

Rowans Hospice

Advertisement feature

Rowans
Silver Jubilee Appeal

Helping to make UK a dementia-friendly country to live in

In Dementia Action Week, we take a look at how the Rowans Hospice is helping those with dementia and their loved ones

Everyone in the community has a role to play in making the UK a dementia-friendly place to live – and this includes the Rowans, your community hospice.

Making the hospice dementia-friendly is one of the contributing factors in the 25th anniversary renovation project which the Silver Jubilee Appeal hopes to fund.

Ruth White, CEO of the Rowans, said at the launch of the Silver Jubilee Appeal: 'As an increasing number of people are living to an older age, many have multiple conditions and complex needs. Therefore we are caring for more people with difficulties such as dementia.'

'So it is imperative that the hospice responds to these changing patient needs and is renovated to make sure that the ward uses colour and design to help people feel comfortable and safe in a new environment.'

The renovation will mirror aspects of the Living Well building that has been designed to support people with memory loss.

Beyond buildings

Recognition of this changing patient need is not restricted to the future plans of the fabric and design of

the hospice building. The Rowans is already addressing the changing needs of both its patients and carers through the services it provides from diagnosis.

The weekly Reminiscence Group, held at the Living Well Centre, is an example of this. The group is run by Helen Slater, staff nurse at the centre, who said: 'We are aware that there are people who are living with a life-limiting illness who also suffer with conditions such as dementia, which makes their risk of being isolated so much greater.'

'Therefore we researched different activities that we might be able to provide for them and their carers to socialise. We quickly identified that running the Reminiscence Group offered potential benefits for patients and their carers.'

Helen explained that reminiscence is about sharing life experience, memories and stories from the past.

'People with dementia usually recall things from many years ago rather than recent memories. So the group pulls on this strength, giving people with dementia a sense of competence and confidence, as it uses skills they still have.'

She explained: 'It can



HELP Maureen and Jim Daw

help to give them a sense of self-worth as they share something about their past, which others are also interested in. Also talking about the past can bring up happy memories and good feelings, which is positive in itself.'

The session is run as a group with carers encouraged to stay and everyone has an opportunity to join in and reminisce. This means the whole group can learn and connect with each other, and the focus is taken away from dementia.

This benefits both the person with dementia and the carer, who gets the opportunity to see their loved one in new light. To

help prompt memories Helen makes sure that they have a range of different props each week, around a central theme.

She said: 'The library's memory boxes have been a fantastic resource as they include objects to touch, pictures to look at and poem or article to read.'

'Running this groups is really rewarding. It is so interesting hearing everyone's memories, watching people become more animated when they recall different memories, seeing how one person's memories can spark a memory in someone else's.'

'One of the best things is

when the group leave the room and go to the café area to carry on chatting.'

The need in our community for dementia-friendly places and groups like the Living Well Reminiscence Group, is evident by the success of the group which has seen attendance increase by 449% in the past year alone.

As the number of people dying with dementia increases, it's important we make sure we renovate our community hospice into a dementia-friendly place.

So please pledge to do one thing for the Rowans Hospice Silver Jubilee Appeal.

'THE GROUP HAS BEEN A REVELATION TO BOTH OF US'

Maureen Daw's husband Jim was diagnosed with Alzheimer's last October. Here she explains how they both benefit from attending the Living Well weekly Reminiscence Group.

'I have been volunteering on reception at the Rowans for more than 19 years and still thoroughly love it.'

'I never really thought that I would be using the services at the hospice, just like I never thought I would become a carer.'

'But about four years ago I started to notice my husband Jim become more anxious, nervous and increasingly forgetful.'

'These symptoms gradually increased which, combined with other health issues, increased his dependence on me.'

'Finally last October he was diagnosed with Alzheimer's and due to the type he had, he was told he couldn't drive.'

'Thankfully I learnt about the Reminiscence Group. It has been a revelation to us.'

'When Jim wakes up and asks what day it is and it's a Tuesday he's like 'oh we go to the Living Well today don't we, I really enjoy that!'

'Each week we have a topic to discuss, with objects to act as a prompt. The group leader Helen makes sure we all participate and share our memories.'

'The really great thing is that this group is somewhere where you can be yourself, relax and know other people understand your situation.'

'After the group, we often all stay to have a coffee and chat. The group is good for Jim but I enjoy it as well. It really helps me because it's a happy morning and it's given me the opportunity to meet people who are in a similar position.'

'As carers for people with memory difficulties, you have the odd day when you think you can't cope.'

'Being able to talk to someone who understands, who's going through the same thing, is very important. It helps an awful lot.'

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