

Press Release

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Raising awareness of dementia

Black Country Partnership NHS Foundation Trust is backing a national campaign to raise awareness of dementia amongst NHS staff on World Alzheimer's Day.

One in three people over the age of 65 will develop dementia, and health and social care professionals have a key role to play in helping improve people with dementia's quality of life.

Dr Lisa Blissitt, Consultant Psychiatrist for Older Adults said : "We all need to be more aware of what we can do to help patients with dementia, not least because they often feel vulnerable and in need of extra reassurance and support.

"There is a lot of work going on nationally about dementia with doctors and nurses, so this campaign is targeting a different, but very important group of hospital staff - porters, receptionists, volunteers and cleaners whose attitude can make a tremendous difference.

"We want to raise their awareness of dementia and encourage them to take specific action. For example, if they see a patient looking lost, check they are okay and whether they need help. In particular, we are stressing the need to be very kind and patient and remember the person."

About a quarter of all hospital beds are occupied with patients who have dementia, most of whom are over the age of 65.

Hospital staff are being encouraged to be aware of the condition and how they can help by:

- Never talking down to a patient or over their head as if they are not there
- Avoid criticising and don't let any impatience show
- Look for the meaning behind the words, even if they don't seem to make much sense. The person is usually trying to communicate what they feel.
- Imagine how you would like to be spoken to if you were in their position.

Dementia is a term used to describe the symptoms that occur when the brain is affected by specific diseases conditions. The following are a few of the most common symptoms of dementia:

- Loss of memory
- Confusion
- Problems with speech
- Lack of understanding

If you require further information about dementia please visit the Trust's website at www.bcpft.nhs.uk or www.alzheimers.org.uk

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NOTES FOR EDITORS:

Black Country Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (BCPFT) is the major provider of:

- mental health services to people of all ages in Sandwell and Wolverhampton.
- specialist health learning disability services in Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton.
- community healthcare services for children, young people and families in Dudley.
- substance misuse services for people in Wolverhampton.

Facts about dementia

- There are 800,000 people with dementia in the UK with numbers set to rise to over 1 million by 2021. This will soar to 1.7 million by 2050.
- One in three people over 65 will die with dementia
- More than 60 per cent of all care home residents, aged over 65, have a form of dementia.
- There are over 17,000 people under 65 with dementia in the UK.
- Dementia affects 11,000 people from black and minority ethnic groups in the UK

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