

GOVERNANCE, STRATEGY AND STAFF

Three meetings of the DSIDC Steering Committee were held during the year; these were in March, May and September. New Terms of Reference were agreed and signed off by the Chair, Professor Rose Anne Kenny and the Vice Chair, Professor J Bernard Walsh.

The Advisory Group met in May and Terms of Reference were agreed and signed off by the Chair, Professor Rose Anne Kenny and the Vice Chair, Dr Greg Swanwick, in September.

A process of strategic review was undertaken through analysis of the internal and external environments and current resources and capacities. A facilitated workshop helped key stakeholders to develop shared understanding and a document which will be the basis for the development, early in the new year, of a three-year strategic plan.

The services of the Centre were provided by seven members of staff and an associate trainer. New staff appointed in 2008 included Patricia Hallahan, Director; Lorraine Lovely, Administrator; Dearbhla O'Cahey, Assistant Education Officer and Dr Niamh Martin, Education Officer.

DSIDC staff at the end of 2008: L-R Cecilia Craig, Education Officer; Dearbhla O'Cahey, Assistant Education Officer; Lorraine Lovely, Administrator; Matthew Gibb, Social Worker/Researcher and Patricia Hallahan, Director.



Dr Niamh Martin,
Education Officer



Dr Suzanne Cahill,
Director of
Research Programme



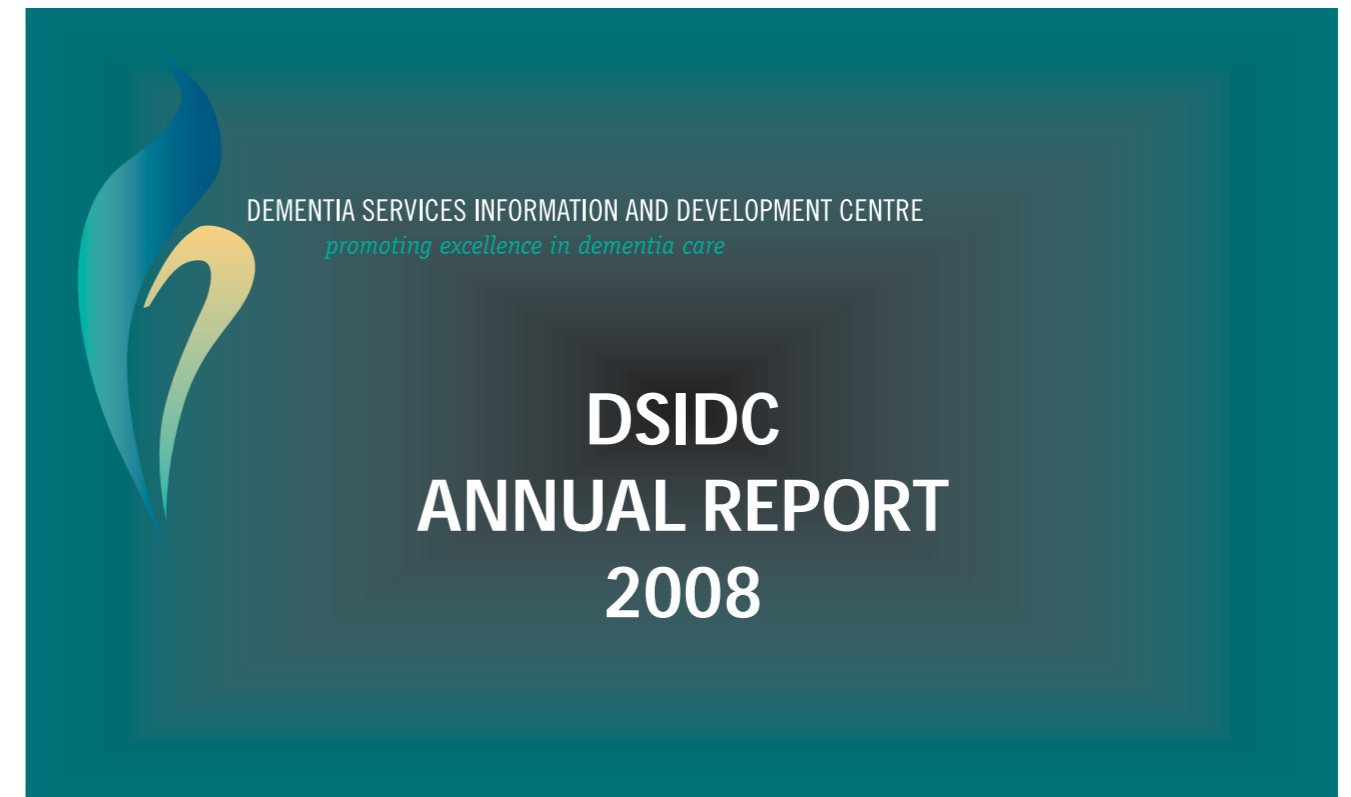
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The **Dementia Services Information and Development Centre** (DSIDC) is a national centre for excellence in dementia that is committed to best practice in all aspects of dementia care in Ireland.

DSIDC offers three core professional services:

- Education
- Information and Consultancy
- Research.

2008 was a significant year for DSIDC. It marked the tenth anniversary of the founding of the centre in 1998 and saw the arrival of four new staff, including a new Director, Administrator, Education Officer and Assistant Education Officer.

Despite staff changes and the challenges of HSE budget restrictions, which impacted upon the access of some staff to education courses such as those provided by DSIDC, a great deal was achieved during the year.

The Education programme developed new relationships and activities. The Information and Consultancy programme expanded and developed new systems. The Research Programme saw an engagement with 11 separate pieces of research and the DSIDC Living with Dementia PhD research programme at Trinity College went from strength to strength.

An international conference was hosted in Trinity College in April. This brought together an interdisciplinary group of 31 European practitioners and researchers committed to best practice in dementia care.

New Terms of Reference were developed and agreed for our governance structures and towards the end of the year, work was begun on developing a three-year strategic plan for the period 2009 to 2011.

EDUCATION

The education service at DSIDC continued to improve and diversify during 2008. The provision of a total of 54 separate dementia-specific courses or sessions meant that a total of 86 education/training days were delivered to 667 participants in venues nationwide, including Dublin, Cork, Kerry, Meath, Waterford and Kilkenny. This is the equivalent of 1,177 person-days of education/training.

In a new partnership with the Centre for Learning and Development in St James's Hospital, DSIDC ran a number of education days which were included in the CLD Prospectus. These days were well-attended and provided opportunities for hospital staff to avail of dementia-specific education.

DSIDC staff also fulfilled a variety of other educational needs identified by health care staff. They included the delivery of bespoke training sessions to private nursing homes and public facilities.

Facilitator-training courses were provided to individuals who had already extensive knowledge and experience of dementia. These newly-trained facilitators are now able to provide dementia-specific training to staff within their own organisations; this extends significantly the effective reach of the DSIDC education service. DSIDC contributions to the Trinity College MSc in Gerontological Nursing also continued during 2008.

Towards the end of the year, a comprehensive review of the DSIDC education programme was undertaken. An education and training brochure, covering all courses planned for 2009, was developed and will be published and distributed early in the new year.

INFORMATION AND CONSULTANCY

In 2008 a new database was established for logging and managing the queries received by DSIDC.

41% of queries related to requests for information on education, resources, tools and techniques of dementia care. 23% related to clinical issues (from Down's Syndrome to palliative care), while 16% related broadly to research. 14% of queries related to issues of design, while legal and ethical issues (from disclosure of diagnosis to advocacy) accounted for approximately 7%.

The diversity of enquiry sources included private nursing homes, hospitals, the Health Service Executive, voluntary and private organisations, academic institutions, architectural firms and private individuals.

Newsletters were produced in the spring and autumn and circulated to members of the e-mail and postal databases. The downloadable versions were accessed by many on the DSIDC website www.dementia.ie

The website continued to be an important source of information for dementia practitioners. Work was undertaken late in 2008 to upgrade it and improve functionality and the revised website will come online in early 2009.

The Library and Resource Centre continued to attract many visitors and increased its stock of ageing- and dementia-specific reference materials, books and journals. A total of 85 DSIDC-produced education resources, both DVDs and books, were sold during 2008.

A total of nine consultancies were undertaken. These included work in Dublin, Roscommon, Tipperary, Cork and Limerick. The expertise of staff was sought on the design of new dementia-specific facilities and also on a number of national policy issues.

During 2008 DSIDC staff participated in the following:

- Ageing Well Network
- Bru Caoimhin Challenging Behaviour Steering Group
- Dementia Services Development Centres (DSDC) Network
- HSE National Dementia Sub-committee
- HSE Project on Falls in older people and the Environment
- Mallow Partnership Group
- NMPDU Dementia Training Project
- North Dublin Private Nursing Homes' Challenging Behaviour Group
- North Sea Group
- Social Workers' Special Interest Group on Ageing
- Working group on Specialist Palliative Care for the person with dementia.



Participants and DSIDC staff at the North Sea Group Meeting, which was held at Trinity College Dublin in April 2008.

RESEARCH

In 2008 DSIDC had an involvement in a total of eleven pieces of research.

Three papers were published in peer-reviewed journals and two in non-peer-reviewed journals:

Cahill S, Clark M, O'Connell H, Lawlor B, Coen R and Walsh C: 'The attitudes and practices of general practitioners regarding dementia diagnosis in Ireland'. *International Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry*, 22, 2008.

Cahill S, Begley E and Hagen I: 'Health technologies for people with early dementia: The ENABLE Project'. In: E Moniz-Cook & J Manthorpe (Eds), *Psychosocial interventions in Early Dementia: Evidence-Based Practice*. Jessica Kingsley, London, 2008.

Cahill S, Headon M, Gibb M, Drury M and Bruce I: ' "I was worried coming in because I don't really know why it was arranged": The Subjective Experience of New Patients and their Primary Caregivers attending a memory clinic'. *Dementia: The International Journal of Social Research and Practice*, 2008.

Cahill S: 'Behaviours that Challenge: Some Suggestions for Family Caregivers'. *Forum: Journal of the Irish College of General Practitioners*, 2008.

Cahill S: 'Dementia and Community Care'. *The Irish Medical News*, June, 2008.

Three pieces of research were further progressed: • a study of cognitive impairment in Irish nursing homes (this is detailed below); • the attitudes of memory clinic patients to anti-dementia drugs; and • the impact of dementia-specific education.

One new piece of research was developed, relating to care pathways for younger people with dementia.

The Living with Dementia Programme (LiD), funded by Atlantic Philantropies, the Alzheimer Society of Ireland and Trinity College continued to be the most significant aspect of the DSIDC research programme. LiD aims to contribute to the development of psycho-social interventions for individuals diagnosed with dementia and their family caregivers, to impact on policy development and to contribute to the design of best-practice models for those affected by dementia. In addition to two PhD students currently registered and being funded on this programme, other postgraduate students working on dementia-related topics were also supported in 2008.

Scientific papers were presented at several local and European meetings. Fieldwork for a research study investigating the prevalence of cognitive impairment in nursing homes in Dublin was completed. This study randomly sampled 100 elderly residents living in four nursing homes. Memory and cognitive functioning was estimated using standardized assessment scales and in-depth interviews were conducted with residents and Directors of Nursing. Preliminary findings emerging from the research were presented at the The Gerontological Society of America Annual Scientific meeting in Washington in November. The findings from this work are currently being prepared for publication.

Other activities included the design and development of a website to be launched in February 2009 and the development of plans for a quarterly seminar series on dementia which will begin in January 2009.