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LOTHIAN DEMENTIA PROJECT

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## The National Policy Context

Dementia is already a huge problem in Scotland and it is set to get much bigger. According to the Alzheimer's Society, direct costs in the UK are greater than stroke, heart disease and cancer put together (over £17 billion for the UK and £1.4 billion for Scotland in 2007).

The Scottish Government has responded to the challenge by making dementia a national priority. That has been followed by a series of actions designed to improve the care and treatment of those with the illness and their carers.

These measures involve:

- **Improving early identification and support**

For the first time, NHS Boards across Scotland have been set a target for delivering improvements in the early diagnosis and management of patients with a dementia. The Scottish Government is looking for a 33% improvement in this area by March 2011.

A Mental Health Collaborative has been established to support NHS Boards in delivering this and other mental health targets. A toolkit was published in December 2008 to help Boards analyse their dementia service and identify where improvements should be made.

- **Improving standards of care**

An Integrated Care Pathway for dementia was published in December 2007. It sets the standard for care, underlines the need for partner system developments while incorporating an accreditation process and systems support.

The Scottish Government has also supported a dementia improvement project led by the Dementia Services Development Centre. This focused initially on Forth Valley and introduced improvements to services based on an analysis of where change was required.

- **Investing in post diagnosis support and information**

Alzheimer Scotland and the Dementia Services Development Centre are leading a project to provide structured intervention, support, and information following first diagnosis. The Government is investing £600,000 over three years on pilots in Lothian, Shetland and East Renfrewshire and Renfrewshire. Work is also being carried out through the *See Me* campaign on the need for and design of a national awareness raising and information campaign on dementia. At the same time, the range of publications and information materials available for people with dementia, carers and staff is being expanded.

- **Establishing dementia registers and annual reviews**

The latest figures indicate that almost all general practices now have a dementia register and significant numbers of those registered receive an annual review assessment.

Reviews are designed to address the support needs of the individual and carer. They should cover the physical and mental health needs for the patient; the carer's information needs and the impact of caring on the carer (if applicable); and communication and co-ordination arrangements with secondary care (if applicable).

- **Improving quality of life**

The Scottish Government is providing £30,000 over three years to support the Elderflowers initiative which helps elderly people with dementia in hospital and other care settings. The programme engages and stimulates people with dementia to reach the person behind the illness. Funding is also being provided to the Befriending Network Scotland and Alzheimer Scotland to develop a national training pack to enable volunteer befrienders to understand dementia. The funding will help to develop a training toolkit and good practice guidelines.

- **Establishing a dementia research network**

A Dementia Clinical Research Network has been established in Scotland to support clinicians and clinical academics in their research efforts. This is designed to improve understanding of dementia and advance the care of people with the condition.

- **Supporting staff**

A Framework for Mental Health Nurses has been developed which outlines the knowledge, skills and values mental health nurses require to work with older people's mental health services. It is based on six main themes - respect, rights and choice; communication; relationships; health and wellbeing; dementia care; and end of life care.

- **Developing dementia friendly premises**

Information and guidance has been issued giving advice on how buildings can be designed to meet the needs of those with dementia. All NHS Scotland Boards now have a team of accredited auditors to advise on the suitability of existing and new NHS facilities for people with dementia. Fourteen pilot audits have already taken place to inform and improve the design of facilities.