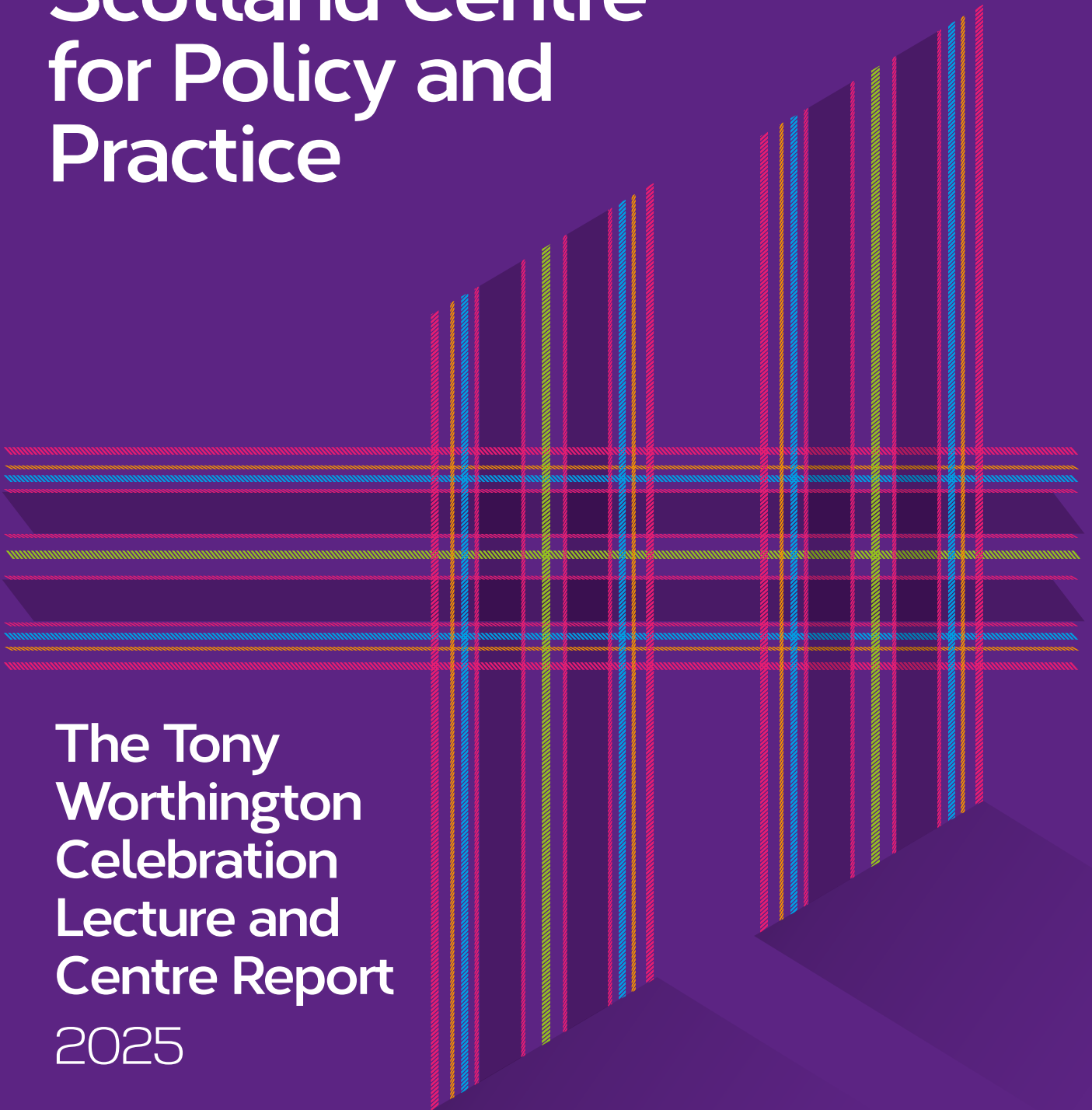




Alzheimer Scotland Centre for Policy and Practice

The Tony
Worthington
Celebration
Lecture and
Centre Report
2025



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Principal's welcome

It has already been two years since we celebrated the tenth anniversary of the Alzheimer Scotland Centre for Policy and Practice (ASCPP), and the Centre continues to achieve so much, having a transformative influence on the lives of others.

The Centre embodies the very essence of what we stand for at UWS. We are a community energised by our impact, and the impact of the ASCPP is clearly felt by many, here in Scotland, the UK and globally.

I congratulate the students, staff and partners of the ASCPP, for being the driving force behind delivering life-changing dementia scholarship, policy, practice-based education and applied research.

As Principal and Vice Chancellor of UWS, I am very proud of the ASCPP and all it has and continues to achieve.

I'd like to take a moment to congratulate Professor Louise Ritchie on her appointment as Director of the ASCPP, following the retirement of Professor Debbie Tolson. Thank you to Debbie for the inspiring dedication and leadership you have shown to the ASCPP over

the years. I'd also like to thank Dr Margaret Brown and Dr Raymond Duffy, who both retired from the ASCPP since the last celebration report. Your contributions to the Centre have been truly inspiring and critical to its success.

I'm delighted that since the last report, we have signed a new Strategic Partnership Agreement with Alzheimer Scotland, renewing and strengthening our commitment to dementia education, research, and policy through to 2027.

Dementia continues to be a major public health challenge, but one that the Centre is equipped to help tackle. Whether that's supporting the next generation of health professionals and leaders to improve dementia practice and services, or the impactful, internationally recognised research undertaken by the ASCPP at UWS.

Its work is directly addressing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs); particularly Good Health and Wellbeing (SDG 3), Quality Education (SDG 4), and Reduced Inequalities (SDG 10).

A key milestone – amongst many achievements you'll soon read about in the pages ahead – has been the development of the Carers' Academy and associated Carers' Academy hubs. I highlight these as a notable success as it perfectly exemplifies the Centre's commitment to both dementia education for all, and to supporting people to live the best life possible with dementia.

Congratulations once again to everyone involved in the ASCPP for another inspiring and impactful period.

Dementia touches the lives of millions—not only those who live with the condition, but also their families, caregivers, and communities. As our population ages, the need for compassionate, informed, and inclusive support becomes more pressing than ever and its clear the critical role the ASCPP plays in shaping this.

Professor James A. Miller FRSE
Principal and Vice-Chancellor
University of the West of Scotland

ASCPP in numbers 2023-2025



22 Journal articles published

5 Book chapters

1 Edited book



4 Research grants (£1.74million)

International connections
India, Canada, Czech Republic, Austria, Netherlands, United Arab Emirates



1 Award (Herald Higher Education Award 2023)
2 Award nominations

22 Conference presentations



4 Carers' Academy Hubs

660 Carers' Academy participants



2 PhD graduations

5 MSc graduations

5 Education programmes with Care Empathia skills taught

12000+ LinkedIn followers



Director's welcome

In the two years since our 10-year celebration event in March 2023, the Alzheimer Scotland Centre for Policy and Practice (ASCPP) has experienced many successes, changes, and challenges. This report is an opportunity to celebrate those achievements.

The most visible change at the ASCPP is the new author of the Director's Welcome. I am privileged to take on the leadership of the ASCPP following Professor Debbie Tolson's retirement in September 2024. As the Centre's inaugural director, Debbie dedicated nearly 12 years to establishing the ASCPP as an internationally-respected centre for excellence in dementia education and applied research. Her leadership and influence are widely recognised, and many have asked, "What will you do without Debbie?"

Fortunately, Debbie remains connected to our work as she has recently been awarded Emeritus Professor status at the University of the West of Scotland. While we will certainly miss her leadership, her strategic and democratic approach has ensured that she leaves behind a strong, experienced team of researchers, educators, and leaders—ready to take the ASCPP to the next level.

There were two other notable retirements from our team in 2023, Dr Margaret Brown and Dr Raymond Duffy. Two very 'well kent' faces in the world of dementia care, practice and education who were influential in educating the next generation of dementia practitioners and researchers. Personally, I count myself among the many who are grateful to have worked alongside and learned from Margaret and Raymond. So, although our team may look different, we are standing on the shoulders of giants and remain committed to the ASCPP's core mission: to develop world-leading dementia education and applied research that influences policy, improves practice, and enhances the lives of people living with dementia.

In May 2024, we signed a new Strategic Partnership Agreement with Alzheimer Scotland, strengthening our collaboration in education, research, and policy through to 2027. Our work is shaped by two key ASCPP thematic areas:

1. Living the Best Life Possible with Dementia
2. Dementia Education for All

While these themes guide our structure, what defines our success is the involvement of our staff, students, and—most importantly—people living with dementia, their families, and practitioners. Their voices ensure our work remains responsive to the needs of those affected by dementia and aligned with the global agenda for high-quality care and support. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone

who has supported the work of the Centre as I have transitioned to Director. I look forward to continuing to work with you all.

It is fitting that today we celebrate a man who has been influential in both the direction of our Centre and the wider landscape for support of people affected by dementia. Tony Worthington has supported the work of the ASCPP for many years, and has worked closely with Professor Debbie Tolson on activities and projects throughout the years. Tony's contributions are always thoughtful, impactful, and driven by a deep commitment to improving the lives of people with dementia at a political and societal level.

Tony's dedication continues to inspire all of us at the ASCPP, and I know his colleagues in the Scottish Dementia Working Group echo our respect and admiration for him. The theme of this year's ASCPP Celebration Event is Living a Purposeful Life with Dementia, which will discuss the importance of maintaining identity, meaning and purpose when living with dementia. Tony is an excellent example of this through his work with the SDWG.

This event is especially important to me as it is not only my first as the ASCPP Director, but will also serve as my inaugural Professorial Lecture. I am very much looking forward to leading the celebration today, reflecting on where we have been, celebrating our achievements and look to the future of the ASCPP. We move forward with a strong foundation, a dedicated team, and a shared commitment to making a meaningful difference.

Alzheimer Scotland Chief Executive's welcome



It is a great privilege for me to welcome you to the Alzheimer Scotland Centre for Policy and Practice (ASCPP) Annual Report 2025.

Firstly, I want to congratulate Professor Louise Ritchie on her appointment as Director of the ASCPP. Following the retirement of Professor Debbie Tolson in 2024, Louise has taken over the leadership of

the Centre and I wish her every success in the role. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Debbie for her tremendous hard work, dedication and commitment she has shown to the ASCPP. I would also like to acknowledge the work and invaluable contributions to the ASCPP of Dr Margaret Brown and Dr Raymond Duffy, who both retired in 2023.

There have been some remarkable initiatives and research projects that have evolved in the last two years, including the development of the ASCPP Carers' Academy. The Academy, which aims to give family carers the skills and knowledge to help them support and care for their relative with dementia, has opened two new Carer Academy hubs. The first at the UWS Dumfries campus and the second based in the grounds of Strathcaron hospital in Angus. I look forward to hearing about the impact that these new hubs have on the people they support.

In 2024, the ASCPP published their Dementia in Prisons research study and report. This key piece of work addresses the overlooked issue of the increasing number of older prisoners across Scotland and the associated health and social care concerns – including dementia. The report highlights the fact that currently there is no specific strategy to manage this and argues that it should be a priority on both health and justice policy agendas.

The importance of preparing the future workforce for working with people with dementia, their families and carers is a priority for the ASCPP. 'Discover Dementia' is a series of learning outcomes aligned to the Promoting Excellence Framework and the Scottish Government's fourth dementia strategy. Developed with the input of people with lived experience and former students, Discover Dementia helps inform those in health and social care education such as undergraduate nursing and adult and mental health.

It is always inspiring for me to see the collaborative work that's being done between the ASCPP and Alzheimer Scotland's Active Voice groups. Over the last two years, members of the Scottish Dementia Working Group (SDWG) and the National Dementia Carers Action Network (NDCAN) have worked on a range of research projects including developing a set of resources for those receiving a diagnosis while still in work and producing guidance on how they could be better supported.

I was very pleased to find out that the ASCPP Celebration Medal Awardee for this year was Tony Worthington. Tony, a member of the Scottish Dementia Working Group for seven years and a former MP, is a passionate campaigner and activist – he truly deserves this recognition.

Finally, I would like to say how delighted Alzheimer Scotland is to continue to work in partnership with the ASCPP team. The opportunity to work with people who are so committed to enhancing the lives of the dementia community by promoting and championing excellence in dementia policy and practice is wonderful. In May 2024, I was honoured to sign a new Strategic Partnership Agreement with the ASCPP. This agreement, which takes us through to 2027, demonstrates our commitment to our collaborative work in dementia research, education and policy.

Henry Simmons
Chief Executive, Alzheimer Scotland

About the Centre

The Alzheimer Scotland Centre for Policy and Practice (ASCPP) is a collaborative partnership between the University of the West of Scotland and Alzheimer Scotland, established in 2013. As a recognised practice education centre locally, nationally and internationally, we are committed to developing world-leading dementia education and applied research which influences policy, improves practice and improves the lives of people living with dementia. Our approach is interdisciplinary, innovative, and inclusive. We are committed to meaningful involvement of people with lived experience of dementia to ensure that our work has direct impact on improving the lives of people with dementia and family carers.

The ASCPP mission is to generate evidence to underpin transformative change to post diagnostic dementia care practice, services and policy. We recognise that dementia is a progressive and complex illness experience, and that investment is required in applied research and dementia education for both practitioners and family carers. Our vision is that through our value-based scholarship and impactful applied research we will be able to meet the prerequisites for change and better care, namely that:

- Society respects the rights of people with dementia
- People with dementia, family carers and practitioners are involved in education, research, and decision making
- Caring interventions, including family caring, are research-based
- Age-appropriate dementia specific palliation is available regardless of place of care
- Scientific discoveries are shared both in detail and in accessible formats
- Practitioners have enhanced dementia knowledge and practical skills
- Enlightened policies are collaboratively put into practice

The ASCPP is located within the School of Health and Life Science, reaching across all academic schools. Our work focuses on two thematic areas, Dementia Education for All and Living the Best Life Possible with Dementia. Our students also benefit from the award winning DOMUS facilities on every campus. DOMUS is a simulated domestic environment, in which students can experience the latest high and low tech aids for living and care. Adjacent to the DOMUS are the hospital simulation suites, Acorn Primary Care area and Living Lab. Our pioneering dementia education extends from our Spiral Curricula and Discover Dementia within pre-registration nursing and mental health nursing programmes, through our new taught masters (MSc in Ageing, Dementia and Frailty coming soon), and independent research degrees – MRes, MPhil and PhDs.

We are proud of our dementia leadership contributions within the UK Higher Education Dementia Network, Scotland's Brain Health ARC and the Scottish Dementia Research Consortium.



Meet the team



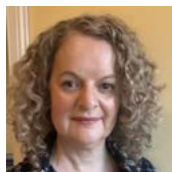
Professor Louise Ritchie, DIRECTOR

Louise is Professor in Dementia Research and Director of the ASCPP. She is a psychologist, who's research focuses on understanding the experiences of people living with dementia with a focus on improving the lives of those living with dementia, their families, and their caregivers. Her current work focuses on employment and dementia, and she leads the ESRC, NIHR, and Alzheimer's Society-funded Working with Dementia Network Plus.



Dr Rhoda MacRae, READER

Rhoda takes a lead role in research and enterprise activities within the Centre. Her research interests include dementia in secure settings, advanced dementia and dementia education. She has led studies into dementia in prison and assessing the feasibility of introducing cognitive screening in prisons. She also leads an Institutional Seedcorn Fund designed to grow interdisciplinary applied dementia research in UWS.



Dr Anna Jack-Waugh, SENIOR LECTURER

Anna is the centre lead for 'Dementia Education for All' and strategic co-lead for ASCPP's Carers' Academy programme. Anna has been involved in research and education projects on advanced dementia across Europe and collaborated with colleagues in India and Canada. Additionally, Anna leads the integration of dementia education in undergraduate and postgraduate Nursing and Paramedic programmes at UWS. Her work has resulted in over thirty research outputs on dementia education for all.



Dr Eileen Harkess-Murphy, LECTURER

Eileen is a psychologist who focuses on psychological trauma and trauma-informed approaches to support carers and people with dementia. With expertise in medical statistics and data analysis, she has secured funding to explore mechanisms that can improve well-being for people with dementia and family carers. Her work includes evidence synthesis to inform best practices and integrating trauma-informed approaches into teaching. She has a broad interest in mental health and well-being across the lifespan.



Dr Bryan Mitchell, LECTURER

Bryan is a Programme Leader and Lecturer within the School of Health and Life Sciences with a background in Complementary Therapy, and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy. Bryan has worked in the education sector for approximately 9 years where he has a keen interest in the Integration of Health and Social Care services, Older People, Nursing Homes, Advanced Dementia, and Dementia Education.



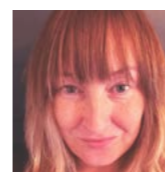
Dr Laura Lebec, WORKING WITH DEMENTIA NETWORK PLUS MANAGER

Laura is the Manager for the Working with Dementia Network Plus, a collaborative research network that aims to improve the working lives of people affected by dementia. Prior to this Laura was a post-doctoral Research Fellow on the Co-Produced Career Guidance and Dementia research project at UWS. Laura's background is in the third sector where she worked as a senior manager in social care. Her PhD research from the University of Glasgow focused on improving third sector organisational performance.



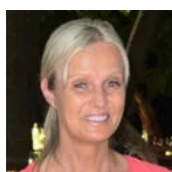
Vinodhini Murugavel, LECTURER

Vinodhini is a dedicated lecturer with a strong focus on dementia care. Vinodhini combines extensive teaching experience with a robust clinical experience background to advance the nursing field through education. Vinodhini contributes to dementia care research and formulation of dementia education within the pre-registration nursing programs. Her research work focuses on understanding the traumatic experiences of the diagnostic pathway of dementia diagnosis, advocating for a trauma-informed approach. Additionally, she is trained in Low-intensity Cognitive-behavioural Therapy and Compassionate Focused Therapy.



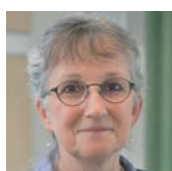
Kellie Burns, LECTURER

Kellie is a lecturer in Mental Health Nursing at UWS, dedicated to advancing mental health care and dementia services. As an active associate of the Alzheimer Scotland Centre for Policy, she contributes to practice projects and academic initiatives. With extensive experience in dementia care, Kellie focuses on creating supportive environments for patients. Her expertise in managing complex health issues in older adults is integral to her teaching and research. She plans to start a PhD in 2026.



Susan Holland NURSE CONSULTANT – DEMENTIA

Susan works as NHS Ayrshire and Arran's Nurse Consultant –Dementia (NCD). As part of her NCD role she has a defined teaching and research remit with our Centre. Susan has particular interests in dementia care within hospital settings, post-diagnostic support and dementia family caring. She co-leads our Carers' Academy programme and works in close collaboration with our Centre team to strengthen links between research, policy and practice.



Emeritus Professor Debbie Tolson

Debbie is the Emeritus Professor of Dementia and inaugural ASCPP Director. She is a registered nurse, Fellow of the Royal College of Nursing and Principal Fellow of the Higher Education Academy (UK). She has a particular interest in research and educational innovations that recognise dementia as a family illness experience and are of practical value. Through her UWS role and executive role with the Scottish Dementia Research Consortium, she is supporting the next generation of dementia leaders and researchers to flourish.



Professor Iva Holmerová, VISITING PROFESSOR

Iva is an Associate Professor and CEO of the Centre for Gerontology, Praha 8. She was the Chairperson of Alzheimer Europe. Iva is our visiting Professor at the Centre and a Palliare partner and currently supporting International Student Networking Conversations.

A list of our Centre Associates can be found at www.uws.ac.uk/research/research-institutes-centres-groups/alzheimer-scotland-centre-for-policy-and-practice/meet-the-team/

ASCPP Celebration Medal Awardee – **Tony Worthington**



The Alzheimer Scotland Centre for Policy and Practice is delighted to award the University of West of Scotland Celebration Medal to individuals who have inspired us in our scholarship and studies or who have made a demonstrable impact on the way we and others respond to dementia.

This year, we are honoured to award the UWS Celebration Medal to Tony Worthington. Tony has been a member of the Scottish Dementia Working Group since 2018, shortly after he received his diagnosis of dementia. In the Centre, we have been inspired by Tony, and his wife Angela's commitment to improving the lives of people living with dementia and family carers and we believe that Tony embodies the theme of this year's event which is 'Living a Purposeful Life with Dementia'.

Tony was the MP for Clydebank and Milngavie from 1987 until 2005. During this time, he was part of a team who worked with Mo Mowlam to bring peace to Northern Ireland, Chair of the International Development Select Committee making several international visits, including spending significant time in Africa. In his constituency, he was instrumental in the redevelopment of Clydebank, following the collapse of the shipyards and Singer's factory as well as campaigning for a legislative change to help sufferers of asbestosis.

Tony's impressive career as a politician was heavily informed by his early life experiences. After doing exceptionally well at school, at the age of 16, he enrolled at the London School of Economics (LSE). During his time at LSE, he became interested in criminology and began working at a Borstal in Kent. Working at the Borstal highlighted the impact of social inequalities on the lives of the (mainly) boys who were held there. From this experience, Tony trained as a teacher and worked in further and higher education until he was elected to Westminster. During this time, he met Angela at a dance hall and they married in 1966.

Since being diagnosed with dementia in 2018, Tony and Angela became involved with the local Alzheimer Scotland Resource Centre in Clydebank where Tony found out about the Scottish Dementia Working Group. Tony is an active member of the group and contributes to policy campaigns such as the Fair Dementia Care Campaign and the Long Term Care Commission as well as research activities including being part of the funding committee for the annual Alzheimer Scotland MRes Studentship fund. Both Tony and Angela talk about working with the SDWG as giving purpose and structure to their lives, and Tony is a proud member of the group who he refers to as a group of people who have found something worth doing.

Reflecting on Tony's award, inaugural ASCPP Director, Emeritus Professor Debbie Tolson said: "Tony has dedicated his life to making a positive impact on peoples' lives. He continues to do so through his SDWG role and ASCPP connections. Like all politicians he asks searching questions and provokes others to reflect, reconsider and take action. He has challenged the ASCPP team to embrace new understandings of life with dementia, to see policy gaps and solutions. Tony's influence is an important part of the ASCPP story, he is a truly inspiring person."

Tony's colleagues in the Scottish Dementia Working Group said...

“Tony is a longstanding member of the Scottish Dementia Working Group. When Tony walks into a room he brings a ray of sunshine and positivity. His insights during the Fair Dementia Care campaign and the MRes programme have been invaluable. His life skills in teaching and politics help to give NDCAN different understandings and perspectives. Tony deserves this award for teaching us all how to live well with dementia. Congratulations Tony!”

Elaine Deehan, on behalf of National Dementia Carers Action Network

“Having the opportunity to meet Tony and other colleagues within the SDWG has offered me a very important opportunity to see how it is possible to “live well” with dementia.

Meeting Tony and Angela has been truly inspiring and shown me that a diagnosis is not the end of one's life – simply an opportunity to find ways to continue to function in order to make a valid contribution to society.

Tony is without doubt an inspirational individual who cares deeply about other people within the dementia community and brings a lifetime of public service to the table at every opportunity. I feel extremely privileged to class him as a friend and colleague and offer my sincere congratulations on being given this award – which is certainly much deserved.”

Kenny Moffat, SDWG member

ASCPP

Inaugural Lecture

Living a Purposeful Life with Dementia: Identity, Personhood and Wellbeing.



LECTURE SUMMARY – PROFESSOR LOUISE RITCHIE

When meeting someone for the first time, how often do you ask, 'What do you do?' This question is more than just a way to learn about a person's job or income, it speaks to their identity and how they spend their time. But what happens when illness or disability, such as a diagnosis of dementia, changes the answer? What if the answer becomes, 'I don't do anything. I used to be a plumber, but I can't do that anymore'.

This lecture draws on over a decade of research exploring the experiences of people diagnosed with dementia while still in work. It will examine how individuals can continue working after a diagnosis with the right support, the decisions they face regarding employment, and what a purposeful life with dementia looks like for those who do not continue working. Through examples such as Tony's, we will explore how continuing to 'do' after a dementia diagnosis can positively impact well-being, provide a sense of purpose, and challenge societal stigma surrounding dementia.

At the ASCPP, we recognise that dementia is a progressive and complex illness. However, drawing on key theories of personhood and identity, we believe that, regardless of capacity or ability, the person remains. By creating a society that views people with dementia as equal citizens capable of meaningful contribution, we actively support them in living a purposeful life, bringing numerous benefits to their well-being. The lecture will conclude with evidence-based recommendations on how to achieve this vision, including inclusive policies, supportive communities, and opportunities for engagement that empower individuals with dementia to participate fully in society.

Dementia Education for All

Dementia Education for All addresses the need for widespread evidence-informed education and awareness about dementia. Our research-informed educational offering focuses on improving knowledge, understanding and attitudes to dementia across all sectors of society. This includes our health and social care workforce, people living with dementia, family carers, employers and the public. The aim of this work is to improve care and support for people living with dementia, to challenge stigma and to raise awareness of brain health through evidence informed pedagogy.

The Alzheimer Scotland Centre for Policy and Practice (ASCPP) Carers' Academy

The ASCPP Carers' Academy is a programme designed for family members who are caring for a relative with dementia and aims to provide them with the knowledge and skills they need to better care for their loved one. Starting in partnership with NHS Ayrshire and Arran, the first Carers' Academy was developed at the UWS Ayr Campus with a UWS Lanarkshire hub following soon after. Over the last two years, two new Carers' Academy hubs have launched. Dumfries & Galloway Carers' Academy hub delivered a successful year of Day 1 delivery based in the new state of the art UWS campus at Dumfries. Seventy-two family carers attended. In the sessional evaluation completed by the family carers all the education sections scored an average of over 9/10, with the provision of resources to help them with their caring role by the team evaluated at 100% satisfaction. Now in 2025 the team will deliver the first Day 2 delivery and undertake a remote and rural pilot delivery in Stranraer.



In February 2025 the Angus hub, supported by Angus Health and Social Care Partnership and funded by the McKenzie Legacy was born. A unique venture for the Carers' Academy leadership team, the Angus hub is delivered in the grounds of Strathcaron hospital with the local hub team developing their education environment and facilitation team aligned to the other Carers' Academy hubs. We welcome the new team on their journey.

The Carers' Academy hubs have engaged in ongoing evaluation and research since inception to assure the quality of the deliveries and to disseminate learning from the Carers' Academy programme. In 2024 we published our first article [Facilitating Family Carer Dementia Education: We All Need to Learn](#). This publication focussed on the importance of facilitator preparation and the advantages of co-delivery models that combine clinical and practice education expertise. The authors concluded that Carers' Academy facilitators need to understand how to walk the talk of theory-guided educational models, be open to reciprocity in learning, and be prepared for the emotional work of delivering trauma-informed practical dementia care education to family carers.

Developing a Trauma-Informed Pedagogical Approach (TIPA)

To complement our signature pedagogical approach of Care Empathia, we have worked to develop a Trauma-Informed Pedagogical Approach (TIPA). The initial project, funded by the 2022 UWS Vice Chancellor's Innovation Fund, considers the impact of trauma on our students and provides a real-time online support framework to support students drawing on the six trauma-informed principles. We have worked to ensure that trauma-informed principles underpin all of our education and research activities. For example, the Trauma-informed Approaches to Dementia (TriAD) study explored how dementia helpline staff provide trauma-informed care. We are carrying out a scoping review to understand how trauma-informed education can benefit family carers' well-being.

We are increasingly aware of our responsibility to adopt a trauma-informed approach to communication of our research findings. Our research can explore challenging and complex issues, and while it's important to share the findings with key stakeholders to ensure we can continue to create societal change, it is important not to cause further harm when doing so. A trauma-informed approach to public engagement and dissemination supports this. You can read more about this in our blog post published on [Times Higher Education](#).

EDUCATION IN FORENSIC SETTINGS

In 2024, in collaboration with the State Hospital, Carstairs, the ASCPP was shortlisted for a Nursing Times Award. The nomination, in the Nursing in Mental Health category, recognised the team's innovative work in enhancing dementia care in forensic mental health services.

The bespoke programme, which empowered 26 staff members at the State Hospital to deliver high-quality, dementia-specific care, was developed during the first COVID-19 lockdown in 2020 with experts from the ASCPP.

“This was an educational project which was developed, delivered and evaluated in partnership and was designed to be responsive to the specific needs of individuals living with dementia in a high-secure setting. We understand the unique challenges of caring for people with dementia in these settings, where balancing patient safety and specialised care needs is critical.

Our education programme was designed to equip healthcare professionals with the skills and knowledge to navigate these complexities, ensuring compassionate and effective care.”

Dr Anna Jack-Waugh, Senior Lecturer within the ASCPP

The package covered a range of topics, including the prevalence of dementia, the different types of dementia, and the impact of dementia on a person's daily living. The team delivering this education have a paper accepted for publication in Mental Health Nursing Practice.

DISCOVER DEMENTIA

Alzheimer Scotland Centre for Policy and Practice at the University of the West of Scotland has a proud tradition of preparing students with Dementia education commensurate with their future role and academic level. Most of this work is in undergraduate nursing, adult and mental health, Paramedic Practice, and Sports Science. The 2025 programme approval of the undergraduate Adult and Mental Health Nursing programmes has resulted in a review and reshaping of the Discover Dementia thread. In line with previous work, the Discover Dementia learning outcomes and all supporting resources are aligned to module learning outcomes, the Promoting Excellence Framework, Scottish Government (2021), New dementia strategy for Scotland: Everyone's Story, National and International Policy, strategy, evidence-informed practice guidelines and research, including work by the Alzheimer Scotland Centre for Policy and Practice.

Alzheimer Scotland Centre for Policy and Practice colleagues have developed this curriculum thread with programme leads, people with dementia, and their families, as well as feedback from students who completed the previous Discover Dementia thread. Alzheimer Scotland Centre for Policy and Practice colleagues will support the delivery and evaluation alongside module teams. This support includes lesson plans and guides, direct class-based delivery, filmed resources, Padlet resources and directed learning resources for students. The Discover Dementia curriculum is designed to interact with other programme threads, including trauma-informed care and assistive technology. This approach has a high degree of flexibility, with most directed learning requiring completion by the end of the student's programme.

Alongside a trauma-informed educational approach, Care Empathia continues to form one of the key underpinning approaches to all dementia education provided by the centre including Discover Dementia. Care Empathia, emphasises learning through a combination of knowledge (“the head”), emotion (“the heart”), and practical action (“the hand”). Rooted in values and human rights, the Care Empathia theoretical approach aims to deepen understanding, foster meaningful connections, and promote practical solutions in dementia care.

DEMENTIA EDUCATION NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL INFLUENCE

We continue to work to influence and inform national and international policy and practice on dementia care and education. Over the past two years we have been delighted to be involved in a number of new and developing initiatives in policy and practice. Some highlights include:

- Hosting the Scottish Government Dementia Workforce short life working group in Lanarkshire in October 2024. Stemming from the Scottish Government's most recent **Dementia Strategy Everyone's Story**, the short life working group has been established to progress deliverable 3 of Scotland's dementia strategy. We presented the work of the centre on leading national and international dementia education including the ten-year project of Scotland National Dementia Champions and more recently the Carers' Academy.
- We continue to play a strategic role in the leadership of the Higher Education Dementia Network (HEDN) a network of educators who work in Higher Education Institutions, responsible for or interested in dementia related education.
- Working with international colleagues, including a trip to Barbados to meet the faculty of the University of West Indies, hosting delegations from Austria and United Arab Emirates at our Lanarkshire Campus and increasing our representation in INTERDEM, the pan-European network of researchers collaborating in research on and dissemination of Early, Timely and Quality Psychosocial Interventions in Dementia.



Living the Best Life Possible with Dementia

Living the Best Life Possible with Dementia aims to enhance the quality of life for individuals affected by dementia through innovative and interdisciplinary research. Grounded in what matters most to those living with dementia, its research supports people to live well, promoting enjoyment, and a better quality of life. By understanding the dementia-related vulnerabilities experienced by individuals, families and services we can identify policy and practice innovations to improve the lives of those living with dementia and empower those affected by dementia to live the best life possible. Below are some highlights from our work in this area over the last two years.

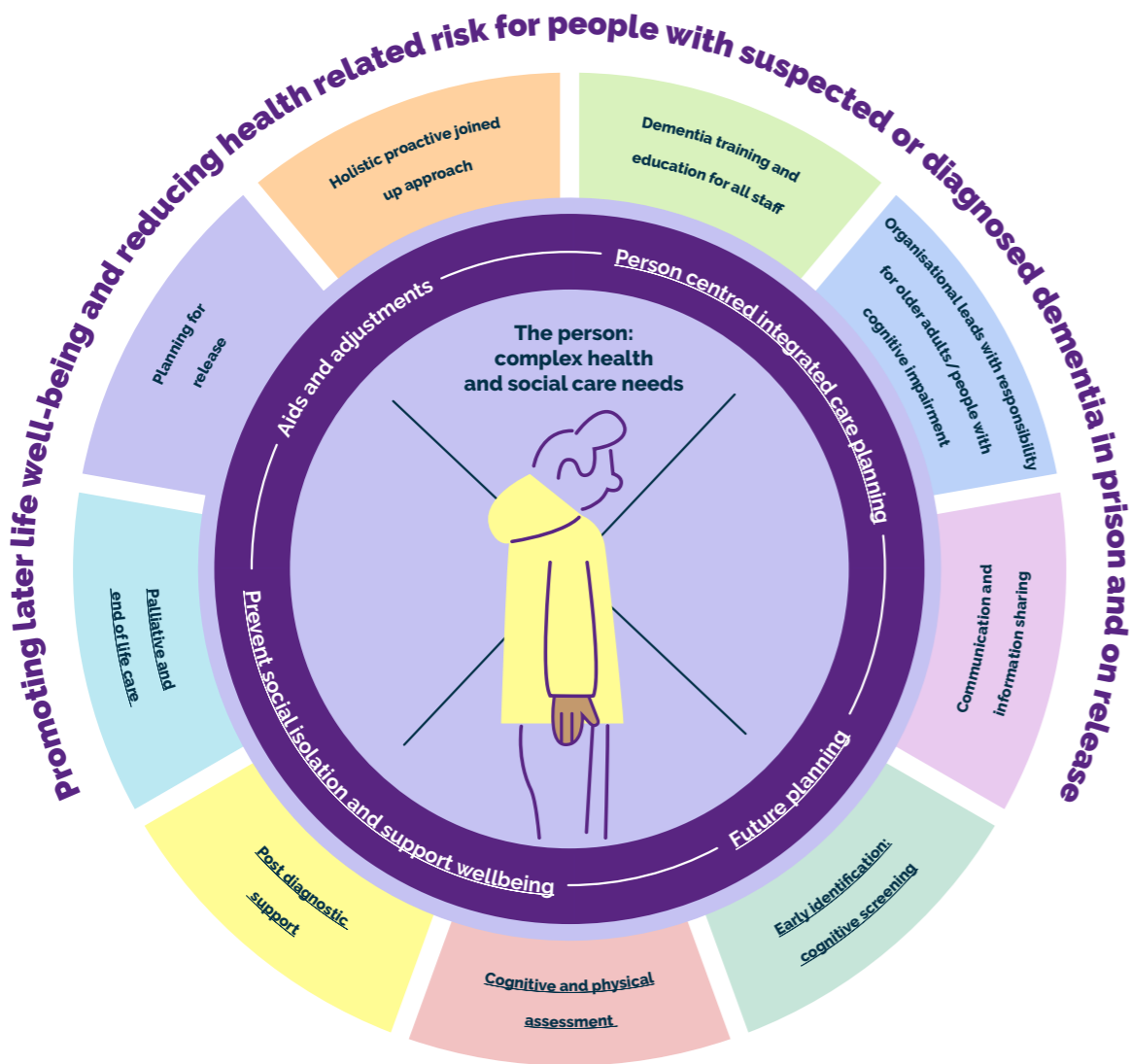
Introducing the Working with Dementia Network Plus.

In 2024, we were delighted to receive £1.6million of funding from the ESRC, Alzheimer's Society and National Institute of Health Research to launch the 'Working with Dementia Network Plus'. Led by Professor Louise Ritchie and Dr Laura Lebec as Network Plus Manager alongside academics from UWS, the Universities of Lancaster, Northumbria, Edinburgh Napier and Warwick, people living with dementia, and key stakeholders, including policymakers and employers will work together to improve workplace policies and build a more inclusive and supportive environment. Crucially, the new Network will build on the dementia in the workplace research we have led for the last 12 years and provide opportunities to develop research and practice together to improve the experiences of those affected by dementia in the workplace. For the first time, this project will explore the under-researched area of the experiences of carers of people with dementia in the workplace.



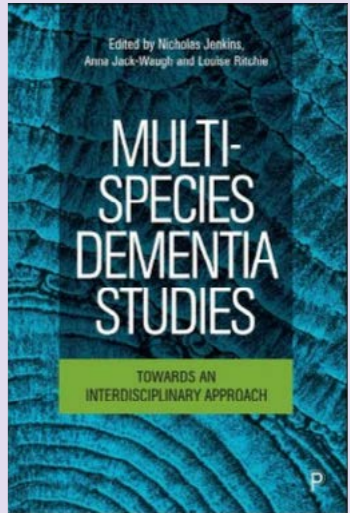
Completing the Dementia in Prisons Study

Dr Rhoda Macrae and team completed the Dementia in Prisons research study, funded by the Dunhill Medical Trust. This research highlighted the unique challenges and health inequalities of people in secure settings with diagnosed or suspected dementia. The research co-produced an evidence informed model and integrated pathway to support pre and post diagnostic dementia care for use in prisons. The findings and resources from the project are hosted on a website [Home - Dementia in Prisons](#) which is in turn hosted by a range of organisations including the Strategic Prison Health Care Network. We continue to work with prison healthcare teams and inspection bodies to explore how they can use the findings to inform standards and practice. Funded by the Royal Society of Edinburgh we also explored through a literature review and research workshops how feasible it would be to introduce routine cognitive screening into prisons.



MULTISPECIES DEMENTIA STUDIES - A NEW PUBLICATION

Have you ever wondered if dementia is truly a uniquely human experience? This question has been at the centre of Multi-Species Dementia Studies, a new book co-edited Professor Nick Jenkins, Dr Anna Jack-Waugh and Professor Louise Ritchie which was published by Policy Press on 30th January, 2025. The book was developed through the MultiSpecies Dementia Network and takes a closer look at the ways humans and other species are entangled in dementia – from the use of animals in biomedical research to their roles in care and companionship. An interesting and engaging read, even if we do say so ourselves!



The future of research excellence and impact

Institutional Seedcorn

RS Macdonald Charitable Trust (RSMCT) awarded £60,000 to establish an institutional dementia research Seedcorn Fund. The purpose of the Living the best life possible Seedcorn, led by Dr Rhoda MacRae, was to catalyse interdisciplinary applied dementia research and provide a unique opportunity for Early Career Researchers (ECRs) to lead signature research projects that can support dementia care and those living with dementia to live the best life possible.

Following a competitive peer reviewed application process seven ECRs, supported by Centre staff, completed projects on wide ranging topics. These projects not only influence the development of new research areas in dementia, but actively support the development of research careers, ensuring the sustainability of the ASCPP and the future impact on improving the lives of those living with dementia.

LEAD RESEARCHER: DR STEVE MULLAY TEAM: DR KAREN MANSON, SUSAN HOLLAND, LAURA JACKSON, DR DYLAN MURPHY.

Title: Addressing Today's Challenges to Supporting People Living in the community with dementia-related stress and distress: A Dementia Advanced Clinical Nurse Specialist Service.

This research examined how a Dementia Advanced Clinical Nurse Specialist Service can support remote and rural dementia care. Using a realist evaluation design the study found that this unique service played an important role in enabling people to continue to live in and be supported in Shetland, rather than requiring transfer to specialist units on the Scottish mainland. Strong collaborative working is essential, but the findings suggest this nurse-led model could support people with dementia living in the community in other remote and rural areas.

LEAD RESEARCHER: DR LAWRENCE HAYES TEAM: PROF NICHOLAS SCULTHORPE, PROF DEBBIE TOLSON, DR NILIHAN SANAL-HAYES, DR DUNCAN BUCHAN AND DR SOWMYA MUNISHANKAR

Title: Identifying whether people with young onset dementia have the same characteristics in terms of physical fitness, physical activity, and wellbeing and compared people without young onset dementia.

This study compared physical fitness, activity levels, and well-being in people with young onset dementia and those without it. Researchers matched participants by age and BMI and assessed various health measures, including heart, lung, muscle function, and mental well-being. While most measures were similar, those with young onset dementia had poorer dexterity, cognitive function, physical fitness, grip strength, self-efficacy, and sleep quality. The next step is to develop interventions to improve these areas for people with young onset dementia.

LEAD RESEARCHER: DR LIZ CARLIN TEAM: MR LOGAN KIDD, DR EILIDH MACRAE, DR RHODA MACRAE

Title: The lived experience of people living with dementia taking part in walking football

This study explored the experiences of people with dementia in walking football, along with their carers, to understand benefits and challenges. Interviews with participants highlighted three key themes: belonging, the coach's role, and wider impact. Sessions provided social connection, support, and respite for carers while helping reduce distress and anxiety in participants. The research emphasised the need for better coach education to improve communication and support for people with dementia in these sessions.

LEAD RESEARCHER: DR SUZANNE HERON TEAM: PROFESSOR LOUISE RITCHIE, PROFESSOR NICK JENKINS, DR MICHAEL SMITH.

Title: Defining 'Age- appropriate' in the context of young onset dementia services

This study focuses on defining "age-appropriate" care within young onset dementia services. Using a systematic qualitative synthesis of literature and focused discussions with service users, families and service providers the study found that understanding of age-appropriate in the context of young onset dementia was not well defined and questions the usefulness of this term for service development. Core principles of person-centeredness and taking a life-stage approach may be more appropriate alternatives to inform future service developments.

LEAD RESEARCHER: PROFESSOR MOHAMMED ISHAQ TEAM: DR DINA SIDVHA AND DR RHODA MACRAE

Title: Caring across cultures: An exploration of the lived experiences of South Asian family carers of people living with dementia in Scotland

This study explored the lived experiences of South Asian family carers supporting people with dementia in Scotland. The study recruited 12 South Asian family carers from seven local authority areas in Scotland. The research revealed how an interconnected blend of cultural, religious, and moral considerations impacted on the experiences and challenges of South Asian family carers of people with dementia. The findings illustrated the need for culturally sensitive information support, training and education for them and formal carers.

LEAD RESEARCHER: DR RACHEL KIMBLE TEAM: PROFESSOR LOUISE RITCHIE, DR NATALIE DICKINSON, DR MICHAEL SMITH, PROFESSOR NICK SCULTHORPE

Title: Having Their Cake and Eating It Too: A mixed-methods study on the dietary behaviours of family carers of persons with dementia

This study explores the dietary behaviours and diet quality of family carers of persons with dementia, highlighting the impact of caregiving on their nutrition. Using a mixed-methods approach, it found that carers often fail to meet dietary recommendations for fat, sugar, fibre, and fruit and vegetable intake, despite having moderate diet quality. Qualitative insights revealed that caregiving responsibilities and the evolving dietary needs of those with dementia influence carers' eating habits. Personalised dietary interventions are needed to support their well-being.

LEAD RESEARCHER: DR HEATHER MYLES. TEAM DR MARIA SAPOUNA.

Title: A Systematic Review of Risk and Protective Factors of Abuse of People Living with Dementia.

Research highlights that people with dementia are at higher risk of abuse. The findings of this review suggest we need to challenge stigma, strengthen legal protections and financial safeguards. Improving staffing levels and providing dementia training for formal care staff are important. Informal carers should be supported with respite and training to reduce risk and stress, to support positive relationships and equip them with care skills. For people with dementia, timely diagnosis and managing symptoms are important. Implementing these measures can create safer environments and reduce the likelihood of abuse.

Working Together – Collaboration with **Alzheimer Scotland** **Active Voice Groups**

At the ASCPP, we work closely with Alzheimer Scotland's Active Voice groups, the Scottish Dementia Working Group and National Dementia Carers Action Network. We are proud of our approach to collaboration within the Centre and in 2023, we celebrated both groups as having been incredibly influential in the first decade of the ASCPP. We are excited to report that our relationship continues to go from strength to strength and are excited to share some of our projects we are working on below.

Career Guidance and Dementia Research

In 2021, we were awarded research funding from the Alzheimer's Society to develop an intervention to support people who were diagnosed with dementia whilst in employment. Members of the Scottish Dementia Working Group have been involved in this research from the proposal development stage through to the final analysis that we are working on now.

Co-production was the most important element of this project, and the contribution of SDWG members Kenny Moffat, Rynagh Flynn, Margaret McCallion, Stuart Dougall, Margaret Northedge and NDCAN member Barry Northedge have been invaluable to the success of the project. Working with a group of healthcare professionals and career guidance practitioners we unpicked the experiences of people with dementia who were diagnosed at work and we explored how career guidance could support people with dementia in these circumstances. The process wasn't always easy, and we didn't always agree but by the end of the six-month co-production period we had produced a set of resources that would form the basis of our 'Guidance for Life, Work and Career' approach. This included a video where our SDWG members shared their experiences of work and dementia, and showcased that although work may change post diagnosis, it does not stop! The video can be viewed www.youtube.com/watch?v=gIFAykUByFg&feature=youtu.be

We will complete this research project later in 2025, but we were thrilled to be able to present at the Alzheimer Europe Conference in Geneva in October 2024. Dr Laura Lebec, along with Rynagh Flynn, Margaret McCallion and Kenny Moffat, attended the conference and presented our early findings together.



“The whole experience of being involved in this research was rewarding and informative. I just wish that the research had been carried out ten years earlier, when I resigned from work following a diagnosis of early onset Alzheimer’s. A better understanding of what I was still capable of doing would have enabled me to continue working for several more years!”

Margaret Northedge, SDWG member

This research is vital for the tens of thousands of people who, unfortunately, are diagnosed with dementia whilst still at work. For so many work is such a fundamental element of self-worth and purpose, often taken away by employers who are ignorant of the capabilities of people in the early stages of dementia and what they can still contribute.

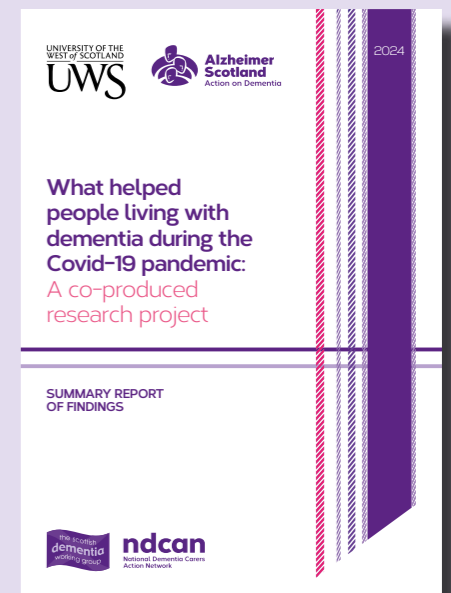
Barry Northedge, NDCAN member

What helped people with dementia during the Covid-19 pandemic?: A co-produced research project

Discussing research during the COVID-19 pandemic was a useful way for us all to keep connected. During one of these conversations, members of the NDCAN research group expressed frustration with the overwhelmingly negative focus of research on COVID-19 and dementia. Could we learn anything from lockdown experiences to better support people with dementia? From there, an idea was born, if no-one was doing this then we would do it ourselves!

We formed an inclusive research team of 14 people, including NDCAN members Marion Ritchie, Elaine Deehan, Angela Worthington and Elaine Symington along with SDWG members Euan Petrie, Tony Worthington and Ian Symington, five members of the ASCPP team and two PhD students, Rachel Allen and Connor McDonald. Our goal was to identify what had helped people living with dementia and their families most during the pandemic. Together, we designed and carried out every stage of the research project. We undertook training as a team to familiarise ourselves with project methods, appreciate each other’s research strengths, and determine our preferred contributions.

In 2023, we completed the project and were delighted to present our findings in a poster at the Alzheimer Europe Conference in 2024. Our findings can inform how we can adopt good practice around online activities and how we support people with dementia now and in the future. As a collaborative research team, we have shown that it is possible for people with dementia, family carers and academics to work together to co-produce research that can positively impact the lives of people living with dementia.



What helped people living with dementia during the Covid-19 pandemic?



Social Connections



Hobbies and Activities



Peer Support

“Prior to Covid lockdown many of our National Dementia Carers Action Network & the Scottish Dementia Working group meetings were in person. Covid changed all of that and many of us felt isolated. We craved those social interactions. UWS reached out and asked us for positive ideas that helped. Both groups met with UWS researchers on Teams and Zoom meetings, we really got to know the staff through those interactions.

This has helped ongoing lived experience research across a wide range of topics and has shown us all that effective communications and socialisation can continue online.

This has been a two-way learning process, and I wish to thank the University for reaching out to us and teaching us. I never imagined that Nominal Group Techniques could trip off my tongue so easily! ”

Elaine Deehan, National Dementia Carers Action Net

PhD Student Critical Friend

ASCPP PhD student Molly Murray is conducting a study on how people with young-onset dementia navigate their environments. Early in her research, she recognised the importance of input from someone with lived experience to help shape her study. She reached out to the SDWG to request a critical friend for her PhD, and Stuart Dougall volunteered.

Stuart and Molly have developed a strong working relationship, meeting every 4–6 weeks to discuss the progress of her study. Stuart has been a crucial source of support, particularly helping Molly navigate the research ethics process. Molly said that *‘working with Stuart has been an invaluable experience, with his unique insights enabling me to reflect on and strengthen my research.’*

“Collaborating with Molly as her “critical friend” has been an immensely gratifying experience. She has such a composed demeanour and exceptional listening skills. Through our numerous discussions, I have gained invaluable insights into how her wisdom and guidance can and already has proven beneficial to me. I extend my sincere gratitude for her support.”

Stuart Dougall

ASCPP OPEN MEETINGS

Our monthly ASCPP Open meetings are a regular diary event that allows us to connect and discuss current and future research, policy and practice initiatives relevant to the work of the ASCPP. With an average monthly attendance of between 30 and 40 these webinars provide an opportunity for us to engage, connect and reflect on the collaborative approach we adopt.

Members of the SDWG and NDCAN regularly co-present collaborative work with ASCPP staff at these sessions, including Marion Ritchie and Professor Debbie Tolson who presented in June 2023 on their experiences of being involved in developing the new SIGN Dementia guidelines. Importantly, Debbie and Marion worked together on two of the key questions for the guideline focusing on grief and dementia and anticipatory care planning. In June 2024, Kenny Moffat, Rynagh Flynn and Margaret and Barry Northedge presented on their experiences of Researching Together with Professor Louise Ritchie and Dr Laura Lebec on the Career Guidance and Dementia project.

Dr Eileen Harkess-Murphy puts together an engaging programme of speakers each year for our ASCPP Open Meetings. These are open for anyone to attend, please get in touch with us if you would like to be kept up to date.

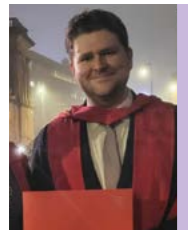
Celebrating Student Success

Recent PhD Graduates



Dr Mohammed Moin Mollah

In July 2024, Dr Mohammed Mollah graduated at a UWS virtual graduation ceremony with a PhD for his thesis titled 'Workforce Development and Dementia Care in Bangladesh: Policy Learning from the Scottish Context.' Moin has now returned to Bangladesh where he is working as an Associate Professor at the University of Dhaka and is actively publishing from his PhD.



Dr Michael Smith

In November 2024, Dr Michael Smith graduated from UWS with a PhD for his thesis titled 'Living with dementia in supported housing in Scotland: Multiple Case Study Research'. Michael is now working with Alzheimer Scotland as a Research Assistant.

Student Conference Presentations

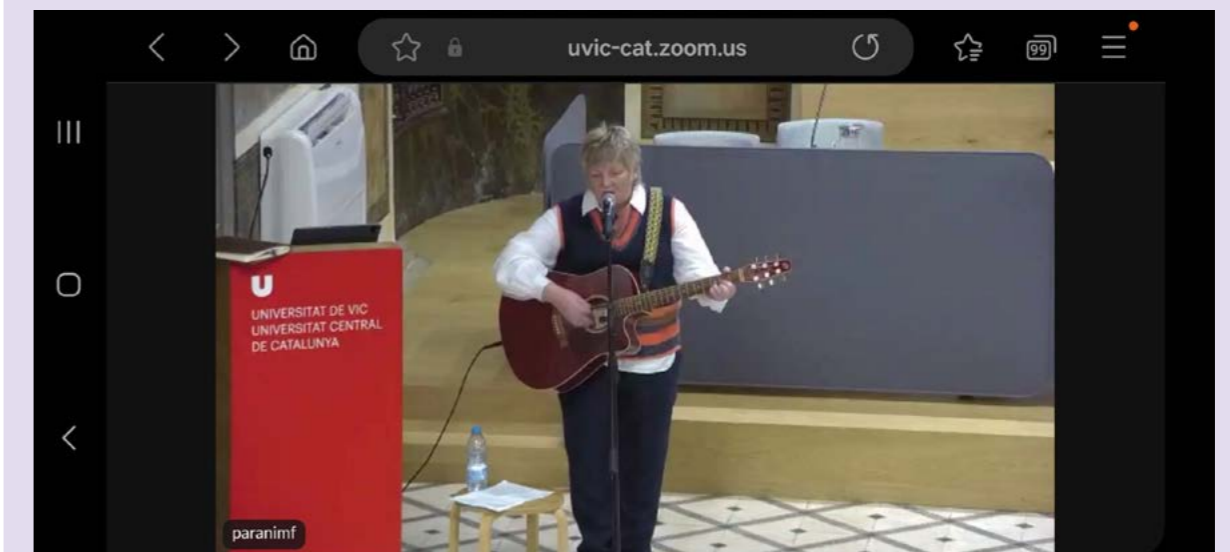
Our PhD students continue to represent themselves and the ASCPP at national and international conferences. ASCPP PhD students Michael Smith, Angela Carter, Connor McDonald and Rachel Allen all presented their PhD findings at Alzheimer Europe Conferences over the last two years. Michael and Angela attended the conference in Helsinki in 2023 while Connor and Rachel presented their work in Geneva in 2024. As they come to the end of their studies, this was an important opportunity for them to share the early findings of their research with an international audience.



Student Conference Presentations

Carol Beckwith gave an invited plenary talk at the International Conference for Storytelling Revisited at the University of Vic in Catalonia in November 2024. Carol's 45 minute talk was titled "How Songs Help: exploring dementia carer stories through group songwriting" and included Carol performing the songs co-written with carers.

Closer to home, we have been regular attendees at the annual Scottish Dementia Research Consortium Conference, the Alzheimer Scotland Annual Conference and the UWS Research Festival. Special congratulations to PhD students Beth Roper and Molly Murray who have both won awards for their poster presentations at conferences in 2024.



ALZHEIMER SCOTLAND MRES SCHOLARSHIP



In 2023, we were delighted to receive the first Alzheimer Scotland MRes Scholarship. The recipient of the award is Kelly Kelly, who is a registered mental health nurse specialising in dementia care and has a BA (Hons) in Psychology. Supervised by Drs Anna Jack-Waugh and Eileen Harkess-Murphy, Kelly's project researches the use of trauma-informed approaches within dementia care, with emphasis on the experience of people with young onset dementia.

Looking Ahead

UPCOMING PROGRAMME NEWS

We have a new part-time programme coming in 2026. This is our MSc in Ageing, Frailty, and Dementia. The programme aims to support health and social care professionals to provide better support, and design effective interventions that promote dignity and well-being in later life across the three areas of Ageing, Frailty and Dementia. As the global population ages, the prevalence of these interconnected issues increases, necessitating for informed approaches to care that addresses the physical, cognitive, social and emotional needs of an individual. We believe at the Centre that it is therefore crucial to advance practice in these areas to provide integrated, compassionate care that enhances quality of life and addresses the unique needs of this vulnerable population.

To enquire about the programme, please contact our MSc programme leader Bryan Mitchell (Bryan.Mitchell@uws.ac.uk)

CARERS' ACADEMY DEVELOPMENTS

We look forward to further developing and raising the profile of our Carers' Academy in the coming years. This will include building the evidence base on the impact of the Carers' Academy attendance on family carer well-being with a publication in preparation. In working together on these publications, the Carers' Academy teams learn with and from each other about undertaking evaluation and research, writing for publication and the importance of sharing this learning with the international dementia education and care community.

KEEPING UP-TO-DATE WITH THE ASCPP NEWS AND PUBLICATIONS

At the ASCPP Centre we have created a Padlet to keep all our important information in one easy-to-access place. This acts in the same way a digital bulletin board does where you can find updates, documents, links, and anything else you might need to know about in relation to the ASCPP. Just click the link or use the QR Code and explore the page. <https://padlet.com/ASCPP/home>



ASCPP are proud to work with:



How you can get involved in our work

If you're inspired by our work, there are several ways you can help us achieve more.

Donate now. You can provide vital help with a donation to support a student scholarship, fund research, provide equipment or help us expand our service faster. To discuss this with no obligation, please contact Nicola Smith, Director of Fundraising & Alumni, UWS by email at nicola.smith@uws.ac.uk or by phone on **0141 848 3084**.

Join us as a "critical friend" to help influence our research agenda, shape projects in development and advise on project delivery. We operate an involvement approach to student education and welcome offers to meet with undergraduate and postgraduate students to share your insights and challenges.

Volunteer with Alzheimer Scotland to offer practical support to people living with Alzheimer's and dementia. You can find out more and register your interest at www.alzscot.org/volunteer-with-us

For further information, please contact:
Professor Louise Ritchie
Director, Alzheimer Scotland Centre for Policy and Practice
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Contact us on social media
[Twitter @AlzScotCPP](https://twitter.com/AlzScotCPP)
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Action on Dementia

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