

Dementia Café and Carers Support Worker Service

1. Responses

- ## 2. Dementia Cafés

- 2.4 Respondents consistently described the cafés as welcoming, friendly, inclusive and supportive. All attendees agreed that they felt welcomed, included, able to talk to others, and able to access advice and information when needed. 88% also reported a positive impact on their mental health and wellbeing.

- Qualitative feedback highlighted several key benefits:

- Reduced social isolation for both carers and people living with dementia.
- Opportunities to meet others facing similar experiences and build lasting friendships.



- Access to practical information, advice and signposting to wider support services.
 - A safe and supportive environment where carers can share concerns and feel understood.
 - Enjoyable activities, live entertainment, music, singing and dancing which stimulate memories and encourage participation.
 - Improved confidence, mood and wellbeing among attendees.
- 2.6 Many respondents described the cafés as a "lifeline", "essential", "invaluable" and a source of community belonging. Several carers spoke about seeing their loved ones become more engaged, sociable and joyful during café sessions, particularly through music and shared activities. Others highlighted how the cafés help them feel less alone in their caring role.
- 2.7 A recurring theme throughout the survey was appreciation for the staff and volunteers. Respondents frequently described them as professional, knowledgeable, compassionate, approachable and willing to go above and beyond to support families. The caring relationships developed between staff, volunteers and attendees were often described as being like an extended family.

3. Carers Support Worker Service

- 3.1 The survey also demonstrates strong support for the one-to-one Carers Support Worker Service. When asked on a scale of 1 to 5 how important this service is for carers caring for people with all levels of dementia (5 being very important), 90.5% of respondents gave a score of 5 with the remainder scoring 4 (8.5%) or 3 (1%). This underlines the perceived value of personalised support for people caring for someone with dementia.
- 3.2 Whilst around half of respondents had direct experience of the service, those who had received support reported extremely positive outcomes. Of those answering the question about helpfulness, 90% rated the support as extremely helpful, with the remainder rating it very helpful.
- 3.3 Respondents described the one-to-one support as providing:
- Emotional support during periods of crisis, grief and uncertainty.
 - A listening ear and non-judgemental space to discuss concerns.
 - Practical advice about dementia and caring responsibilities.
 - Information about benefits, financial support and completion of complex forms.
 - Signposting and referrals to other services and sources of help.
 - Support to maintain wellbeing and resilience whilst continuing in a caring role.
- 3.4 Many carers reported that the service helped them cope with the emotional impact of caring and gave them confidence to navigate available support systems. Families also valued support that extended beyond the person living with dementia to include carers and relatives more broadly.

4. Areas for Improvement

- 4.1 Most respondents felt the service should remain unchanged, frequently stating that it already operates exceptionally well. The strongest message was a desire for the service to continue.
- 4.2 Suggestions for future development were relatively limited but included:
- Increasing funding to expand activities and sustain provision.
 - Improving transport options and accessibility for some attendees.
 - Raising awareness and promoting the service more widely.
 - Increasing opportunities for carers to engage in peer support and discussion groups.
 - Involving additional professionals such as health and social care practitioners at some sessions.

5. Overall Conclusion

- 5.1 The survey provides strong evidence that both the Dementia Café and the Carers Support Worker elements of the Service are highly valued community resources.
- 5.2 Respondents consistently reported that the services reduce isolation, improve wellbeing, provide practical and emotional support, and help people affected by dementia remain connected to their communities. The combination of welcoming social environments, knowledgeable staff and volunteers and tailored one-to-one support for carers appears to be having a significant positive impact on individuals and families across Rotherham. The overwhelming message from respondents is that these services are essential and make a meaningful difference to people's lives.

6. Quotes from respondents:

‘At a time of crisis, they were able to offer a sympathetic ear and vital practical advice in a compassionate and understanding manner’.

‘The Cafes offer carers a vital opportunity to vent to others who understand their circumstances and make friends in the process’.

‘They give you lots of information, this is super important as it's very difficult to find out what you need. They are so friendly and make you feel welcome. It's a wonderful service for people who don't know where to turn’.

‘This service is essential, the staff are extremely caring, and you know you can contact them for any problem you need help with’.

‘The cafes have created a positive environment for people to socialise, relive memories and share laughter’.

‘I think it is very important for spouse carers who are often in their 70's, 80's to be able to get out of the house in a safe friendly and welcoming space. Everyone I know has a

relative with dementia so more of this provision seems to be very important for the future’.

‘The staff and volunteers are all very friendly and supportive and they offer a genuine hand of friendship to both carers and people living with dementia. There is a real sense of community within the dementia cafes’.