



Kinections Community Bulletin Series

Principles emerging from Dementia-Friendly Communities

Kinections Second Community Bulletin

Welcome to this second Community Bulletin. In our first Community Bulletin we explored what had been written about dementia-friendly communities and care homes. We also explored the concept of dementia-friendly communities more broadly. This bulletin can be found on our webpage www.myhomelife.uws.ac.uk/scotland/kinections under the Strengthening Community in Care homes-Community Bulletin tab.

What is the focus of this Community Bulletin?

Life Changes Trust have published an online set of publications called Dementia: A Whole Life Approach.

Second in this set of publications is Community and Dementia, which discusses dementia and citizenship also shares the learning from 4 years of working with a wide range of projects. This rich learning is shared in the form of a Dementia-Friendly Community Toolkit, as well proposing 9 Principles that are present across Dementia-Friendly communities. How these 9 Principles are expressed within individual communities. As a follow-on to Community Bulletin No. 1 which looked from a more theoretical position on dementia-friendly communities, this Bulletin explores how the 9 Principles Emerging from Dementia-Friendly Communities have been expressed in Kinections. The bulletin closes with a story about the development of a garden in Craigie Care Home, Kilmarnock that was a true community effort. In Bulletin 1 we discussed how care homes and

dementia-friendly communities might use slightly different words to describe their approach; but the heart of the work is the same. We suggest that this story of Craigie's care home illustrates this, whilst not named as a dementia-friendly community initiative, the work and collaboration in developing the garden followed many of the Principles of Dementia-Friendly Communities.

Exploring Principles Emerging in Dementia Friendly Communities and the Kinections Project

The 9 Principles suggest that Dementia-Friendly Communities work best when:

They adopt a social model of disability, rather than a medical model

They take an assets-based approach that identifies and mobilises individual and community 'assets', rather than focusing only on problems and needs

People with dementia and carers have a significant say, that places them at the heart of the community so they can shape it

They are multi-generational

They enable people with dementia and carers to do what really matters to them

They provide appropriate training to staff and volunteers that goes beyond awareness raising

They meet with other communities so they can learn from each other

They collaborate with others and work in partnership to maximise use of resources and skills

They mentor new communities, who mentor new communities

Each of these Principles will be discussed in turn, as they relate to the Kinections project.

They adopt a social model of disability, rather than a medical model.

Involving people with dementia, and particularly people with advanced dementia in research has historically been deemed problematic when considered from a medical model perspective. More recent thinking has sought to move to a social model of disability when considering how to create systems and processes which enable people with dementia, including people deemed to be without capacity, to participate in research.

The Kinnections project was committed to undertaking the work involved in securing ethical approval for people with advanced dementia (reasoned to be without capacity under the Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act, 2000) to be included in research activity within Kinnections. The Kinnections team were successful in their application to Scotland A Research Ethics Committee, who are the body responsible for approving research with people with reduced capacity.

Unfortunately the planned research activity could not proceed due to COVID-19 restrictions. The Kinnections team have made their ethics submission, and accompanying documentation, publicly available in order to promote and support research activity involving people with advanced dementia.

They take an assets-based approach that identifies and mobilises individual and community ‘assets’, rather than focusing only on problems and needs.

Kinnections is rooted in a strengths-based approach to research and culture development called Appreciative Inquiry.

Some Principles of Appreciative Inquiry that connect with the above assets-based approach principle of dementia-friendly communities include:

- The belief that within every organisation or system there are things that are working well
- That what we focus on grows and expands, meaning if we only give our attention and focus to problems or issues we can miss out on the opportunity to give energy to the existing assets and strengths.
- That by recognising and celebrating assets and strengths that they can be amplified and be encouraged to happen more of the time.

In Kinnections we wanted to communicate this strengths-based approach in the project aims and objectives which were:

- Find out what is important to people in care homes living with dementia & those who support them.
- Use our learning about what is important to people to help create a picture of what community in care homes looks like at its best.
- Work together to enhance and imagine small, everyday ways in which people’s experiences of community can be strengthened in care homes.
- Engage with people and groups from local communities and those who are involved with care homes to strengthen ways in which those who live and work in care homes are valued & cherished.

Alongside the strengths-based approach informing the project objectives, we also worked in Kinnections to develop resources which help the positive qualities within people and communities to be named and celebrated. We developed the Community Qualities Cards, which are a set of 70 different qualities such as ‘heart of gold’ and ‘friendliness’ which can be found in people with and without a dementia diagnosis. These Community Quality Cards can help people to identify their own and others strengths, as well as seeing the assets of the community they are part of.

People with dementia and carers have a significant say, that places them at the heart of the community so they can shape it.

Within the over-arching theme of exploring community in care homes emerged several smaller areas of work and focus. These initiatives used a variety of creative means by which to engage people with dementia and their families.

Further details of these initiatives can be found in our [**Kinections Chronicles**](#).

- Collaborative Storytelling Sessions
- Elderflowers face-to-face and online visits (A Place in the Fun)
- Extra Yards Together Make the Extra Mile
- Future of Care Homes
- Local Stories and Legends
- Workshops with relatives and Hearts & Minds
- Using Stories to Enhance our Community (SnipChat Sessions)
- Trying and testing of different resources (Knowing Me and Knowing You)

The design of the Kinections project was such that a significant proportion of the work was focused on working with care home staff. The work with care home staff focused on how they currently, and could enhance in the future, the ways in which people with dementia and their families are cared for and supported.

Reasons for placing a focus on working with staff included that:

- They have an established relationship with residents and families and so are best placed to have ongoing conversations to gather the perspectives of people as to how they would like to shape the care home community
- They have in-depth understanding of both the particular care home they work in, as well as wider contextual knowledge regarding: existing relationships with local services, matters of regulation & quality assurance and broader areas of interest & relevance to care homes.

Within the Kinections project we would like to acknowledge that throughout the project we continued to learn from others about collaborative ways in which to meaningfully create spaces for people, particularly people with advanced dementia, to have a say in their community.

We hope that Kinections has been a voice of recognition and celebration of those who work in and alongside care homes, and demonstrate tremendous skill and expertise in their ways of engagement and listening to people living with dementia in care homes and their families.

They are multi-generational.

The care homes involved in Kinnections had established links with local nurseries and schools, which brought much joy and connection to the residents and staff. In Kinnections we also drew attention to the multi-generational nature of care homes, due to ages in care homes spanning from 18yr old staff to 81yr old + residents. The examples below demonstrate how the engagements moved from being multi-generational encounters between people of different ages to being inter-generational connections and relationships.

Reciprocal care and interest in one another often emerges in staff-resident relationships. This care and interest can then extend to connections to the other person's family network; in Kinnections we heard many stories of residents forming relationships with the children and grand-children of staff members.

More examples of these informal intergenerational connections include: Some examples of these informal multi-generational connections being:

- The daughter of a member of staff visiting on a regular basis, and chatting with residents as they helped with the tea trolley.
- A member of staff sharing that her newly born grandchild was unwell and the residents asking everyday how they were doing, and then the staff member bringing her grandchild in to meet the residents once she was a few months old.
- A group of residents always making sure there were treats available for children who would be visiting their (great) grandparents at weekends.

Insights into Me also acknowledges that when what matters to a person presents complexities in the context of community living may mean that further conversation and exploration are required; and so it invites these types of conversations to take place early on in the person's move to a care home.

Kinnections has collaborated with Generations Working Together (the national centre for intergenerational practice in Scotland), who plan to promote the use of Kinnections for online interactions between younger and older generations in care homes and other settings across Scotland.

They enable people with dementia and carers to do what really matters to them

Enabling conversations and interactions that lead to discovery of what is important to people has been at the heart of Kinnections. We have worked from the understanding that these conversations and interactions are currently happening everyday in care homes. They can be further enhanced by structured processes and resources which support people to share what matters to them.

We consider these processes and resources to be important because:

- It can take courage to express something that is important to us.
- It can take courage to ask questions & listen to about what matters to others when we don't know what they may say, and how they would like us to respond.
- Creative resources can help us to think of things that are important to us that we may not necessarily think of if just asked the question.

In Kinnections we developed the **'Insights into Me'** source which has been developed to support conversations where people find out about the small, simple or significant things that help to make a good day for residents in care homes, and their families. Insights into Me also acknowledges that when what matters to a person presents complexities in the context of community living mean that further conversation and exploration may be required; and so it invites these types of conversations to take place early on in the person's move to a care home.

They provide appropriate training to staff and volunteers that goes beyond awareness raising.

The approach to learning within Kinectons was to work with staff to identify the existing knowledge and expertise they had on supporting the particular residents in their care home; with an additional emphasis on finding ways to ensure this knowledge was shared among the staff team.

Further information about approaches to learning within Kinectons can found in the [**Celebrating and Enhancing Learning section of our Kinectons Chronicles**](#).

Other examples of development opportunities for staff within Kinectons were:

- In response to care home staffs desire to enhance the lounge experience of resident's (i.e. how they spend their day) a two-day series of workshops were organised which introduced staff to a wide range of different approaches to engagement and interaction with residents, that they could then try out in their own care home.
- In addition, Kinectons collaborated with Namaste Care™ Programme trainers who provided training to 18 care home staff in the Namaste Care approach. Kinectons then explored with the care home staff how they would maximise their learning from this training in their day-to-day practice when supporting people with dementia and those at the end-of-life.

They meet with other communities so they can learn from each other

Kinectons has valued being part of networks where an openness and generosity to share and learn from one another has been at the heart of ways of working together. While always strong, people's eagerness to connect and share was further strengthened during COVID-19, with an added motivation for people to share key learning that may be of benefit to others.

The communities Kinectons has connected with have included:

- Dementia-friendly communities and initiatives that form part of the Life Changes Trust Network
- Kindness Innovation Network (KIN)
- Care Home FaNS (Friends and Neighbours) Network*
- My Home Life UK, Australia and Germany*

* You can read more information on [**Care Home FaNS and My Home Life on the My Home Life Community pages of Kinectons Chronicles**](#).

Kinectons is also part of the University of the West of Scotland community and has had opportunities to work with and learn from colleagues in the School of Media, Culture & Society and School of Education & Life Sciences. Kinectons works closely with members of the Alzheimer Scotland Centre for Policy & Practice (ASCPP), with Dr Anna-Jack Waugh, Senior Lecturer, ASCPP taking up the role of Kinectons Principal Investigator in January 2020.

They collaborate with others and work in partnership to maximise use of resources and skills.

Kinectons has greatly benefitted from and been enhanced by numerous collaborations. These collaborations can be broadly categorised to be collaborations with:

- Colleagues in various Schools and departments across UWS
- Dementia-friendly initiatives within the Life Changes Trust Network
- Creative practitioners with an interest in people living with dementia and/or care homes
- Organisations closely affiliated to care homes
- Health and social care practitioners working in or connected with care homes
- Wider My Home Life Community
- Researchers in other Universities
- Community organisations and venues

They mentor new communities, who mentor new communities.

Kinectons outputs, such as this document, have been designed to tell the story of the project, and have also been created with the hope that they may be of relevance and use- both to future research projects and to those with an interest in dementia-friendly communities & initiatives and their connections with care homes.

This Community Bulletin has thus far talked mapped the Emerging Principles of Dementia-Friendly Communities to the work of Kinections. In the following section we will share the story of how one care home engaged a wide array of individuals and groups from their local community in developing their garden. Many of the Principles outlined above are evident in this story.

Growing and Nurturing Community-

Craigie Care Home Garden Venture

The progression of Craigie Care Home's garden in to a space of many uses for many people has been years in the making, and has been a labour of love. Before the combined efforts of staff, residents, professionals and the local community, the garden wasn't showing its full potential. The aim was to develop a space which could accommodate of a wide range of activities, and was accessible to residents, staff and visitors. Craigie Care Home's Care Home Manager Denise and Activity Co-Ordinator Fiona, have always sought to maintain links with the community, and a chance conversation during a garden fete led to a successful campaign to win funding from 'Tesco's Bags of Help'. This was a wonderful example of the community putting their tokens to good use and voting for a local care home to receive financial support in enhancing their outdoor space for residents. A broad range of organisations were involved with the residents and staff in developing the garden including East Ayrshire Council. Dobbie's Garden Centre and local community groups with a gardening interest got involved. Denise and Fiona invite Trellis Scotland to lend their expertise and help. Trellis is a charity which supports 'wellbeing through horticulture'. Joan, a project Advisor with Trellis was involved in the planning of the garden and shared her experience in the conversations and sharing of knowledge that was facilitated by the Craigie Garden.

"It's all worth it, gardening is amazing. [the residents] had a great wealth of knowledge themselves and so much as they were asking me questions, it was very reciprocal. It was really rewarding for me to be out there and to see [the residents] actually access [the garden] without any assistance, walking about and touching plants, and being comfortable in that garden space".

Joan Wilson, Trellis Scotland

The garden has herbs, flowers and a wealth of plants appropriate to the East Ayrshire climate. It has a lawn which has seen a garden party and awards ceremony, and the garden is a safe space. The landscaping is beautiful to enjoy outdoors and from the cosiness of indoors. There is a circuitous path for enjoying a dander, and benches for repose. A garden party was hosted to celebrate a major phase of the garden completion, with many of the local community in attendance including those dignitaries and students from local schools who had helped with making the garden what had become.

The garden continues to grow literally and metaphorically with the next installation to be a greenhouse. The greenhouse has been purchased enhancing community fund that was offered to care home participating in Kinections. A number of residents are eager to start potting and planting, to make the most of this new addition to their garden space.

Fiona shared how the garden is a physical place for relationships, but is also a meaningful project between staff and residents, with shared aspirations for the future.

"We're part of the local community, and we do now have that garden for relatives, friends. We will strive to keep replanting it and keep it nice. The greenhouse will be used for years and years to come. I do feel proud. I love to tend the garden with [the residents] and I know we've achieved that. It's a big part that garden for us in that- and for myself, I feel proud. When residents tell me their stories of their life stories that I'm privileged to be part of that. I know with [the residents'] projects, there are things we can get up to in that garden."

Fiona Brown, Activity Co-Ordinator Craigie Care Home

Communities working together to transform:

Before...



After...

