

Leeds Older People Matter Food Group - NACC Hydration Award

Leeds Older People Matter Food Group won the 2012 National Association of Care Catering (NACC) Hydration Award for their city wide campaign. According to the NACC: “The Group impressed the judges with its significant contribution to best practice in hydration and wellbeing. The judges praised its remarkable, yet relatively low cost, campaign aimed at improving health whilst reducing treatment costs.”

The Group was created in response to the rising number of older people in the city and the growing risk of malnutrition. Group members include key officers with an interest in, or responsibility for nutrition in NHS Leeds, Leeds Community Health Trust and Leeds City Council. Their aim is to develop a coordinated approach to food work for older people based on needs, including raising the awareness of the issue of malnutrition and dehydration, highlighting how good nutrition and hydration has a place in any social or health care setting.

The Project

Building on their success in 2011's NACC Dehydration in Older People Awareness Week (DiOPAW), in 2012 the Group's campaign was further developed and included in the Older People Matter Food Action Plan as one of the key pieces of work for 2012. This allowed for a 12-month lead time to develop even more materials, and to apply for a budget to enable a wider distribution of supporting information and subsequent awareness.

A budget equivalent to treating just four Urinary Tract Infections (£8K), often a result of dehydration in older people, was secured and plans drawn up for the campaign.

The Benefits

During the first campaign, a Spotting the Signs of Dehydration leaflet was developed. Links with the Continence Team produced a key message of 'Drink More for Dryness' and with the Occupational Health teams highlighted a need to ensure 'Which Cup is Correct', and posters aimed at frontline workers were developed to raise the awareness of these two aspects of ensuring good hydration.

As more people are living at home with support in the community a tool was needed for service users themselves. The Group developed an A4-size fridge magnet with a dry wipe style pen, which can be used to tick off the drinks taken in a day and also acts as a reminder to those people suffering from dementia. Initial funding has enabled the purchase of 1000 of these magnets. Initial feedback on the design has been extremely positive, and frontline workers are unanimous that the tool was needed.

The Group also developed a promotional tool for healthcare professions - a lanyard for the identification badges, a useful method of promotion within this environment. In addition, a supporting resource DVD containing downloadable copies of the posters, an introductory PowerPoint presentation about the campaign and an mp4 file detailing the common misconceptions about hydration were also developed.

All Doctor's surgeries, health centres and community contact points were sent a large promotional pack containing posters, leaflets and information on how to receive the campaign's DVD were sent. More than 300 packs were sent out and also made available at the Public Health Resource Centre.

A flyer highlighting the week was circulated to all the relevant health and social care, and Older People Matter Food Group partners. Articles were produced for the internal media to promote and provide feedback on the campaign initial activities and to highlight the reasons why the campaign was needed.

For further information please contact

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or visit <http://www.leeds.nhs.uk/Your-health/keeping-older-people-hydrated.htm>