

## CHAIR: Professor Alistair Burns, National Clinical Director for Dementia and Older People's Mental Health, NHS England and NHS Improvement

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ALISTAIR BURNS CBE FRCP, FRCPsych, MD, MPhil, is Professor of Old Age Psychiatry at The University of Manchester and an Honorary Consultant Old Age Psychiatrist in the Greater Manchester Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust. He is Director of the Manchester Institute for Collaborative Research on Ageing (MICRA) and the National Clinical Director for Dementia and Older People's Mental Health at NHS England and NHS Improvement. He graduated in medicine from Glasgow University in 1980, training in psychiatry at the Maudsley Hospital and Institute of Psychiatry in London. He became the Foundation Chair of Old Age Psychiatry in The University of Manchester in 1992, where he has variously been Head of the Division of Psychiatry and a Vice Dean in the Faculty of Medical and Human Sciences, with responsibility for liaison within the NHS. He set up the Memory Clinic in Manchester and helped establish the old age liaison psychiatry service at Wythenshawe Hospital. He is a Past President of the International Psychogeriatric Association. Alistair was Editor of the International Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry for twenty years, (retiring in 2017) and is on the Editorial Boards of the British Journal of Psychiatry and International Psychogeriatrics. His research and clinical interests are in mental health problems of older people, particularly dementia and Alzheimer's disease. He has published over 300 papers and 25 books. He was made an honorary fellow of the Royal College of Psychiatrists in 2016, received the lifetime achievement award from their old age Faculty in 2015 and was awarded the CBE in 2016 for contributions to health and social care, in particular dementia.

I will just say a few words if I may, before moving onto our Preventing Well session. It is a great pleasure and privilege to be here, to talk about dementia, and about what everyone has articulated much better than I can, the importance of personalised care and individual care. In this Dementia Action Week, it is very timely that this event is now. Veronica has shown amazing leadership in this field, in taking the work in A4D long beyond many of traditional ways of looking at things, I think that is really important. Sally, your inspiration in bringing us together is key. Keith is very difficult to follow you and your personal journey, and the way you articulate so well the lived experience, that is key. Finally, James, the only person who can take us 4000 BC to the future and keep to time. Reminding us that there is no doubt the pandemic has brought to the fore some relatively straight forward things we all appreciate; the connectedness, being with people, especially as we reflect on the importance of what has happened in the last year in terms of isolation. If there was ever something to emphasise

the importance of community and networks, it would be the isolation people have felt over the past year.

I am sure like many people here today; I have seen it first-hand the negative effects of isolation on people living with dementia and their carers. I know that Helen will speak to that in a bit more detail. In terms of wellbeing, we have articulated the wellbeing pathway: preventing well, diagnosing well, treating well, living and supporting well, and dying well. This first section in preventing well is key, whether it is singing for the brain, dancing for the brain, or swimming for the brain. As we move on, James I am conscious you look after a whole gamut of things, as people like Sally and I articulated a number of years ago, if you get it right for dementia, you get it right for everyone. I make no apology in emphasising these approaches that we will hear about today are as relevant to everyone, and are of benefit to all older people, all ages, but using dementia as an example is important. Let us move on quickly, it is a great pleasure to introduce Professor Helen Chatterjee, Professor of Biology University College London and UCL Arts and Sciences.

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