



*Dementia Services Information and Development Centre*  
**DSIDC Newsletter**

Issue: No 14 Spring 2008

Welcome to the Spring 2008 edition of our newsletter. I am delighted to be the new Director of DSIDC, having taken over from Dr. Suzanne Cahill in January. I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself to you.



*Patricia Hallahan, Director DSIDC*

I am from Dublin and trained as a nurse midwife in the Richmond & Rotunda hospitals. I have a B.Soc Sc. (Sociology & Politics) from UCD and an M.Sc. from the Open University. Much of my career has been spent in the design, development and management of health and social care interventions and advocacy programmes in Ireland and overseas where I've worked with both statutory and non-governmental organisations. I am interested in organisational development, change management and quality assurance in health and social care environments and in particular, in the empowerment and training of staff and the development of policy to ensure inclusive and holistic care. I am currently completing an MBA.

Before joining the DSIDC, I was the Head of Services with the Alzheimer Society of Ireland (ASI) where I was responsible for the implementation of over 90 dementia specific services (home and day care, respite, social clubs, advocacy etc) throughout the country. Maurice O'Connell, CEO of the ASI, has graciously granted me leave to take on this role while Suzanne manages the new dementia Ph.D. programme in Trinity College which is being funded by Atlantic Philanthropies, ASI and TCD. More about this below.

I am delighted to be taking up this position at a time when the needs are great but when there is a lot happening in the field of dementia care. I am looking forward to meeting you and to finding out how best the DSIDC can serve your needs so that together we can ensure that the services for people with dementia in Ireland are improved.

### **Education and Training**

The first quarter of 2008 was a busy one for our Education and Training team who ran ten Foundation Day Workshops, six workshops on Behaviours that Challenge, 2 Extra Mural Courses and one 5-day Essentials of Dementia Care. We also gave input into the MSc. Gerontological Nursing in TCD. Most of our course participants give us very positive feedback but we also welcome your suggestions as to how we can make our courses even more responsive to your needs. The months up to the summer are very busy with many training events planned. However, during July and August, we will be reviewing course content and developing new modules for delivery in the autumn. Please do not hesitate to send us your suggestions and comments so that we can better address your training needs in dementia care.



### **Psycho Social Research**

The DSIDC's new programme of psycho-social research in dementia care entitled "Living with Dementia" has now formally commenced at Trinity College and is being managed by Dr Suzanne Cahill. The first PhD student, Andrea Bobersky who holds an undergraduate degree in Psychology has now enrolled on this programme. Andrea has worked in practice settings with people with dementia where she has planned and delivered activity programmes in Day Care. Her thesis will involve an investigation into the effects on persons with dementia and their family caregivers of a relocation into a specialist care unit. As part of this new programme of research, a dementia-specific research study has also been conceptualised and a literature review on dementia services in Ireland has been undertaken. A symposium on non-pharmacological interventions in dementia care was jointly hosted by Professor Clive Ballard and Dr Suzanne Cahill at the recent International Psychogeriatric Association European conference in Dublin.



### Meetings and Conferences

We are delighted to be able to welcome members of the **North Sea Group** to a meeting in Dublin in April. This is a group of dementia practitioners from 11 European countries who are interested in sharing information and supporting each other. The **Alzheimer Europe** Conference 'Breaking Barriers' to be held in Oslo in May promises to be an exciting event and staff from the centre will present some of our recent research findings there. We are also looking forward to participating in the important and timely **DSDC Northern Ireland** Conference entitled Embracing the Challenge: Citizenship and Dementia, in May. We have been receiving many queries on various aspects of environmental design for people with dementia and we are hoping to hold a conference on this topic in December. Watch this space!

### Information and Consultancy

We have had a lot of visitors to our library and resource centre in the first quarter. We will be revamping our website soon to make it more user friendly. If there is anything in particular you would like to see included either on our website or in our newsletter, do let us know. Our DVDs have been selling well and because DVDs have taken over from the VHS Video, we have a small number of the video version of our excellent 'Understanding Challenging Behaviours in Dementia' now on sale for the knock down price of just €5! More info on resources on our website.

### Finally....

The Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) published the National Quality Standards for Residential Care Settings for Older People in March. The new standards which include criteria for dementia specific residential care units will come into force later this year once the Minister for Health signs off on the legal regulations.

In February, I was delighted to visit the impressive award winning Saoirse dementia unit at Mount Carmel Hospital in Clonakilty and to attend the launch of their research which showed the positive effects on residents and staff of moving from a traditional ward to the new dementia specific unit.

DSIDC has been happy to be able to participate this year on the HSE National Working Group on Dementia, the NMPDU National Dementia Training Steering Group and the HSE / Irish Hospice Foundation working group on extending Access to Specialist Palliative Care.

We are reviewing our strategy in this, the 10th anniversary of the foundation of DSIDC. We have achieved a lot and the DSIDC tree has grown strong and put down deep roots. Now is the time to look at where we have come from, what we have achieved to date and where we need to go to have the greatest possible impact for people with dementia. Your input into this process is very welcome.

These are just a few of the many exciting initiatives in the area of dementia care, in which we are involved at the moment. This is an exhilarating and hopeful time when all of us, if we work together, can really make a big difference in the lives of the tens of thousands of people in Ireland who are living every day with dementia. I look forward to making sure the DSIDC plays its part in helping you to fulfil your objectives in relation to dementia care in Ireland.

*Patricia Hallahan*



DSIDC

Strong growth and deep roots  
established over 10 years.  
Where to from here?

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