

Welcome to the second edition of the East of England Older People's Mental Health and Dementia Newsletter. Recent progress in developing a Covid-19 vaccine offers all of us some degree of hope, which is very welcome, but it's clear that restrictions will continue to be with us for some time yet and these can have a considerable impact on older people. This continues to drive the focus of our regional work.

We aim to provide a summary of information relevant to anyone affected by dementia and/or older people's mental health. Let us know if there is any specific content you'd like to see included in future, and please forward this newsletter to any networks and colleagues you think may be interested. Previous editions will be available on the Older People's Mental Health page on the [East of England Mental Health Programme Workspace](#). If you have not registered to join the NHS Futures Collaborations platform, you will be asked to do so. This is quick and easy.

Meet the Team



Sarah Leet, Programme Manager – OPMH & Dementia

I lead on the day to day management of the regional older people's mental health and dementia work programme. My background is in transformation and programme management, within both health and local authorities, in a variety of policy areas including social care, substance misuse, and social housing. I'm passionate about the value of partnership working and improving the quality of life for those living with dementia.



Caroline Humphreys, Mental Health Senior Transformation Manager

I work as a member of the Senior Management Team of the regional mental health team. I lead on specific areas of the Mental Health Programme including mental health workforce; health inequalities and physical health checks for people with Serious Mental Illness. I also have members of the team who lead on other programme areas under my responsibility, including OPMH. My background is primarily in primary care commissioning; managing residential and community services for older people as well as in the policy area of health inequalities.



Jo Dickinson, Senior Quality Improvement Manager – OPMH & Dementia

I support Sarah to run the Dementia and Older People's Mental Health programme, but on a very part time basis. I love working with the team and the work compliments my other roles which are lead for dementia in the South East Essex CCGs' and developing Locality Integrated Networks across the same geographical area. I also strongly champion older people's wellbeing and good mental health and that people with dementia can lead a good life with the support of an understanding and supportive community.



Dr Emma Tiffin, East of England Clinical Director for Mental Health

As East of England Clinical Director for Mental Health I provide clinical input into programmes of work, which includes Older Peoples Mental Health. I am a practising GP and have experience in community and crisis mental health transformation, focusing on integration across primary and secondary care and the wider system. I am an advocate of partnership working and involving local communities, patients and carers in all our work.



Ben Adams, Mental Health Network Administrator

I work across all the different programmes as an administrator and collaborate with Sarah and Caroline on the OPMH team to design and write this newsletter every month. I'm passionate about disability rights and improving care for people with neurodevelopmental disabilities like autism. I can be contacted at ben.adams4@nhs.net if you have any questions or feedback.

News from the Regional Clinical Network for OPMH & Dementia

- The national mental health team at NHS England and Improvement hold a meeting with the regional team and senior leaders from the six Integrated Care Systems / Sustainability and Transformation Partnerships in the East of England every quarter. This is a forum to update on planning, performance, discuss concerns and share practice. This month, there was a focus on dementia and older people's mental health. Key messages that came out of the meeting were the importance of a 'blended' model of memory assessment: having options for patients in how they receive their assessment, including face to face, video and telephone; the importance of recognising and supporting carers; and the need to focus on pre-diagnostic support.
- We were thrilled with the response to our Dementia, Delirium and Depression webinars, organised in collaboration with Tide (Together in Dementia Everyday) and the Life Story Network, with hundreds of sign-ups for both dates. The webinars were a huge success with excellent feedback from attendees on how informative and helpful they were.
- We held the second of our Memory Assessment Services (MAS) Support and Share Sessions this week and had Dr Jeremy Isaacs in attendance who provided a thought-provoking presentation on neuroimaging and when it may, or may not, be valuable in the assessment and diagnosis of dementia. These sessions will be held monthly with the aim of providing a space for the sharing of operational challenges, learning and, primarily, some peer support with others working in a similar context. Please contact Sarah if you would like to be added to the circulation s.leet@nhs.net

- The past few weeks have been very busy regarding planning and the Regional Older People's Mental Health Team has been involved in reviewing draft Community Mental Health Transformation Plans submitted by the 6 systems in this region. There is a requirement for these plans to specify how transformation will improve care and enhance equality for older people.
- A Regional OPMH & Dementia 'Thinking Group' was established back in the summer with the aim of identifying key challenges for older people and working on very practical solutions which could then be shared with across the region to the benefit of all. The Memory Assessment Service Sub-group of this group has co-produced a leaflet to encourage those with memory concerns to come forward and to outline the options that may be available regarding a memory assessment, including telephone, video and face to face. The leaflet and FAQs are available for download on the NHS Collaboration Platform which you can sign up for by emailing ben.adams4@nhs.net.
- On the 30th of November, NHS England & NHS Improvement began the promotion of its new 'Help Us Help You – Mental Health' campaign across the country. This aims to increase the awareness of NHS talking therapies services (IAPT) and encourage adults with mental health issues to access them via their GP or self-referral. The national NHSE/I team have worked with Age UK to ensure this campaign reaches older people. More info can be found [here](#) and resources can be found below.

Resources: Guidelines & Aids

[Cruse Bereavement Care](#)

Cruse Bereavement Care, a leading charity and bereavement support organisation, is promoting several initiatives including a free national helpline, group and 1-1 support and training for other organisations. More information can be found [here](#).

[Help Us Help You – Free Resources](#)

The Help Us Help You campaign being run nationwide to raise awareness of the NHS talking therapies service (IAPT) includes a wealth of resources including posters, email signatures and a toolkit including key messages from the campaign. You can sign up for free and download the resources via the Public Health England website [here](#).



Resources: Support for Unpaid Carers

Unpaid carers are often older people themselves with their own mental or physical health challenges. During the pandemic, formal research and local anecdotal evidence has highlighted the significant impacts COVID-19 has had on carers as a result of social isolation, a reduction in support services and the increasing needs of the loved one they care for. Below are examples of the flexible approaches that services have been taking to continue to support these incredibly important people. If you would like to find out more about these examples, email Ben Adams at ben.adams4@nhs.net

Suffolk Family Carers offer advice, help and support to all types and ages of unpaid carers and took the lead in publishing updates from carers during the pandemic. The information-sharing between organisations in Suffolk has been strong with several established groups and forums and events such as Carer's Week in June and Carers' Rights Day in November. Click [here](#) and [here](#) to read more about the charity and Carers' Rights Day.

For carers that would usually have a break when their loved one attends day clubs, **Caring Together** in Cambridgeshire & Peterborough and Norfolk have offered a sitting service using unused guaranteed hours. The care worker has given the carer time to relax, see friends, exercise or catch up on sleep. Being offered a break in their own home/garden has been well-received.

The charity is also piloting a small-scale service by which volunteers provide company to people living with dementia, to reduce pressure on the carer. This has been particularly beneficial for a couple of gentlemen struggling without male company. It has also enabled the carer to access activities they had been missing during lockdown (yoga, Pilates, walks etc). Click [here](#) to find out more.

Hertswise have been providing home visits for 1-1 support for those where priority support is needed. The team is still doing garden visits for carers that need to speak to someone to keep from being isolated – they are just taking big coats and umbrellas!

In weeks of the first lockdown, Hertswise was holding Zoom sessions with clients and carers to ensure they still had some continuity of support via virtual means. They have twenty online groups that are well attended. Donations of tablets were provided to carers to join for weekly sessions. They also support individuals with welfare calls, help with benefit checks online, food shopping, medication pick-ups and activity packs. Click [here](#) to see a video to find out more.

Dementia Together have continued to provide information and support for people impacted by dementia in Suffolk. This is provided over the phone, via virtual meetup or face-to-face in open spaces. Their team of Navigators can refer and signpost to relevant supports as well as being a listening ear. Click [here](#) to find out more about Dementia Together and their work in Suffolk.

Mrs. A was diagnosed in 2016 and lives with her husband, who is her main carer. She has experienced significant cognitive decline over the past year, prior to which she had a very active social life. Her husband was concerned that since lockdown, she had become withdrawn, appearing sad and reluctant to engage in conversation. He attributed this change to her inability to socialise.

A navigator introduced her husband to doll therapy and they found that she became totally engaged, unable to contain her joy. She would continue to engage with, talk to and sing to the doll and was more content...and if she was content he also felt content. The intervention had a positive impact on both of them.

Upcoming Events

The Royal College of Psychiatrists' Memory Service National Accreditation Programme (MSNAP) and NHSEI's Dementia Programme are running a Zoom webinar on the 17th of December on ensuring high-quality dementia diagnosis. You can sign up [here](#). A recording of the webinar will be available after the event.

Thursday 17 December, 9:30 – 11:00 National MSNAP & NHSE/I webinar: Ensuring High Quality Dementia Diagnosis

IAPT Webinars on Post-COVID Syndrome

The national team at NHSE/I is running a five-part webinar series on the role psychological therapies can play in supporting those with COVID and particularly persistent 'long COVID' or 'post-COVID syndrome.' Each webinar focuses on a different topic and will be relevant to a range of people including therapists, physiotherapists, commissioners, and so on. You can find more information and details of how to register [here](#).

Tuesday 8 December, 13:00-15:00	Understanding Post-COVID Syndrome
Tuesday 15 December, 13:00-15:00	Assessing and engaging people recovering
Tuesday 12 January, 13:00-15:00	Using low intensity interventions to aid recovery
Tuesday 19 January, 13:00-15:00	Using high intensity interventions to aid recovery
Tuesday 26 January, 13:00-15:00	Further steps to help recovery: employment, older people and specialist services

Those on the circulation list for this newsletter will also be sent info on how to attend NHSE/I regional events. If you are not on this list, contact Ben Adams to be added or for more information: ben.adams4@nhs.net.

This newsletter is produced by the East of England Regional Clinical Network for Older People's Mental Health & Dementia. It is provided on an opt-out basis. If you received this email in error or no longer want to receive the bulletin, please email ben.adams4@nhs.net. Please contact Ben if there is any content that you would like to see in future editions.

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