

Working with Dementia Network Plus



CONFERENCE

2026



Summary and videos from all key sessions:



WELCOME TO WORKING WITH DEMENTIA NETWORK+ CONFERENCE

NEW INSIGHTS ON WORKING WITH DEMENTIA

SPOTLIGHT ON ENABLING A DEMENTIA-INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE

MORE THAN A DIAGNOSIS: EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCES FOR THOSE LIVING WITH DEMENTIA

CARING AND WORKING: EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCES FOR THOSE CARING FOR A LOVED ONE WITH DEMENTIA

KEY TAKEAWAYS, REFLECTIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES



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SOME FEEDBACK FROM THE DAY...

“Excellent conference. Very well organised. Each session was inspiring”

“Found the full day very educational and well managed with excellent selection of speakers”

“Was excellent to hear from the speakers with either a lived experience of a diagnosis of dementia or a carer/spouse of someone. They all were amazing speakers”

“Reverse panels and marketplace were great. Overall, the passion for working on this project and area came through from all members”

“We all felt welcome and heard, and a truly special space was created - because there was a lot of collaborative sharing happening”

“Exploration, emerging evidence and raising profile of this area overall has been very insightful. ”

“For me, the best thing was the incredible atmosphere. It felt very friendly and open. There was an amazing buzz about the place, and I left feeling very inspired”

“Excellent opportunity to collaborate and learn, a really thoughtfully planned event that had superb content and ample opportunities to network. Thank you”

“I found the whole day very informative and the networking opportunities were terrific”

“The whole event was brilliant, hearing from lived experience was very beneficial!”

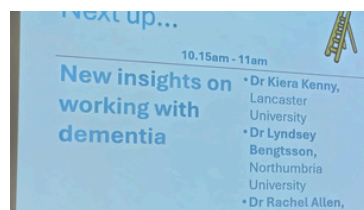


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THANK YOU FOR JOINING US...



The photo above is of Louise speaking at the conference

On 25th March 2026 we hosted the Working with Dementia Conference at the UWS Paisley Campus. It was an amazing event, attended by over 100 people who not only recognized dementia as a workplace issue, but were committed to making things better. In terms of changing attitudes since I began research about employment and dementia in 2013, this is wonderful progress. I am in awe of all the people who have played a part in the journey to get here.

We still have a long way to go. One common thread for me across all the conference presentations was the need to create safe spaces to speak about dementia in our workplaces. We created this summary as a resource to share with both those we met on the day and those that could not be there. We have included a written description of the key sessions, along with a video link (where available) so you can watch the presentations.

While the conference day may be over, the work is very much continuing! You can connect with us by visiting our website (workingwithdementia.org) or emailing WWDnetworkplus@uws.ac.uk.

Louise Ritchie

Working with Dementia
Network Plus Lead



WELCOME TO WORKING WITH DEMENTIA NETWORK PLUS CONFERENCE

Louise Ritchie, Network Lead

Kenny Moffat, Lived Experience Panel member

After an introduction from Julie Edgar, Dean of the School of Health and Life Sciences at UWS, Kenny and Louise welcomed all attendees to the conference.

Louise encouraged all attendees to be open to conversations, to be curious, and to think innovatively. Kenny introduced himself and emphasised the importance of our lived experience panel and their involvement throughout the day.



The photo above is of Louise and Kenny as they welcome everyone to the conference.



NEW INSIGHTS ON WORKING WITH DEMENTIA

Marion Ritchie, Lived Experience Panel Member

Kiera Kenny, Lancaster University

Lyndsey Bengsston (on behalf of **Connor McDonald**),
Northumbria University

Rachel Allen, University of the West of Scotland

Kiera's presentation was titled "Identifying workplace supports and interventions for employees living with neurodegenerative cognitive impairment: A rapid review". She explained the review aims and process, and some key conclusions including how workplace supports and interventions for people diagnosed with neurodegenerative cognitive impairment must be multi-level: Individual, relational and organisational.

Lyndsey presented an overview of Connor's research about dementia and employment tribunals. Connor has been searching tribunal judgements to analyse findings relating to dementia and work. So far, he has found that there are very few cases being brought by people diagnosed with dementia, but the tribunal data shows positive outcomes are possible for those with a diagnosis.

The photograph on the right is of Lyndsey (with the panel to the right) as she told us about Connor's findings so far.



Rachel's presentation was about the Nominal Group Technique (NGT) project that has contributed to the priority themes for the network: Work and Wellbeing, Inclusive Workplaces and Economic Costs and Benefits.



Rachel explained how the project had involved a series of focus groups with a range of participants, including people living with dementia and carers for loved ones with dementia, employers, policy makers and academics. She also developed 'thread' themes during analysis of focus group discussions. These were flexibility, self-employment and finances. The picture above is of artwork she created during the data analysis.



Click this link to watch a recording of this session: [New Insights Panel](#)

SPOTLIGHT ON ENABLING A DEMENTIA-INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE

Carol Holland, Lancaster University

Tracey Stewart, Rowan Alba

Rynagh Flynn, Lived Experience Panel Member

Rebecca O'Neill-Kerr, Dementia UK - Nationwide Building Society

Marla Baird, Qualifications Scotland

Katie Strickland, Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD)

Tracey and Rynagh began this session by sharing about their experience. Rynagh first noticed symptoms of dementia at work and her manager Tracey encouraged and supported her through the diagnosis process. They shared how they had discussed what Rynagh needed and wanted; and adjusted her role to ensure she could continue working until she chose to retire.

Rebecca shared about the partnership between Dementia UK and Nationwide. She is one of two Admiral Nurses embedded within Nationwide and told us about their role to support colleagues and vulnerable customers and provide education and resources.

Marla's presentation focused on the Carer's Policy her organisation has developed. She told us why the policy was important and how Qualifications Scotland ensure they are identifying carers and have created a Carer's Network. Her presentation used this powerful quote:

"There are only four kinds of people in the world. Those who have been caregivers. Those who are currently caregivers. Those who will be caregivers, and those who will need a caregiver."

(Rosalynn Carter)





In the photo on the left Rebecca is speaking on the left with other panel members to the right.

Katie's presentation was titled "Enabling a Dementia-Inclusive Workplace". The CIPD champion better work and working lives, and Katie explained how the employment landscape requires employers to make meaningful employment decisions, develop line management and support carers.



The photo above is of the panel in action. From left to right: Carol, Tracey, Rynagh, Katie, Marla and Rebecca.

Click this link to watch a recording of this session: [**Spotlight Panel**](#)

MORE THAN A DIAGNOSIS: EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCES FOR THOSE LIVING WITH DEMENTIA



Margaret McCallion, Lived Experience Panel member

Rynagh Flynn, Lived Experience Panel member

Kenny Moffat, Lived Experience Panel member

In the afternoon, our two main sessions were 'reverse panels'. Panel members introduced themselves and then asked questions of the audience. These sessions aimed to promote discussion in an environment where people felt safe and supported to contribute.

Question One (Margaret): What adaptations for a person with dementia do you have in your organisations now?

The first response was about how a reasonable adjustments policy had been developed with HR and staff disability network. There was appreciation for the approach Tracey and Rynagh had shared earlier, and hope that this could be replicated elsewhere. The positive potential of advancing technologies, such as AI and robotics, was also discussed.

"Soon after being told I was a valued member of the team, I received the devastating news that my employment was being terminated... Anxiety kind of led me to feeling quite worthless."

(Margaret)



Question Two (Rynagh): If you noticed an employee exhibiting brain fog or other symptoms of dementia, would you realise they may be having memory problems? If so, how would you approach a conversation with them and what support would you need to do so?

Suggestions prompted by this question included experience tours, management toolkit, signposting advice and best practice guidance to help start conversations that may be difficult. There was agreement about the need for safety with conversations, so that trust and rapport could facilitate support. It was also important that carers felt able discuss their needs with their employers.

"People mentioned earlier that initial conversation. For me, the initial conversation I had to have was with myself... That's when I decided I needed to go to the doctor and figure out why I'm forgetting people's names... That first conversation was very hard and I imagine from experience it would be harder to have that conversation with someone else."

(Kenny)



Question Three (Kenny): If an employee could not continue in their current role due to their dementia symptoms, what are the key factors you would consider when looking at potential alternative roles within your organisation?

Tracey, who had spoken with Rynagh during an earlier session, shared how allowing Rynagh greater flexibility in her role and been very beneficial for their organisation and had created a lasting legacy through the projects Rynagh had been given freedom to resource. Scaffolding roles could support someone to continue with their current job. Working flexibly with job descriptions was suggested as a positive approach when alternative roles may not be available, or right for an individual.



The photo above is of the panel in action. From left to right: Rynagh, Margaret and Kenny.

CARING AND WORKING: EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCES FOR THOSE CARING FOR A LOVED ONE WITH DEMENTIA



Alice Dunn (via video), Lived Experience Panel member

Marion Ritchie, Lived Experience Panel member

Bill Alexander, Lived Experience Panel member

Claire Davies, Lived Experience Panel and ECR Forum member

Our caring and Working session also took a ‘reverse panel’ format:

Question One (Alice, via video): Given that self-employed carers often struggle to access traditional workplace protections; how might health, social care and local services better coordinate to provide reliable advice, respite and financial guidance?

Responses included the need for better connection and signposting between services, such as the Department for Work and Pensions, with the NHS at the time of diagnosis. It was also acknowledged that recognising that you are a carer can often take time. Carer Support Plans, carer support organisations and direct payments were suggested as useful resources. The lack of suitable respite services for younger people with dementia was also highlighted.

"The key things we want as carers is some hope that we're going to get through this, some fairness with the way it's applied and the choice about what we do in our employment."

(Bill)

Question Two (Marion): Do you know how many of your colleagues are carers? And if you do, do you have any supports in place?

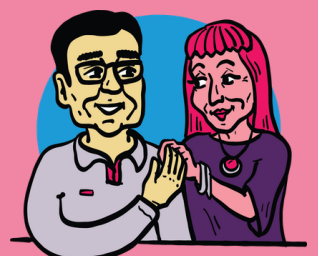
Marion referred to Marla's earlier presentation and how her organisation had set up support groups. The importance of support groups and having a system for knowing how many carers an organisation has, but that many organisations don't have this, was highlighted through responses.

Question Three (Bill): What would you expect your employer to do for you, if you were a carer?

The need for respect for the carer and their caring role was emphasised. It was important that employers work around caring needs, and to enable this having conversations and asking 'what do you need right now?' on an ongoing basis was suggested as helpful. Though not specific to carers, wider policies can have implicit benefits, such as time off for medical appointments without using annual leave. Senior staff and managers need to be role models. Difficulties with respite care were also discussed, and the need for employers to appreciate how challenging this can be for carers to put in place.



The photo on the left is of the panel in action. From left to right are Lyndsey, Marion, Claire and Bill.



"Suddenly all those opportunities for learning and development just disappeared... There was an assumption that because I was a carer I no longer had any ambition."

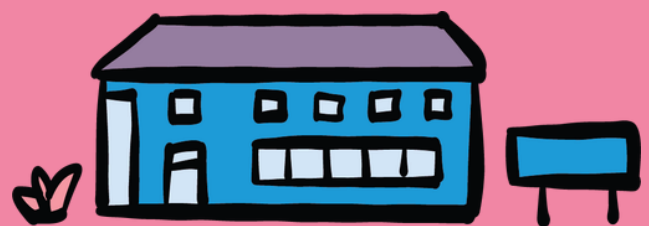
(Claire)

Question Four (Claire): How do you have a performance conversation when someone's work capacity is impacted by their caring responsibilities?

The need for employers to work in a 'trauma informed' way was important, for example by listening and understanding the carer's story and appreciating how much they bring to their role that non-carers don't. Compassion was highly valued, and appraisal processes need to focus on praise rather than penalty for balancing care roles and employment. The carer role evolves and changes and carers need flexibility and safe spaces to share and discuss their needs. It was suggested that working to skills rather than hours could help facilitate the flexibility carers often need.



The photo on the left is of Louise and Claire chatting in the conference Marketplace.



MARKETPLACE

Our Marketplace provided an opportunity to chat to stallholders, network and have inspired conversations. Please click on each logo below to access the stallholder website:



Photos above and below: Conference attendees connect with one another and stallholders in the Marketplace.



Thank you to all stallholders for being part of the conference.

KEY TAKEAWAYS, OPPORTUNITIES AND REFLECTIONS

Louise Ritchie, Network Lead

Margaret McCallion, Lived Experience Panel member

As our time together drew to an end, Louise thanked everyone for attending and being part of the day, and shared her excitement at the changes that had been achieved and the opportunity for further impactful research.

Louise announced that the research grant fund was now open for expressions of interest until 1st June 2026, with further details available on our website.

Margaret closed our day with a reminder of the importance of including those with lived experience in research.



In the photo on the left, Louise is speaking into the microphone with Margaret at her side.



Above: A group shot at the conference of those happy to pose!