



Report 4 Primary Care Position Paper

Enabling People with dementia to live well at home and in the community

The majority of people with dementia want to live at home, in a familiar environment linked to their communities (IASW, Age Action, ASI and UCD, 2016). To achieve this we have to improve and enhance primary care. To that end we recommend three key actions:

- i. The creation of a **national network of Dementia Advisers** as an integral part of a primary care team who would provide dedicated support to people diagnosed with dementia and their carers. There is a similar scheme of 70 'Link Workers' in Scotland which is having positive results (Deputy Butler and Senator Kelleher, 2017). Dementia Advisers signpost people to services, welfare and provide support and validation to families. The ASI currently has eight Dementia Advisers. It is envisioned that this service would expand to 32 and eventually scale up to 90 with a Dementia Adviser for every primary care network.
- ii. The **recognition of dementia as a chronic disease within the new GP contract** and recognition of the resources and time required to care for people with dementia. GPs need adequate and ongoing training to enable them to provide the best support possible to people with dementia. The GP PREPARED project, currently funded through the National Dementia Strategy (NDS), should be continued and expanded. A Dementia Care Coordinator, whose role is to coordinate health and social care professionals, should also be available to every primary care network as specified in the NDS.
- iii. Make every community a **dementia friendly community** (The Alzheimer Society of Ireland, 2016). We must work with urban and rural villages to ensure the challenges and obstacles faced by people living with dementia are eliminated or reduced. This will involve a national education and awareness programme involving the entire community and targeted key people e.g. An Post, shops, Gardaí and other core aspects of our communities. This will require funding and on-going support from central government.

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Deputy Mary Butler and Senator Colette Kelleher 2017, 'Report One: Learning about Dementia: The Scottish Experience.'

IASW, Age Action, ASI and UCD 2016, 'Meeting Older People's Preference for Care: Policy, But What About Practice?'

The Alzheimer Society of Ireland 2016, 'Creating Dementia Friendly Communities – A Toolkit'.