

Darnall Dementia Group Annual Report 2011



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CONTENTS

Page 2 - Chairperson's Report

Page 4 - Day Centre

Page 6 - Wednesday Group

Page 9 - Waiting List

Page 10 - Planning Day

Page 12 - George & Betty's Story

Page 14 - Support Groups

Page 16 - Cleethorpes

Page 18 - Learning Environment

Page 21 - Volunteers

Page 24 - Donations

Page 26 - Thanks

Chairperson's Report

I joined Darnall Dementia Group Management Committee in January 2011. Although I had learned much about DDG from being an external supervisor for a number of years it was only when I joined the committee that I appreciated the amount of work and commitment that goes into providing such a caring service. The staff and volunteers are dedicated to the wellbeing and contentment of each individual attender and their carers. At the annual Planning Day many attenders expressed how much they appreciated the personal attention and the opportunity to participate in deciding what they do. The photograph log highlights the many activities involving outings, domestic skills, discussions, art, music appreciation, singing, dancing and endless good humour.

There have been more serious notes for the committee in updating policies, managing the budget and looking ahead towards changes in the funding system. There is some concern about how this will affect DDG and the attenders in the future when the financial situation changes next year. However the committee is looking into ways of continuing the service and keeping its identity wherever possible.

DDG welcomes visitors and I would encourage anyone who wants to know why attenders and carers value it so highly to make contact. However please be aware - you may need your dancing shoes.

Janet Dore
Acting Chairperson
October 2011



Day Centre

Darnall Dementia Group provides a day centre based in a church in Darnall. Three days each week the main hall is turned into a comfortable, light and warm space where people with dementia, volunteers and paid workers can gather to enjoy each others company.

On Monday and Friday it has 10 places for people with dementia and on Wednesday it has 6 places. People are invited to attend one day each week with the possibility of another day being offered if that is appropriate.

We aim for our attenders to receive one-to-one support so that the person attending can be involved in the decision-making and choose whether or not to join in activities. There are always options about the level of involvement and the input that attenders have.

At the centre we create a relaxed, informal setting where people have a sense of identity and of belonging. By building a strong community people can develop significant friendships. Laughter and having a good time are high on our agenda of priorities; we want people to go home with an increased sense of wellbeing.

There are numerous activities; talking and sharing life stories, artwork, looking at local history books, exercise

group, hat parade, short walks in the local community, annual seaside trip, singing and dancing.

We have regular concerts by Lost Chord and 'Eric and Pam'. Also we were visited by the BeVox choir. People who attend are invited to help with the practical tasks e.g. washing up, setting the table and on Wednesdays helping to prepare lunch.



Two ladies who attend the group were invited to take part in the Creative Art Workshops. They latter attended the exhibition to see their work on display. The Wednesday Group enjoyed a visit to the Jessops Centre to see the Images of Women Exhibition.

The Wednesday group

The Wednesday group has 6 attenders, it adapts to meet the needs of the attenders, but is based on sharing thoughts and feelings, reminiscing and coming together to have a laugh. Attenders have the opportunity to talk about their past, revisit troubles if they need to, and share their worries about the present.

Skilfully facilitated, attenders are able to support each other. We prepare and share lunch which is usually sandwiches or salad and pudding with custard. Care is taken to make sure everyone feels useful and involved with the group, whether slicing cucumber, setting the table or grating cheese.



Over the past year the group has been only women. This was not planned but all have now become firm friends, and provide each other with mutual support carefully facilitated by the staff. These are some of the comments they made about the group:

Kitty said “We sing, dance and make our dinner, we love to come and all get together.”

Tina “Especially anyone on their own, I told my son that arranging for me to come here was the best thing anyone’s ever done for me. You can talk through your problems, even if you just want to tell one person, but coming here helps you forget about any nastiness.”

Joan “I enjoy the company, it helps me get through the week. I call the people here my friends. I like to be helpful and am willing to help in any way. I enjoy the trips out.”

Alice “I feel lonely living on my own, I like talking to people here and I like helping with the pots.”

Sheila said “I’ve been coming here for a while and I really like it. The people are nice. I like the food ”

We also asked the Wednesday group volunteers to contribute: Raj, who is fairly new said “This place feels like a family and we learn a lot from each other”,

Helena added “I feel well loved and appreciated here. I get to socialise with people I otherwise would not get to talk to. It has improved my self-confidence”

The comments reflect the feelings of a group of people coming together for mutual support, and having a lot of fun along the way. Many attenders appreciated being able to take part in preparing lunch and washing up. This helps people feel more fulfilled, particularly women who may have spent their lives nurturing and caring for others. Peoples sense of self can be reinforced, to counteract the effects of dementia where it can feel that this is being eroded along with the ability to remain active and useful.



The Wednesday group enjoying the sunshine in the peace gardens.

Waiting List

Prior to attending the centre each person will have been on the waiting list. During this time they will have received outreach visits, which help to develop an understanding of the group, and a contact person which can make attending for the first time less daunting.

Anyone can make a referral to the group. Once the referral has been received an appointment with the registered mental health nurse is made. The initial meeting gives people with dementia and their carers an opportunity to share their experiences and concerns. It is understandable and expected that some people will have reservations about attending. The out-reach visits allow time for questions to be answered and a trusting relationship to be developed.

We believe that everyone involved with the care of someone with dementia should be actively encouraged to take part in the care planning. The carers have an expertise that the paid workers at the centre will tap in to so that the best possible support can be given.

Planning Day

On 29th June we held our yearly planning day at St Alban's Church. This is our opportunity to get everyone involved with Darnall Dementia Group together to discuss current issues relevant to the group and gives people the chance to give their opinion about them. This year we discussed the imminent changes to our funding arrangements with the introduction of personal budgets, and the proposed co-operation with Age UK (formerly Age Concern) to help manage the changes.

The day was very well attended with around 50 attenders, carers, volunteers, Management Committee members, paid staff and friends. We spent the morning looking at what was unique about the group, and how we could keep this uniqueness through the changes.



Lots of participants felt that people were treated like individuals at Darnall Dementia Group, and that members of the group went out of their way to make people feel welcome and valued – not just the attenders but everyone associated with DDG. The Group was valued by all, and there was a consensus that it should keep going. Key to maintaining the uniqueness appeared to be keeping staff and volunteer levels up, providing reliable transport and remaining small. Some felt that being part of a larger organisation could help us weather the changes.



After the hard work of the morning, we had a lovely buffet lunch and following that a concert by Eric Brodie, assisted by Pam. Eric sang lots of old songs for us, accompanied by members of the audience singing along. Many even managed a dance. This was a lovely end to an uplifting day.

George and Betty's Story

George and Betty have been married for 66 years. For most of that time they have lived and worked in the Darnall area; they had a short spell living in Woodhouse but couldn't settle.

Betty first noticed something was wrong about 4 years ago when George could not complete a job he would normally have done easily. They went to see the GP who referred George to the Memory Clinic; they had to wait a year for an appointment. Betty suspected that George had Alzheimer's disease after having experienced the disease through family members. She knew that it was going to be hard work but wasn't prepared for the level of care that George needed or for the heartbreak that it causes.

Betty said that she misses so many things. George was never a romantic but each morning he brought her a cup of tea in bed and would have given her the world if she'd asked for it. He was a good husband, father and grandfather. Betty very much misses having a conversation with George. He has no opinion or comment to make on anything which frustrates Betty. Some days she feels that he is more like an ornament.

Betty can't share the good times or bad times and has lost her shoulder to cry on. Betty's own physical health has suffered; she feels at a time when she needs to be at her strongest she is weak and frail.

Betty says that George's attendance at the DDG has made a lot of difference and she would feel lost without it. She says that she can't praise the Darnall Dementia Group enough and that it gives her a few hours to do other things even if that is only resting. Betty asks George each time he attends if he has had a nice lunch, he can't remember but Betty knows that she can trust and rely on the staff at Darnall Dementia Group. Betty knows that changes will be coming but is desperate for the day care to continue; she feels that is good for George and her. Betty said that if she was in good health she would love to be a volunteer at the group joining in the dancing and events but her physical frailty means that this is not possible.

Betty said they don't look to the future; they haven't anything to look forward to. They live day by day. Her only wish is that George passes away before her so that she will have the comfort of knowing that he is safe. Betty feels that when George was given his diagnosis, dementia took her life as well. After this life time together they remain a couple and Betty is determined that George will receive the best care possible.

Support Groups

Darnall Dementia Group provides 2 support groups. Both groups are facilitated by a registered mental health nurse and held monthly. Each group offers people who care for someone with dementia the opportunity to share the caring experience. Everyone is allowed time to talk through how life is for them.

The sharing and problem-solving unites people, increases knowledge and awareness and gives credibility to the mixture of emotions often felt. Laughter and tears are shared in equal measure, no subject is out of bounds and everyone can speak freely without fear of judgement or prejudice.

Each group is welcoming, friendly and confidential.

Kath Maillard who attends the evening group said:
“The support group is a life saver because I have no-one else to talk to or any one who will listen. I know the people there are in the same situation and understand how things are”

Sandra Galloway who attends the evening group said:
“When I first started going it was nice to be with people who knew what I was going through. I got advice about practical things. It now feels as though we have become friends”

Tom Simms who attends the afternoon group said:
“I get companionship from the other people. I have an opportunity to pass on the things I learnt whilst caring for Mary. I find it enjoyable and uplifting”

Afternoon Support Group at Darnall Library

2nd Monday of each month

Transport may be arranged.

For more information contact:

Lynsey Button 07773381621

Evening Support Group at Hurlfield View

3rd Thursday of each month 6:30pm to 8:00pm

For more information contact:

Lynsey Button 07773381621

Cleethorpes

Our annual trip to the seaside took place in September. The day was bright but a little cool although this did not dampen spirits! We had lots of wonderful helpers so everyone had an arm for support or someone to push their wheelchair.

On arrival in Cleethorpes we made our way to our usual restaurant- The Ocean Fish Bar where we were looked after really well. The fish and chips were excellent. We then meandered down to the front where we enjoyed an ice cream and sat and watched the world go by before boarding the coach for the journey home! Everyone said they'd had a lovely time!





Learning Environment

Darnall Dementia Group provides placements for student mental health nurses and student social workers. We are also involved in the schools Work Experience Programme. We actively encourage students to become part of the team and their opinions and recommendations are taken seriously.

The learning opportunities involve the students working closely with people who attend the group, carers, volunteers and other professionals.

“Before starting at Darnall Dementia Group I had very little knowledge about dementia and it is not an area I had considered working in prior to my placement. I had heard negative things about the care of older adults and that the standards were not very high. However after my first day with the group I realised that this was not the case. The level of care and support the volunteers and staff provide is of the highest standard and I think they do a brilliant job. The attendees of the group have such positive things to say about coming and appear to get enormous benefits from attending. They are always listened to and respected and their opinions valued. I have really enjoyed my placement at Darnall and will miss being a part of the group.”

Katy Jones

Student Mental Health Nurse (On placement Nov '10)

"I really enjoyed my placement at Darnall Dementia Group. I thought it was an excellent example of person-centred care in practice. It was really rewarding to be part of a team who provided such a vital and much appreciated resource for people with dementia. I felt privileged to be given an insight into the lives of the service users, and as the weeks went by a real sense of their characters through their sharing of past experiences. I also gained insight into the difficulties experienced by those living with dementia. I have seen how with positive support their lives continue to be fulfilling and enjoyable. It was great to work in such a positive, relaxed and friendly environment. The outings and activities organised for the group were thoughtful and stimulating, where fun was had by all"

Isobel Price
Student Mental Health
Nurse (On placement
March '11)





Volunteers

We have a long list of volunteers to thank. Everyone who has volunteered at Darnall dementia Group has quickly fit into the ethos of Darnall Dementia Group but has also brought their own individuality and expertise. We have recruited many new volunteers but have also lost a good many: some have obtained paid employment, others have started courses or returned to their studies at Universities outside Sheffield.

As always our volunteers come from diverse backgrounds: people who are not in paid employment because they have retired or become unemployed, students who wish to gain some experience in a care setting, asylum seekers who cannot work in this country but wish to contribute to the community, people who just like coming!

The high numbers of volunteers had meant that most days we are able to provide one to one support to our attenders. There have also always been willing hands to do the washing up after lunch and other chores.

Volunteers arrive before the Attenders so that they can be briefed on the plans for the day and learn anything new about the people attending which they might need to know. They also help with setting out activities for the Day Centre.

When the attenders arrive everyone is then busy all day helping attenders participate in activities, chatting, finding out about one another, maybe having a game of dominoes or doing a Word Search together. When the attenders leave the Day Centre on the mini bus the volunteers are then busy putting everything away and transforming St Alban's back into a church. They then have a meeting to discuss the day; any difficulties they have encountered or things that went well.

Volunteers also worked really hard participating in our Planning Day, AGM and trip to Cleethorpes when it is vital that we have lots of helpers.

Some of our volunteers were asked for their comments about volunteering at Darnall Dementia Group:

Sandra:

"I wanted to give something back for the help given to my mum, but I also get great pleasure being part of the group and enjoy the time spent with the people who come."

Peter:

"I enjoy coming because I feel at home with the attenders and volunteers. I like helping others so that they feel good and loved. Also when the attenders appreciate my help, that makes me enjoy myself and keep coming back as well."

Neil:

"Very rewarding. Love helping. Hoping they have a good day."

Volunteers who have helped over the past year

Abda Bi Ali	Jess Grayhurst
Logeswary Arulselvam	Lindsay Holley
Samantha Bannister	Ruth Jaques
Peter Mubiru Bemba	Mariyarita Mahalingam
Ashley Booth	Caulous Moyo
Jim Brookes	Jamila Musa
Erica Brown	Farah Naaz
Tim Collins	Shreeya Patel
Vlad Costin	Jenny Richardson
Jade Cupac	Helen Russell
Helena Dearden	Dahlia Sabzevari
Raj Dookhy	Aisha Shaheen
Sandra Galloway	Bernard Sona
Steve Gascoyne	Manuj Vyas
Nigisty Ghebrelul	Neil Wingfield
Will Gibbons	Gemma Walker

Donations

Thank you to everyone who has made donations to the Group over the past year. This has helped with our day to day running of the Group but also enabled us to go on several outings and fund special activities.

Thank you to the Brelms Trust for awarding us a further grant towards staff salaries. To Tesco Charity Trust for giving us an award to purchase some new furniture.

Many thanks to Kate Waddicor, who ran the London Marathon (in very good time too), and donated her sponsorship money to Darnall Dementia Group.

Thanks go to for their continued financial support.

Elizabeth Birks

Nigel Chatterton

Lisa Heller

Big thanks also go to Lynsey, Caulous, Peter, and Gemma who successfully completed the Great Yorkshire Run. Also Lynne Walker and Michael Button for their support on the day.



Donations collected at the 2010 AGM amounted to £87.10.
Thank you to everyone who contributed.

We would also like to thank:

Enid and Ray Kemp

Helena Deardon

Val Harley

Keith and Fran

Thelma and Joan Kirby

Margaret and Derek Wragg

Gill Smith

Family & friends of Roy Nolan who donated in his memory

June Vyce

Family & friends of Joyce Oldfield who donated in her
memory

Family Development Project

Sally Goldsmith and Rony Robinson who collected for DDG

Tom Simms

Michael Roberts

Kate Waddicor

Thanks to all those who have contributed to the work of the Darnall Dementia Group over the past year.

To all those who contributed to the Management Committee Tony Ryan, Lisa Heller, Charlotte Piney, Jack Czauderna, Elizabeth Birks, Janet Dore and our treasurer Don Callister.

Lynsey, Jean and Sheila the paid workers and all the volunteers.

Sheffield Health and Social Care trust for providing office space and Norbury Resource Centre for supplying our meals.

Manor Community Transport – Paul Dyson our regular driver and Liz Fox the admin manager plus the other drivers that helped out when Paul was on holiday.
Sheffield Community Transport

Liam Pettinger for helping with IT Support.

All the support staff – Janet Dore, Kath Pardoe, Andrew Roberts, Fiona Williams, Jane Mckeown, Jack Czauderna Lisa Heller and Karen Ledger.

Peter the vicar and Tony and Eileen from St Albans.

Sheffield City Council – Sheila Bradley, Howard Waddicor and Staff.

