

## **Talk (with Tommy Dunne) given at DAA annual meeting in London - 9th December 2015**

As new members of the DAA board, Tommy and I are both very pleased and honoured to have the opportunity to speak today. Although new to the Board I have been an active affiliate and member of the national alliance since October 2011, and it is about the Alliance which I wish to speak this morning.

It's fair to say that in my first year or so I just listened, watched, thought and reflected upon the Alliance. I attended all the meetings and I learnt a lot from both the professionals and the other people affected by dementia who I got to know and became to see as friends. To be able to do this I needed support and got excellent support from Sarah, Simon, Renee, Reinhard and some Kent University psychology students on placement with the Kent & Medway NHS Partnership Trust.

As a former headteacher and primary school advisor I have always seen the potential benefits and also challenges involved in working collectively and in collaboration. This involves giving something in order to receive, and in order to see progress across a broad front. I remember the Labour government's vision of a children's dept where the child was at the centre of all relevant services and that education, health, local and national government, social services, the police etc. would all work together for the benefit of what we saw as the child although other agencies sometimes saw as the key stakeholder. First issue. We didn't always speak a common language. We didn't always understand the other professionals' perspective. Professionals didn't always want to share our knowledge or expertise, and rarely did folk want to share their budgets. Now if we replace the child with a person living with dementia and take education out of the picture and add the third sector, we have a parallel with regards to dementia care which we think and know should be person centred.

I see in the DAA an outstanding opportunity. An opportunity to bring together the best this country provides by way of service providers allied to a committed band of people affected by dementia in order to bring about the best services which can be provided for the maximum number of people. The title of the DAA sums it up. Dementia needs to be first and foremost as recognising and naming it is the first stage to addressing the issues in presents to all; Action is next to make things significantly better and today's programme clear shows this intention on a number of areas; and to achieve this we do need to work closely together, and that is the idea of Alliance. One feature of today's conference is the desire for greater engagement of our membership and the board are keen to help facilitate and more importantly achieve this through a series of initiatives designed to achieve greater involvement of you all.

Recently I was asked by the Journal of Dementia Care to write about how I thought Dementia care has improved over the past 10 years and then took this to Congress for the debate. Clearly there has been much progress in SOME aspects for example in service-user involvement much of which is coordinated by DEEP and TIDE, and in some parts of the country, but there is still a long way to go. Improvements in diagnosis rates are to be commended. Although this does place extra pressure on the need to support the people affected by dementia. There is some good quality post-diagnostic support and treatments

some delivered by professionals in the NHS and others by the third-sector. Some of the best treatments I have benefited from have not come in a bottle but through some outstanding psycho-social interventions. Recently my consultant psychiatrist who I taught for 2 years in primary school - I cared for him, now he cares for me, wrote my care plan - it took 5 years to get and 10 minutes to write.

One of the best ways of achieving our goals of good quality care for everyone living with dementia is through working together, and one of the best vehicles to achieve this is the DAA.

Thank you.

Keith Oliver  
Canterbury  
16 November 2015