

**Dementia Strategy Development – Outline Report**  
**Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee**  
**Devon County Council**  
**June 2024**

**Introduction:** Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee have requested an update on the development of a system Dementia Strategy. This paper sets out a short overview of the work in progress.

**Situation:** Currently there is no comprehensive dementia strategy for Devon. With an ageing population it is important to develop a dementia strategy to support a joined-up system response for statutory, voluntary and independent sector partners. There is a particular need for earlier diagnosis for people to support and enhance life opportunities for individuals and their families, and to prepare the system to cope with increasing demand for services.

In support of this work, NHS Devon held a system workshop on dementia in January of this year. To move this important work forward the Devon Mental Health, Learning Disability, and Neurodiversity (MHLDN) Collaborative has brought together a coalition of interested experts to draft a strategy via the newly formed Devon Dementia and Memory Care Delivery Group. This group of stakeholders from local organisations will support the development and implementation of a dementia care strategy for Devon. The process requires input, support, and agreement from all system partners, including financial commitments.

**Background:** Rates of dementia are growing; dementias (including those caused by Alzheimer’s disease) are already the biggest driver of mortality after coronavirus in England and place a significant burden across NHS services. For example:

- 25% of acute hospital beds are occupied by people with dementia.
- People with dementia stay in hospital twice as long as other people over age 65.
- 90% of people with dementia found admission to hospital frightening and confusing.
- 43% of people with dementia in hospital were due to urinary tract and chest infections (treatable in the community).
- 25% of people with dementia living in their own homes were admitted to hospital with a potentially treatable condition over a one-year period.
- Alzheimer’s disease is the most common sub-type of dementia diagnosed. For December 2023, it was reported that Alzheimer’s disease represented 44.6% of all dementia diagnoses.

A timely diagnosis of dementia is vital as it enables a person to access the advice, information, care, and support that can help them (and their carers) to live well with the condition. However, diagnosis is only one part of the answer. Following diagnosis

clarity on post-diagnostic care and support is required, and this includes development of the residential and care market to cater locally for people with more debilitating complex presentations related to their illness.

**Table 1: Future Dementia Burden in Devon:**

| <b>Region</b>                         | <b>Increase in Dementia Prevalence by 2040 (%)</b> | <b>Total Number of People with Dementia by 2040</b> |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| <b>Devon (DCC)</b>                    | <b>51.82%</b>                                      | <b>24,327</b>                                       |
| <b>Torbay</b>                         | <b>50.38%</b>                                      | <b>4,244</b>  |
| <b>Plymouth (Livewell)</b>            | <b>39.90%</b>                                      | <b>5,163</b>  |
| <b>Total</b>                          |  |   |
| <b>DPT footprint (DCC and Torbay)</b> | <b>41%</b>   | <b>28,571</b>                                       |
| <b>Devon ICB footprint</b>            | <b>54.40%</b>                                      | <b>33,734</b>                                       |

Dementia is not a mental illness; it is a degenerative, neurological, progressive illness that, if diagnosed early, can help people maintain improved wellbeing and remain active citizens for longer. The absence of a cohesive strategy has resulted in fragmented efforts and insufficient support for individuals affected by dementia and their carers.

The Devon Dementia and Memory Care Delivery Group, which reflects a wide range of stakeholders, are committed to advancing a course of action towards establishing a comprehensive dementia strategy for the region.

### **Assessment:**

There is good engagement from key system partners across Devon, including Devon NHS Partnership Trust, Devon County Council, Exeter Age UK and both Torbay and South Devon and Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trusts. The aim is to have an agreed strategy ready for implementation from April 2025, with key recommendations ready for the planning round in November this year.

Key points agreed for inclusion in the strategy:

1. **Prioritisation of End-to-End Dementia Care:** Emphasising the need for a holistic strategy that covers all aspects of dementia care.
2. **Significance of Key Partners:** Recognising the critical roles of local authorities, housing agencies, and other stakeholders.
3. **Carer Support:** Ensuring that the needs of carers are adequately addressed within the strategy.
4. **Financial Challenges:** Aligning the strategy with current resources while planning for future expenditures.

5. Interdependencies with Frailty: Understanding and addressing the various interdependencies, particularly with frailty.
6. Consolidation of Efforts: Bringing key partners together under a unified plan to consolidate ongoing efforts across the system.
7. Role of Integrated Care System: Highlighting the essential role of the Integrated Care System in effectively supporting the initiatives.

## What is happening now?

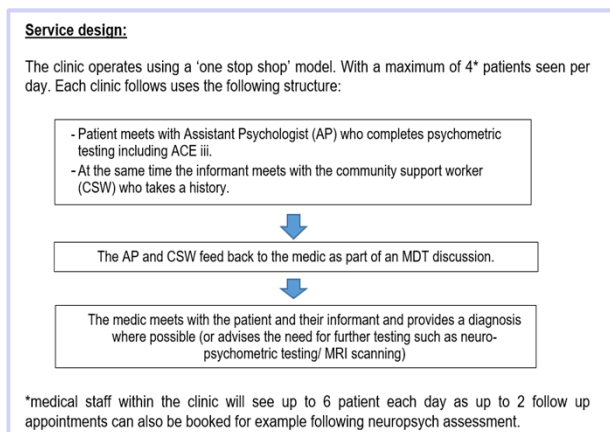
While a strategy is important, there is already work underway or in place to support it. The system strategy will support a cohesive approach to the delivery of dementia care without impeding any of the ongoing efforts.

## Memory Assessment Services:

Devon Partnership NHS Trust (DPT) currently provides the majority of dementia diagnoses through their One Stop Shop Memory Assessment services (see slide 1). The diagram below outlines the key aspects of this service. It is important to note that the pandemic has impacted wait times, with increased demand post-pandemic leading to longer waits. Additionally, available financial investment in the Devon Memory Service (DMS) has not kept pace with the 35% growth, over the last 10 years, in the over-65 population.

## Slide 1

# Devon Memory Service



**Key Aims:**

- Patient centred – co-designed model.
- 'One stop' process
- Early Diagnosis

**Service Performance:**

- Diagnostic rate of **76%** for 23/24
- **Over 2,100** referrals accepted by DMS in 23/24
- **Over 1,500** new assessments completed in 23/24
- Current average wait time 16 weeks.

**Challenges**

- **94%** increase in referrals since 2019
- Aging population: **54%** increase in Dementia prevalence in Devon predicted between 2023 and 2040.
- Lack of Dementia strategy in Devon.
- Post diagnostic service gap since December 2023 (under development).

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## Slide 2:

## Population overview and Dementia prevalence:

DPT older peoples services have seen a **45%** increase in referrals for assessment and support over the past 5 years.



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Devon Partnership  
NHS Trust

**35%** increase in people over the age of 65 in Devon between 2023 and 2040 alongside a **51%** increase in Dementia prevalence.

### Post Diagnostic Planning:

There has been a reduction in post-diagnostic support due to the disinvestment by the system, specifically with the decrease in Better Care Funding allocated to the Alzheimer's Society for Dementia Support workers. As a result, the Alzheimer's Society has withdrawn from Devon. NHS Devon has reinvested approximately 50% of the original funding back into the system, and efforts are underway to determine the best allocation of these resources, considering population health and health inequalities guidance.

Guiding principles of the DPT post-diagnostic support include:

- Access to the post-diagnostic pathway regardless of where the diagnosis was received.
- Ongoing access to advice or guidance from the post-diagnostic service without requiring a GP referral, unless clinically indicated.
- Prompt support from the Community Mental Health Team (CMHT) without unnecessary barriers, when needed.

### System response:

**Devon County Council (DCC):** DCC has a statutory responsibility to have a Health and Wellbeing Board which is responsible for developing and overseeing a Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy and a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA). The JSNA identifies local need and informs commissioning decisions and local action to improve health and reduce health inequalities.

Devon County Council's commissioners work with the independent sector to ensure services meet the eligible needs of people with a dementia across all of the social care markets such as personal care and care homes. Devon County Council supports investment in the community and voluntary sector through grants that fund

a wide range of activities and support that can be accessed by people and families living with a dementia. This approach rather than specific dementia support is so that we can support the person and their carers' needs, not simply their diagnosis.

In addition to the Devon County Council grants provided to the VCSE, Devon County Council and Devon ICB has a joint contract with Devon Carers which provides support to the carers of people with dementia.

Devon County Council, and ICB Devon provide funding to Devon Memory Café Consortium (DMCC), an umbrella organisation for memory cafes across Devon. DMCC currently support 50 Memory Cafes across Devon to provide a quality service to people living with dementia and their carers by:

- Supporting Memory Café Co-ordinators, volunteers, trustees and other involved with Memory Cafes, providing information, guidance, training and opportunities to share and learn from each other.
- Strengthening engagement between Memory Cafes and DMCC and between DMCC and other stakeholders.
- To make the Memory Café Hub more accessible as a resource and learning tool for Memory Cafes in Devon and beyond, and to other relevant groups, significantly increasing use.
- To deliver opportunities for learning and development to Memory Cafe Coordinators and volunteers including face-to-face and online training, mentoring (particularly for new Cafes) and opportunities for sharing knowledge and learning.
- In conjunction with Teignbridge CVS, to support Memory Cafes to meet quality assurance standards as set out in the DMCC Quality Assurance Mark.

### **Health and Voluntary Sectors:**

Several organisations across Devon have been developing their own strategies and plans to improve their response to individuals with a dementia diagnosis. Examples include Age UK Exeter and the Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust. Additionally, it is evident that a number of clinical experts across the system, beyond mental health, are focused and eager to participate in the work of devising a comprehensive system strategy.

The primary message from these organisations is that having a system-wide strategy and implementation plan allows them to align their organisational efforts with broader strategic system priorities. This alignment provides the focus necessary to effectively drive their own strategies and plans within their respective organisations.

In addition, system providers, including those in the VCSE sector, are eager to support the development of community-based accommodation for individuals with all levels of dementia, including those with complex needs, which are often the most challenging to find suitable local care for. This approach requires collaboration and agreement among commissioners (both health and local authority) and providers across the system to determine if the proposed models are the appropriate housing and care solutions for people with dementia in Devon.

## Research:

Research is an imperative and engagement with the research team from Exeter University, leaders of the IDEAL study, and Health Innovations South West to ensure evidence-based development and support for the service is in place.

## Concluding comments:

In response to the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee's request for an update on the development of a system-wide Dementia Strategy, this paper has provided an overview of the current efforts and the need for a cohesive approach.

## Key Points:

- **Need to develop a Comprehensive Strategy:** Devon currently lacks a comprehensive dementia strategy to guide efforts across the statutory, voluntary, and independent sectors. With an ageing population, it is crucial to establish a unified response to meet the growing needs of individuals likely to be diagnosed with dementia. The ambition is to deliver a strategy by April 2025.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** NHS Devon, in collaboration with the Devon Mental Health, Learning Disability, and Neurodiversity (MHLDN) Collaborative, has initiated the formation of the Devon Dementia and Memory Care Delivery Group. This coalition of experts and stakeholders is dedicated to drafting and implementing a comprehensive dementia strategy.
- **Significant Need for Early Diagnosis:** Timely diagnosis is vital for accessing necessary advice, information, care and support, enabling individuals with dementia to maintain their wellbeing and remain active citizens for longer. Post-diagnostic support is equally important to ensure a clear and effective care pathway.
- **Impact of Dementia on Health Services:** Dementia significantly impacts NHS services, with 25% of acute hospital beds occupied by people with dementia, who often experience longer hospital stays and more frequent admissions for treatable conditions.
- **Financial and Resource Challenges:** The strategy will align with current resources and service delivery while setting out likely future expenditure requirements and/or challenges. Despite financial constraints, there is a critical need to address the growing prevalence of dementia and the corresponding demand for services.
- **Collaborative Efforts:** a wide range of partners are actively engaged in taking forward the development of a strategy, however, they are doing this work on top of their day-to-day roles. The aim is to have an agreed strategy ready for implementation from April 2025.
- **Innovative Care Models:** Providers are keen to support the development of local dementia care facilities. Any plans require system-wide support and agreement among commissioners and providers.
- **Research and Evidence-Based Development:** Collaboration with research teams is essential to ensure the strategy is evidence-based and supported by robust research.

## Next Steps

The Devon Dementia and Memory Care Delivery Group will continue to work towards developing and finalising a Devon dementia strategy. The group members,

who have agreed to take on this additional responsibility, whilst maintaining their regular job requirements, will support Devon to advance the development of a comprehensive dementia strategy. Their ambition is to outline the current provision, set ambitious goals, and make recommendations to support effective planning for the next 3 to 5 years. The main components the strategy will address include:

- Consolidation of ongoing efforts across the system.
- Ensuring broad-based input into the work alongside support from system partners.
- Setting out financial challenges and making recommendations for sustainable resource allocation.
- Establishing a holistic, end-to-end dementia care approach and robust post-diagnostic support.
- Inclusion of research initiatives to support evidence-based strategy development.

The strategy will aim to provide a clear, unified approach to dementia care in Devon, addressing current gaps and preparing for future demands. Through collaboration and dedicated effort, Devon can enhance the quality of life for individuals with dementia and their carers, ensuring they receive the support and care they need.

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**Date:** 10<sup>th</sup> June 2024