

The Dementia Services Information & Development Centre DSIDC Annual Report 2010



The Dementia Services Information and Development Centre (DSIDC) is a National Centre for excellence in dementia and is committed to best practice in all aspects of dementia care. During 2010 the Centre continued to make progress with its first three-year strategic plan. Now in the second year of the plan the Centre is operating over and beyond its projected targets. Following a participative process with key stakeholders, which started late in 2008 our strategic objectives are as follows:

- To promote an awareness of dementia to policy makers, opinion leaders and others by providing up to date and relevant information at individual, organisational and institutional levels.
- To enhance the knowledge, skills and attitudes of health care professionals and others who work with, or who provide services to persons with dementia by identifying needs and by providing the most appropriate educational response.
- To find out what works best or makes a lasting difference to the lives of persons affected by dementia through conducting and supporting research and disseminating research findings.
- To ensure the relevance, viability, growth and development of the DSIDC through regular review of strategy and policy, increased resources and capabilities, good governance and management.

The year saw a number of important achievements particularly in the areas of promotion, awareness, education and research .



DSIDC Autumn Conference 2010
L-R Matthew Gibb, Garuth Chalfont, Maria McManus,
Joost Van Hoof and David McNair



DSIDC Autumn Conference 2010
Keynote speaker
Dr Margaret Calkins

Promotion of Awareness of Dementia

We were pleased to have hosted two major public events this year which were both very well attended and evaluated.

Our **Spring Synapse Research Seminar** was a great success and was attended by 108 participants. It started with the official launch by Minister Aine Brady of the Living with Dementia Programme.

The **Autumn Conference** was held in the Trinity Centre for Health Sciences and was attended by 130 participants. The theme for this one day event was design and dementia. It brought together many expert speakers who provided a deeper understanding of pertinent issues in relation to the environment and dementia. The conference provided a forum for interdisciplinary sharing and networking among healthcare professionals, architects, engineers and designers. A broad range of issues in relation to dementia and design were explored and participants were brought up to-date with the latest thinking in this important area of caring for people with dementia. The conference proved to be a great success, with attendees on evaluation judging it to be very good or excellent.



L-R Ms Patricia Hallahan, Prof Robbie Gilligan, Minister Aine Brady, Dr Suzanne Cahill at the Launch of the Living with Dementia Programme DSIC Spring Synapse



L-R Prof JB Walsh, Dr John Gibbon, Ms Patricia Hallahan, Bishop Brian Hannon, Mr Neil Hannon at the DSIC Spring Synapse Seminar 2010

“A Practical Guide to Daily Living for Family Caregivers” a publication developed by Dr Suzanne Cahill and Vanessa Moore was also launched at the conference by Mr Noel Mulvihill, Assistant National Director for Older Persons Services, HSE. This booklet provides practical information for family caregivers of people living at home with a cognitive impairment or a dementia to help them to better cope with the day-to-day choices and dilemmas they may confront.

DSIC staff also participated in some national and international networks including the Ageing

Well Network, The National Dementia Strategy Group, The DSDC network, The Social Workers Special Interest group on Ageing, The National Educational Dementia Group, The Dementia Strategy Planning Group Laois/Offaly and the DARES Group. Presentations were made at conferences and workshops throughout the country.

DSIC **newsletters** were produced in the Spring and Summer and were disseminated widely through our e-contacts database which now has more than 800 contacts. These newsletters included articles on many aspects of dementia and information on dementia specific events.

The DSIC **website** continued to be widely used during 2010 as evidenced by the number of hits received and by the increase in the number of queries in relation to dementia that are being processed by the Centre.

Throughout 2010 DSIC responded to many **queries** in relation to various aspects of dementia. We conducted a number of **design** consultancies which enabled many organisations to enhance the living experience for their clients with dementia by improving their environment. DSIC continues to promote its “**for sale resources**” which consist of two DVD’s (*Understanding Dementia* and *Understanding Challenging Behaviour*) and a manual (*Dementia: A Positive Guide*).

Education

The DSIDC Education Service expanded its modules and during 2010 offered a diversified range of courses. Earlier in the year a new Education Brochure was produced and widely disseminated through our e-contacts database and is also available to download from our website. This provided details of ten different scheduled courses and information on how to access tailored courses designed to meet specific dementia education needs.

In 2010, 160 separate dementia specific education or information sessions were provided and a total of 1887 individuals attended these sessions throughout the country during the year. This was achieved despite a shortage of resources in many institutions, which limited funding for participants to travel to attend courses. The education programme included 36 scheduled sessions and 47 tailored sessions which were delivered to health care professionals in the public, private and voluntary sectors. These were held in various locations in Dublin and in 12 counties in the east, west, north and south of the country. In total 22 lectures, talks or seminars were given at various venues throughout the country.

During 2010 three new courses were developed and delivered namely (i) "Communicating with the Person with a Dementia", (ii) "Management and Leadership in Dementia Care" and (iii) "Caring for the Person with Dementia in the Acute Care Sector". The specific needs of Architects and Engineers were addressed at our Autumn Conference. Work was also done on the development of one new course entitled, "End of Life Care for the Person with Dementia", which will be delivered in 2011. An Bord Altranais approval was obtained or renewed for courses of relevance to nurses.

DSIDC staff contributed to the development and/or delivery of dementia specific education in a number of other organisations including the Centre for Learning and Development, St. James's Hospital, The University of Dublin, Trinity College (MSc. Gerontological Nursing and MSc. Dementia) and the HSE Nursing and Midwifery Planning and Development Units (National Dementia Training Project).

Governance, Strategy and Staff

The services of the DSIDC were provided by six staff and a number of associate trainers. We were sad to say farewell to Patricia Hallahan, Director, who left to take up a position with Our Lady's Hospice, Harold's Cross as Director of Education, Research and Training. May we take this opportunity to wish Patricia every success in her new post and thank her for her valued contribution to DSIDC.

Steering Committee meetings were held in February and June 2010. Following long years of service Professor Davis Coakley, a founder member of DSIDC, retired from the Steering Committee. We would like to thank Professor Coakley for his commitment and support over the years. During 2010 we welcomed two new committee members Dr Conal Cunningham to the Steering Committee and Professor Mary McCarron to the Advisory Group.



L-R Triona Parsons, Andrea Bobersky, Prof Davis Coakley, Sarah Donnelly and Dr Suzanne Cahill at the Spring Synapse Seminar

Research

The Living with Dementia Programme (LiD) funded by Atlantic Philanthropies and Trinity College continued to deliver valuable research material. A total of 20 scientific research papers were presented by LiD students and staff during 2010 at national and overseas conferences.

During the year, two Masters students whose internships took place at LiD, completed their dissertations on dementia-related topics. Both graduated from Trinity College in December. Two new booklets which provide information and advice to family caregivers about (i) Memory Clinic services in Ireland and (ii) home adaptations for a relative with dementia, were also produced by LiD during the year and can now be downloaded from our websites www.dementia.ie or www.socialwork-socialpolicy.tcd.ie/livingwithdementia.

The fieldwork for the CARDI funded DSIDC/LiD project on end of life and dementia was completed during 2010, and a report produced which contains guidelines for end of life care and dementia. During the year findings from an earlier LiD research project addressing the important topic of dementia/cognitive impairment in nursing homes were published in the journal *Age and Ageing*. Later in the year, a research paper based on another LiD study examining the quality of life of people with a cognitive impairment and living in long stay care was also accepted for publication in the journal *Ageing and Mental Health* and will be available in early 2011.

During the year, the DSIDC along with the Centre for Social Gerontology in Galway were also awarded a grant through the Atlantic Philanthropies to undertake the evidence-based research required to identify the key priorities to be included in the Government's development of an Irish National Dementia Strategy.



Dementia Services Information and Development Centre
Top Floor Hospital 4 St James's Hospital Dublin 8

Telephone: (+353 1) 416 2035

Fax: (+353 1) 410 3482

Email: dsidc@stjames.ie

Web: www.dementia.ie

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