

Annual General Meeting of the Prime Minister's Champion Group - Dementia Friendly Generation Event

12th September 2017

I attended this event in London and here are a few notes taken from the discussion.

Chaired by Angela Rippon.

“DEMENTIA IS A TEAM EVENT” i.e. it affects the whole family.

Ipsos Mori trained volunteers to carry out a poll/survey of dementia sufferers. The key response was:

“We have the right to –

Choices

Day to day family life

Early diagnosis

Respect

Involvement in research”

Currently 2m dementia friends – 170k of whom are young. 650 schools have signed up and introduced dementia issues to assemblies and the curriculum.

Daisy Robson, Senior Youth Engagement officer although Gavin Miller is shortly to take over. They have available teaching packs and hold interactive dementia friend sessions using music and art projects.

Matt Hyde (Chief Exec of the Scout movement) and Jack Abrey . The “million hands” project reaching children as young as six. “If you reach a child before he/she is 11, they are much more likely to stay involved afterwards”. Scouts can achieve a community impact badge for visiting and interacting with dementia sufferers.

Paul Murray from the Oasis Academy School – Isle of Sheppey. The students run “dementia cafes” six times a year. Getting people together, engaging with and entertaining Dementia sufferers. Next on 12th October 2017 (someone might want to visit) and then 14th December. The students quickly understood that it is “not just Vera Lynn!” The generations have moved on – people who were young in the sixties decade are now 70+ themselves – “we want the Who!” Paul emphasised the importance of getting photographic permission and making counselling available for the students. Angela Ripon said “kids get it, they don’t worry about dementia”. “Get the passion in our schools”.

Dr Mel Hall, Manchester Metropolitan University has conducted research into parents with dementia. Not just a disease of the old. She discovered 23 people aged between 6 and 31 who suffer from Dementia and there are great implications for medical practice.

Melanie.hall@mmu.ac.uk for information on the research.

We then broke into workshops. I was involved in the “Social Action” workshop. We heard from:

Joy – an Alzheimer sufferer from the age of 55. She has created a doll “Mr. Alzheimer” which she involves in age appropriate activities. It is hoped to market “Mr. Alzheimer”.

Jack Abrey and Astrid from the Scouts. Give the young their head, let them lead with projects on dementia sufferers, let them “drive it” in schools etc. Adults can be patronising. The young lead the young. There are of course safeguarding challenges.

Andy Chagga (spelling?) from “Dementia Friends in the Community” spoke about “Quality Social Action”. Talked about volunteering, fundraising, training dementia friends and embedding in the community. His social action movement has 2 million members. Get involved in Fresher week, with scout groups, with schools. Consider and be aware of cultural resistance and ethnic differences with reference to dementia.

Ian Sheriff from Plymouth Council and Trevor Jarvis, another Dementia sufferer. Spoke about dementia training in schools. Trevor wants to create a child support line like “ChildLine” for young people caring for parents with dementia. Shockingly, until six years ago, medical schools were not teaching students anything about dementia. He suggested separate messages on bus passes so that the driver was aware “I have dementia”, “put me off at ? stop”, “please don’t move until I’m sat down”.

What I took from the meeting:

Involve the Scouts.

Involve the Schools.

Involve Fresher week.

Set up a Dementia café.

Consider putting messages on bus passes.

Stephen Hibbert

Cabinet Member for Housing and Wellbeing