

New Plan to transform dementia care in Wales

Supported by an extra £10m a year, the Dementia Action Plan aims to create new ways of caring, training and increasing the number of support workers, increasing rates of diagnoses and strengthening collaborative working between social care and housing.

At a visit to Ysbyty George Thomas in Treorchy, Mr Gething met with support workers and volunteers who are taking part in new, innovative ways of delivering care for people living with dementia.

The community-led projects include intergenerational work with a local school and Grow Rhondda, a gardening project based at the site.

Since 2015 the Welsh Government has provided additional funding to support improvements in dementia care, including the introduction of dementia support workers, occupational therapy support in older people mental health units, and dementia flexible resource teams working within our district hospitals.

The Health Secretary said the Action Plan would build on this work and bring together health, social services, the voluntary sector and communities to not only deliver support as flexibly as possible but also make Wales a leader in innovative dementia care.

He said:

“I have a clear vision for Wales to be a dementia friendly nation that recognises the rights of people with dementia to feel valued and live as independently as possible in their communities. This plan, developed with those who have lived with dementia and supported by an extra £10m a year, will accelerate achieving that vision.

As the Parliamentary Review made clear we need to look at new ways of delivering health and care services. Today I have seen some excellent examples of new ways of caring for people living with dementia in the community, like working with local schools and gardening projects. I want to see similar successful ideas rolled-out across Wales and this plan will help achieve that.

“It also sets out how we will raise awareness of ways to reduce the risk of dementia, ensure the wider population understands the challenges of living with dementia, improve diagnoses and support the families and carers of those living with dementia.”

County Director for Alzheimer’s Society Cymru, Sue Phelps said:

“For the 45,000 people affected by dementia in Wales and their families, the launch of Welsh Government’s Dementia Action Plan today is pivotal.

“We have campaigned long and hard, through our #45000reasons campaign, for a plan that recognises the rights of people affected by the condition. We hope this initial three year commitment through the Dementia Action Plan will bring about the changes that people with dementia have told us they need, such as; receiving a timely diagnosis and access to support services to enable people to live well with dementia.

“The real work starts now and the implementation of this Plan at a national and local level is key to improving the experiences of people with dementia and their families. This will only work with the continued inclusion and engagement of people who live with the condition, and by building and strengthening our dementia-friendly nation, where we all play an active role and are united against dementia.”

Progress against delivery of the plan will be overseen by a Dementia Delivery Assurance Implementation Group, and will include people living with dementia and their carers and families. The plan will be subject to a review after three years to ensure the actions remain ambitious and relevant.