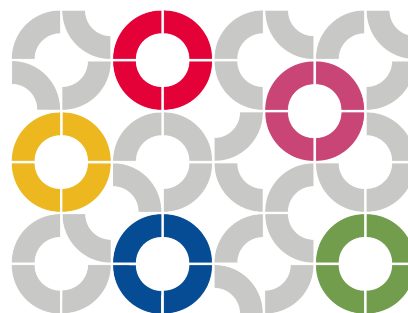


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Issue 135 July 2026

Welcome to July's edition of the PROSPER newsletter, designed to keep you updated with the progress of the PROSPER project.
Promoting **S**afer **P**rovision of care for **E**very **R**esident.

Champion Study Days Special

During June and July, The Prosper team held 4 Prosper Champion Study Days around the County. We had a great turn out with **83** staff attending from **32** homes.

The agenda for the events consisted of informative sessions that were both fun and interactive and covered several different topics which we will look at in more detail in this edition. The sessions were:

- Perspectives – seeing things differently
- Sensory & Trauma Informed approaches
- Nutrition and Hydration
- Alzheimer's Society – Lift the Lid on Sexual Relationships

Feedback was positive and there were lots of lovely comments about how staff found the days useful and learnt a lot of new things they can now take back to their homes and implement.

"A varied day with interesting content"

"All the topics which we covered during today session will help and provide more support to our residents and ourselves"

Now that our Champion Study Days are over, we are already busy planning a Prosper Community of Practice that will be taking place in October, so make sure to keep your eyes peeled for invites and agenda of the event that will be coming to your inboxes very soon!!

Residents Riddle?

Each month we will provide a riddle for residents to solve. Please email their answers to prosper@essex.gov.uk

Answer to last month's riddle was of course:
The Letter U

Well done to all at **Cameron House, Longmead Court and Freda Gunton Lodge** who answered the riddle correctly.

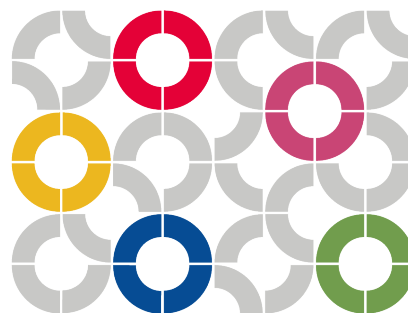
This month's riddle is...

I am a type of building and from the top I shine. I warn sailors about rocks so that ships will be fine. What am I?

Answer in next month's newsletter



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Perspectives

The first session of the events was a session created by the Prosper team on Perspectives and how different perspectives in the home could help towards the reductions of Falls, Pressure Ulcers and UTI's.

So, what does Perspective mean?

A particular attitude towards or way of regarding something - A point of view.

why are differing perspectives beneficial?

Innovation: Diverse thinking challenges existing norms, leading to better ideas.

Problem-Solving: Multiple angles help uncover blind spots and anticipate challenges.

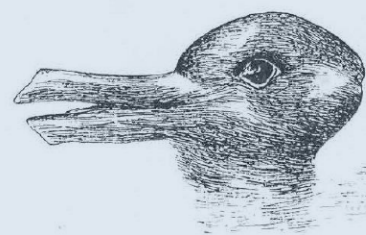
Empathy: Understanding that others have valid, different perspectives can deepen relationships and build trust.

We set everyone a task to look at all the different roles within a care home ranging from Management, carers, kitchen staff to maintenance, laundry etc, and how their perspective can help towards preventing falls, pressure ulcers, UTI's, Dehydration and Bad Oral Health. This helped staff to see how different perspectives could make a real difference in their homes, and how everyone should be able to come forward with ideas to try.



Perspective exercise

During the session we also used an exercise where we showed everyone different pictures to see what it was, they saw first.



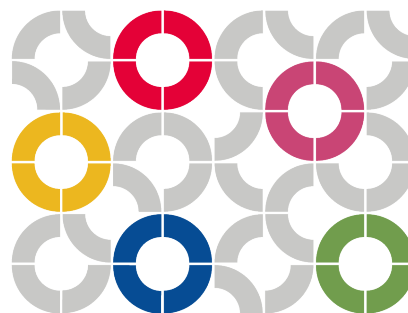
A Duck or a Rabbit?



2 Faces or a Candle Stick?

This was a quick, but fun task that showed how everyone sees things differently and got us talking.

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Sensory & Trauma Informed approaches

Caroline Robinson Senior OT held a session on Sensory and Trauma Informed Approaches.

The first part of her session was about Sensory processing or sensory integration. This is the processing, integration, & organisation of sensory information from the body and the environment. This means how we experience, interpret and react to information coming from our senses which gets processed in our brains. Sensory processing is important in all the things we need to do daily, such as getting dressed, eating, moving around, socialising, learning and working. Caroline explained how Dementia has a big impact on how the brain receives, processes and responds to sensory information. In dementia, processing is much slower. If we can recognise how a person's **sensory processing** is affected by their dementia, we can then start to shift our focus from managing behavior to supporting them to feel regulated instead.

The Second half of the session Caroline discussed about the impact Trauma could have on a person. When someone experiences trauma—especially early or repeated trauma, it can lead to **sensory modulation difficulties**, where the brain either over-responds or under-responds to sensory input. When overreactive, its often referred to as **hypervigilance**—a survival response where the nervous system is constantly scanning for danger. In this state, sensory input like noise, touch, or movement can feel exaggerated or threatening. A light touch might feel painful, or a sudden sound might trigger a fight-or-flight-or-freeze response. This is because trauma alters the way the brain filters and prioritizes sensory information. In practice, this means individuals with trauma histories may present with sensory defensiveness (characterised by fight/flight), sensory avoidance (hypersensitivity avoid lights or sounds or smells), or sensory seeking behaviours (hyposensitivity - actively looking for sensory input, may be making loud noises, stamping feet when walking)- —not because of sensory processing challenges alone, but because their nervous system is trying to protect them.

Did you Know?

We have 8 senses not 5!

As well as our standard 5 senses of sight, smell, taste, touch and sound we also have:

Proprioception:

Proprioception supports body awareness, allowing us to perceive the position and movement of our body parts without relying on vision.

Vestibular:

A key function of the vestibular system is balance and postural control. It helps us to know if we are moving fast or slow.

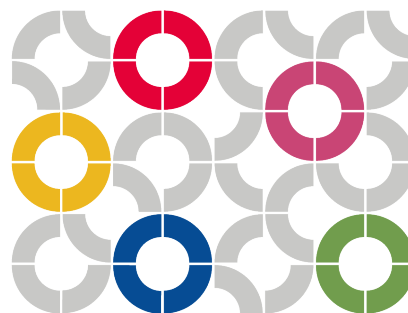
Interoception:

Is knowing how we feel internally, are we hungry, hot, in pain, needing the toilet, if we have tense muscles...



THE 8 SENSES

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Nutrition and Hydration

The third session was all about the importance of nutrition and hydration. There were facts given around Malnutrition and dehydration to show care staff the importance of why keeping someone hydrated and well fed is an important part of their role.

Discussions took place about different ways both nutrition and hydration could be increased including things like using adaptive cutlery and tableware, looking at different areas like accessibility, assumption and affordability. But most importantly a person-centred approach for every resident. To help with implementing a person-centred approach there was a lot of ideas, tools and projects discussed. We illustrated the I Hydrate project tools including the personalisation of drinking vessels, asking residents what their favourite hot drink is, and how many times of day that they prefer a specific drink. We highlighted a project one care home completed using 100 Calorie booster snacks from the food first resources, which helped residents who were underweight improve their MUST score.

One big topic of discussion was the visual tool that was used on what strength a person likes their tea or coffee. Everyone had a different preference! It really highlighted how this would be the same for residents and could affect whether they drank their tea or coffee.



All the tools, and ideas discussed during the session can be found within the prosper toolkit [Prosper Toolkits](#) | [Provider Hub](#) | [Essex](#)

Fluid contents in food

Around 20% of daily fluid intake comes from food



4 florets of Broccoli have 75ml of fluid

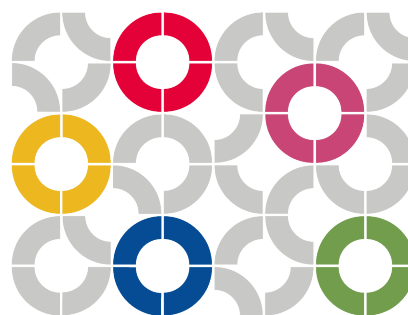


3 tablespoons of Bake Beans have 90ml of fluid



1 boiled egg has 40ml of fluid

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Alzheimer's Society – Lift the Lid

The last session introduced staff to the Alzheimer's Society's Lift the Lid on Sex, Intimacy and Relationships toolkit. The toolkit is used to

- **Challenge Perceptions around sex, intimate relationships and people affected by Dementia**
- **Provide a framework for respectful management of in the moment situations**

The first part of the session consisted of a quiz with true and false statements around the topic for staff to answer. Each question had an explanation as to why it was true or false, that included facts and figures.

The second part of the session introduced the HEART Framework the Alzheimer's Society have created to help staff know if an action needs to be taken and it being a respectful one. To help get used to the framework there were several scenarios for the staff to go through using the framework to see if respectful action would need to be taken, and what that may look like.

In-the-Moment Situations



If your home is interested to find out more about the toolkit please either visit the Alzheimer's society or email Prosper@essex.gov.uk

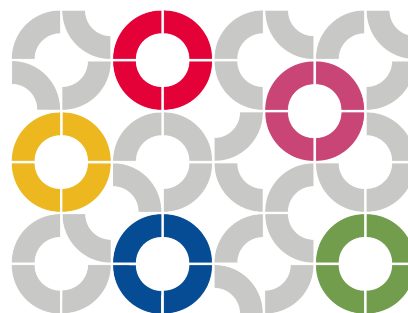
Five Stacks PDSA

Following collaborative discussions and shared learning between Five Stacks Residential Care Home and their Prosper Officer, it was identified that urine dipstick testing was being used inappropriately to diagnose UTIs. The home set a PDSA to implement education on best practice, the team recognised that dipstick testing alone is not a reliable diagnostic tool, particularly for people over 65. Learning on “to test or not to test”, recognising true clinical signs, and evidence-based UTI management was shared with all staff.

The home stopped routine dipstick testing and only submitted urine samples when clinically indicated.

The impact has been significant, with reduced unnecessary antibiotic use, and a reported 100% reduction in UTIs over the past 12 weeks.

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Methodology Corner

Using a Completed Driver Diagrams

In recent newsletters we have been explaining the process of completing a **Driver Diagram**. Today we are giving some ideas of how a completed **Driver Diagram** can become a quality improvement resource.

Remember that a **Driver Diagram** has three columns, your **SMART Aim** in the left-hand column, **Primary Drivers** in the middle column, and **Secondary Drivers** in the right-hand column.

Once completed, it is the **Secondary Drivers** (right-hand column) you need to look at. This column will have a list of elements that feed directly into your **Primary Drivers**, and there will probably be many of these elements that you feel are functioning well in your home already. However, there will almost certainly be some elements that, if you are being honest, you could improve. And it is these elements that you need to plan to improve to achieve your chosen **SMART Aim**.

For example if your **Driver Diagram** is in relation to falls prevention, you may look at your **Secondary Drivers**, and be confident that your environment is in good order and tidy already, and that your risk assessments etc. are personalised, up to date and being adhered to. However, you may see something about resident's footwear or staff training in the right-hand column and believe that these areas could be improved. You could then devise a plan to try and improve these areas using a **Plan, Do, Study, Act** cycle, which we will discuss next month.

As always, your **PROSPER** support officer is always happy to support you to facilitate this process, email Prosper@essex.gov.uk

Driver Diagrams Summary

A **Driver Diagram** is an excellent tool to look at your processes, and what is working well or not.

Link your **Driver Diagram** to your chosen **SMART Aim** and enter that in the left-hand box.

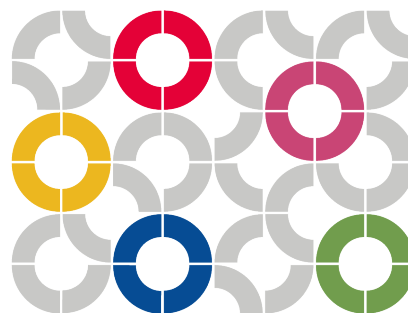
Include all processes (Drivers) etc. in your **Driver Diagram**, not just those that you feel need improving.

Involve a diverse range of job roles when completing your **Driver Diagram**.

There are no right or wrong suggestions in completing your **Driver Diagram**.

Look down the list of **Secondary Drivers** for elements you could improve in an attempt to achieve your **SMART aim**.

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Poetry Corner

Written by Sue Smith, Manager at Cherry Wood Grange

Hearts of Gold

*In every smile that's gently shared, In every moment someone cared,
In every hand held through the night, there shines a little golden light.
Kindness isn't grand or loud*

*It doesn't seek applause or crowds, it lives within the quiet things, The
hope and comfort that it brings.*

A cup of tea, a listening ear, A friendly word that calms a fear,

*A patient pause, a gentle touch, can often mean so very much.
For kindness grows when it is given, It lifts the heart, it lightens living,
And every act, both big and small, creates a ripple touching all.*

*Today we celebrate those souls Whose caring hearts make others
whole, Our Hearts of Gold, so warm and true, whose kindness shines in
all they do.*

*To every team member gathered here, Your compassion, dedication
and cheer. Make this more than work each day— You help light
somebody else's way.*

*So, wear your kindness with great pride, let empathy and love be your
guide, For the greatest gift we'll ever hold Is a heart that's kind, a heart
of gold.*

*And long after this party ends, may we continue as colleagues and
friends, remembering always, as stories unfold, the world needs more
hearts of gold.*

Done Something New and Exciting?

Do you have a top tip, an amazing new idea to share or an event that is different to any other and would like it published in the newsletter?

Don't forget to wear your badge with pride!



Prosper Contact

Would you like a prosper support visit, or can't find something you are looking for on the provider hub then email

Prosper@essex.gov.uk