



DEMENTIA AND HOUSING WORKING GROUP

BOARD DEMENTIA CHAMPION – OUTLINE SPECIFICATION

Introduction

This specification is offered to Housing Providers in to help them fulfil Recommendation 35 in the report of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Housing and Care for Older People: “Housing people with dementia – are we ready?” (2021):

We recommend that providers of housing for older people in the private and social sectors appoint dementia ‘champions’ at executive / senior management / board level, in general needs social and specialist housing bodies, to demonstrate organisational commitment and ensure effective leadership at the highest level.

Overall purpose of the role

The primary role of the Board Champion is to provide leadership that helps the organisation to find ways of improving its housing¹ and services to people with dementia and their carers. The Champion may do this in various ways:

- By encouraging the Board to use the Dementia Housing Charter as the framework for developing its strategy/plan and adopt best practice
- By raising awareness pro-actively about dementia , both on a planned basis and as opportunities arise
- By challenging negative attitudes, inappropriate language or misconceptions about dementia and its impact
- By promoting awareness raising and skills level training in dementia for staff, as appropriate
- By helping the organisation consider ways to involve people with dementia and carers so that their voices are heard at all levels
- By helping the organisation to consider ways in which to support its own staff who may be affected by dementia

¹ Housing refers to mainstream and specialist housing, whether operated by social housing providers, the third or private sector

- By exploring and highlighting opportunities for the organisation to network with other relevant organisations to ensure housing and dementia remain high on people's agendas
- By becoming a member of the DHWG Leaders' Forum

Requirements for the role

People recruited as Board Champions do not need to be experts in dementia. Rather, they will have a basic understanding about the condition and its impact on people with a diagnosis, their families and friends along with a determination to help the Board fulfil its obligations and improve services for their prospective and current residents who are living with dementia.

A Board Champion will:

- Be accountable for the organisation's dementia strategy and/or action plan
- Keep up to date about organisations and resources that may be able to offer advice on specific developments, e.g. case for capital or revenue funding, design of refurbished or new build stock to ensure they will be dementia-inclusive
- Be familiar with acceptable terminology and language in relation to people with dementia and act as a role model with other Board members, managers and staff
- Be confident about challenging proposals if they do not appear to meet the needs of residents with dementia and their carers
- Be familiar with a rights based approach to providing services, e.g. understanding dementia as a long term condition and a disability (and thus coming within the remit of the Equalities Act) rather than as a mental health problem
- Be alert to safeguarding matters in relation to residents with dementia and their carers
- Adopt an approach of 'What does this mean for our residents with dementia and their carers?' when considering and discussing Board agenda items
- Provide a report annually to the Board that reviews key actions undertaken and identifies further areas for improvement

About the Dementia and Housing Working Group

The DHWG brings together a wide range of stakeholders to focus specifically on housing and dementia with a view to promoting the role of the housing sector in enabling people with dementia to live independently in a suitable home environment in accordance with their needs and aspirations.

Twitter: @DementiaHousing

Website: <https://www.housinglin.org.uk/housing-networks/dementia-and-housing-working-group/>