

New innovative training to improve the care of people with dementia in general hospitals

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Academics and healthcare professionals from across Greater Manchester as well as people with a diagnosis of dementia and family carers have teamed up to devise a new training programme for general hospital staff.

The University of Manchester and Greater Manchester West Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust teamed up with three other NHS Trusts in Bolton, Salford, and Central Manchester to develop the new "Getting to Know Me" [dementia care training programme](#) for general [hospital staff](#).

Mike Howorth and Ann Johnson who both have [dementia](#), and Brian Briggs who cared for his wife, also worked with experts also worked on the [training](#) materials which are free to download and access.

Over 800,000 people in the UK are living with dementia, and at any one time this group occupy approximately 25% of general hospital beds. However, nurses and other hospital staff do not always feel confident and skilled in the provision of care to this group.

The "Getting to Know Me" training programme was designed to address this issue. The training programme increases staff knowledge, confidence and skills in the delivery of care to people with dementia in general hospitals.

Simon Burrow, who directs the MSc in Dementia Care at The University of Manchester and worked on the programme, said: "We felt involving people with real-life [personal experiences](#) of dementia and hospital care

was extremely important. It has had a positive effect on making the training programme and materials relevant to staff and patients.

Professor John Keady, from the University of Manchester's Dementia, Ageing and Research Team (DART), said: "We genuinely hope that the "Getting to Know Me" training programme reaches as many staff as possible working in the NHS. By working and learning together, we can improve care for people with dementia and their families in the general hospital."

Over 450 staff have completed the training programme so far, and evaluation has shown an increase in confidence and knowledge following completion.

Kathryn Harney, from Greater Manchester West Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust, said: "Working in partnership to bring research and people with personal experience of dementia into the development of the training was really worthwhile. The "Getting to Know Me" focus of the training will help hospital staff treat patients with dementia as individuals and improve the hospital experience for them and their carers."

The training programme also had input from professionals at Bolton NHS Foundation Trust, Salford Royal NHS Foundation Trust and Central Manchester University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

Pat Graham, Senior Nurse for Older People at Bolton NHS Foundation Trust, said: "It's so important for the care of people with dementia that all staff understand them and how best to meet their needs. The programme can be delivered in a very flexible way which means it can be accessed easily. Our staff have benefited greatly from the training and therefore so have our patients."

The project was funded by Greater Manchester Health, Innovation and Education Cluster (GM-HIEC).

The "Getting to Know Me" training materials can be downloaded free of charge from www.gmhiec.org.uk.

Provided by University of Manchester

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