

Dementia Select Committee – Hearing 5th April 2011

Penny Hibberd

Biography

Penny is the Director of Dementia Services Development Centre South East (DSDCse) and Admiral Nurse based at the Canterbury Christ Church University. Penny is a general and mental health nurse and has many years of experience as a community nurse. She specialised in dementia care nursing in 1999. Penny now has a key role in leading the development and research into improved care for people with dementia and their carers.

Since taking over as Director of DSDCse in January last year, Penny has been concentrating on developing partnerships with other dementia specialists across the region to provide a comprehensive approach to dementia care. The DSDCse has been involved in several projects over the last year including, the local evaluation of the DH Medway Advisers Project, the introduction of a series of monthly lectures to raise awareness of and improve dementia care, dementia awareness one day courses for general hospital staff, spirituality in dementia care and work force development care homes. Penny also leads on accredited Higher Education dementia care courses at Canterbury Christ Church University at Foundation Degree, Continuing Professional Development (BSc) and MSc Advanced Practice levels and oversees a virtual learning environment for dementia care for student nurses and others working towards being a registered professional.

The DSDCse is 3-way funded by Christ Church University, Dementia UK, (Uniting Carers, Admiral Nurses, Dementia UK Training) and Avante Partnership (care homes and community care in Kent and SE London). The DSDCse works closely with other Faculties in the University, The Service Evaluation and Development Centre and Knowledge Transfer.

Themes & Questions

1. Could you please introduce yourself and briefly outline your current role?
2. How does DSDC identify good practice and how is this disseminated; particularly within Kent but also more widely?
3. Several people have indicated to the select committee that improving professionals' level of knowledge about dementia is a key requirement if the experiences of people with dementia and their carers are to be improved. In your view,
 - a) which professionals need specific or specialist dementia training?
 - b) what targets are in place regarding dementia training in Kent and what progress has been made so far?

- c) regarding GP practices, what are the issues applicable to dementia training for:
 - i) GPs at the start of their career
 - ii) Experienced GPs
 - iii) Practice Nurses
 - d) is dementia training being incorporated into any courses offered by the University?
 - e) is any of the workplace-based training, to your knowledge, compulsory or linked to progression?
 - f) how is the quality of training assured - what accreditation is in place (and are there particular issues for people who may be purchasing services using a personal budget – what should they look out for?)
4. In addition to dementia awareness-raising and professional training, what could be done to ensure that more GP Practices are fully informed about the number and type of support services available in their area for people having memory problems and their carers? What is the role of the Voluntary Sector?
 5. Kent is lucky to have a number of good support services for people with dementia and their carers, already in place. How can we ensure that, in the current financial climate, these services are enabled to continue and that continuity and local experience/knowledge are not lost?
 6. How can stigma about dementia be reduced – at what age do you feel children should learn about its effects on people in order to make them more accepting and to foster a supportive culture?
 7. What practical steps can be taken to make our communities generally more accepting and supportive of people with dementia and their carers, for example when going about everyday tasks like shopping or when undertaking social activities?