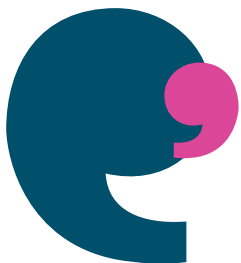




Healthwatch Herefordshire
Memory Café Engagement 2015



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Healthwatch Herefordshire planned workshops at three memory café's run by the Alzheimer's Society, to hear the views of people with dementia and their carers.

Healthwatch Engaged with 70 people, those who are living with dementia and their carers, at Leominster, Ross-on-Wye and Hereford in October & November 2015.

We were asking them what made a service good when thinking about the services they, as service users or carers, found beneficial to their health and wellbeing. To take on board negative perspectives, we were asking people what would have made their experiences good ones and what they find useful.

The feedback was grouped into the most discussed categories of services, with each locality having slightly differing priorities.

- **Hereford City:** Support in communities, Carers Support, GP's support, Memory Cafe's and singing for the brain.
- **Leominster:** Memory Cafe's and singing for the brain, Support from care services, GP's support.
- **Ross-on-Wye:** GP's, Memory Cafe's and singing for the brain, The 2Gether Memory Service.

In general there were many positive experiences of formal services & voluntary sector support. There was a strong positive response from people indicating that informal community based support, such as neighbours, friends, social groups & church groups, were the most valued in terms of impact on wellbeing.

It was consistently raised that there was a need for more activity in the localities, as the formal and informal provision centred in Hereford City, many people said they are not able to access these because of transport.



‘It was good to be able to interact with carers and those with dementia to hear first-hand their experiences, and gain more insight into what makes good practice or a good service; something which is extremely important to help me develop in my student placement’

Poppy Wade - Student Social Worker volunteering for Healthwatch

Engaging with the people who meet together at The Memory Cafe’s was a focus for healthwatch to hear views from older people living with Dementia and their carers. It was also an opportunity to speak to them and inform them of the role of Healthwatch in championing the voice of people using services.

Our purpose was to find out what a good service experience is for these people, and what they find of most value to their wellbeing. Inevitably with negative experiences being easier to focus on and more frequently spoken about, we set out to also ask what would have made those experiences more positive for people.

In the planning of this work we decided that engaging people in facilitated group discussions to enable all people to participate and share their views with us. Healthwatch volunteer Margot, Board Member Gwyneth and a Poppy - a student social worker on placement with Age UK Hereford & Localities, worked with us on the planning and the engagement events.

- We created a ‘Good Memories Orchard’ with stick on leaves for people to write their comments
- We split each cafe into 2 or 3 tables of 10 people and facilitated discussions around the sorts of formal and informal services and sources of wellbeing activities and support that people had positive experiences of using.

- At each of the events we involved Alzheimer’s Society Organiser Claire McCarthy and volunteers to have some one to one discussions and assist in recording some of the stories, thinking about how negative experiences could have been made better.

The information gathered was collated onto the memory trees, and using a young volunteer, Evie, on Takeover Challenge Day in the office, we set about using the information from each locality and grouping the comments in to categories by types of services/support.

For each locality there were a clear 3 or 4 topics with the highest levels of positive feedback. Highlighting the impact and importance that these services and mechanisms of support had on the wellbeing of the people and their carers.



Picture - The Good Memory Orchards - L-R: Christine Price - Healthwatch Herefordshire, Poppy Wade - Student Social Worker & Margot Forde - Healthwatch Volunteer

What is a good experience and positively impacts my wellbeing?



Your Voice



Ross-on-Wye Memory Cafe

The top 3 areas of services and support discussed at Ross-on-Wye were:

GP's

- It is good when GP's understand the dementia pathway for patients and carers
- Face to face appointments are the best
- Listen to the carer
- Seeing the same GP who can see change and knows me to avoid repeating my story
- Regular medication reviews
- Coordinating with other services for me

The 2gether Memory Service

- It needs to be responsive
- Need for regular reviews to pick up change
- Needs to inform hospital about diagnosis
- Needs to Listen to carers & involve them in support meetings
- Need to reduce delays between diagnosis and support
- Keep people informed about diagnosis and beyond

Memory Cafe & Singing for the brain

- Useful speakers & visitors provide information & advice
- Provide friendship & peer support
- Singing for the brain is sensitive and inclusive
- Evening cafes would be good



Other topics discussed:

Accessing information about: Good clear information is essential. Disability aids, accessing carers allowance, support to access funding and services, information about disabled parking badge.

Communities: Regular social interaction keeps me well, addressing people directly, community supporting and heling one another, good neighbours.

Carers Support: courses about caring for someone with dementia are fantastic. I appreciate support groups for carers, they are helpful. Carers respite breaks are vital. Broomy Hill care home is welcoming and friendly for me as a carer and home from home for my husband

Dentist is fantastic & sensitive to dementia patient

Telecare service is helpful and technology useful

The Falls service has been very helpful and valuable

Medicine delivery is very convenient and helpful to us

Location: Services available to us locally, matter

Home care and visits at the home are convenient



The top 3 areas of services and support discussed at Leominster were:

GP's

- GP's need to understand dementia
- GP's need more up to date knowledge about services that are available for us
- I would like my GP to give some research about some of the facts stated
- Palliative care and planning for the future is important
- Seeing the same GP makes a difference to the quality of our care

Support

- Regular visits from support services, mental health nurse, home care etc. reduces isolation
- We appreciate consistency in care and support, it has a positive impact on our wellbeing
- Need for quick referrals to services

Memory Cafe & Singing for the brain

- Singing for the brain is uplifting and reconnects us with old memories
- The cafe provides social support and reduces our isolation
- Information and advice about services is available through this group

Other services and topics discussed:

Transport & local services: More consideration needs to be given for transport issues and lack of transport. Services need to be available close to where people live in the locality towns.

Residential care: Singing activities going into nursing homes is a positive benefit

Funding: Continuing care needs to be quicker to access, reduction in the backlog and more advice available. Funding should be fair and equal, the spread of financial help can seem unfair currently. Reduction in funding is affecting services and the service users, e.g. respite.

Eye Department: the eye department in the hospital is fantastic. Cataracts operations is smooth and a fantastic service.

Communication & Sensitivity: Empathy from friends, nurses & professionals makes a huge difference. Sensitivity for those who don't like to talk about their dementia. Verbal communication is vital to explain what will happen next with dementia.

Carers: Support is crucial for carers, carers dementia courses are very helpful, information for carers, support groups are a welcome social contact. Carers need to be listened to by service professionals. Quick & easy access to respite is needed for a break

Falls service: quick effective service, good equipment and continuing support

Community groups & neighbours: friends & neighbours contact helpful and social impact helps wellbeing, Baptist church in Leominster support group is great and chair exercises here at the cafe would be good

Dentists: Getting an appointment is good. Dentist could take more consideration of age and condition

Memory Service: nurses are fantastic and have the expertise. The clinic could listen to carers more. Accessing the service and a diagnosis needs to be much quicker



Hereford Memory Cafe



The top 4 areas of services and support discussed at Hereford were:

Communities

- Social groups and informal support networks are important
- Walking group
- Being a good neighbour
- Befriending and good neighbour schemes

GP's

- Knowledge of patient
- Being proactive regarding my care and diagnosis
- Coordinating with other services for me
- Home visits
- Seeing the same GP is important

Carers Support

- Signposting to services
- Carers breaks
- Counselling for carers
- Carers support groups social connection
- More support needed for working carers
- Without respite services I would never get a break

Memory Cafe & Singing for the brain

- I value social interaction at the cafe
- Singing for the brain is stimulating involving and social
- Information and advice I receive here is helpful

Other services and topics discussed:

Daycare: Bolton House, Crossroads and community OT's are all easy to access

999: fast and responsive 999 services, listened to, service is understanding and patient.

Being listened to and understood: acknowledging the need even if not formal diagnosis or award of a service. Caring and patient staff and the support of family. Empathy and understanding in services makes all the difference.

Falls clinic is very helpful

Memory Service: reviews need to be on time and regular

OT & Equipment: home adaptations so I can stay at home are important to me. Telecare keeps me safe, OT at The County Hospital is best practice.

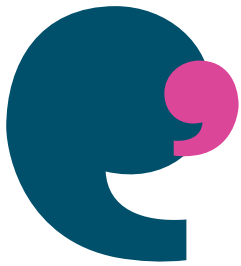
Assessments: Support and assessments for carers are good. More support for working carers needed, I need advocacy support and help with challenging behaviours but not eligible for help as a self funder - the help drops off.

Transport: Regular community transport is needed. Community wheels is a good service: accessible, affordable, reliable and easy to book. Reliance on family for transport to access GP and hospital appointments

Care at home: Paid care coming twice a day is very helpful. Vital for proper training and checks on care workers e.g. moving and handling. Regular carers we can trust that know our needs are what we appreciate

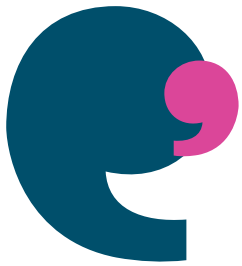
Podiatry services are useful & keep me mobile

Good information: Appreciate a range of available ways to access information. Services need better advertising. Access to specialists at cafes helps as they have knowledge of local services.



Observations

- Everyone appreciated access to information & advice provided by experts and visitors who come to The Alzheimer's Society Memory Cafe and singing for the brain. Social interaction, stimulation and reduction in isolation are beneficial to the carers and the people living with dementia
- Having a relationship with a regular GP who knows the patient, listens to the carer and understands the dementia pathway and services available is important
- Good neighbours and communities are the support people appreciate and breaks down social isolation and keeps people well
- Support for carers is vital: information and advice, support groups, courses & peer support
- The Falls service is fast and responsive
- More services and support - both informal and formal - should be available in localities, as transport to Hereford central services and support is a barrier
- People need good clear and accessible information about what services and support is available
- The Memory service needs to be more responsive, listen to the carer, be easier & quicker to access for a diagnosis and carry out regular reviews



Acknowledgements



Healthwatch would like to thank Margot Forde and Poppy Wade for volunteering and participating in the planning and facilitation of our engagement activity.

We would also like to thank Claire McCarthy from the Alzheimer's Society for inviting Healthwatch and hosting us at the Memory Cafes, and her volunteers for making us welcome.

Thank you to all of the members of the public attending the Memory Cafes in Leominster, Ross-on-Wye and Hereford, who have shared their views with Healthwatch, your views count.

