



Darnall Dementia Group



Annual Report 2024

Welcome to our Annual Report for 2024

We'd like to say a big thank-you to everyone who has been involved with Darnall Dementia Group during this year, for standing with us and helping us to continue to provide the best possible service.



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Chair's introduction

Dear all, it gives me great pleasure to introduce our annual report. This is part of our ongoing commitment to openness, transparency and accountability to all our funders and supporters.

Another very successful year for Darnall Dementia Group. Again, a number of challenges have been faced – both practical and financial. However, it is the commitment of all of us – members, carers, staff, volunteers and Trustees, and our clear mission to provide friendly, homely and caring support that continues to drive us forward.

We continue to see ourselves as a “family” and that is the key quality that people seek and appreciate. From dominoes to sitting and eating together, we want everyone to feel “at-home”.

We serve an increasingly diverse range of needs and have members from a very diverse range of backgrounds. We are very fortunate that our membership, staff and volunteer base reflect the diversity of our community and the people who make it up.

So.....I hope you find the report informative. Please get in touch if you would like any more information or to support our work.

As always, my greatest thanks to all of you who make this possible – our members, carers, volunteers, staff and Trustees.

Thank you so much.

Kevan Kevan Taylor, Chair of Trustees



Some Big Changes.

In June, Bev Graham, our Day Centre Manager, left us. She had been a wonderful colleague and friend for many years and is missed by all of us. She brought skill and experience to the work, and her ability to empathise with everyone—those living with dementia, their carers, and those working alongside them, was enormously valuable. She was also full of fun, and was wholeheartedly committed to Darnall Dementia Trust.



In August, Bev was replaced by Lynsey Button as the new Day Centre Manager, with Michael Johnson taking on the role of Service and Finance Administrator – sharing some of the role that the Day Centre Manager had previously been responsible for.

Lynsey and Michael are working brilliantly together as a team, and we are hugely grateful to them for all the very hard work that they do.

In January we were joined by Moira Cartwright, as a Day Centre Worker and later by Rehana Akhtar as a relief Day Centre Worker

A Leaving Party was held for Bev, attended by several of the staff and volunteers



Meet The Team!



Above: Peter, Rehana, Lynsey, Linda.

Below: Kirsty, Moira, Jen, Rachel.





Above: Fiona and Isaura, a student on placement.

Below: Marwa and Rehana



Below: Michael



Introducing Michael

Hi, I'm Michael. I am the Service and Finance Administrator for Darnall Dementia Trust. I have been with the charity for two and a half years and in that time, I have seen my role grow exponentially as the charity has grown.

Initially I looked after the day-to-day accounts - inputting and paying invoices, dealing with salaries, providing reports for the management team etc. Over time my role has grown and although I still deal with the day-to-day finances for the charity, I am also now responsible for fundraising, and I am part of the Management Team. I also manage all the referrals for new

clients that are sent to us by Sheffield City Council and other duties around monitoring, training and liaising with our funders and our auditors.

I find myself in a unique and privileged position - although my role is predominantly administrative (I work from home most of the time), I am able to come to our Day Centre in Darnall on a regular basis. That means that I get to spend time with our amazing clients (I prefer to think of them as friends rather than clients) and I get to see the great interaction between our staff and volunteer team and the fabulous people who attend the Day Centre.

So, on any given day when I am at the Day Centre I could be playing dominoes, chatting or having a sing song - it sure beats spreadsheets!!

It is definitely the best job that I have ever had

Michael Johnson.

The Team:

Day Centre Manager: Lynsey Button.

Service and Finance Administrator: Michael Johnson.

**Day Centre Workers: Peter Bemba,
Fiona Allinson,**

Rachel Gozzard, Moira Cartwright.

The Day Centre

The Day Centre takes place in a local church, St. Albans, in Darnall, that has links to other social groups, creating a vibrant, community hub.

Darnall Dementia Group Day Centre operates on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, offering 10 places each day for people living with dementia.

The Day Centre is a place where people come to have a break from the usual routine. We encourage friendships amongst members of the group, staff and volunteers.

Initially, people attend one day each week, but this can be increased if it's felt that they or their carer would benefit from an extra day.





Prior to attending the group, people receive a home visit. This is an opportunity to meet a senior member of staff who can give them an insight into what to expect when attending the group. The staff member is able to gain life-history information that helps us to understand the person's care needs, interests and family dynamics.

When attending, the emphasis of the day is set around people coming into a relaxed, friendly atmosphere where they can feel valued, supported and listened to.

Participation in activities and group work is voluntary without pressure to join in. We do try to tailor activities to suit each person's preferences so that there are always choices. By getting to know each person we have a



clearer understanding of what their interests are. Most of all the Day Centre is a very positive place . Lots of laughter and general larking about. Our objective is that people go home feeling happy and with a sense that they have been amongst friends.

Lynsey Button

These photos show some of the activities that people have enjoyed



Playing musical instruments.



People enjoy a variety of things



Everyone is offered the chance to engage in whatever way they wish and are able to.

Baking



A sociable time, making something delicious



Wouldn't it be great to know what they said?

Maureen and Marwa



More activities





One lovely thing.....

A lady attended the centre with her husband who attends on Mondays. She was very interested in the staff group, commenting on how diverse it is. She said we were like a vase of flowers, each flower beautiful and unique, making a bouquet.

Lynsey Button

More activities



Singing at Darnall

Every week, I facilitate an afternoon of singing at Darnall, moving between the different days the Centre is open, so I'm lucky enough to sing with everyone who attends.



We always begin by singing Side by Side. It is well-known among those who attend, with staff and volunteers who have not previously encountered the song in their lives learning it through repetition. I love how this song sums up the feeling of togetherness in adversity:

*Through all kinds of weather
What if the sky should fall?
Just as long as we're together
It doesn't matter at all*



Our sessions usually have a theme (e.g. the weather, dancing, light) and are a mixture of songs we sing ourselves and recorded music where we can sing, dance, or simply listen. I aim to embrace people's personal preferences: these range from Mario Lanza to The Damned, from ballads to heavy metal, taking in Elvis Presley, Doris Day, The Beatles and more along the way. It can be an eclectic mix!

Not everyone likes everything, but people get pleasure from others' enjoyment and sometimes there is good-natured teasing.

This quote from another favourite song, from the musical Oliver! says it all:

*Consider yourself at home
Consider yourself one of the family*

I have got to know some songs through being introduced to them by those who attend the Centre. One example is Kitty Kallen's 1954 hit, Little Things Mean A Lot:

*Send me the warmth of a secret smile
To show me you haven't forgot
For always and ever, now and forever
Little things mean a lot*

Singing together is an ancient way to be in community; songs are threads that connect us to our own histories and to the lives of others. We sing them because they are meaningful to us. Friendship, love, heartbreak, home: it's all in the songs. Some evoke strong emotion in people, and I never wish to suppress or deny that: the skilled staff and volunteers support each individual in their experience.

I have been going to Darnall since 2016. Naturally, I have seen many changes over the years, but singing never changes. As Gracie Fields sang in 1934:

*A song and a smile make it right worthwhile
so sing as we go along*

Andrea Small



Pat and Nigel's Story



Pat has been attending Darnall Dementia Group for over 8yrs. Initially, Pat was able to participate in all the activities and have an influence on how the day would progress. Pat has always been a “people-person,” seeing it as her job to make sure everyone is OK, and fairly treated.

Despite her deteriorating mental and physical health Pat was still a vital member of the group and was encouraged to join in at a level that allowed her to experience the centre in a positive way. Nigel says that he’s impressed with how the activities are tailored to her needs and abilities, allowing Pat to have a fulfilling day. Pat has developed friendships amongst members of the group. Nigel has confidence in the staff knowing that their extensive experience ensures that Pat’s needs are fully met.

Nigel regularly attends the monthly carers group which is facilitated by a member of staff. He says that he greatly benefits from the shared experience of spending time with people who know what he is going through. Nigel says that he can “open his heart”, knowing that he won't be judged. By sharing experiences with others he’s gained knowledge of how to apply for help and where to go to find support.

When Nigel was asked to sum the centre up in one word, he said it's FANTASTIC.

Rachel Gozzard writes about the Carers Group:

Darnall Dementia Group recognises the importance of support for carers. This is offered in two ways:

- a) informal support, for example, when staff see carers in the morning or afternoon - carers might need to share with a member of staff something which might have occurred, or an issue which is causing a problem. All discussions are related back to the Day Centre Manager.
- b) Darnall Dementia Group also provides a regular monthly Carers' Support Group. It is an opportunity to meet other carers in a safe space and share experiences, advice, and information (over a cup of tea)! As well as discussing practical issues, it is also a space where carers can talk to others, who are in a similar situation, about how they cope emotionally when caring for a loved one who is living with dementia.

If a carer would like to attend the Carers' Group, then the person they support can join in the afternoon activity in the main Day Centre. This means carers can talk openly and not in front of the person that they are caring for.

[If you want to know more about the Carers' Support Group, please get in touch with Lynsey on the number at the back of this report.]



Tabassum writes:

I wanted to share my experience of being a volunteer at the Darnall Dementia Group.

Volunteering at the Darnall Dementia Group has been an eye-opening and deeply rewarding experience. It's a place where I get to witness the challenges faced by individuals living with dementia, as well as the resilience of their families. The group provides a safe, supportive environment where I can help with daily activities, offer companionship, and engage the members in stimulating and meaningful activities. It has taught me a lot about patience and empathy, as I've learned how to communicate effectively and adapt to each individual's needs. Being part of this group has been both emotionally enriching and humbling, giving me a deeper understanding of dementia and its impact on lives.



Above: Tabassum with an attender



Katie Zwerger writes:

The Darnall Dementia Group is such a unique and wonderful place in the Sheffield community. I have had the privilege of attending all sorts of groups across the broader Sheffield area, and I can honestly say that the Day Centre workers at DDG do such a phenomenal job providing truly person-centred care.



One day, we were sat having our normal cup of tea as a group, and one woman living with dementia shared her thoughts about the Day Centre that I think perfectly captures the results of all the hard work put in, so I wrote it down on the spot. She shared, 'I love it here, we always have a laugh.' I think it is really important to say that the Day Centre not only cares for and supports individuals and their carers, but creates a space for

fun and laughter that is all too often missing in community services.

I also think DDG is incredibly special in that the staff fosters such a sense of community and teamwork. The work requires a lot of skill and is very demanding, but there is such a level of care and support shared between the staff and volunteers that the variety of complex situations that arise each week are handled with clients' physical and social well-being at the fore. Finally, I want to make it especially clear what a truly remarkable job the whole team has done navigating the changes of the last 18 months. I think the leadership and care shown by each and every person has been nothing short of inspiring. I was very sad to have to leave my role at DDG, and look forward to being a volunteer as much as possible going forward.

Our 2024 Planning Day



We held our Planning Day on 26th June. All attenders, carers, staff, volunteers and trustees were invited. Lynsey and the staff had planned the seating very carefully so that everyone would have the best chance of being able to express their opinions, and answer the questions which had been prepared.



The Planning Day started with a cup of tea, in our groups, and then we answered questions about what we thought of the Darnall Dementia Group Day Centre.



These were based on three ideas: “Bag It”: What do we like and want to keep? “Bin It”: This isn’t so good, let’s stop doing it, change it or get rid of it, and “Dream It”: What would we do if we could do anything we wanted?



In our groups we discussed each of these questions, and came up with a long list of answers.



Amongst the answers to “Bag it” were: It’s friendly and caring; It’s fantastic; Wonderful, committed and caring volunteers; It feels as if we belong; Everyone is treated fairly and equally; People doing activities based on their interests; Linda is a hot-pot - always doing something; We have a laugh; One big family.



**Then we tackled the “Bin It” question: What don’t we like?
What do we want to change? What would we get rid of?**



Amongst the answers to this were: Problems with the building- toilets, access – especially in wet weather, cold in winter, hot in summer, no quiet space or comfortable room for carers group; Problems with transport- lack of MCT drivers, long journeys; Arrangements by the Council: Referral process, making finances clear, cost; We need more reflections of multicultural life in resources and food; Staff under pressure.



Then we had a go at “Dream It” – What would we do if we could do anything we wanted – money no object!



We came up with lots of ideas. Amongst them were:

A building of our own; A good garden which we could use to grow things and relax in;

A swimming

pool; Dolly

Parton and

Tom Jones to

come and

sing for us;

Have our

own bus –

with driver;

Better chips;

Multicultural

food; Open

five days a

week; Trips out; Clive Betts, the Mayor of Sheffield, King Charles the King

of England, animals and an ice cream van to come and visit us; Have

Andrea every day.



We ended the day with a sing-song and dancing led by Andrea.



The Staff and volunteers were all thanked for their huge contributions to making the Day Centre such a special place. In words taken from what was said in the groups: It is vibrant, happy, caring, kind, inclusive, friendly, thoughtful, safe, secure, diverse, rewarding, accepting, wonderful.

Some more photos from the Day Centre





Volunteers This Year



Our huge thanks to all of the volunteers who have spent time with us, supported us and helped in so many ways during the year – We couldn't do it without them!

**Linda
Katie
Joan
Kashaf
Tabassum
Kirsty
Arliyah
Jack
David**

**Kemi
Moira
Jamie
Rehana
Keshan
Areshba
Elaine
Lorna
Jen**

Just a few more photos



A Huge Thanks

To all these for their continued support

- **All the Attenders and Carers.**
- **All the Staff: Lynsey Button, Michael Johnson, Peter Bemba, Fiona Allinson, Rachel Gozzard, Moira Cartwright, Marwa Shakeri, Rehana Akhtar: for their skill and continued hard work in maintaining and developing the service.**
- **All The Volunteers: for their many talents, contributions and ideas.**
- **Trustees: Kevan Taylor, (Chair), Jo Saul, (Treasurer), Lisa Heller, (Secretary), Linda Woollen, Hazel Wood.**
- **Staff Support: Kevan Taylor, Lisa Heller.**
- **All our doors and grant makers, who are listed below**
- **St. Alban's Church, Kinder and Janet, the Churchwardens, and Gina Kalsi from the Church Army for our Day Centre space and meeting room for our daytime Carers' Group.**
- **Manor Community Transport: For their transport service**
- **Wayne, Jess and Staff at Lightwood House Kitchens for providing hot meals for the Day Centre.**
- **Andrea Small for musical entertainment.**
- **Staff of Sheffield City Council contracts and commissioning department.**
- **Examination of Accounts: Sue Cochrane and Sarah Lightfoot, 7 Hills Accountants**
- **Voluntary Action Sheffield for support and virtual office address.**
- **All our visitors and friends, for continued friendship and support.**



And a huge thanks to our Donors and Grant Makers, whose support is vital:

Donors

- Sheffield 1000 charity
- Pat Fairest in memory of Tony Fairest
- Sheila Allin in memory of John Ellin
- Michael Button Christmas bucket collection
- Nigel & Pat Worthington
- E Drake in memory of Michael Shillito
- Lisa and Tom Heller

Grants

- Zachary Merton & George Woofinden Trust (2 grants)
- Sarah Nulty Power of Music
- South Yorkshire Community Fund
- Talbot Trust
- Freshgate Trust Foundation
- JG Graves Charitable Trust
- Charles & Elsie Sykes Trust

**And thanks to Michael and Jo for all their work in applying for grants,
which enable us to provide activities and music which we couldn't
otherwise do.**

Trustees this year:

**Kevan Taylor - Chair, Jo Saul - Treasurer, Lisa Heller – Secretary,
Linda Woollen, Hazel Wood.**

**We are looking for more Trustees: If you are interested. Please get in touch
by email at darnalldementia@yahho.com**

Contact Details:

Our Office Address is now:

Darnall Dementia Trust,

The Circle, 33, Rockingham Lane, Sheffield S1 4FW

(We no longer have a physical Office space, this is an address only, post is collected from the above address).

Email: darnalldementia@yahoo.com

To contact the Day Centre by phone:

Lynsey Button: 07518746472

Darnall Dementia Group is part of Darnall Dementia Trust

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