

Good Practice Case Study

Leicestershire: Champions of Dignity in Care ▼



Resident with carer at Curtis Weston House, Wigston

Leicestershire launches a kitemark to recognise Dignity in Care ▼

A joint project between Leicestershire County Council and Leicester City Council, sponsored by East Midlands Improvement and Efficiency Partnership (EM IEP), has developed and launched a kitemark to recognise care homes that demonstrate 'Dignity in Care.'

This kitemark will benefit many people who come into contact with the care profession. It gives recognition to businesses who demonstrate high standards of care, reassurance for the families who entrust their loved ones into the care of others and it also benefits care staff, who will be taught new skills and be recognised for their work. Most importantly, this kitemark will benefit service users in Leicestershire

County and Leicester City who require care.

"The East Midlands has seen some fabulous initiatives as part of the Dignity in Care scheme. The work that Leicestershire has achieved in partnership is a real exemplar. Ultimately it will be life-changing for many people who need care in the county, some of whom are approaching the end of their lives. To know they will do so looked after by people who care, who will show them respect and dignity, will be of comfort, but also, is the very least they deserve."

Robert Nisbet
Regional Health &
Criminal Justice Lead
Department of Health East Midlands

Dignity in Care: The thinking ▾

Ours is an ageing population, and therefore the requirement for care is increasing nationally. This obviously results in more investment needed and yet there is concern about the consistency and balance of care that people receive when they enter the care system.

Care homes are assessed by the Care Quality Commission (CQC), which inspects the more logistical and process-driven elements of care, for example medication management and contractual issues. However, providers need to be proactive in raising standards in care homes.

To help supplement this monitoring of care, Dignity in Care is a Government-led national programme, launched in November 2006. Its aim is to improve the standard of care that people receive while they are being looked after, whether that's in hospital, or a care home, through community services or home support services.

Dignity in Care is less about driving measurable outcomes, and more about changing culture and behaviours. It is a 'hearts and mind approach' that also fits the ongoing Personalisation Agenda. However, there can be indirect savings benefits:

- Commercial care providers who adopt the Dignity in Care approach and improve their service can attract further business

- There is evidence of a correlation between lower standards of care and increased ill-health, therefore impacting the burden on the NHS and other care providers

Prior to the launch of the nationwide Dignity in Care programme, numerous consultation events had occurred with service users and their families, to understand what 'dignity' actually means. From this, a ten-point Dignity Challenge was created:

- 1.** Have a zero tolerance of all forms of abuse.
- 2.** Support people with the same respect you would want for yourself or a member of your family.
- 3.** Treat each person as an individual by offering a personalised service.
- 4.** Enable people to maintain the maximum possible level of independence, choice and control.
- 5.** Listen and support people to express their needs & wants.
- 6.** Respect people's right to privacy.
- 7.** Ensure people feel able to complain without fear of retribution.
- 8.** Engage with family members and carers as care partners.
- 9.** Assist people to maintain confidence and a positive self-esteem.
- 10.** Act to alleviate people's loneliness and isolation.

Initiatives have been put in place at a national level that can be utilised regionally by government bodies and individual organisations to help promote the scheme. For example:

- Dignity Champion Scheme: Nationally there are more than 17,800 people who have committed to raising awareness of, and championing Dignity in Care
- Reward and recognition schemes for councils and individuals
- Creation of a Dignity in Care website www.dignityincare.org.uk providing inspiring ideas and showcasing best practice
- Regular newsletters

Dignity in Care across the East Midlands ▾

In the East Midlands, the Department of Health has predominantly focused its efforts for Dignity in Care on care homes and domiciliary services, looking at respite care, day care and residential care, particularly for those suffering from dementia. Good relationships exist regionally in these areas that have helped create results which to date, have exceeded all expectations. For example, in the East Midlands there are now 1,579 Dignity Champions, including all 77 members of Lincolnshire County Council who have committed to the initiative.

Other initiatives introduced across the East Midlands centre around service users' desire for more meaningful activities and a more varied choice of diet. As a result, the Department of Health East Midlands has:

- Supported the work of the Society for All Artists (SAA) who have developed a training kit to deliver arts classes in care homes. To date, 'Guidelines to Art' has been installed in 310 BUPA care homes across the UK and a further 65 care homes in Lincolnshire
- Profiled the work of First Taste (who provide educational creative arts classes to older people in care within the Derbyshire Dales) as a model of good practice. Examples include music lessons, IT and photography
- Showcased the work of Learning for the Fourth Age, who recruit volunteers to go into care homes and provide one-to-one tuition, everything from piano lessons to learning to speak Russian
- Run a cooking event in celebration of Dignity Action Day at Radford Care Group with TV Home

Economist and Food Stylist
Michaela Bowles for 45 guests

- Produced a DVD with locally

renowned chef Preston Walker to
highlight good nutritional practice for
older people in care



Care home resident with volunteer for piano tuition provided by Learning for the Fourth Age services. Image courtesy of Learning for the Fourth Age

Leicestershire's sign of success ▾

Leicestershire, including the city of Leicester, has a population close to one million. The age profile of the county is slightly older than both the rest of the East Midlands and nationally, with 18% of the population falling into the 60–79 age group in 2007. By 2016 it is estimated that the 60 plus age group in Leicestershire will have grown by a further 26%.

To support the Dignity in Care initiative and ensure a high level of care for the county's service users, Leicestershire County Council and

Leicester City Council, with the support of EM IEP, have created a kitemark, to support a network of Dignity Champions, accrediting them for their work.

Whilst Dignity in Care is often associated with care of older people, in this instance, Leicestershire wanted to broaden the remit to also include other groups of people: those with learning disabilities, people with mental health issues and the physically impaired. The thrust of the project is to work with those care homes that have been identified

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as underperforming in the CQC assessments i.e. those with a grading of either 'Adequate' or 'Poor'. The end ambition is to increase the number of homes with a 'Good' or 'Excellent' score.

To ensure consistently high standards, the kitemark will be reviewed annually, with care homes having to reapply. This will be done via a self-assessment tool. Care homes need at least two members

Listening skills ▾

The project team knew that consultation with a wide group of people was key in order to engage care homes, their teams and to provide the correct services. Therefore:

- The project team sent out a questionnaire to all 300 identified relevant care homes in the county, to determine what they knew about the Dignity in Care campaign; the response rate was high at 70%
- Individual meetings were held with 25 service users, to understand what 'dignity' means to them personally. The results surprised the team; a recurring theme was food and nutrition, as well as being given privacy to meet family and friends, even the G.P
- Care homes who had achieved a CQC rating of 'Good' or 'Excellent' were asked what priorities should be for best practice. 50% of these responded and were invited to a focus event

of staff as Dignity Champions before the home can be awarded the kitemark; so far 85 accreditations have been made.

A bid document was created by Leicestershire County Council and Leicester City Council to secure funding. A crucial element of this was the monies to recruit a Dignity in Care Project Officer, which would be a full-time post for two years.

This event identified six priorities that care homes would need to demonstrate in order to gain the kitemark:

- 1.** Recruitment and retention
- 2.** End-of-life care
- 3.** Management skills
- 4.** Training and development
- 5.** Person-centred planning
- 6.** Awareness-raising of Dignity in Care

An event, funded by the Department of Health, was held at the Walkers Stadium in Leicester in March 2010 to launch the kitemark to care homes. Over 150 people came and there was a waiting list of more than 80. Local providers were prioritised, but representatives came from all over the country. As well as workshops looking at best practice in care, there were also a variety of keynote speakers, including Karen Darke, a lady who fell off a mountain and spent more than six months in

hospital; she spoke very articulately about how small gestures such as

someone taking time to wash her hair made life more bearable.

Next steps for the project ▾

Care homes will be able to apply for the kitemark from September 2010. In the meantime the next steps for the project are to:

- 1.** Complete consultation on the self-assessment tool with the 'Good' and 'Excellent' providers.
- 2.** Distribute a Dignity DVD, created as a marketing tool. It includes all presentations from the launch event, plus a poem written by Sue Eato of Leicestershire County Council. This will be sent to all 300 care homes for their use.
- 3.** Continue the free rolling workforce development programme of training

and events. Two events will be held per month, each focusing on a different element of the self-assessment tool.

- 4.** Set up a peer support network: Every single one of the 'Good' and 'Excellent' providers that attended the focus groups (approximately 30) has committed to sharing good practice with those providers that need additional support.
- 5.** Share lessons with other authorities; requests are already coming in and the information will be distributed via the Department of Health.

Lessons for the future ▾

Even with the project in its infancy, there are already lessons that can be shared and learnt about this innovative project:

Listen and consult: Projects with a human angle must not be approached with assumptions of knowing what is needed. Those who are using the services must be included in the process.

Be open-minded: The consultations threw up all kinds of unexpected angles that the team hadn't considered. For example, some

carers didn't have a thorough understanding of confidentiality and data protection rules and were preventing a relative from seeing a care plan even when the service user gave permission.

Two-way working with the Department of Health: Share ideas to help round the team's thinking as well as providing inspiration to others.

Ensure you have adequate admin support: A project of this size and magnitude, with so many

stakeholders, requires administration support to help with both people and paperwork.

Project Manager Annette Forbes summarised: *“This project has already taken us all on a real journey; I don’t think anyone could have anticipated some of the feedback we have had and therefore the direction it has taken us in. I sincerely hope, and believe, that the kitemark will*

become firmly embedded in the care industry, as it serves a purpose for so many different groups. Care homes can be recognised for their high standards which will help business, staff will be better trained and therefore motivated, families will feel secure that their loved ones are being cared for, and best of all, our service users will have a better quality of life for longer.”

East Midlands Improvement and Efficiency Partnership Case Studies

The East Midlands Improvement & Efficiency Partnership (EM IEP) is funding the Leicestershire Kitemark project to the value of £85,000 over two years. The total funding for the project amounts to £137,134. The EM IEP funding is allocated in sums of £17,000 as the project delivers against various pre-agreed criteria. To date, £34,000 has been allocated, helping facilitate robust planning, preparation and administrative support to assist the future success of the project.

The East Midlands Improvement & Efficiency Partnership (EM IEP) is committed to celebrating the successful, innovative and imaginative project work that exists in the East Midlands region.

The EM IEP Support Team publish case studies showing how East Midlands councils are improving services and delivering significant improvements and efficiencies.

The case studies are intended to inspire councils in the region, and indeed nationally, to transform services and benefit from the processes developed by those councils that have pioneered the way forward.

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