

Portfolio

Dementia Care and Provision for the Elderly in Wales



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Portfolio

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OVERVIEW

Dementia, an umbrella term for a range of neurological conditions with progressive decline of cognitive function, is an important health concern for an aging population. NHS UK (2023) suggest that as many as 1 in 11 people over the age of 65 have dementia and that the risk of a dementia diagnosis increases with age, meaning that as the population is living longer, the prevalence of dementia is increasing. As such, it is crucial to consider how to cater for, and care for the aging population.

The number of people living with dementia in Wales is rising and the Welsh Government has committed to supporting people living with dementia with the development of key policies. The aim for Wales to be a dementia friendly nation was set out in the Dementia Action Plan (2018) and since then the focus has been for a person-centred, integrated care approach across assessment services, hospitals, workplace settings, dementia care coordinators and community engagement to support individuals living with Dementia and their families and carers.



OVERVIEW

This portfolio is comprised of two distinct sections;

Part one: will outline three Dementia initiatives that aim to support people living with dementia and their care givers, through community involvement. It will discuss the importance of the community initiative, and the associated benefits to the client and their friends and family, and how it relates to the Government policy to support dementia care in Wales.

Part two: of this portfolio will discuss the impact that dementia has on an individual with dementia and the people who care for them outlining the challenges faced by people with dementia, their caregivers, friends and families.





Part 1:

Initiatives that support dementia care and provision for the elderly in Wales



Cradle Choir



Cradle choir is a singing group initiative run by the Welsh National Opera, that delivers free weekly singing sessions for people with dementia and their relatives, friends, and carers across South Wales. There are currently three Cradle Choirs running, in Milford Haven, Llandeilo and Llanelli, in which anyone with dementia can attend, accompanied by a care giver, to participate in an hour long singing session, run by a choir leader and a pianist, followed by a friendly get to know you session, in which members can chat and make friends over a tea or coffee and a biscuit.

During each session, members sing a great range of songs including folk songs, pop music, hymns, many of them familiar along with any requests members may have.



The aim is to create positive experiences through music, song, and singing for people with dementia and their care givers, leading to increased wellbeing and social connection by developing friendships, interpersonal relationships, and support networks.



Cradle Choir Sessions

Milford Haven, Torch Theatre

Mondays – 10.30-11.30am

Llandeilo, Capel Newydd

Mondays – 2-3pm

Llanelli, Fwrnes Theatre

Tuesdays – 2-3pm

Cradle Choir

A unique, and fundamental aspect of the initiative is intergenerational collaboration and education, where Welsh National Opera work with local schools delivering workshops to develop understanding and share experiences of dementia with school children. Throughout the term children engage in music and singing lessons, develop poetry and song writing through workshops, and spend time in the community with people with dementia by becoming a 'dementia friend', by participating in joint activities such as colouring and crafts. The culmination of the intergenerational collaboration is a joint performance with the Cradle choir and the school choir. The aim of the intergenerational education is to foster a dementia friendly nation through

The education aspect of the initiative aims to reduce stigma and increase the likelihood of earlier intervention and treatment for future generations.

education and understanding by raising dementia awareness, and building a dementia informed society as set out in the Dementia Action Plan policy (Welsh Government, 2018).



Cradle Choir



The effects of therapeutic group singing for people with dementia and their care givers has been reported to be largely beneficial as a non-pharmacological option that can significantly improve wellbeing, quality of life and reduce stress (Camic et al., 2013). Communal singing fosters social connection, building important friendships and reducing loneliness and isolation, and giving a support network for



those caring for someone with dementia (Mabire et al., 2023). Importantly, singing together with a caregiver is beneficial to improving the interpersonal relationship between the person with dementia and the caregiver, which is vital for improved care and empathic understanding (Clarke et al., 2018).

The physical benefits for active singing include increased oxygenation and respiratory health, which can be beneficial for slowing health decline in the elderly and lead to improved feelings of wellness and energy (Segull, 2017). Group singing is known to produce endorphins, the pleasure hormone, giving improved mood, and

Music and singing increases communication and vocabulary (Mittelman & Papayannopoulou, 2018), which is extremely beneficial for people with dementia experiencing cognitive decline and memory and vocabulary loss which can lead to increased social isolation. Singing in a group setting acts as a protective factor for dementia as it increases social interaction, communication and vocabulary use, as well as accessing memories of recognised music and song (Mabire et al., 2023) stimulating cognitive

oxytocin, which relieves stress and increases relaxation. As you move when singing, this can lead to increased physical activity which is widely reported to increase mood. Therefore, the physiological effects of singing have been shown to increase levels of happiness (Kang et al., 2018).



Cradle Choir

While research in this area can be difficult due to the population sample being elderly and vulnerable with progressive cognitive decline, leading to large participant dropout rates (Cho, 2018), and wide variances and inconsistencies in methodologies, meaning that findings are reportedly varied and relatively complex for comparison (Thompson et al., 2021). Nevertheless, empirical studies have reported significant results from

group singing interventions that show supportive evidence that when conducted and delivered well, inclusive dementia choirs can provide many improvements for both people with dementia and their care givers.

In a 12-week group singing intervention for people with dementia, a significant increase in quality of life and positive affect was seen during, post, and at 12 week follow up to the intervention when compared to a music listening group and TV watching group in an elderly population. This suggests that the unique social connection and communal aspect of the group singing, and the session delivery by an experienced music therapist was able to nurture positive group experiences for the singing group leading to improved emotional wellbeing and quality of life.

(Cho, 2018)



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Stackpole Walled Gardens

Garden Activities



At Stackpole Walled Garden in Pembrokeshire, there are regular dementia friendly sessions available to experience the gardens at Stackpole and to take part in a range of different gardening activities. People with dementia have the opportunity to walk around and explore the gardens, enjoy different sensory experiences, learn new skills, and have fun meeting other gardeners and making friends.



Stackpole Walled Gardens, Garden Activities



To book a space at the Stackpole Gardens dementia friendly garden activities you can contact Angela Reid at PAVS using the contact information below.

Angela Reid – 01437 723660
angela.reid@pavs.org.uk

Each person is allocated a plot in which they can choose to grow and take care of their own plants, in a safe and understanding environment where independence is encouraged and nurtured. Activities range from potting, planting, weeding, watering and harvesting. The dementia friendly sessions are run every Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday from 11am-3pm. Sessions are completely free and open to all through self-referral or agency referral, but booking is essential.



Gardening interventions have been reported to have many therapeutic benefits for people with dementia with significant contributions towards cognitive and emotional wellbeing as well as physical health and social engagement (Murrone et al., 2021). Research suggests that participating in gardening activities can stimulate sensory engagement, and support reminiscence work by stimulating memory function.



Stackpole Walled Gardens, Garden Activities



From observations in a case study of 21 elderly participants with dementia during a therapeutic garden renovation intervention, Meneghetti et al. (2022) reported increased sensory engagement in more than half of the participants who spent more time in the therapeutic garden and were observed touching and smelling the flowers more often after the intervention. Most notable findings from the intervention included increased social engagement and reduced depression scores in those who had increased social and sensory engagement, suggesting that a therapeutic garden intervention can lead to improved social and emotional wellbeing



In addition, exposure to nature and green spaces is known to have a calming effect and studies have found that when people with dementia engage in garden activities this can reduce stress and anxiety (Scott et al., 2022), observed behaviour is less agitated (Meneghetti et al., 2023) and this can improve mood, increase relaxation and improve sleep quality (Gonzalez & Kirkevold, 2014). Furthermore, it leads to an increase in physical



activity which also promotes improved mood and stress relief, as well as the physical benefits such as increased muscle strength which can prevent falls (Murrioni et al., 2021) and improved respiratory health which supports cardiovascular health.

Stackpole Walled Gardens, Garden Activities



A person-centred approach is advised when selecting suitable interventions for people with dementia (Scott et al., 2022), with the most beneficial results found in participants who enjoy, or have previous gardening experience (Meneghetti et al., 2023) and those with mild to moderate dementia symptoms compared to people with severe cognitive decline (Murrioni et al., 2021). This suggests that different strategies are necessary for people at different stages of the condition.



The Wednesday Club



The Wednesday Club is a dementia supportive community group based in Tenby and Saundersfoot, Pembrokeshire that meet regularly on a Wednesday for a range of different social activities and events. It's run by a group of volunteers to provide a safe and friendly environment for people with dementia and their families and carers to meet and socialise on a regular basis, develop a support network and participate in stimulating activities to engage cognitive function.



For further information you can
contact The Wednesday Club
by telephone or email on:

07842 739059

twcpembs@gmail.com

Each week per month is designated to a specific activity to accommodate a range of needs and abilities with activities to suit all. Members can attend as often as or as little as they want depending on their interests.

To view The Wednesday Club website, scan the QR code or visit **twcpembs.org.uk** for information on activities and Facebook page



The Wednesday Club



Week 1

On the 1st Wednesday of each month there is Saundersfoot Games morning held at Regency Hall, Saundersfoot from 10.30am-12pm. Activities include board games, Boccia, cards, with refreshments and a friendly chat over a cuppa.



Playing traditional board games in a communal and group setting are said to be beneficial for people with dementia due to the cognitive stimulation from problem solving and social interaction (Pozzi et al., 2023).

Week 2

On the 2nd Wednesday of each month there is Tenby Diners Lunch Group that meets at different locations in the Tenby area from 12-2pm to enjoy a meal with supportive and understanding people. This gives members and their families and caregivers a chance to socialise, make new friends and chat with old friends.



The Wednesday Club

Week 3

On the 3rd Wednesday of each month from 11am – 1pm there is Saundersfoot Walk and Talk, run in partnership with West Wales Walking for Wellbeing Project at various locations in Pembrokeshire. The walks are specifically designed for people with dementia and their families and care givers to attend and offer friendly social group walking sessions followed by a cuppa and a chat. Members have the opportunity to experience the outdoors and nature while being physically active in the beautiful Pembrokeshire landscape. The session is suitable for all abilities to participate as much or as little as they are able to.

The benefits of a walk and talk group for people with dementia and carers are many, firstly the physical activity promotes health and improved mood, facilitating access to outdoor spaces and nature by supporting use of public space. Improved social connection through communication in a social setting which are all factors known to increase positive affect and promote relaxation and reduce stress (Vseteckova et al., 2020).



Interesting activities that foster social connection benefit people with dementia (Suragarn et al., 2021).

Week 4



On the 4th Wednesday of each month there is the Tenby Memory Café held at the Giltar Hotel in Tenby from 2-4pm, which offers a fun packed afternoon of entertainment and games. Activities include music, singing, dancing, quizzes, indoor games and bingo and a chance for a cuppa and catching up with friends and making new ones.



The Wednesday Club

The Wednesday Club

Timetable

Week 1

Saundersfoot Games morning @ Regency Hall
10.30-12pm

Week 2

Tenby Diners Lunch Group @ Various locations
12-2pm

Week 3

Saundersfoot Walk and Talk
@ Various locations 11-1pm

Week 4

Tenby Memory Café @The Giltar Hotel
2-4pm

Week 5

Magical Mystery Event

Week 5

When there is a 5th Wednesday of the month there is a Magical Mystery Event organised which is a wonderful way for people with dementia and their families and care givers to enjoy a trip out with friends to local places, to see the beautiful scenery of Pembrokeshire and to deepen social connections. All transport is provided making the trips accessible for all.





Pozzi et al., (2023) suggests from a meta-analysis study, that playing traditional board games improved mental function for elderly people with dementia after a 3-4 month intervention. In addition, the type of board game was evaluated and found that different games affect different cognitive domains. For example, Mahjong was found to improve attention, reasoning and short-term memory. Whereas chess was found to improve executive function. Therefore, it should be considered to offer a range of different boardgames for people with dementia to enjoy for effective slowing of cognitive decline. In addition, playing games can aid dexterity and fine motor skills. A further benefit is improved mood and quality of life, suggested to be from the social interaction involved in playing traditional board games. Stimulating social environments can improve mood, create positive emotional states and relieve stress which can improve overall wellbeing (Ching-Teng, 2019).



As studies suggest, the most effective initiatives for people with dementia are person-centred and cater for individual needs on a psychological, physiological and social level (Scott et al., 2021), which has been provided by The Wednesday Club with its wide range of events and activities which are made suitable for all needs and abilities. It helps to foster community and connection for the individual and the family or caregiver reducing the stigma and loneliness which can be common for people with the condition (Gardiner et al., 2018).



Part 2:

**A discussion on the impact of
Dementia for the individual and their
care givers**



The elderly population is one of the fastest growing populations across the world and, according to the Office for National Statistics (2021), the increase in the aging population in England and Wales means that there is now a larger proportion of people over the age of 65 than under 16. This change in population growth means that it is now crucial to consider, and cater for, the provision and delivery of caring for an aged population.

Dementia is an important health concern for an aging population, NHS UK (2023) suggest that as many as 1 in 11 people over the age of 65 have dementia and the risk of a dementia diagnosis increases with age, meaning that as the population is living longer, the prevalence of dementia is increasing (Stevenson-Hoare et al., 2023).

Dementia is an umbrella term that describes a range of different neurological conditions that, although common in older age, are not a normal part of aging, such as Alzheimer's disease, Vascular dementia being the two most common types of dementia, followed by Lewy bodies then Fronto-temporal dementia and Parkinson's disease (Klimova & Kuca, 2016). The disorders cause a progressive decline in cognitive function through brain damage and brain cell and tissue death. PET scans and MRI studies have found that dementia patients have increased white matter areas in the brain known and damaged areas known as infarcts where cognitive function is damaged, and that dementia symptoms can vary depending on the brain area that is affected (Nasrabad et al., 2018). While symptoms can vary, they typically include memory loss, confusion, loss of language, getting lost, repeating things, movement difficulties, and changes in mood and behaviour (Zverova, 2019). The impact of cognitive decline for the person with dementia leads to functional impairment making daily tasks significantly more difficult as the disorder progresses,

for example, they may not recognise common everyday objects, or know how to use them, such as a phone or kettle or TV remote. They may struggle to recognise people which can lead to distress and feelings of confusion, fear and frustration (Atri, 2019). Another issue for dementia sufferers is the loss of motor control and physical strength which can increase the likelihood of falls and injuries (Peek et al., 2020) increasing the risk of harm and hospital visits for someone with dementia significantly more than someone without dementia. In addition, as stated in a review by Bessey and Walaszek (2019), it is common for dementia patients to suffer increased pain levels when compared to elderly people without dementia. As much as 68% of people with dementia report experiencing pain, furthermore, this can often go unrecognised and untreated due to communication difficulties for people with dementia (McAuliffe et al., 2012), often worsening their symptoms and impairing their ability to concentrate, reason and make decisions, and psychological deficits such as negative affect and low mood (Flo et al., 2014).

Communication difficulties extend far beyond pain management, often as dementia advances, loss of vocabulary impacts the ability to have meaningful conversations which can lead to social withdrawal (Klimova & Kuca, 2016). The knowledge of language and vocabulary is so intrinsic to the way in which we communicate that the decline in language function can hugely impair the ability for self-expression which and social connection which can be profoundly isolating (Banovic et al., 2018). In addition, it can cause upset and frustration at not being able to engage in everyday conversations which can also cause embarrassment leading to further self-withdrawal and exacerbating social isolation and feelings of loneliness.

Loneliness for dementia patients and their caregivers is a key issue and many studies have drawn strong correlations between loneliness and cognitive decline

which suggests that cognitive function and loneliness are significantly and negatively related (Boss et al., 2015; Montoliu et al., 2019) meaning dementia can cause loneliness and there are many negative consequences that loneliness can cause, such as poor emotional wellbeing and poor physical health. Surgaran et al. (2021) found that loneliness and a lack of social connection is related to premature mortality meaning that people who experience perceived loneliness through a lack of social network and connection are at increased risk of mortality compared to those that don't. It is also suggested that the relationship between loneliness and dementia is bidirectional, meaning social isolation and loneliness can be caused by dementia and the communication challenges and stigma associated with a dementia diagnosis and public perception, but the lack of cognitive stimulation from social interaction can contribute to declines in cognitive function and worsening of dementia symptoms (Karska et al., 2023).

The impact of dementia not only affects the person with a dementia diagnosis but as the condition worsens and symptoms increase, the individual experiences a loss of independence and therefore increased dependency on others to assist them with daily functioning. Often, it will be a spouse or close family member who will become a dementia caregiver, assisting in many daily tasks such as dressing, personal hygiene, house cleaning, providing meals and managing household bills (Pozzeboni et al., 2016). This is often a gradual process or transitional role change for both the carer and the person with dementia, and studies have found that as the dementia symptoms increase, the relationship between the patient and caregiver can often worsen due to increased stress and carer burden (Isik et al., 2019). There is significant research on the psychological effects of carer burden for those that care for a loved one with dementia. The effect of added stress on the carer from financial

burdens such as increased hospital care or loss of earnings due to caring responsibilities or early retirement have been found to reduce when there is a secondary carer or other financial contribution (Bessey & Walaszek, 2019). In addition, a spousal carer or close family member or friend will be experiencing a transitional role change, and many studies indicate that feelings of grief for the person with dementia has a significant psychological impact on the caregiver (Gilsenan et al., 2023). Without psychological resilience, the implications for declines in emotional wellbeing and increased rates of clinical depression are seen in populations of dementia care givers (Alfhakri et al., 2018; Isik et al., 2019).

While the psychological burden on caregivers is considerable and often leads to increased rates of stress and anxiety for the carer, it is equally important to consider the emotional and mental health challenges faced by the person with dementia. Depression is hugely prevalent in the elderly population, however it often goes underreported or misdiagnosed due to other health conditions (Isik et al., 2021). For elderly dementia patients there is a further increased risk of depression when compared to those without dementia (Bennett & Thomas, 2014) indicating a high comorbidity and correlation between dementia and depression. They further add that there are differences between the type of dementia that is diagnosed, in particular, those with vascular dementia which is caused by stroke or lack of blood flow due to acute brain injury, and a sudden onset of dementia, are found to have increased rates of depression. This may be a psychological reaction due to a sudden change in circumstances and cognitive abilities when compared to a slower progression of dementia onset. The significant alteration to quality of life for a person with vascular dementia is associated with poorer mental health (Pang et al., 2022).

The cumulative effect of the symptomology of dementia combined with the decline in emotional wellbeing from declining health is known to negatively impact quality of life for both the person with dementia and their care giver (Isik et al., 2019). The impact of dementia on both the individual and caregiver is both complex and intertwined creating challenges to both research and understanding of how to differentiate between the consequences or causes of dementia (Bessey & Walaszek, 2019; Lara et al., 2019). As dementia diagnosis rates continue to increase it is now vital, through evidence-based strategies, to improve government policies and implement effective interventions that work towards preventative and protective measures against dementia. A multi-agency approach is needed, between healthcare, social support, local initiatives and governments to improve the quality of life for people with dementia and their caregivers (Karska et al., 2023).



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1. Therapeutic group singing and dementia
2. Benefits of gardening for people with dementia.
3. Group activity and social engagement and demntia
4. Impact of loneliness for people with dementia
5. Carer burden for dementia carers
6. Cognitive decline and dementia

I confirm that I have not presented any AI generated text as my own work. I confirm I have copies of my drafts, notes, and other resources I used before, and after the use of AI tools which I may be asked to provide in evidence.