Health and Housing: Dementia support in retirement housing

Michael Spellman, Dementia and Mental Wellbeing Lead
The ExtraCare Charitable Trust
Our challenge...became an opportunity

Most people living with dementia live in their own home, in the wider community

1998, ExtraCare opened our first Retirement Village... housing with care

Risk of residents relocating to residential or nursing care settings

14% (estimated to be living with dementia)
Trialling a new approach in housing with care

• Between 2007 and 2009 completed a randomised control trail across 10 housing schemes

• 5 locations given a ‘project support worker’

• 5 locations given a ‘Locksmith’ a specially trained member of staff

The Enriched Opportunities Programme (EOP)

1. Specialist Expertise
2. Individual Assessment and case work
3. Activity and Occupation
4. Staff Training
5. Management and Leadership
Residents supported by a Locksmith were...

- 50% less likely to move into a care home
- 42% less time spent in hospital as an in-patient
- More likely to have their mental health condition diagnosed

Residents also...

- Rated their quality of life more positively
- Experienced decreased symptoms of depression
- Experienced greater feelings of social support and inclusion

(As detailed in the 2009 Bradford dementia group report, available on the ExtraCare website)
More challenges... more opportunities

Most people living with dementia live in their own home, in the wider community

2019 ExtraCare operating 20 retirement communities

Residents relocating to residential or nursing care settings

30%
(dementia and mental health)
An ExtraCare Village
Wixams, Bedford
Explore a broader dementia and mental wellbeing offer

Dementia and Mental Wellbeing in ExtraCare

- Enriched Opportunities Programme
- Community based dementia service (Coventry and Solihull)
- Non-clinical solution focussed approaches
- Introduction of talking therapies (2020)
Move into residential care

- You can leave the care home behind after a visit, but you can’t leave the guilt behind.
- It can feel like the person you care for is living in a “dementia prison”, despite you knowing they are receiving the care they need. I visit 2 or 3 times a week and I know he is being cared for while I’m not there.
- It was a really difficult time getting a care home place, and the care home is some distance away.
- Care home has a peaceful environment, we can go for walks as a couple and enjoy time together.
- We make a plan for each visit.

Social impact and losses

- I can’t leave my spouse on their own to attend things socially.
- Loss of independence.
- Lifestyle change – less social life and holidays.
- Loss of identity:
  - I feel lost with the routine change, now I’m not caring anymore.
  - I became more ‘me’ after the care home move or during respite care.
- I have to be rude sometimes during social occasions to put my husband and his wellbeing first.

- There is either consistency with carers in the care home, or many different carers who don’t know my wife as a person.
- I feel “wracked with guilt” if I have a day off from visiting.
- You either lose your life or rebuild your life after your partner moves into care. It’s not easy to rebuild your life and not everyone can.
- Some carers spend their life in the care home visiting the person with dementia.
- Bereavement can start once the person moves into care.
Questions

Comments