



The UK Meeting Centres Support Programme

Overview

The Association for Dementia Studies (ADS) at the University of Worcester has been awarded a National Lottery grant from the Big Lottery Fund. The project will run from 1st Sept 2018 to 31st August 2021. The aim is to help establish new Meeting Centres in different parts of the UK to work with their communities to support people and families directly affected by dementia.

This funding will enable us to build real capacity across the UK so that Meeting Centres can form a backbone of community-based active support to people and families across the country. By working together with early adopters in their communities and with national influencers, UK MCSP will attain the national visibility, momentum and traction to bring future generations of Meeting Centres on board.

ADS was a co-investigator on a successful research project, MEETING DEM,¹ that took the learning from the Netherlands to set up Meeting Centres in the UK, Italy and Poland and to evaluate their impact. As part of the project two pilot demonstrator Meeting Centre sites, funded by the Alzheimer's Society, were established in central England in semi-rural market towns. These have now established themselves as charities since the research funding ended in August 2017.

With this funding we have a unique opportunity to develop a sharing of the learning across early adopters of the Meeting Centre model in the UK from different regions and jurisdictions as well as from organisations of different types such as housing associations, faith groups and day centres who could be well placed to build Meeting Centres from their existing provision.

Project Outputs

By the end of the three years, the UK MCSP will deliver: -

- **Between 15 and 20 new Meeting Centres opened or under development across the UK** for people and families affected by dementia that can act as demonstrator sites and centres of learning for others.
- **Greater understanding from sharing the learning of how Meeting Centres function over time in different communities, jurisdictions, locations, rural and urban** via the following:-
 - **UK MCSP National Reference Group** – a range of representatives from organisations from across the UK with an interest in the needs of people living with dementia and including people directly affected by dementia guiding and informing the national programme and strategy and disseminating the learning from Meeting Centres.
 - **Early Adopters UK MCSP Core Group** - representatives with significant experience of organising and running the existing Meeting Centres and will be joined by those who are actively developing a MC or working to develop similar projects that could meet the criteria for a MC. It is envisaged that these organisations will become demonstrator sites alongside Droitwich Spa and Leominster.
 - **Meeting Centres Community of Practice** – to share learning between different Centres, to support each other and to help those who are interested in setting up Meeting Centres locally both during and beyond the Project period.
- **Accessible information, training, skills development and on-going support on how to set up and sustain a functioning Meeting Centre in the UK.** To achieve this we will:-
 - Review and develop existing resources and training approaches which will be to support the demonstrator and early adopter sites.
 - Hold workshops for those interested in starting Meeting Centres in their communities.
 - Set-up a help-desk early on for existing, new and pre start-up Centres.

¹ www.meetingdem.eu [MEETINGDEM \(2014-17\)](#) research funded by ESRC Grant ES/L00920X/1 with implementation costs from the Alzheimer's Society.

- **Greater understanding of the costs and benefits to people with dementia, family carers and local communities to be used as an evidence base for policy decision makers on the impact of Meeting Centres.**
 - Evaluating the demonstrator sites and early adopters during Year 2 in terms of benefits and cost-effectiveness in a similar way to the MEETINGDEM project.
 - Develop a self-evaluation tool in consultation with the reference group to enable Meeting Centres to evaluate and understand the benefits for people with dementia and carers and the wider community and the cost-effectiveness.
- **A business and sustainability plan to ensure continuity of the outputs of the project with a view to future operation being self-funding.** Aspects of this work will include the following:-
 - Developing the Community of Learning and Practice to become self-sustaining so that people, communities or organisations can get the support they need when they leave or move on from our project.
 - Establishing Meeting Centres so that they become a workable option for local community groups across the UK.
 - Encouraging other organisations (include statutory organisations where relevant) to respond to what has been achieved by changing what they do or how they do it.
 - Moving towards a similar model developed in the Netherlands, whereby the main functions are supported by income from the annual training courses and other income generating activity.

Project Team

Role	Who?	Responsibility
Programme Director	Professor Dawn Brooker	Strategic oversight and direction of all aspects of the project; ensuring its overall success and quality of delivery; driving real knowledge transfer and translation of the project outputs to make a positive impact for people affected by dementia; ensuring continuity of outputs post-project. Chair of the National Reference Group.
Programme Manager	Dr Shirley Evans	Day to day management of the project and central point of contact; ensuring and assuring high quality and timely deliverables and reports; communicating within the University of Worcester and across partners and other relevant stakeholders. Weekly monitoring of project plan, risk register, dissemination, publication and communications plans. Developing and Implementing the evaluation and related tools.
Meeting Centres Practice Development Coaches	Mary Bruce Nicola Jacobson-Wright	Leading on training, education and practice development work. Developing and delivering: - training courses for staff of Meeting Centres and providing post-training supervision; training courses for Meeting Centre Ambassadors; Pioneer Workshops.
Research Assistant	Jennifer Bray	Developing and reviewing resources and undertaking documentary analysis, data collection, data analysis and reporting.
Administrator	Mike Watts	Planning, up-dating documentation, organising meetings, following up progress, and organising training events and conferences.
Finance Officer	Michele Bowers	Co-ordination of all financial aspects of the UK MCSP project to meet requirements made within the grant.

The Alzheimer's Society, via Colin Capper its Head of Research Development and Evaluation, also brings its knowledge and learning gained from the MeetingDem project to this Programme.

Please get in touch with us at meetingcentres@worc.ac.uk

Further reading and resources

Publications and films: A list of publications from the MEETINGDEM project and related studies and films can be found at <https://www.meetingdem.eu/publications/publicatons-non-mcsp/> and <https://www.worcester.ac.uk/discover/meetingdem-jpnd.html>

Meeting Centre Blog: Keep up to date with Meeting Centre news here <https://meetingcentres.wordpress.com/blog/>

Twitter: Follow @Meeting Centres #MeetingCentres

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