Quick news

- Eight teams in the region have received funding for projects to reduce the inappropriate use of anti-psychotic medication.

- £50 million has been made available by the Department of Health for ‘environmental improvements’ for dementia services and support.

- A training DVD is currently being developed to improve awareness of the needs of people from minority communities who have dementia.

Dementia Friendly Hospitals event

A Dementia Friendly Hospitals event was held in December which focussed on improvements which can be made in the region’s hospitals. Although formal quality improvement targets are in place, there was discussion around the need to move from ‘compliance’ with targets to ‘commitment’ to more dementia friendly working in every north east hospital.

We need people to sign up as ‘dementia friends’. A dementia friend learns more about what it’s like to live with dementia and then turns that into action - anyone of any age can be a dementia friend.

Sign up at www.dementiafriends.org.uk

For more information on the stories in this newsletter or to give us your feedback on any of the questions we have asked in it, please contact debbie.smith@northeast.nhs.uk or call 07826 864799.
Dementia leadership course
The Dementia Leadership Course is a piece of work from the Alliance's action plan aimed at people with dementia and their carers who are involved in or wish to be involved in influencing decision making. It aims to give those people the skills and confidence they need to engage with groups such as Health and Well Being Boards, Healthwatch and Clinical Commissioning Groups.

This course is currently under development and will be one of the first of its kind in the NHS. If you would like to be part of the course development please contact Debbie Smith before 28th March 2013.

Minority communities
Research has been undertaken to better understand how to support people in minority communities who live with dementia.

Initial findings show that certain minority groups: are more likely to receive no diagnosis or receive a diagnosis at a later stage; often lack awareness about dementia and the services that are available; have a stigma attached to dementia in some communities; require a specialist assessment process to deliver a diagnosis and sometimes have issues relating to the physical design of support and care services or the way in they are delivered - e.g. appropriate to their culture. The research also examined what services are valued, which are best able to deliver support and care and what services already exist to tackle the issues identified.

What do you think the alliance should be doing to improve dementia care for people in minority communities?

Forget me not event
A ‘Forget me not’ event was held in December 2012 with representatives from across the region coming together to raise awareness of the scheme. ‘Forget me not’ is an initiative aimed at giving staff information about the person with dementia’s preferences.

The event was a success with attendees impressed by the training model which cascades information via nurses to other staff including non-clinical support staff.

Mental Health Liaison Teams
Community hospitals usually have more people with mental health issues than general hospitals, with recent figures showing 643 older people with mental health issues in the hospitals covered by Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust.

A new project at the trust has put mental health liaison teams in place to engage early on following a patient’s admission to community hospitals. They work to consider mental health issues and manage these people’s needs better. This is done through early referrals, a daily presence on medical wards, occupational therapists, a new support worker role and post discharge mental health intervention work.

Do you have any examples of support from hospital liaison services (good or bad) which you would like to share with the alliance?

Value-based recruitment
The North East Mental Health Development Unit is currently working with the Alliance developing a toolkit around value-based recruitment, which can be used by employers when recruiting to jobs concerning dementia. We plan to make the ‘toolkit’ available by June/July.