

# UWE mental health expert helps produce new dementia guidelines

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A UWE Bristol professor in mental health is one of the key experts behind a new care pathway and Guide to Psychosocial Interventions in Dementia launched recently by the British Psychological Society.

Professor Richard Cheston is a [clinical psychologist](#) who worked with colleagues from five NHS Trusts to produce the documents which bring together current research and best practice in psychosocial care.

Dementia has been a key topic since the Prime Minister's Dementia Challenge highlighted the need for the UK to become [dementia](#) aware. Dementia was also on the agenda at the recent G7 summit.

The Guide to Psychosocial Interventions in Dementia offers an A to Z of approaches which can be used in this area to enable people to live well with dementia.

Professor Cheston said, "The documents highlight the importance of personalised pre-assessment counselling, skilful cognitive assessment, sympathetic communication of the diagnosis and appropriate post-diagnostic support and access to relevant psychosocial interventions. They provide clear recommendations and guidance not only to clinical psychologists working in the field but to their colleagues in other disciplines and partnership agencies working with people living with dementia."

By 2015 there will be 850,000 people with dementia in the UK including 40,000 younger people. One in six people aged 80 and over have dementia and there are 670,000 carers of people with dementia in the UK. Two-thirds of people with dementia live in the community while one-third live in a care home. Only 44% of people with dementia in England, Wales and Northern Ireland receive a diagnosis.

According to the Alzheimer's Society, up to a quarter of all general hospital beds in the UK are occupied by a person over 65 years who has dementia.

The guidelines are the output of a two-year project coordinated by Reinhard Guss of the Faculty of the Psychology of Older People (FPOP). The project involved consultation with service users, carers, and stakeholder groups such as the Alzheimer's Society, Dementia Action Alliance (DAA) and DEEP (The Dementia Engagement and Empowerment Project). They are supported by the Royal College of Psychiatrists Old Age Faculty and the Royal College of Nursing.

The documents Clinical Psychology in Early Stage Dementia Care Pathway and Guide to Psychosocial Interventions in Dementia can be downloaded from the British Psychological Society [webpage](#).

Provided by University of the West of England

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