

Reach-Out Delirium Service



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Information for staff

What is Delirium?

Delirium is a state of confusion caused by physical illness. It comes on suddenly over hours or days. It can be a worsening of pre-existing confusion. The degree of confusion may vary over the course of the day.

Early diagnosis and support is important for any memory problem, particularly Dementia.

As well as confusion some people will experience other symptoms which can include:

- Agitation
- Drowsiness
- Difficulty sleeping at night
- Hallucinations (voices or visions, hearing/ seeing things that are not really there)
- Misinterpretation
- Delusions or troublesome thoughts (false beliefs)
- Fear, anxiety or terror
- Apathy
- Inability to concentrate
- Inability to think clearly.

What causes delirium?

As with most conditions there are factors that can increase the risk of you developing delirium. The known risk factors include:

- Increased age, being 65 years of age or older
- Having pre-existing cognitive impairment (memory loss)
- Severe illness such as renal or heart failure
- Hip fractures

Things that cause delirium are wide ranging and delirium can be caused by just one or a combination of these factors. Sometimes we are not able to identify the specific cause of the delirium.

Causes include:

- Infection-this can be a urine infection, chest infection, infection of the blood, skin or other systems in the body
- Constipation
- Certain drugs such as morphine
- Dehydration



- Diabetes
- Abnormal blood chemistry
- Pain
- Hypoxia (a lack of oxygen getting to the brain)
- Immobility (as a result of stroke or hip fracture for example)
- Sleep deprivation
- Withdrawal from drugs or alcohol

What is the 'Reach-Out' service?

'Reach-Out' (Reduce, Educate, Assess & Care with Hope) is a dedicated service for delirium across the hospital. The service has several key elements:

- Prevention of delirium
- Effective screening for delirium
- Assessment of suspected/confirmed delirium
- Support in the treatment and management of delirium
- Cognitive stimulation/support/advice
- Support to carers
- Liaison with other community based services to support effective discharge
- Education

Screening of Delirium?

The service will aim to prevent delirium by screening patients most at risk of developing delirium.

This includes:

- All patients aged 65 years and older
- All patients with dementia (or AMT<8/10)
- All patients with a current hip fracture
- All patients with severe illness
- All patients where delirium is already present or suspected

Assessment:

All assessments will include the following:

- Check if patient is known to local memory services
- Liaison with patient's carers regarding baseline and collateral history
- Delirium screening (4AT)
- Advice/support/further input depending on outcome of screening.

Referral:

The 'Reach-out' service will check on Hospital Patient Information systems for all admissions over 65 years of age and proactively case find these patients who are at higher risk of delirium.

Referral will also be accepted from any health professional within the Hospital where delirium is suspected or already present or where the patient has dementia or other high risk factors.

Referral Line: **07770781293** or **07770811244**

Management of Delirium

Following screening 'Reach-Out' staff will work closely with the ward staff to ensure effective support.

This may include commencing a 'Reach-Out' delirium Care Plan, ensuring investigations are completed to identify and treat possible underlying cause of suspected delirium.

'Reach-Out' will also arrange for progress to be monitored of all patients at risk of developing delirium throughout their hospital stay.

Support & management following screening:

Screening outcome	Support
<i>Negative</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nil- normal care
<i>Negative but high risk group</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily 'Reach-Out' screening throughout admission • Carer Support • Cognitive stimulation twice daily
<i>Positive</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Reach-Out' Delirium Care Plan • Advice/support re environment/management • Carer support • Cognitive stimulation twice daily • Assistance with needs • Follow up to GP/other services on discharge
<i>Positive and complex needs</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Reach-Out' Delirium Care Plan • Nurse practitioner assessment/Interventions • Carer support • Support re medication • De-escalation techniques • Diversional activities • Assistance with meals/nutrition • Promoting independence • Time limited 1 to 1 interventions • Support with discharge planning • Coordinated follow up to GP/Memory service

Carer Support:

The 'Reach-Out' service will work closely with carers of people with delirium and also patients admitted with existing dementia and with whom it is essential that carer's knowledge regarding their baseline level of functioning is able to be confirmed and protected during their hospital stay.

This will help the person return to their previous placement, avoiding unnecessary or premature entry into long term care, while also ensuring any additional concerns during admission are considered in discharge plans.

Where a patient has existing dementia, 'Reach-Out' staff will liaise with their carer to enable completion of 'This is me' passport- ensuring this is then communicated to ward staff and that any support required by the patient is confirmed.

Practical Support:

'Reach-Out' staff will provide practical support including; Care Planning; time limited 1 to 1 support; Cognitive stimulation; de-escalation & diversional activities, daily monitoring and other practical support measures.

Education:

'Reach-Out' will deliver regular programmes of education across the hospital site aiming to improve awareness and recognition of delirium. In addition, joint working with ward staff in the management of delirium will also aim to combine education with practical support

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Email: PET@cumbria.nhs.uk Tel: 01228 602128 Freephone: 0800 633 5547

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01228 603890

E:communications.helpdesk@cumbria.nhs.uk

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