

# Launch of the National Dementia Strategy

## Understanding the impact of key policy objectives



February 4<sup>th</sup> 2009

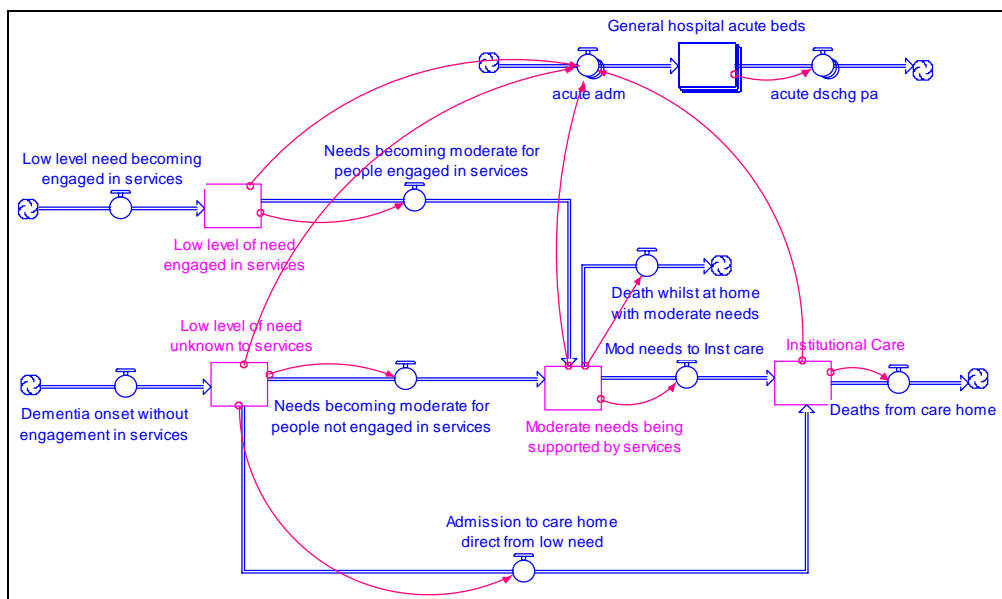
The Whole Systems Partnership (WSP) has worked with a number of Local Authorities and Primary Care Trusts over recent years to review strategy in the area of older people's mental health services. Whilst the policy direction set out in the National Dementia Strategy has probably been largely anticipated, what has often proved illusive is a clear systems approach to understanding the impact of these policies over time.

WSP are a leading consultancy in applying systems modelling to just such questions. We have pioneered the development of simple and accessible models that explore and provide insight to support the implementation of policy.

Recent work in modelling the impact of two key policy areas in dementia care have provided just such insight, and chime well with the direction now set out in the National Dementia Strategy. These strategies are:

1. To increase the proportion of people with low level needs who are engaged with preventative services – i.e. the early identification and access to services such as memory clinics that will enable a lot of people to live more fulfilled lives, experience less untoward incidents with the potential for hospital admission and remain independent, with the support of carers for longer.
2. To extend the period of time that people receive support at home before being admitted to long term care through improved community support services, intermediate care, and housing related support.

A simple systems model has been developed (and is accessible online – see below) that reflects a generic, high level pathway for people with dementia.



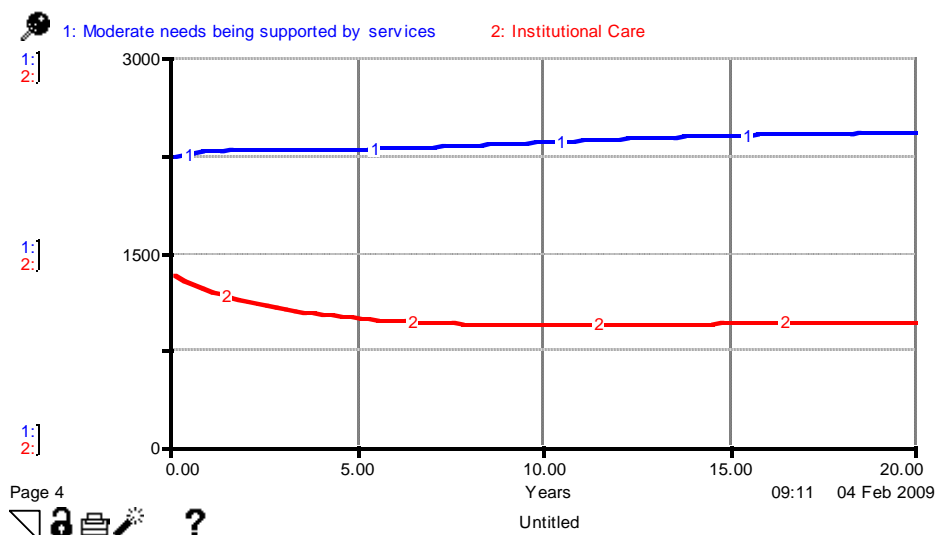
The model identifies two routes into services at the onset of dementia, one where there is engagement with services to meet low level needs and one where there is not. We have initialised the model with a 50/50 split, but you can increase the proportion engaged in services using the model interface to reflect a policy of earlier identification and engagement of clients in 'low level' support.

We have scaled the model to reflect an incidence of 1,000 new cases of dementia each year, which would be typical of a total population of just over 300,000 based on national incidence rates for dementia.

The model produces a range of outputs and scenarios dependent on a number of simple sliders representing the ambition of local policy. The output below reflects an increase from 50% to 70% of those who are identified early as well as the extension of support at home before an admission to a care home by 1 year. The model provides an output over a 20 year period and suggests:

- An increase in the number of people supported in the community with moderate level needs from 2,243 to 2,429, or approximately 8%;
- A reduction in the number of people in institutional care from 1,317 to 961 (27% less) but no change in the admission rate – the model assumes people enter later but for a shorter period of time;
- A reduction in acute admissions for the population as a whole of about 4%.

Model assumptions may vary in different locations and the demographic changes over this period also need to be factored in. However, this modelling has provided important intelligence for local commissioners seeking to implement these policy options.



You can access the online model by registering on the WSP website at [http://www.wspnetsims.com/sd\\_home.asp](http://www.wspnetsims.com/sd_home.asp) and then navigating via the 'share' icon to online models and selecting the 'simple dementia model' from the list.

We trust that the insights from this modelling work will help people in addressing the challenges of implementing the National Dementia Strategy. If you have any questions about this model in particular or other applications of systems modelling please do not hesitate to get in touch.

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