

# Nursing Practice

## COMMENT

### “By investing in staff education we can tackle dementia head on”

**D**ementia is a disease that can dramatically change a person's identity and personality, and the deterioration can be devastating both to patients and their loved ones.

A third of people born in 2015 will develop dementia according to Alzheimer's Society, which has warned that a national health crisis is looming because of the ageing population. Even today, the number of people living with dementia is staggering – an estimated 850,000 in Britain.

At University Hospital of South Manchester Foundation Trust we recognise the impact dementia has on patients, on their friends and families and also on our services across both the hospital and community settings. We must adapt to the changing health needs of patients so we can provide the care needed to improve their quality of life.

UHSM is ranked in the top 20% of hospitals for staff engagement and our latest results show that 97% of patients attending inpatient services who have completed a Friends and Family Test would recommend UHSM. We need to ensure the level of care that has made us a leading hospital is not just maintained but is progressed so the quality of our staff and their skills matches the technology and facilities we deploy for patient wellbeing.

Our role as nurses is not about providing a cure – it is about leading collective thinking on care provision so we can effectively and compassionately care for those who will need help in the near and distant future. Across all NHS trusts there is a chronic shortage of nurses and, as a result,

a skills gap in the provision of high-quality dementia care.

We agree with the view of Alzheimer's Society that dementia is one of the greatest challenges facing our society. As a result, at UHSM we are taking action to address the issue. We have launched a focused recruitment drive to find the most passionate and driven nurses to care for older people who are frail – many of whom have dementia – who access our services.

Our initiative is to grant band 5 nurses advancement to band 6 in the provision of dementia care in 18 months by investing in their professional development. This will be done through university-accredited education along with a robust competency framework. This not only shows our commitment to the nursing profession but is also testament to our desire to provide the highest levels of care for dementia patients.

We have currently appointed 15 nurses and have 11 candidates pending for this programme, with an eventual aim to have 40 nurses taking part. If these objectives are achieved swiftly, to the very high standards this hospital demands of its staff, then everyone who works, is treated or is affected by what we do here will have a better quality of life.

For me, and everyone at UHSM, that is our primary goal. We are ready and willing to accept challenges and find new ways of tackling them. **NT**

*Mandy Bailey is chief nurse and executive director of risk and governance, University Hospital of South Manchester Foundation Trust*

## HIGHLIGHTS

**How to meet your CPD requirements in revalidation** p17

**Peritoneal dialysis: guidance for non-renal nurses** p18



**Selecting the right wound dressing** p20

## SPOTLIGHT

### Ensure learning disabilities don't impinge on care

People with learning disabilities die at a younger age than the general population and are more likely to die a preventable death. Fifteen years on from two major policy reviews by the Department of Health and the Scottish Government that aimed to end this disparity it still exists – this is unacceptable.

This group face a range of barriers to accessing healthcare; some may depend on individual needs but some are general. You must know you need it, it's available, and be able to arrange appointments. Once in the system, you need staff who are not only skilled in their specialty, but are also able to communicate appropriately so

they can ensure informed consent can be given.

Our special focus on learning disabilities (page 12) looks at improving access to health

screening, and sets out five measures health professionals can follow to improve care for this vulnerable group.



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