



CREATING A DEMENTIA FRIENDLY AREA IN OUTPATIENTS

BACKGROUND

For patients with dementia, attending an outpatient appointment at Ashford Hospital - navigating the department, waiting for their appointment in an unfamiliar environment and spending time in a very busy, and potentially noisy waiting area - can potentially be difficult and distressing.

In 2017, the Outpatient team completed the 'King's Fund Self-assessment Audit' to identify areas that could be improved, based on the need to provide meaningful interaction and engagement between staff, patients and their families and carers and a calm and safe environment for the patients to feel secure.

The audit identified a number of key areas that could be updated to improve the experience for patients with dementia. Learning from David Sills (Dementia and Admiral Nurse Lead) and a carer, offering a real-life perspective of living with someone who has dementia, also helped the team focus on what improvements they could make that would make a difference.

AIM

The team aimed to create a designated environment that allows patients with dementia and their carers to wait for their outpatient appointments in a quiet and relaxing area; including the use of photos and tactile artwork to distract and relax patients; and ensuring facilities such as hand wash and paper towels in toilet areas are clearly highlighted; and internal signage within the area will be easy to read and follow.



THE CHANGES

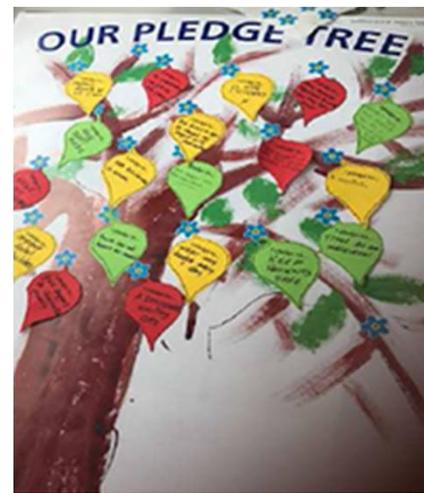
An area outside of the main waiting area was identified and has now been clearly marked as a "Dementia friendly area". Toilet facilities have been clearly identified with hand wash, towels etc. highlighted by a red border.

All staff have signed a pledge to make a difference to dementia care within their areas and have been given a list of 10 tips for communicating with patients with dementia.

Badges have been designed and created for all staff to wear encouraging visitors to ask them about the department being dementia friendly.

OUTCOMES

As the changes are being made a feedback form has been made available in the waiting area for patients and their carers to complete about their experience when they use the area and facilities. The Outpatient team will continue to monitor the feedback and make further improvements to the experience for patients with dementia, as well as their carers and families, attending their important appointments.



THE TEAM

The change was led by Diane Lashbrook, Sister in Outpatients and the Ashford Outpatient team.

