

The Dementia Strategy was refreshed in 2022 – endorsed by Health and Wellbeing Board in October. It is a Greater Essex Strategy that encompasses all ICB footprints, Southend, and Thurrock. It complements the current Hertfordshire Strategy and has been reflected in the emerging strategy in Suffolk.

Our agreed vision is:

For people in Greater Essex to live well with dementia and have support for their carers, and work in collaboration to prevent, reduce and delay the onset of dementia to positively influence population-level impact through whole-system and place-based approaches at all ages and stages of life to promote better health and wellbeing outcomes for people across our communities.

The Priorities outlined in our strategy that are most pertinent to the diagnosis pathway are:

- Priority 2 – Support unpaid carers
- Priority 3 – Reducing the risk of crisis
- Priority 5 – Finding information and advice
- Priority 6 – Diagnosis and support
- Priority 7 – Living well with dementia in the community

Following consultation, the strategy sets out 10 commitments to deliver against the 9 priorities, informed by the people of Southend, Essex and Thurrock. Aligned to priority 6 – Diagnosis and support: All people with dementia will receive appropriate and timely diagnosis and integrated support, the strategy sets out our commitment.:

We will improve access to and opportunities for dementia diagnosis at the earliest possible stage for the people of Southend, Essex and Thurrock

4. Our mission

Building on the previous strategy, consultation and engagement activity and national guidance and best practice, the refreshed Dementia Strategy sets out to make sure that:

- Those who experience dementia, and their families and carers feel they are understood and can access the support they need when they need it
- That communities and local organisations are aware of the impact dementia has on those who experience it and their families and carers
- That support for people with dementia and their families and carers is underpinned by levels of training and expertise among professionals and volunteers

And to further promote and enhance the conditions which will contribute to a reduction in prevalence and promoting health improvement in the long-term, recognising health inequalities and the wider determinants of health to promote better health outcomes for people across Southend, Essex and Thurrock.

Since April 2020 and throughout the COVID19 pandemic the CDSS has worked intensively with people living with dementia and their carers to ensure they receive appropriate levels of support at a time when services were limited. The service seeks to provide

information and support - providing more co-ordinated access to information and support that enables people to access a diagnosis and adapt to a life with dementia ensuring individuals and families have the knowledge, confidence and support networks to live independently.

Family navigation - empowering and supporting people living with and affected by dementia to live an active and enriching life and be actively involved in planning their own care. The services aims to give people living with dementia the tools to remain independent, and as part of their community, for as long as possible wherever they are in the journey with dementia.

Dementia friendly communities programme strengthening the response of the entire community to dementia by developing communities understanding of dementia and equipping them with the skills to support people living with and affected by dementia in their community. Reducing the stigma associated with dementia and encouraging people to seek support and a diagnosis.

Some key data

- 4617 new individuals with a dementia Diagnosis have been supported through community interventions and signposting
- 2969 individual contacts from people without a dementia diagnosis (carers/professionals)

In addition to the CDSS and the CDST, the Alzheimers Society are commissioned by ICB partners to provide information and advice in primary care settings and at the point of diagnosis. The health & social care commissioned services work together and ensure appropriate levels of continued support for people across Essex to seek diagnosis, whilst waiting diagnosis and post diagnosis.

5. Next Steps

Whilst the data tells us a lot about the number of people being supported further work is need to have a clear understanding of the number of adults living with cognitive impairment and/ or dementia.

Recent work in Adult Social Care Systems has highlighted a hidden cohort of people living with dementia/cognitive impairment, it is estimated there are potentially five times the number currently identified being support by Adult Social Care. Early diagnosis and identifying indicators suggestive of cognitive impairment can help us provide early support for people who may have a diagnosis in the future. Further work is required to

- Improve data recording (ASC) – leading to increased visibility of those with dementia or cognitive impairment enabling identification of those most at risk and improved access to timely care and support for people.
- Improve data reporting – to identify those who may be at risk of future deterioration, targeting preventive/health promotion and early intervention.
- Investigate the use of the Health Information exchange and improved data sharing between health & social – Improved understanding of the care and support available and better support for people living with Dementia and their carers.
- Further develop data sharing with providers – to improve identify those know to ECC without any support, identifying those at high risk and offering support.

Post pandemic there is an increase in referrals due to those who have waited,

functional cognitive concerns and post COVID impairments. However individual choice and stigma relating to dementia still impact on individual decisions to seek diagnosis. Work to improve the reach and role of information, advice and the Dementia Friendly Communities programme is critical in enabling people to feel confident in seeking a diagnosis.

6. List of Appendices

Appendix i: Southend, Essex & Thurrock Dementia Strategy

Appendix ii: Overview of Dementia Services in Essex