

Balhousie Care Group

# Dementia Strategy

2020-2022

Providing a therapeutic  
environment for people  
to live and die well  
with dementia.



Balhousie Care Group  
sharing your care

[www.balhousiecare.co.uk](http://www.balhousiecare.co.uk)

“ You matter because you are you, and you matter to the end of your life. We will do all we can not only to help you die peacefully, but also to live until you die. ”

**Dame Cicely Saunders,**  
nurse, physician and writer, and  
founder of hospice movement  
(1918 – 2005).



# Foreword

As a person's dementia journey progresses, they need increasingly more intensive care and skilled support. Balhouses Care Group aims to provide the first-class care expected by people living with dementia and their loved ones.

Our Dementia Strategy (2020 – 2022) builds on previous work undertaken to continue with improvements for care home residents who have dementia. We have developed this strategy with a focus on the quality of the environment and care delivery. We are committed to training and developing staff to use the knowledge and skills needed to support each person and their loved ones for the duration of their time living with dementia.

Our dementia team and dementia ambassadors are passionate about creating a therapeutic environment: an environment that creates meaningful living activities and peace at the end of life. We recognise that at the centre of all we do is the resident and we know that inviting the input of loved ones into these improvement activities will ensure stronger and more positive outcomes.

Experts or governments cannot explain the reality of living with dementia; instead, the reality is lived daily by those with a diagnosis of dementia and those who care for them. This strategy will help us to work together within and across Balhouses Care Group to deliver the best possible dementia care and support for everyone living with dementia in our care homes.

**Jill Kerr,**  
**Group Chief Executive Officer**

# Introduction



Balhouse Care Group provides care to over 950 people across 26 nursing and residential care home facilities. The Care Home Census (National Services Scotland 2018) suggests that demographically the number of “old-old” (people aged 85+ years) is increasing; the number of residents aged 95+ years increased by 19% during the decade 2007-2017. A person’s risk of developing a type of dementia increases from 1 in 14 at age 65 to 1 in 6 at the age of 80.

Within Balhouse Care Group care homes, we have an increasing number of residents who are living with dementia or cognitive decline. Balhouse Care Group commits to providing the highest quality care and support to all residents and their loved ones throughout their unique dementia journey, from admission to end of life.

## The national position

Improving dementia care has been a national priority since 2007. Scotland’s first dementia strategy (2010-2013) focused on improving the quality of dementia services through more timely diagnosis and better care and treatment. A second strategy followed in 2013 focused on rights-based approaches to care from diagnosis to end of life.

The current national dementia strategy (2017-2020) highlights three key priorities:

- continuing timely, person-centred and consistent treatment and care for people living with dementia and their carers, in all settings
- more progress on the provision of support after diagnosis and throughout the disease, taking account of individual needs and circumstances
- responding to the increasing proportion of older people developing dementia later in life, often alongside other chronic conditions

Much of the international focus on dementia has looked at finding cures for the different forms of dementia. However, Marie Curie Cancer Care (2015) and Alzheimer Scotland (2009) have highlighted a lack of emphasis on dementia as a progressive, terminal condition. The death and dying phase of dementia remains a largely overlooked aspect of what has previously been described as a ‘silent epidemic’.



### The scope of the strategy

This document sets out the strategic vision for dementia care delivery in Balhousie Care Group. It provides a clear direction for the future development of the services we provide. Balhousie Care Group understands that people with dementia deserve and need kind and supportive treatment focused on dignity, respect and autonomy. This person-centered care approach depends not only on the caregivers' skills and knowledge but also on tailoring care to both residents' and, when appropriate, families' needs and preferences.

The strategy can determine how Balhousie Care Group will be recognised as an excellent provider of dementia services in Scotland. Aligning with our vision and purpose, the scope of this document ensures that Balhousie Care Group embraces continual improvement of dementia care across all environments and teams. It covers the entire dementia journey, the development of dementia-friendly environments and therapeutic care, the evolution and evaluations of training and continuing clinical development, our engagement with service users and their families, and with internal and external stakeholders.

The key areas of the strategy have been developed to reflect Balhousie Care Group's commitments to dementia care as outlined opposite. They are drawn from best practice and research evidence based on Scotland's Dementia Strategy (2017-2020), Health & Social Care Standards (Scottish Government 2017) and the Charter of Rights for People with Dementia and Their Carers in Scotland (Alzheimer Scotland 2009).

### Balhousie Care Group commitments to dementia care:

1. We will work collaboratively, internally and with partner organisations to develop our workforce in line with the Promoting Excellence framework (Scottish Government 2017)
2. We will continue to develop a rights-based, anti-discriminatory, care-giving culture
3. We will strive to deliver current evidence-based dementia care, measuring the impact and care outcomes within a quality improvement framework
4. We will continue to develop a therapeutic environment for residents living with dementia across the dementia journey
5. We will work as equal partners in care with residents, their loved ones and external agencies to deliver therapeutic person-centred care from admission to end of life.

### The strategy will be delivered under four key headings:

1. Developing the workforce
2. Developing a therapeutic environment for people living with dementia and their families
3. Collaboration and growth through engagement
4. Continuous quality improvement in dementia care for our residents

This strategy will be dynamic and a revised version may be required in response to service user feedback, quality improvement findings and any new national priorities outlined in Scotland's Fourth Dementia Strategy, expected to be published in late 2020 or early 2021.



## 1

# Developing the workforce

Developing a knowledgeable, motivated and skilled workforce across all care home teams will help us to meet Balhousie Care Group commitments 1 -3.

Scotland's Third Dementia Strategy (2017-2020) supports Promoting Excellence, a framework for all health and social services staff working with people with dementia, their families and carers. We aspire to all staff being developed within this framework to continuously improve their knowledge and skills in dementia care. A Dementia Team to lead on meeting the outcomes from the dementia strategy will be identified and developed from the existing workforce. The Dementia Ambassador programme will be refreshed and revised to meet ongoing training/ education needs of the workforce

## Dementia Team

The Dementia Team will comprise experienced and committed senior staff and registered nurses/senior carers who will undertake to lead on developing best practice across Balhousie Care Group. The team will also commit to identifying external opportunities for learning and development and collaborative working with partner agencies in research and practice development.

## Dementia Ambassador Programme

We aspire to each care home having at least three identifiable Dementia Ambassadors with one acting as a Lead Ambassador on a rotational basis. Ambassadors will have successfully achieved Enhanced Level in the Scottish Government's Promoting Excellence framework as a minimum. They will be key in supporting staff training and the development of therapeutic environments for residents and their families. They are expected to contribute to Balhousie Care Group quality improvement programmes.

Dementia Ambassadors' skills will be developed if required, to include understanding and undertaking environmental audits and observations of care. They will participate in in-service development through two monthly on-line meetings where they will be encouraged to identify the opportunity for improvements in service delivery.

A topic of the month will be identified by the Dementia Team/Ambassadors and shared using IT and Communications opportunities. Topics may range from innovations in care, national priorities (for example, hydration or delirium management) and research findings, to sharing resident or family stories as learning opportunities.

Dementia Ambassadors in all homes will support dementia care mapping bi-annually as a benchmark for practice and evaluation of ongoing improvements.

## Workforce education

Staff will initially develop skills using the traditional LearnPro approach, but blended learning activities including face to face teaching, practical role modelling and workbooks with assessments will be employed to improve the application of knowledge in specialist areas of dementia care. Large group teaching may not be viable in the short term due to infection control measures; developing local approaches to "Train the Trainers" with the Dementia Ambassadors will support cascading training.



### Dementia Informed Level

From 2020 and beyond we aim to ensure that all staff are Dementia Informed within the first month of starting employment with Balhousie Care Group. An on-line module is used initially, the post module assessment signed off and retained in the employee records. Staff will be able to demonstrate positive interactions with residents living with dementia and recognise situations when the residents' safety or dignity is compromised.

### Dementia Skilled Level

Care staff and Activities Co-ordinators will develop to achieve Dementia Skilled level within the first six months of employment. Successful completion of LearnPro Dementia Skilled online learning is the basic requirement, and the Dementia Team and Ambassadors using blended learning approaches to develop their knowledge will support staff in:

- fundamental physical care of residents with dementia
- person-centred care delivery
- meaningful activities for people living with dementia and cognitive decline
- rights, risks and limits to freedom
- fundamental care of people with dementia at end of life

### Dementia Enhanced Level

Carers developing to become Senior Carers and those who seek to become Dementia Ambassadors will be supported to work at Dementia Enhanced Level in

preparation for their role as leaders in care delivery. It is desirable that Activities Co-ordinators also develop their skills to this level. The core dementia modules at skilled level will underpin further development in more advanced dementia care including:

- legislation in dementia care, capacity and consent, welfare attorney/guardianship
- pharmacology and medication management for people living with dementia
- use of psychosocial therapies including positive behavioural therapy
- palliative and end of life care advocacy
- quality improvement in clinical care and the environment

### Dementia Expertise Level

The Dementia Team and interested Dementia Ambassadors will undertake to seek learning opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge to ensure a positive and effective care environment for all people living with dementia and their families. Skills development will be tailored to the individual and may include teaching and learning skills, coaching skills and quality improvement management.

A register of staff education developed to demonstrate investment in staff skills and knowledge will run concurrently with quality improvement project logs, clinical/environmental audits and gathering service user feedback on the quality of Balhousie Care Group's dementia care delivery.

# 2

## Developing a therapeutic environment for people living with dementia and their families

The new national dementia strategy, due to launch around November 2021, will continue to provide a focus for educating our employees.



The environment in which people live influences how they feel and behave. Developing a therapeutic environment will contribute to the achievement of Balhousie Care Group commitments 2 and 3-5. Care homes designed for the care of people living with dementia encourage community, maximise safety while allowing autonomy, promote positive behaviours and abilities, and can redirect stressed and distressed behaviours. For the environment to be therapeutic, the care culture must complement the physical environment. The therapeutic effect of carers cannot be underestimated.

Delivery of safe and effective person-centred care is fundamental to Balhousie Care Group's values. Following key guidelines and standards, this strategy aims to develop continuous improvement in the therapeutic environment.

### Assessment and care planning

People with dementia and their carers have the right to full participation in care needs assessment, planning, deciding and arranging care, support and treatment. Meaningful biographic information and lifestyle preferences will be gathered and uploaded to the Person Centred System (PCS) to guide outcome-based care planning and evaluation. Care planning audits will benchmark and identify areas of improvement.

### Meaningful activities and therapeutic interventions

Staff will provide opportunities for meaningful activities and therapeutic interventions (for example reminiscence therapy and life story work) on an individual and group basis that are meaningful to residents. Activities should be flexible and planned to stimulate physical, mental and social wellbeing. Residents' participation and responses to activities should be recorded on PCS to provide a guide for future care delivery.





### Personalised spaces

Creating a personalised door or doorframe can improve residents' orientation to their own space. Encouraging personal items in the room, including memory boxes, music and art, can provide cues for meaningful conversations. Dementia ambassadors will support residents and their families with the opportunity to personalise the outside and inside of their rooms. Bedrooms will provide peace and be designed for sleep and relaxation. Residents with en-suite facilities should be able to see their toilet from their beds.

### Therapeutic communal spaces

Communal areas will be safe, well-lit and designed to minimise falls risks. Residents will be able to see where they want to go by having clear signage with words and pictures on a contrasting background. Each home should develop at least one sensory space in partnership with residents and relatives. This may be part of the garden area or a designated room within the home, not used for any purpose other than to provide a therapeutic area for people living with dementia.

### End of life care

Inappropriate hospital admissions can cause unnecessary disruption for a person with dementia in the final days and weeks of life and they may not die in their preferred place or in the most appropriate place for them.

All residents should have an anticipatory or advanced care plan uploaded to PCS. This may have been decided and documented before admission; staff should confirm on admission that the resident's wishes have not changed. Families may have a range of emotions when their loved one is at end of life due to the losses associated with the dementia journey. Care planning and evaluation should include care of relatives through to the end of residents' lives. Care home staff will demonstrate planning joint working with specialist services to support residents to live a good life until the end of their life.



# 3

## Collaboration and growth through engagement

People living with dementia have the right to access a range of treatment, care and support. Though collaboration with internal and external stakeholders and agencies, we can achieve Balhousie Care Group commitments 1, 4 and 5.



### Collaboration with partner agencies to deliver quality care

Balhousie Care Group staff will demonstrate open and transparent engagement with community based healthcare professionals in accessing specialist care for people living with dementia. These include, but are not restricted to:

- General Practitioners and Primary Care teams
- Community based social care teams
- Community based professionals allied to health
- Community nursing teams and care home liaison staff
- Community mental health teams
- Palliative care and end of life teams

Staff will recognise the potential to share learning between partner organisations that will improve physical, mental and social care of residents living with dementia throughout their care journey.

### Collaboration with service users to improve service quality

Every six months a revised satisfaction survey will be distributed to service users and/or their families, using a mixed method of data collection. Employing a combination of anonymised qualitative and quantitative data will allow for a statistical baseline of satisfaction scores with a narrative to explain the findings. A report documenting dementia practices company-wide will be produced which will identify areas of good practice for sharing, areas for quality improvement across the Group, and an accompanying action plan if required.

### Collaboration with agencies to enhance learning, practice development and research activity

Balhousie Care Group will seek accreditation for our Care Homes from national dementia improvement programmes. The Dementia Team and Dementia Ambassadors will actively seek learning, development and research opportunities through establishing and strengthening networks with partner and external agencies. Balhousie Care Group will also be involved in sharing our knowledge and good practice through publications, attending and presenting at conferences, podcasts and blogs on our company website, and active participation in working groups.





“ We cannot and should not wait for national achievements in dementia to shape local change. We must work together to deliver the best possible dementia care and support for everyone living with dementia in Scotland

Sir Henry Simmons  
Alzheimer Scotland Chief Executive 2018.



# 4 Continuous quality improvement in dementia care for our residents

Through the revision of previous successful projects and the initiation of others of local and/or national priority, we can demonstrate continuous improvement in service delivery for people living with dementia and their families. Successful and targeted project development and completion can achieve commitments 2 – 5.

## Namaste project

Namaste translates as “to honour the spirit within” and when embedded in care homes, staff shift from task-orientated care to delivering holistic and meaningful care. This previously successful Balhouses Care Group pilot project will be revised and refreshed for development across all care homes. Opportunities will be sought to develop interested Dementia Ambassadors’ knowledge and leadership skills to support the adoption of Namaste principles, to increase the number of homes with Namaste rooms and to enhance the quality of life for people living with dementia.

## Reducing antipsychotic medication

“When a person living with dementia, who does not have a psychosis, is prescribed an anti-psychotic to “help with their behavioural symptoms” at best they receive a toxic medication that causes increased confusion, sedation and reduces their mobility, leading to serious illnesses and increased falls” (Perry 2016)

Reducing the use of antipsychotic medication and its use as part of chemical restraint has been a national priority for care providers and health professionals. Balhouses Care Group will respond by developing staff knowledge about the application of therapeutic interventions to reduce stress and distress in people who have cognitive decline, including delirium. Education and training will run concurrently with measuring the use of antipsychotic medication and through monitoring partnerships, for example, working with General Practitioners and community mental health teams.





### Dementia Support Programme

This programme, which will be led and supported by the Dementia Team, is designed to develop all carers, from new recruits through to those with extensive experience, but who may have not been previously provided with development opportunities. Ultimately, completion of the programme will prepare carers to take a senior role and increase capacity and capability in caring for people living with dementia and their families.

There are three modules comprising a number of units within each module. Accreditation will be sought and this programme will be augmented with face-to-face teaching, to include "Train the Trainers". These modules should be undertaken in conjunction with the newly developed Balhousie Care Group Carer Development programme to provide seniors with the skills to manage the physical care of people living with dementia and to develop the non-technical skills associated with decision making and supporting people living with dementia and their families.

### Additional projects

Dementia Ambassadors will be supported by the Dementia Team to develop their own projects and share their findings through the Dementia Ambassadors' Group meetings, the Balhousie Care Group Communications team, and to wider audiences through conferences and publications.



# 5

## Measuring Success

Balhouses Care Group commits to developing evidence of service improvements to share internally and externally to the organisation.



The Dementia Team in collaboration with key stakeholders, including service users, will develop an action plan with measurable outcomes for all sections of this strategy. Measureable outcomes will include a combination of quantitative data through, for example, audit and qualitative data including satisfaction measures and targeted feedback on service quality. Instead of the action plan being a discrete part of this strategy, the actions will be included in every care home's Service Improvement Plan or Service Development Plan. This approach will ensure that dementia care becomes embedded in service improvement. Successful outcomes will not only demonstrate a knowledgeable skilled staff group but service delivery that is safe, effective and improves the quality of life of our residents who are living with dementia. Achieving our commitments to people living with dementia and their families will also demonstrate our commitment excellence to external agencies, for example the Care Inspectorate.

## Conclusion

This strategy has been developed as part of the Balhouses Care Group commitment to service users. We recognise that if we can provide excellent person-centred care for people living with dementia, we can provide excellent care for all of our residents.





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*\*Photographs for this brochure were taken prior to COVID-19 lockdown and compulsory mask-wearing.*



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