Staff Development in Care Homes: using a competency framework

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Aims

1. to present the development of a Core Competency Framework for the entire dementia workforce in the West Midlands

2. to discuss ways this framework is applicable to care homes targeting better quality care provision.
Barriers to dementia workforce development

• The negative attitudes surrounding dementia (including ageism) have acted as a barrier to workforce development.

• The false belief that efforts to improve well-being in people with dementia are fruitless has resulted in little priority being assigned to developing a workforce with appropriate skills.

• The significant under recognition of dementia (only 1/3 receives a formal diagnosis) results in an inaccurate assessment of workforce training needs.
How far with staff dementia training?

• Research data supports anecdotal evidence that the proportion of staff receiving dementia care training is low, even among those working in specialist dementia services

• around 1/3 of care homes with dedicated dementia provision report having no specific dementia training for staff
“Front-line staff lack basic training with only 18% of nurses receiving training in end of life care. Meanwhile, there is no formal training for care home staff. There are examples of good practice out there, but the lack of training is undermining the confidence of many health professionals.”

Karen Taylor OBE - Director of Health Value for Money Audit
National Audit Office / 26th November 2008
Moreover...

• Although training alone is insufficient to improve the care provided to people with dementia, the very low level of training in dementia has been a significant barrier.

• The lack of clear regulations has led to confusion about what kind of training should be provided and allowed some employers to provide minimal levels of or no training.
The National Dementia Strategy (DH, 2009; Objective 13) emphasised:

>> the critical need for a skilled workforce in all aspects of dementia care.

• **key**: improved training of dementia workforce
• “People with dementia and their carers need to be supported and cared for by a trained workforce, with the right knowledge, skills and understanding of dementia to offer the best quality care and support.” (p.66)
The vision

• “... all people with a suspected or confirmed diagnosis of Dementia will access an integrated, seamless, proactive and high quality locality based service that encompasses all the expertise to meet needs of the people with Dementia and those of their carers. The emphasis will be on personalisation and choice” (p. 5)

Saad et al, 2008
As a result...

- The Workforce Deanery at NHS West Midlands commissioned the Centre for Ageing and Mental Health at Staffordshire University to develop a set of generic core competencies that would guide a competency based curriculum to meet the demands for improved dementia training and education.
Competency Framework

Method of development

- a systematic search was conducted from which 18 relevant competency frameworks were identified

- thorough review of these frameworks enabled the construction and/or adoption/adaptation of relevant competencies

- suitable knowledge, technical and attitude/behavioural skills were included within each competency (Bloom’s Taxonomy)

- feedback from key individuals was sought throughout including users and carers
Results

We developed:

• A set of 8 core competencies
• 87 knowledge, technical and attitude/behavioural skills within these competencies

• => to serve every profession, grade and level of dementia workforce.
### Core competencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge/ awareness of dementia &amp; dementia related</td>
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<tr>
<td>Understanding the behaviours of individuals with dementia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enriching the life of individuals with dementia &amp; their carers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interaction with individuals with dementia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction with carers/ families</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dementia worker personal development &amp; self-care</td>
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<tr>
<td>Person-centred care</td>
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<tr>
<td>Promoting best practice</td>
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### Knowledge/Awareness of Dementia and Dementia Related Issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competencies</th>
<th>Skills</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understanding of dementia</td>
<td>understanding of dementia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Awareness of the primary causes of dementia</td>
<td>awareness of the primary causes of dementia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Awareness of the most common types of dementia</td>
<td>awareness of the most common types of dementia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Awareness of the different stages of dementia</td>
<td>awareness of the different stages of dementia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Awareness of the common signs and symptoms of dementia</td>
<td>awareness of the common signs and symptoms of dementia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Awareness of the differences between dementia, depression and delirium</td>
<td>awareness of the differences between dementia, depression and delirium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding of ageing and age related care issues</td>
<td>understanding of ageing and age related care issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness of the impact of dementia (and/or terminal diagnosis) on the individuals and their families/carers</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
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Conclusions

The competency framework:

• is rigorous in that it encompasses all vital aspects of core competencies and skills that are essential in dementia care
• it proficiently addresses all the different stages of the Dementia Care Pathway
• is practical and easy to implement and evaluate
Conclusions....cont’d

• provides a means to equip the dementia workforce with skills and qualities which are vital in optimal interactions with the vulnerable populations of individuals with dementia and their carers

• has the potential to improve quality of care, support and empowerment of people with dementia as envisaged by the National Dementia Strategy (Department of Health, 2009)
How could the framework be used in care homes?
by home managers...(1)

- to identify the competencies needed by care home staff at all levels (including staff at managerial levels)

- to aid the recruitment of new care staff (i.e. person specification)

- to assess/audit how far existing staff meet the required competencies
by home managers...(2)

to plan/organise how to develop the necessary staff competencies

to identify various training courses that provide the relevant competencies, essential for their staff training needs

to match specific competencies identified in staff to the needs of individual patients
• by staff...

- for self-evaluation and assessment at annual appraisal

- for identification of skills gaps and individual needs that need further development (CPD)
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