

## COUNCIL SEMINAR 1st October, 2013

Present:- Councillor Doyle (in the Chair); The Mayor (Councillor John Foden), Barron, Beck, Burton, Clark, Dalton, Doyle, Ellis, Godfrey, Goulty, Kaye, Lelliott, McNeely, Rushforth, G. A. Russell, Sharman, Sims and Swift.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ali, Hoddinott and Stone.

### ALZHEIMER'S SOCIETY

Consideration was given to a presentation from Kathryn Rawling (Information Officer) and Liz Hopkinson (Service Manager, Rotherham and Doncaster), representatives of the Alzheimer's Society, concerning:-

- the awareness of dementia;
- local service provision for dementia sufferers;
- organising dementia friends.

The presentation included the following summary issues:-

#### (a) Awareness

- recognition of different physical conditions;
- the link between damage to the brain and the impact upon a sufferer's everyday skills and abilities;
- the creation of dementia friendly communities – bringing together organisations which are able to make improvements for dementia sufferers;
- currently 800,000 people in the UK have dementia (17,000 aged under 65 years), with 11,500 people of black and ethnic minority communities;
- dementia causes 60,000 deaths per year;
- the costs of dealing with dementia exceeded £23B in 2012;
- two-thirds of people with dementia live independently, not in care homes;
- many sufferers feel that they are burden upon their families;
- 3,086 people in Rotherham (2012) were suffering dementia and the prediction is that there will be almost 4,000 sufferers by 2014;
- other cases remain undiagnosed;
- dementia is not a natural part of ageing – it is a disease of the brain and affects a person's memory;
- Alzheimer's disease is one form of dementia; another form is vascular dementia;
- there is no cure for dementia; it is a progressive disease;
- dementia sufferers have communications problems, loss of memory, mood changes and may suffer depression and have less control of inappropriate behaviour;

- some medical and physiological details of dementia were described (e.g.: the sufferer being confused between night and day);
- the importance of early diagnosis of dementia and sufferers being able to seek help, support and treatment at an early stage;
- the importance of sufferers having useful activities to perform (e.g.: certain sports and leisure activities, including walking groups);
- the availability of schemes such as memory cafes and 'singing for the brain' (music is very therapeutic for dementia sufferers);
- the use of the Alzheimer's help-line telephone service;
- the attempt to sign up one million volunteers as dementia friends by 2015.

#### (b) Local Services

- local dementia services, for Rotherham and Doncaster, are based in Mexborough;
- the team of Dementia Support Workers;
- there are four memory cafes in the Rotherham area (eg: Wesley Centre, Maltby and at Davis Court, Dinnington);
- provision of 'singing for the brain' groups – which have more than fifty referrals per month;
- pressures on the service contract, as demand increases and there is a continual search for new sources of funding;
- referrals of people by telephone and from GP practices; and occasionally there are self-referrals;
- the nomination of the Rotherham care team for the National Care Awards;
- education programme for carers (funded by the Borough Council);
- the majority of referrals are from the south of the Rotherham Borough area;
- information displays at local events such as the Rotherham Show.

#### (c) Dementia Champions and Dementia Friends

- the commitment required of volunteers;
- awareness raising sessions for dementia friends;
- training courses available for dementia champions, who will ultimately encourage people to become dementia friends;
- the development of the Rotherham Dementia Action Alliance – and the need for representation from amongst the Borough Councillors;
- the desirability of shops and public services displaying their information signs in a style which will help to minimise the confusion of dementia sufferers;
- identifying people who may be suffering from dementia;
- Dementia sufferers often provide peer support for each other, including fund-raising for specific events.

Various information leaflets published by the Alzheimer's Society were provided for Members.

During discussion and questions, Members raised the following issues:-

: certain Borough Council staff (e.g.: Housing Neighbourhood Teams and reception staff) have received awareness training about dementia;

: the support and care provided by relatives of dementia sufferers, often reducing the cost to public services;

: the role the Borough Council's Safeguarding Adults Team and the provision of support for the carers of dementia sufferers;

: dementia is not considered to be an hereditary condition, although medical research is continuing.

Mrs. Rawling and Mrs. Hopkinson were thanked for their interesting and informative presentation.