

Paper 3: Healthwatch Rutland response to the Draft Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Joint Living Well with Dementia Strategy 2024-2028

We welcome the ambitions of the Strategy and are pleased to see that it draws on the views of the public sought through research and engagement work. We hope you will find the following comments helpful:

Page 2, Section 1 last paragraph: *'not only for the person with dementia but also for the individuals who care for someone with dementia'*. We suggest amending the text to *'not only for the person with dementia but also for **family members** and individuals who care for them'*. This is because not all carers are family members and not all family members are carers, but all family members are affected by a dementia diagnosis.

Page 4, Section 5 Local picture: The text states, *'there are currently 9000 diagnosed people living with dementia across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland'* and a few lines later, *'There was a total of 14000 people predicted to be living with dementia across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland in 2020'*. We suggest that figures, available on line from NHS Digital, should be cited for the same year and preferably 2023. The diagnostic shortfalls should then be made more explicit for readers and provide a base line for considering in the future how the situation might have been improved over the period covered by the Strategy.

Page 7, last paragraph: *'This strategy does not have specific financial investment allocated in order to deliver the high-level priorities cross organisationally. Each organisation is responsible for ensuring that the activity and objectives are met using existing resources through allocated budgets by each organisation'*. We find this statement very disappointing given that organisational costs and the number of people diagnosed with dementia are increasing. We hope to hear that extra resources will be found to cope with increasing demands.

Page 9, Preventing Well: Social isolation is briefly mentioned in the Living Well section. The national intention is to focus on preventing ill health and there is a well-documented link between social isolation (and the resulting feelings of loneliness) and increased risk of developing dementia. We therefore suggest that 'reducing social isolation' should be an integral part of the strategy and explicitly included in the 'preventing well' section.

Page 9, Diagnosing Well: In order to be meaningful, diagnosis rates should be by Place and not by the (now defunct) CCGs to align with the Integrated Care System.

Digital First

As a general comment, the thrust of NHS policy is to move to much greater use of digital technology. Our concern is that many people with dementia are unable to use such technology and, as such, are digitally excluded. We would like to see recognition of this and a firm commitment to offer hard copy correspondence and information available in face-to-face contexts, alongside patient choices in the availability of face-to-face or remote consultations appropriate to their cognitive ability.

22 September 2023