

DEMENTIA CARER WELL-BEING SERVICE SUNFLOWER CENTRE AT EAST CHESHIRE HOSPICE

REFERRAL PROTOCOL AND CRITERIA

This service operates over an eight week period to provide information, guidance, signposting and support to carers of people with dementia. It aims to empower and build resilience in carers to maintain their own health and help them make informed choices about their future. A team of volunteer Dementia Buddies will be a trained companion to the person with dementia in the Sunflower Centre at East Cheshire Hospice to allow carers the time to attend the well-being sessions, secure in the knowledge their loved one is close by and is being supported and occupied.

The service is free at the point of need, however with limited places, a waiting list system is in operation.

How to refer to the project

In order for a referral to the Dementia Carer Well-being Service to be accepted one or more of the following criteria must be met:

- The carer must be caring for a person with a diagnosis of any form of dementia
- Carers must care for, or live with, a person with dementia within East Cheshire
- The carer feels they would benefit from attending a time-limited, structured, information, signposting and support programme
- Must be able to transport themselves to the Sunflower Centre at East Cheshire Hospice

Referral Protocol for access to the Dementia Carer Well-being Service:

Criteria for referral:	Carers of people with dementia who live in East Cheshire who may benefit from attending a time limited (8 weeks) structured well-being support programme.
Criteria of exclusion:	Referrals to the Dementia Carer Well-being Service will not be accepted if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None of the referral criteria listed above are met • There is no diagnosis of dementia • Carers are not aware of referral • Carers are unable to transport themselves independently to the Sunflower Centre at East Cheshire Hospice • The person with dementia needs support with personal care
Action if needed:	Any referrals deemed inappropriate or which are outside the remit of the Dementia Carer Well-being Service will be referred back to the referrer in the first instance, discussed and advice and signposting offered.
Agreement:	Referrers will be provided with information on the Dementia Carer Well-being Service. Referrers must discuss the referral with carers and ensure adequate information is available to enable them to make an informed choice and agree to a referral to the service.
Action if intervention declined:	People will be informed if the Dementia Carer Well-being Service will remain an option for the future should he/she wish to pursue it. They will be provided with information on how to do this and other services available to them. The original referrer will be informed if the service is declined.

For further information please contact: Sunflower Centre Manager 01625 665685

Referral Process and Response Time:

Referrals will be made via fax (01625 666995) to the Sunflower Centre at East Cheshire Hospice. These will be actioned by the Sunflower Centre within 2 working days, excluding bank holidays. The referrer may be contacted for further information and clarification. The carer for who the referral is for will also be contacted. At this point understanding of the service including time commitment, introduction and purpose of a dementia buddy will be discussed. Once established, if the service is appropriate, arrangements will be made for people to commence the programme. If it is established the service is not suitable, carers will be signposted to the most appropriate support services and the referrer informed of any action taken. Referrers will also be informed when carers complete the programme.

Meeting a national need locally

There are currently 856,700 people living with dementia in the UK. It is anticipated this figure will double over the next thirty years. It is expected this will result in additional demands upon front line health and social care services and respective budgets which are already stretched and overspent.

The Commission into the Future of Hospice Care (Help the Hospices 2013) recommended that hospices extend their services to those with a non-cancer diagnosis including dementia. Further work exploring the role of hospice in dementia care resulted in the launch of specific guidance: Hospice Enabled Dementia Care, to support the hospice community in taking first steps (Hospice UK 2015). A common theme running through these is the recommendation and acknowledgement of the value for hospices that previously worked in isolation, to develop collaborations and partnerships.

A number of hospices nationally have already embraced the dementia agenda resulting in innovative and creative projects. Along with St. Luke's Cheshire Hospice, East Cheshire Hospice is currently involved with and supporting the local Dementia End of Life Practice Development Team. They have also engaged in a successful exchange scheme with one of the largest providers of 24 hour care in the UK in order to facilitate mutual sharing of knowledge, skills and practice development.

The population of older people in East Cheshire continues to rise and a number of these will experience dementia. Whilst investment and development of services for dementia locally continues no one organisation can do this alone. East Cheshire Hospice are skilled and knowledgeable in helping people live well with life limiting and chronic illness and delivering palliative and end of life care. They are keen to share these skills with other organisations and the local community. The new programme will also continue East Cheshire Hospices reach to external organisations and the development of partnerships and collaborative ways of working in order to meet local population needs. A number of local organisations will support the delivery of the programme in different ways.

It is acknowledged volunteers contribute hugely to the Hospice workforce. The value and creative use role of volunteers to support dementia care was also advocated within the work of the Commission. East Cheshire Hospice Dementia Carer Well-being Service: a collaboration between the Hospice and the Alzheimer's Society, is an extension of their interest and work in dementia. It is an example of a different and creative use of volunteers. The project aims to complement, supplement and reduce the impact upon existing health and social care services. It will contribute to this by ensuring people with dementia and their carers are prepared, informed and in control of decisions affecting their health, wellbeing and futures. It will help empower and build resilience, enabling them to live more fulfilling, healthier, better and longer lives.

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