



Gwent sy'n Deall Dementia Dementia Friendly Gwent

Dementia Friendly Gwent Coffee Morning 2024

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Dementia Friendly Communities

What is a Dementia Friendly Community and Why are They Important?

A dementia-friendly community is a city, town, or village where people with dementia are understood, respected, and supported. In a dementia-friendly community people will be aware of and understand dementia, so that people with dementia can continue to live in the way they want to and in the community they choose. (Alzheimer's Society, 2019).

Dementia-friendly communities are vital in helping people live well with dementia and remain a part of their community. Dementia-Friendly Communities encourage everyone to share responsibility for ensuring that people with dementia feel understood, valued, and able to contribute to their community.

Dementia Friendly Gwent

Our Dementia Friendly Gwent Network (previously consisted of five steering groups across each local authority) commenced a regional meeting in 2022, since then we have gone from strength to strength with 280+ network members. Working regionally enables us to streamline our work programme and encourages partnership working. Taking a regional approach has allowed each borough to highlight projects, network and provides opportunities to share learning and raise any current challenges. There are a wide range of members sharing their passion to improve our communities for people living with dementia their families and carer's.

All Wales Dementia Care Pathway of Standards

As part of the Dementia Care Programme of work, directed by the requirements of the Dementia Action Plan for Wales; Improvement Cymru have been scoping the standards for dementia care with people living with dementia, carers, and partners from across Wales. From this engagement twenty standards have been narrowed down from over one hundred, detailing what people believe will make a positive difference to dementia care.

Dementia Friendly Communities plays a huge part in this work as the standards are person centered, take a proactive approach to address needs, and help people from all communities to engage and get the support they need. We also have a number of great community support initiatives across Gwent, that support people pre and post





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diagnosis, alongside carer and family support and are working hard to raise awareness and understanding across the region.

The All-Wales Dementia Care Pathway of Standards supports the Dementia Action Plan and focus on a set of interventions determined to improve dementia care and shape the future of our action plan for the next 5 years and beyond.

This work is being taken forward by the Gwent Dementia Board, with our Dementia Friendly Gwent Network playing a key and active part in regional community engagement. More information can be found at: <https://phw.nhs.wales/services-and-teams/improvement-cymru/news-and-blog/publications/dementia-standards/>

Highlights

In May 2024, the Gwent Regional Partnership Team facilitated a Dementia Friendly Gwent coffee morning. This brought together both professionals and citizens from across the region, to share innovation, good practice and look at ways of moving forward to support our communities and enhance the lives of those living with dementia. It was an opportunity to celebrate all the incredible work taking place across Gwent and gain valuable feedback to help us improve care and support across the region. The coffee morning highlighted the importance of creating a dementia friendly society for all, with support and inclusion being a strong theme throughout the day.

“Interactive and friendly atmosphere – a good networking event!”

Event Overview

There were fifty-five attendees at our Dementia Friendly Gwent Network coffee morning at The Greenmeadow Golf Club, in May 2024. Attendees included people living with dementia, carer's, Local Authority leads, Health Board colleagues, care home staff, and third sector partners. The event highlighted and celebrated the inspirational work across Gwent and how it is benefiting those living with dementia and their carers.

The agenda included a range of speakers, with Simon and Lisa sharing their story of their dementia journey so far, partners and community groups from across Gwent showcased their projects, and attendees were asked to commit to a Dementia Friendly pledge. We also took the opportunity to collate comments on the planned dementia hub proposals for the region and provided an update around the Meaningful





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Engagement work taking place within ABUHB, offering information packs for attendees to take away with them. The Age Connects **Love to Sing Choir**, closed the event, providing their first emotive public performance, which was enjoyed by all partners.

Guest speakers included:

- **My Story: Living with Dementia** – Simon and Lisa
- **Forget Me Knot Friday** – Melanie Smith, Health, and Wellbeing Torfaen Libraries
- **Dementia Friendly Schools** – Cllr Carol Andrew, Caerphilly Council and Davina Parfitt, Idris Davies School
- **Hospice of The Valleys CARIAD Service** – Jemma Price, CARIAD Service Team
- **Love 2 Move** – Carly Hawke, CEO at Wye Gymnastics and Galaxy Cheerleading
- **Sporting Memories** – Karen Burgess, Dragons Rugby

“I really enjoyed seeing the amazing work going on in the area, I also loved hearing Simon and Lisa’s journey!”

Dementia Friendly Pledges

We asked attendees to make a dementia friendly pledge before leaving the event, here are the key themes from the day:

1. Accessible Public Spaces: Ensure public spaces are accessible to individuals with dementia. This includes clear signage, seating areas, and quiet spaces. Collaborate with local businesses to make their premises dementia-friendly (e.g., well-lit, clutter-free, with supportive staff).

2. Education and Awareness: Conduct workshops and training sessions for community members, healthcare professionals, and caregivers to raise awareness about dementia. Promote understanding of dementia symptoms, communication strategies, and empathy.

3. Transportation Support: Develop transportation options that cater to the needs of people with dementia. This could involve specialized services, volunteer drivers, or accessible public transport.



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4. Community Engagement: Organise social events, support groups, and activities specifically for individuals with dementia and their families. Encourage community participation and reduce isolation.

5. Inclusive Policies: Advocate for spaces, places and policies that prioritise dementia-friendly priorities for all community groups. Collaborate with local government to integrate DFC principles into their work.

Feedback and Evaluation

An important part of the event was to gain insight into what members of the community, those living with dementia and carer's felt would be important to include in our plans to roll out Dementia Hubs in Gwent that aim to provide information, guidance, and support.

“What resources would you like to see at our dementia hubs?”

We also felt it was important to gain feedback from the wider network, as not all members would be able to join us on the day. We posed the same questions to our 280+ members virtually and have included their feedback in our overall list of resources and themes. Responses included:





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What resources would you like to see at our dementia hubs?

- 'One stop shop' – information all in one place!
- Support for carers and respite Information.
- Pre/post diagnosis support
- Financial and legal support
- LGBTQ+ resources
- Resources in multiple languages and Easy Read options.
- Care home information.
- Links to community groups, resources, and activities.
- Contact details for key services.
- Training opportunities.
- Bereavement support.
- Health checks including hearing and site loss.
- Community transport.
- Counselling opportunities.
- Driving advice and support.

What should the environment of our dementia hubs look like?

- Welcoming, supportive, and inclusive spaces.
- Refreshments.
- Private and public areas.
- Suggestion box.
- Message boards!
- Face to face opportunities with professionals from a range of backgrounds, multiagency, partnership approach.
- Informal peer support, volunteers with lived experience.

We collected feedback from the coffee morning to find out what had gone well, and how we could improve future events. This was also an opportunity for us to gather interest from those attending not already involved in our Dementia Friendly Network, to join as members going forward and widen our community reach.

 **86% of respondents were very satisfied with the event.**

 **90% of respondents would recommend the event.**

 **We gained 12 new DF Gwent network members!**



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Key Messages from The Day

1. Accessibility and Inclusivity: Several feedback points highlight the need for better accessibility in dementia-friendly resources. Participants emphasize the importance of considering diverse needs, including those with visual impairments or cognitive challenges.

2. Practical Tips and Strategies: Feedback about practical tips, actionable strategies and support through diagnosis and living with dementia should be included in the resources available to those visiting the Dementia Hubs.

3. Collaboration and Networking: Several attendees emphasised the importance and benefits of collaboration among healthcare professionals, community organisations, and caregivers.

Recommendations and Next Steps

The recommendations drawn from feedback at the coffee morning, will be highlighted at the Regional Dementia Friendly Gwent Network meeting and Gwent Dementia Board and adjoining workstream subgroups linked to the All-Wales Dementia Care Standards work. This will help shape the work we do moving forward and will also help us plan for future activities and events in Gwent.

Your help and expertise are gratefully received to take this work forward and we would like to say a big thank you on behalf of the Regional Partnership Team for your input.