



June 2026



**Sandwell Community
Dementia Service**

SCDS News



Who we are:

SCDS NEWS is the newsletter of the Sandwell Community Dementia Service, offering free advice, information, and support to individuals concerned about their memory and those living with dementia in Sandwell.

Our service is a partnership of eight local voluntary sector organisations, working together to support individuals and families at every stage of the dementia journey. We provide training, raise awareness, and help create Dementia Friendly Communities across Sandwell.

Whether you are living with dementia, caring for someone, or seeking guidance, SCDS is here to support you every step of the way.

We are here for you:

☎ 01902 826 655

🌐 murrayhall.co.uk/SCDS



Scan Me!

A Day in Dementia: A Shift in Perspective Experience

During Carer's Week, Sandwell Community Dementia Service held their first 'A Day in Dementia – A Shift in Perspective' event for carers, professionals, and anyone with an interest in dementia. We were delighted with the level of attendance at the event, and we were kept busy throughout. Attendees undertook activities whilst wearing simulation glasses that replicate sight loss caused by conditions such as cataracts, macular degeneration, and glaucoma, and gloves designed to mimic the challenges faced by people living with arthritis. People living with a dementia diagnosis often live with several other co-morbidities, which can make some tasks more difficult to undertake. When going about our daily lives, we often don't appreciate the struggles others may have and the frustration this may bring. Tasks undertaken included attempting to put toothpaste on a toothbrush, trying to complete a jigsaw, opening a purse and taking out the money they needed to pay for items, writing a letter, folding and putting the letter in an envelope, taking medication, and reading a newspaper.





The staff were on hand to talk through some of these difficulties and offer suggestions to make some of the tasks a little easier, such as using coloured plates/cups to help those living with dementia see food and drinks more clearly. Also, having a coloured toilet seat rather than a white seat in a white bathroom, this makes the toilet more visible.

Several dementia friendly activities were on display, including aqua paints, specialised colouring books and puzzle books, along with specialised jigsaws, where lots of conversations took place around these.

Many people attending commented on how trying to perform the activities made them stop and think about how complex life can be for someone living with dementia and/or old age frailty, and how the behaviours of others can make them feel more frustrated.

Several people said it was a real eye-opener for them and would make them stop and think when out in public around people and their behaviours, as you cannot see dementia.

We were also grateful to Age UK Sandwell and Age Connects (on behalf of Sandwell Carers), who both had stands and were kept busy providing a wealth of information and support to those attending.

One of the biggest eye openers for people on the day was trying to open the purse and take out the coins to pay. We discussed the scenario of being in the supermarket, and you are at the till waiting to pay for your items, feeling impatient as you have to be somewhere, but there is an elderly person in front paying for their items, taking their time, struggling to open their purse or wallet, and struggling to gather their money to pay. We actually found out how difficult this could be for someone with dementia and/or old age frailty by undertaking the simulated task ourselves with our senses reduced. Everyone said this would make them think next time they were waiting impatiently in the queue at the supermarket, and they hoped they would be more patient and sympathetic in the future.





Kaleidoscope

Helen Kennedy and Lee Allen of Sandwell Community Dementia Service were asked by Kaleidoscope to attend their centre in West Bromwich and deliver a Dementia Friends session to their staff so they could gain more knowledge on how they could support people living with dementia on a personal and professional basis. 12 members of the team from across the organisation attended and were highly engaged throughout.

The team was asked by Lee what words came to mind when he said the word dementia. Words like memory, confused, and scared were mentioned. We spoke about how these words were negative, and following the session, we aimed to raise more awareness and reduce stigma and negative thinking about dementia. Lee then went on to explain dementia wasn't just about struggling with memory but was so much more – certain dementias can affect your vision impairing judgement when crossing the road, can affect how you hold a pen or knife and fork, it is about emotions and he explained how emotions remain, shiny floors can appear as if they are wet floors, patterns on a tablecloth such as patterns of fruit, the fruit may appear real and the person with dementia could pull at the fruit, pulling the tablecloth off the table along with everything on it including hot drinks, swirls in carpet may appear as snakes on the floor.

Lee explained how communication is key and the importance of speaking at a slower pace, clearly, and in short sentences. Don't speak to people living with dementia like a child; they are an adult. Be clear with body language and use visual aids to assist, point to the coat hook, or put signs/pictures on cupboards. Within organisations, think about signage. We have signs directing to the toilets, but what about signs from the toilets to other areas?

The group were told a true story of an elderly man who had to move into a care home. He used to get up at 4 am every morning, disturbing other residents. The staff would tell him to go back to bed, and he would become agitated. He was tired during the day and missing meals as he was sleeping. One day, when a family member visited, they were talking to a carer and told them how he used to be a postman. It was identified that he was reliving his past life. The staff bought some envelopes and put the residents' names and room numbers on them, and left them on his bedside table each night when he was asleep. At 4 am, he would get up, pick up the letters, and post them through the doors, and then return to bed. The staff would then collect all of the letters and keep them for the next night. From that night, by having a meaningful occupation, his agitation disappeared; he engaged in activities in the day, didn't sleep during the day, and ate his meals.

Several questions were asked at the end of the session:

How do you approach a loved one whom you have concerns about their memory?

When should you get a lasting power of attorney?

Congratulations to all attendees who completed the Dementia Friends program. They can now wear their pin badge to promote awareness and encourage conversations about dementia. At the end of the session, we received positive feedback from the staff, who said it was informative and well delivered, and that they stayed engaged throughout. It was a real comfort to know how they could improve their communication skills, body language, and reactions when with someone living with dementia.



Forget Me Not Café

Our Service Manager, Helen Kennedy, was invited by Dovedale Court Nursing Home in Wednesbury to attend their new dementia café. The café had been running for a few weeks and was recently named the Forget Me Not Café by its attendees. Whether you are a resident at Dovedale Court or a member of the local community living with dementia, you are guaranteed a warm, friendly welcome in a safe environment from Wellbeing Assistants Vicki and Leah.



The café runs every Wednesday from 10:30 am to 12:00 pm. It was lovely for Helen to meet Stan and Jenny, who receive support from the Sandwell Community Dementia Service's Dementia Advisor, Jenny. This was their first time attending the café, and Jenny explained that Stan can find it difficult to settle in new environments, but he was calm and relaxed throughout their visit. We started the morning with a nice warm drink, followed by a quiz featuring 10 questions on topics from years gone by. Some were easier than others, but we all had a great time. Newcomers Jenny and Stan won the quiz—Jenny said she's usually not very lucky and rarely wins anything!

Helen told everyone about Sandwell Community Dementia Service and explained the support they can receive from our Dementia Navigators and Dementia Advisors. She then provided everyone with some small fidget items, which were kindly made and donated by a local craft group. It was then time for cakes, followed by a game of bingo. The room was filled with happiness and chatter throughout the session. The room was thoughtfully arranged with reminiscence books on the tables and reminiscence items from around the world. Drinks and cakes were served using vintage china, adding a charming touch. A lovely, well-thought-out Dementia Cafe with a sense of belonging, safety, and friendships.

For more information or to book, please call Dovedale Court on 0121 502 6444.

Wellbeing event with Serco

Sandwell Community Dementia Service attended the wellbeing event at Serco's Oldbury Depot for the street cleaning teams alongside a number of other services, including Community Offer Plus, Public Health, Smoking Cessation, Prostate Cancer, Kidneys Explained, Physiotherapy, and Workplace Explained.

There are over 300 members of staff based at the depot. It was an enlightening day supporting the teams and speaking about dementia and the advice and support available from Sandwell Community Dementia Service.

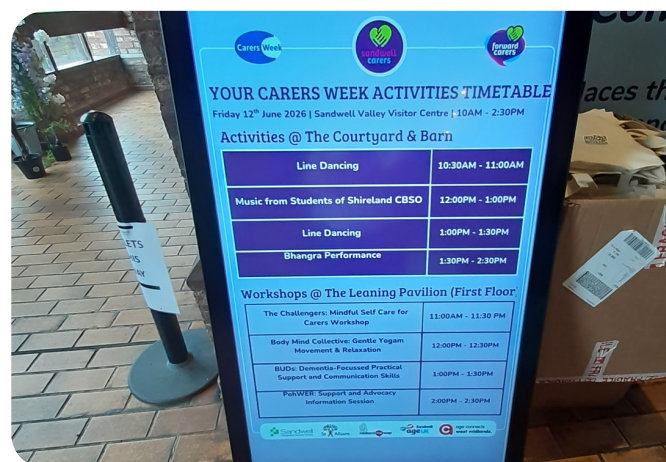
Several members of staff came and spoke of their experience of dementia, others spoke of their concerns regarding a family member, and others were enlightened to learn some information about dementia.

Carers event

During Carers Week, Sandwell Community Dementia Service were invited to attend the Sandwell Carers' event at Sandwell Valley Visitor Centre.

Having worked closely with Sandwell Carers since their inception, it was an honour to be part of their event amongst so many other services and organisations that provide wonderful and invaluable support for carers throughout Sandwell. The event spanned over four areas with a wide range of stall holders, and it was a great opportunity to talk to others to see what was on offer that could benefit those within our own service. We also got the opportunity to speak to so many wonderful informal carers doing so much to care for their loved ones and those living with a dementia diagnosis. It was a lovely day filled with lots of conversation, opportunities, reassurance, and hope.

There were a number of talks and presentations throughout the day providing insightful and useful information, while those wanting time out to relax could do so in the courtyard listening to a local school band and watching or participating in line dancing and Bhangra dancing.



Way to Wellbeing Group

A warm welcome was received when Helen Kennedy and Lee Allen of Sandwell Community Dementia Service attended the Way to Wellbeing Group at Wednesbury Sons of Rest Community Centre to deliver a Dementia Friends session. Lee spoke about Dementia and gave lots of examples on how to communicate and support someone living with a dementia diagnosis. He gave an example of the news on TV, someone living with dementia may believe that person is talking to them, and can get agitated when they don't reply. He spoke about certain TV programmes and how the noise may cause confusion and distress, if there are lots of gunshots on the TV, the person living with dementia may believe the gunshots are in the room and become frightened and distressed.



He spoke about going to the supermarket and seeing the black mat in the door way – how this may be perceived as a hole in the ground or a shiny floor may appear as a water spillage on the floor.

He explained that when communicating with a person living with dementia, ask one question at a time instead of asking several questions at once, as this can cause confusion and may prevent people from socialising. One step at a time can increase confidence. He explained the importance of body language and making eye contact.

Lee explained the importance of doing with rather than doing for, for example, making a cup of tea. Encouragement to do things gives the person with dementia a sense of purpose. Explaining that doing with helps keep those skills for longer, and referred to the term use it or lose it. Lee explained that a little bit of understanding can make a big difference to someone living with dementia and also to their loved ones supporting them.

Helen then spoke to the group about Sandwell Community Dementia service and the support the service offers to those living with a diagnosis of dementia or with a memory concern seeking a diagnosis.

Thank you to Neil Baker and Deborah Jones from the Way to Wellbeing Group for inviting us to talk to the group about dementia and becoming dementia friends.

Fantastic feedback was received from several group members:

One group member told us how she very nearly didn't attend the session, as the word dementia frightened her, as it was something she had feared later in life. She said she was so glad she attended, as it opened her eyes and she was no longer so scared, as she had a better understanding of the disease. She felt better knowing that if someone gets a diagnosis, their life doesn't necessarily need to change immediately.

Another group member explained she was currently in the process of getting a diagnosis and was awaiting a CT scan. She explained that the information in the session gave her some reassurance, and she left armed with an SCDS flyer and said she would refer in if she was given a confirmed diagnosis. She understood she could receive support from the service whilst she is seeking a diagnosis.



WE SUPPORT!



**WE OFFER PRACTICAL
ADVICE**



**WE HELP PLAN
FOR THE FUTURE!**



WE LISTEN!



WE RAISE AWARENESS!



WE ARE HERE FOR YOU!



Making a Referral to SCDS

Who can access the service?

Sandwell Community Dementia Service is free to access for people living in Sandwell, or who are registered with a Sandwell GP practice and are: Diagnosed with Dementia or people who are seeking a diagnosis.

Referring people to SCDS promises a range of benefits for both caregivers and people affected by dementia. Our service offers comprehensive support, offering tailored interventions that help ensure people live well with dementia. With a multidisciplinary team of support workers, including Dementia Navigators and Advisors, we ensure a holistic approach to address the complex needs of individuals living with dementia and their carers. By engaging with our service, SCDS professionals can seamlessly integrate their clients into a supportive community, fostering a continuum of care that significantly contributes to improved client outcomes and overall wellbeing.

How do I make a referral?

To make a referral, please contact the Single Point of Access by telephone or email. Our Dementia Navigators will triage new referrals and provide coordinated support alongside our Dementia Advisors to ensure the best possible care.



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