

## National Dementia Strategy Implementation Monitoring and Governance Group Meeting

Wednesday 8th February, 2023, via Teams. Report by Anne Tierney.

This meeting takes place between members of the Scottish Government Dementia Policy Unit and a range of representatives of interested parties, organisations and carers' groups including the National Dementia Carers Action Network (NDCAN).



### New Dementia Strategy

First on the agenda was an update on the new dementia strategy by Geraldine Campbell, Head of the Dementia Policy Unit. The Dementia Policy Unit is keen to make sure that the new strategy is fit for purpose. It acknowledges that there have been issues with previous dementia strategies in that there is a practice/policy gap. Scotland's dementia policy is acknowledged to be among the most progressive in the world; however, implementation of policy has lagged behind. The Dementia Policy Unit is working hard to ensure that this is addressed in the new strategy. There was discussion surrounding language, funding and accountability – all issues which have been previously identified as contributing to the practice/ policy gap. The halting of the National Care Service was also discussed as it affects people living with dementia, their families and carers. Services are starting to pick up as we move into the post-pandemic period, although what those services look like may be different to what was previously on offer.

## SIGN Guidelines

The second item on the agenda was the SIGN guidelines for dementia, presented by Dr Adam Daly, Consultant in Old Age Psychiatry. SIGN guidelines are a national clinical guideline produced by Health Improvement Scotland, which includes recommendations for the diagnosis, risk factors and management of dementia and co-morbidities. The guidelines were discussed and it was noted that there was a missing element of the care of people with learning disabilities, specifically Down Syndrome, and the care of young onset dementia.



## Reflection

The group acknowledged that we are entering challenging times in all areas of health and social care. For me, as a former and current carer, there is a lot to be hopeful for. The implementation group acknowledges the weaknesses in previous dementia strategies that have been exploited, resulting in the policy/practice gap. This goes a long way to addressing what many of us have experienced. Written into the new strategy is a sense of accountability which I hope will shift service provider thinking. However, these changes do not happen on their own. We have to keep pushing to have policy implemented, and that means continually talking to councils and health boards, and advocating for our loved ones.