Information Services

Throughout 2015, the DSIDC staff responded to many queries, from health care professionals and the general public. 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.

The DSIDC website, facebook and twitter accounts continue to be a valuable information source for both health service professionals and the general public. During 2015 we posted new materials on the website around Assistive Technology (AT). AT refers to any practical intervention available to support and promote the functional needs of people experiencing age-related or disability-related difficulties. AT has the potential to greatly benefit people living with a dementia provided it is used ethically and the choice of product is based on the assessment of individual circumstances.

During 2015 DSIDC staff participated in a number of international conferences and forums these included the First World Health Organization Ministerial Conference; Global Action Against Dementia in Geneva, the Swedish Dementia Forum X, held in Stockholm, and the International Brain Health Conference held in Havana, Cuba.

National and International Networks

During 2015 DSIDC staff participated in a number of national and international networks, steering committees and projects including:

- National Steering Group for Dementia
- Friendly Communities
- HSE National Dementia Education Programme
- Scientific and Advisory Panel Alzheimer's Society
- Trinity Haus and National Disability Design Project
- Dementia Elevator Project
- InterGeri
- Living Well with Dementia (SliNAC) South Dublin (Genio)
- The Social Workers Special Interest group on Ageing
- The Alzheimer Café
- Atlantic: Philanthropies
- HIQA Advisory Group for Thematic Inspections focusing on Dementia Care
- DemPath Project
- National Referral System for Memory Clinics

Governance Structure

The DSIDC continues to employ five staff members, two of whom are part-time. It occasionally co-opt in the expertise of associate trainers. During 2015, three Steering Committee meetings were held in January, June and October and the annual Advisory Committee Meeting took place in February.

During the year Mr Brian Fitzgerald stepped down from the Committee, we would like to take this opportunity to thank Brian for his help and support during his tenure and extend a warm welcome to Mr Lorcan Birthistle, Chief Executive of St James’s Hospital, who joined the Steering Committee in 2015.
The symposium attracted much interest and drew together work recently conducted both at the DSIDC and internationally, on the importance of primary prevention; that cognitive and brain health in later life is rooted in physical and mental health and in dignity cared for by family members and by service providers with a thorough understanding of Alzheimer’s disease and the related dementias.

The year 2015 saw a major mid-life productivity for the DSIDC, starting in January with the launch of the ‘The Irish National Survey of Dementia Long Term Residential Care’, the first national survey of dementia care since the 1990s and the timely point in the dementia landscape over the last five years and addressed some of the issues arising out of these changes including a new national dementia research programme and a call for research funding in the area.

A key message conveyed at this seminar was the need for a multidisciplinary approach to care, not only in the early stages of dementia, but throughout the patient’s experience, as well as the need for education and awareness of Alzheimer’s disease and the related dementias.

During the year the DSIDC continued to provide education to healthcare professionals, people living with dementia and family caregivers. The Centre also partnered with other organisations including Our Lady’s Hospice, Trinity College and the HSE, in delivering other educational initiatives.

Throughout the year, the DSIDC served over 2,000 people directly, and over 15,000 people indirectly. The Centre also made a significant contribution to the hospital led DemPath project, funded by Genie. St James’s is one of three Irish hospitals that has participated in the DemPath project, a dedicated funding initiative to make the hospital more dementia friendly, as well as to improve care and, in particular, the community-based support and engagement of hospital staff.

In April staff from the DSIDC participated in the International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics European Region Congress, which took place in the Convention Centre Dublin. The congress was opened by An Taoiseach Enda Kenny, who reiterated the need to support caregivers, to develop partnerships between community and hospital staff, and to ensure that the public sector invests in dementia care.

In May 2015 Trinity Hall and the DSIDC’s Living with Dementia Programme were delighted to announce the official launch, by Minister Aodhán Ó Ríordáin TD, of the “An Irish National Survey in Long Term Residential Care” – Dementia Friendly Dwellings. The resource for both health service professionals and family caregivers.

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The report was launched by Professor David Coskay, a special event in Trinity College Dublin, which was attended by the Dementia Services Information and Development Centre (DSIDC) and the Alzheimer’s Society of Ireland. The report presented the current state of dementia care in Ireland and highlighted the need for a multidisciplinary approach to care, not only in the early stages of dementia, but throughout the patient’s experience, as well as the need for education and awareness of Alzheimer’s disease and the related dementias.

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The fresh public event of the year was our Annual Conference, which took place in the O’Connellinagh Hotel in Dublin. The theme of the conference was ‘Providing excellence in dementia care: powerful feedback for powerful learning’. The conference addressed topics such as dementia care and dementia research, Dementia Friendly Dwellings, and the introduction of a new national dementia research programme. The conference also addressed topics as broad as ageism, active ageing, financial abuse and social inequalities and as narrow as dementia care in the home. The conference addressed a considerable input into this excellent conference with participation by staff in a total of six different platform events including hosting our own presentation, ‘Evaluating the Impact of Education and Awareness of Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Dementias’. The symposium attracted much interest and drew together work specifically conducted both at the DSIDC and at Dublin City University.
The symposium attracted much interest and drew together work recently conducted both at the DSIDC from Bangor University in Wales, was our keynote speaker and delivered a thought provoking and informative risk of developing dementia in later life.

The theme of the conference was dementia education and focused on a number of interventions designed to inform providers with a thorough understanding of Alzheimer’s disease and the related dementias.

The year 2015 was a very active and productive year for the DSIDC starting in January with the launch of "The Irish National Survey of Dementia Long Term Residential Care", the first national survey to map demographic trends in the dementia landscape over the last four years and addressed some of the issues arising out of these changes including a proposed national electronic referral system for publicly funded Memory Clinics.

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During 2015 the DSIDC continued to provide education to healthcare professionals more effectively and for psycho-social interventions to be made available on the same basis as medical interventions. The DSIDC had considerable input into this programme, which is now in its second year, is to increase awareness among secondary school students about ageing and dementia and in particular how young people can help a person to live well with dementia.

During the year 2015 the DSIDC provided continuing education for nurses, occupational therapists, physiotherapists and care workers to enhance knowledge and practice in dementia care.

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Dementia Friendly Dwellings

In May 2015 Trinity Haeu and the DSIDC’s Living with Dementia Programme were delighted to announce the official launch, by Minister Aodhan O’Riordain TD, of the Universal Design Guidelines for people living with dementia. It is envisaged that these guidelines will be used by all stakeholders and those who commission, design, build, and occupy dwellings. Subsequently, if new dwellings or alterations to existing dwellings are built in line with these guidelines, they will help people to remain living at home, and in their community, independently and safely as far as possible.

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The symposium attracted much interest and drew together work recently conducted both at the DSIDC and elsewhere. One of our key aims is to make Ireland one of the best places for people to be well and for people with dementia in Ireland. During this year the DSIDC hosted four large events and participated in several international conferences. The education staff continue to develop a comprehensive programme of education in the Dublin area and throughout the country. In December the DSIDC was the proud recipient of a Dementia Elevator Innovation award, from Dublin City University and the HSE, for its groundbreaking dementia awareness programme for secondary school students, ‘We Won’t Forget Remember Me.’

The second event was held on Wednesday 20th May in Trinity College’s Long Room Hub. The aim of the seminar was to debunk prevailing myths, myths and misunderstandings about Alzheimer’s disease and the related dementia and to explore the critical impact that a diagnosis of dementia, along with the associated stigma, often has on the individual and other family members.

In September to mark World Alzheimer’s Day, the DSIDC and the Alzheimer’s Society of Ireland jointly hosted a seminar, designed to equip both health care professionals and the general public about memory problems, brain health and cognitive reserve. The seminar took place in the Smurfit Science Centre, Smurfit Business School. It was attended by many practitioners, service planners, people with dementia and caregivers. A key message conveyed at this seminar was the importance of identifying early signs of dementia and ensuring that people with dementia can be helped to live well and enjoy a good quality of life. In particular, it was stressed that early diagnosis is key in order to maximise the potential for treatment and support, and to help people feel reassured and supported as they face the challenges of dementia.

The final public event of the year was our Annual Conference which took place in the O’Connell Hall in Trinity College. The theme of the conference was ‘Ageing Well’ and was based around a number of international conferences designed to educate and develop, not only people’s understanding of dementia, but also to improve their caregiving practice. We were delighted to present an array of speakers that represented a number of disciplines including general practice, gerontology, nursing, psychology, academia and the voluntary sector. Professor Bob Woods from Bangor University in Wales, was our keynote speaker and delivered a thought provoking and informative presentation addressing staff training needs and the effectiveness of that training when caring for people with dementia.

Research Studies

In January 2015 the DSIDC was delighted to launch the research studies, the results from the first national survey to map demographic trends and risk factors associated with dementia in Ireland. The report was launched by Professor Davis Coakley at a special event in Trinity College Dublin. The research was carried out by the Demenias Services Information and Development Centre (DSIDC), the University College Dublin School of Social Work and Social Policy at Trinity College. The study gathered information from participating care units throughout the Republic of Ireland. The research identified gaps in service provision particularly in dementia, and excessive numbers of patients in individual residential units. The report revealed that the private sector provided the majority of high dependency care, but residential care was severely underdeveloped in Ireland compared to the public and private sector in Ireland. In addition from findings the survey enabled the DSIDC to develop a resource manual for family caregivers wishing to place their relatives with dementia in a specialist care unit. The publication lists the contact details of 54 self-identified Specialist Care Units and has proved to be a useful resource for both health service professionals and family caregivers.

Conferences & Seminars

During 2015 the DSIDC hosted four large conferences and seminars which attracted healthcare professionals, people living with dementia and family caregivers. The first event was the FPA National Memory Clinic Conference held on Friday, 27th March in Trinity College Dublin, jointly hosted by the Mercer’s Institute for Successful Ageing (MISA) and the DSIDC. The conference focused on significant changes to the dementia landscape over the last five years and addressed some of the issues arising out of those changes including a proposed national electronic referral system for publicly funded Memory Clinics.

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In December 2015 the DSIDC participated in the International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics European Regional Congress, which took place in the Convention Centre Dublin. The Congress was opened by Dr Teodora Iwanka, Kenya and the closing ceremony by the President of EAAGE, Dr Yolande van den Berg, Belgium. The DSIDC delivered a presentation on the results from the first national survey to map demographic trends and risk factors associated with dementia in Ireland. The congress addressed topics as broad as ageism, active ageing, financial abuse and social inequalities and as narrow as managing care in the home, and in their community, independently and safely for as long as possible.

Education

Throughout 2015 staff from the DSIDC continued to provide education to healthcare professionals and students. These workshops continued to be delivered and as always were well attended and well received. The Centre also partnered with other organisations including Our Lady’s Hospice, Trinity College and the HSE in delivering other educational initiatives. Throughout the year the DSIDC made a significant contribution to the hospital led Dementia project, funded by Genio. St James’s is one of three Irish hospitals participating in the Hospital Partnership for Excellence in Dementia Care, a dedicated funding initiative to make the hospital more dementia friendly and improve the quality of care for people with dementia.

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During the year the extra mural classes, designed to upskill family caregivers about dementia, continued and were well attended. These evening classes, delivered by St James’s Hospital staff, covered topics relating to cognitive and communication aspects of dementia and how to care for family members with dementia. The Centre also participated with other organisations including Our Lady’s Hospice, Trinity College and the HSE in delivering other educational initiatives. Throughout the year the DSIDC made a significant contribution to the hospital led Dementia project, funded by Genio. St James’s is one of three Irish hospitals participating in the Hospital Partnership for Excellence in Dementia Care, a dedicated funding initiative to make the hospital more dementia friendly and improve the quality of care for people with dementia.

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The Dementia Services Information and Development Centre

ANNUAL REPORT 2015

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Information Services

Throughout 2015, the DSIDC staff responded to many queries, from health care professionals and the general public. 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.

The DSIDC website, facebook and twitter accounts continue to be a valuable information source for both health service professionals and the general public. During 2015 we posted new materials on the website around Assistive Technology (AT). AT refers to any practical intervention available to support and promote the functional needs of people experiencing age-related or disability-related difficulties. AT has the potential to greatly benefit people living with a dementia provided it is used efficiently and the choice of product is based on the assessment of individual circumstances.

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During the year Mr Brian Fitzgerald stepped down from the Committee, we would like to take this opportunity to thank Brian for his help and support during his tenure and extend a warm welcome to Mr Lorcan Birthistle, Chief Executive of St James’s Hospital, who joined the Steering Committee in 2015.

(L-R) Professor Suzanne Cahill, Ms Lorraine Lovely, Ms Cecilia Craig and Mr Matthew Gibb pictured at the Stephen’s Green Hibernian Club on World Alzheimer’s Day.
Information Services

Throughout 2015, the DSIDC staff responded to many queries, from health care professionals and the general public. 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.

The DSIDC website, facebook and twitter accounts continue to be a valuable information source for both health service professionals and the general public. During 2015 we posted new materials on the website around Assistive Technology (AT). AT refers to any practical intervention available to support and promote the functional needs of people experiencing age-related or disability-related difficulties. AT has the potential to greatly benefit people living with a dementia provided it is used ethically and the choice of product is based on the assessment of individual circumstances.

During 2015 DSIDC staff participated in a number of international conferences and forums; these included the First World Health Organization Ministerial Conference, Global Action Against Dementia in Geneva, the Swedish Dementia Forum X, held in Stockholm, and the International Brain Health Conference held in Havana, Cuba.

National and International Networks

During 2015 DSIDC staff participated in a number of national and international networks, steering committees and projects including:

- National Steering Group for Dementia Friendly Communities
- HSE National Dementia Education Programme
- Scientific and Advisory Panel Alzheimer’s Society
- TrinityHaus and National Disability Design Project
- Dementia Elevator Project
- IntelDem
- Living Well with Dementia (SWCD) South Dublin (Genio)
- The Social Workers Special Interest group on Ageing
- The Alzheimer Cafe
- Atlantic Philanthropies
- HIQA Advisory Group for Thematic Inspections focusing on Dementia Care
- DemPath Project
- National Referral System for Memory Clinics

Governance Structure

The DSIDC continues to employ five staff members, two of whom are part-time. It occasionally co-opts in the expertise of associate trainers. During 2015, three Steering Committee meetings were held in January, June and October and the annual Advisory Committee Meeting took place in February.

During the year Mr Brian Fitzgerald stepped down from the Committee, we would like to take this opportunity to thank Brian for his help and support during his tenure and extend a warm welcome to Mr Lorcan Birthistle, Chief Executive of St James’s Hospital, who joined the Steering Committee in 2015.