



PRESS INFORMATION

Dementia Care in RMBI care homes

Dementia is one of the most important issues we face as the population ages. There are currently approximately 820,000 people with dementia living in the UK and this figure is set to rise within the next twenty years.

The Alzheimer's Society's report 'Home from Home' states that two thirds of people living in care homes have some form of dementia and that many homes are not providing person centred care to meet their needs. It also found that a substantial number of staff welcomed the opportunity for more training to improve their skills, thus enabling them to offer enhanced care to people with dementia. The report also highlighted that there were not many activities geared for people with dementia and that residents with dementia were often left on their own for long periods of time and were spoken to by staff in a disparaging way. The report goes on to state that care plans were not person centred and that relatives were not being included in their relatives' care planning.

Debra Keeling, Deputy Director of Care Operations, said: "We found that people living with dementia, of varying types and stages, live throughout our care homes and therefore as an organisation needed to think about how we could adapt, improve and expand our services to meet the needs of the people who live in our homes in a way that enhances their well being and quality of life."

The National Dementia Strategy sets out key objectives for providers to meet to ensure that people living with a dementia receive high-quality care and are involved in decisions relating to their care and support.

The RMBI carried out qualitative research on the type of care and individual needs the people using its services required and saw the need to implement a strategy that would enable it to improve its services to people with dementia, their relatives and also those living within the care setting without a dementia.

The RMBI Strategy was approved by the board of trustees in 2009 as a five year programme and is currently being rolled out in a phased approach to its 17 care Homes throughout England and Wales.

The Strategy focuses on person centred care and how through the provision of a more person centred approach the quality of life could be improved for individuals using its services.

New and improved care planning documentation has been introduced, which focuses on the individual's care needs, taking note of their past, hobbies/interest and desires and how this information could be used to influence the way care is delivered to the individual to ensure that it is meaningful to them. The revised care plans have enabled staff to enrich residents' lives with both physical and emotional activities in tandem with the care provided. Relatives are also encouraged to be involved in the process throughout.

Many of our Homes hold a regular relatives support group for families of people living with dementia. The purpose of the group is to offer both emotional support and advice about all aspects of dementia, with an emphasis on sharing experiences and learning from each other.

The RMBI Strategy is integral to the working of all departments within the organisation. Closer working relationships have been developed to ensure that cross department working offer advise and support in order to ensure that the key strategic goals of the Strategy are met in a coordinated fashion and that any changes required within the care home environment is implemented in a manner that is appropriate to the people living in the home.

A comprehensive training programme to support staff has also been implemented. Staff benefit from the Alzheimer's Society's learning and development package, 'Tomorrow is another day'. The programme helps to ensure that all people with dementia are supported by a workforce that understands their needs. Staff working in our specialist dementia support units undertake a bespoke six month education and awareness course provided by Dementia UK, to enable each home and staff group to identify their strengths and improve the service to people living with a dementia. Home Managers and Deputy Home Managers are also supported to complete the diploma in person centred dementia care run by Dementia Care Matters. Through this investment in staff training and development the RMBI aims to equip its workforce to review the care regime in their local care setting in order for them to seek ways of removing barriers that hinder relationship based care.

Furthermore, SONAS sessions have now been introduced into all RMBI care homes, providing older people who have communication difficulties better opportunities to communicate and engage in activities. In partnership with THRIVE, the charity who champion the benefits of gardening, the RMBI has introduced specific horticultural activities for everyone, including features such as places to sit, raised beds, sensory stimulation and opportunities for people to be involved in gardening.

The RMBI Strategy will continue to be rolled out until eventually all 17 RMBI care homes have completed the training and are equipped to provide better quality care to the people using its services. On completion of the Strategy the RMBI will be able to deliver a more person centred approach to its care provision throughout the organisation.

All Homes will also be working towards achieving the Butterfly kitemark, following an observation by Dementia Care Matters. Cornwallis Court, Suffolk has just achieved this award in recognition of the high level of person centred care they deliver to people living with dementia.

-Ends-



Notes to Editor

The RMBI has been caring for older Freemasons and their dependants for over 160 years. We operate 17 care homes across England and Wales offering a range of high quality care. Many of our Homes are registered for both residential and nursing care and all can offer places to people with dementia following an assessment of their needs.

Limited sheltered accommodation is offered for those people who prefer to live more independently, but with support nearby in an emergency.

The RMBI has a team of Care Advice Visitors, who know a great deal about health and welfare rights and benefits. They can also give advice on all aspects of the services offered by the RMBI and the other Masonic charities, and by statutory and voluntary agencies.

The RMBI can also offer short-stay breaks, including respite care. These are helpful for both those living alone, and for families that need a little respite from the demands of caring for an older relative.

At the RMBI we believe in treating everyone as an individual. Every potential resident is assessed to find out what type of care package would best meet their needs. A tailor-made care plan is put together which is reviewed on a regular basis.

Residents who choose an RMBI Home, have the security of knowing that they have a home for life regardless of any change in their financial circumstances, as long as we can cater for their particular care needs.

For more information about the RMBI and our other Homes please visit our website, www.rmbi.org.uk

1. *Media Contact: Deena Samani*
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E dsamanii@rmbi.org.uk
2. *The Royal Masonic Benevolent Institution (RMBI) is a charity which dates back over 160 years with the specific aim of helping older Freemasons and their dependents.*
3. *The RMBI operates 17 care homes throughout England and Wales with at any time 1,000 residents.*
4. *The RMBI is a registered charity. Charity number: 207360*
5. *For more information about the RMBI please visit www.rmbi.org.uk*

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Photo Caption: A resident at RMBI care home Albert Edward Prince of Wales Court, Mid Glamorgan with Activities Co-ordinator Sheila Thomas.

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