

# Notes from Dementia Action Alliance Quarterly Meeting

**Mallard Suite, National Railway Museum, York.  
Friday 7<sup>th</sup> February 2014.**

## **1. Welcome and Updates**

Over 100 people crowded into the Mallard Suite at the National Railway Museum for the fourth quarterly meeting of the Yorkshire & Humber Dementia Action Alliance.... the largest attendance by far since the Regional Alliance was officially launched 15 months ago.

Simon Wallace, Project Manager, provided an update on the movement in the Region, where there are now 115 members, 10 Local Alliances in cities and towns across the region - and up to 10 more likely to start in the coming months.

Dozens of Dementia Friendly Communities are beginning to develop... and the number of people who have received Dementia Awareness training at all levels, is likely to be now into several thousands.

## **2. Mo Ali – West Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service** Responding to fire risks affecting vulnerable individuals

Mo Ali revealed that the cost of a single fire death is around £1.4 million and went on to explain the 3 tier approach West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Services takes to reduce death and injury in the community:

- Prevention
- Protection
- Response

He said that through Partnership Working, this tier system can become more effective, allowing the Fire Service to reduce the risk of death or injury in vulnerable adults.

He gave specific examples of how fire crews had been called out to an elderly gentleman's home more than 10 times on a false alarm – but with more robust system, there had been no call out for several months.

A copy of Mo's PowerPoint presentation can be found on the Dementia Action Alliance website: [http://www.dementiaaction.org.uk/resources/local\\_daa\\_resources](http://www.dementiaaction.org.uk/resources/local_daa_resources)

## **3. Eileen and Richard Jacques** Living with Dementia

SEE NOTES ATTACHED WITH EMAIL

## **4. Susan Wright – Solicitors for the Elderly** The importance of early dementia diagnosis and its impact on planning for the future

Susan Wright explained that Solicitors for the Elderly is an organisation made up of 1430 separate firms of solicitors who devote 50% of their time to dealing with elderly clients. Solicitors for the Elderly members must follow two codes of conduct, the Code of Conduct for solicitors, as well as a specific Code of Conduct for Solicitors for the Elderly.

Susan went on to explain how she changes her way of working when looking after the interests of an elderly client, such as providing home visits and using plain English, and even bullet points. Even though “plain English” is better for some clients, she reminded the meeting that there are pieces of legal advice all solicitors are obligated to provide.

In general, Susan emphasised on the importance of putting Powers of Attorney in place before a person loses capacity, because otherwise she would have to obtain an order through the Court of Protection. This can cost in excess of £2000 and take up to 6 months to be fully in place.

She also referred to many of the myths that exist around legal responsibility. For example, even married couples/civil partners have no legal authority to consent/ refuse treatment or to have a say in where someone should live etc. Major problems can arise where couple cohabit and are not married. Banks are refusing to allow joint bank accounts to operate where one party has lost capacity.

Expensive trusts to avoid care charges are not necessarily going to work

## **5. Philly Hare – Joseph Rowntree Foundation**

### The language of dementia

Philly Hare asked the meeting how words such as “Timebomb” and “Tsunami” made them feel.....the general consensus was that these words made the attendees feel frightened and helpless. By the media using these sensational words to describe dementia, it increases the stigma surrounding the disease.

She added that images, as well as language, can ‘dehumanise’ the person with dementia, and single them out by “putting them in a box”.

Philly then explained, that by using more positive language and images, you can challenge attitudes and behaviours of individuals towards dementia, which, in turn, would reduce isolation and break down the barriers surrounding dementia.

Thinking of dementia of more of a “challenge” than a “timebomb” would promote individuals to engage with people living with dementia. It was noted that if we are to provide the media with positive images, more images should be available. Organisations, such as the Alzheimer’s Society, should openly share their images with others so it is easier to access them.

Philly finished by saying that by changing the language and images we use to describe dementia, we will get people thinking differently about dementia, which will then promote the idea of Dementia Friendly Communities.

A copy of Philly's PowerPoint presentation can be found on the Dementia Action Alliance website: [http://www.dementiaaction.org.uk/resources/local\\_daa\\_resources](http://www.dementiaaction.org.uk/resources/local_daa_resources) scroll down to THE LANGUAGE OF DEMENTIA

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