

Dementia Together is a new service that launched in April, and is available to anyone registered with a GP surgery in Ipswich, east and west Suffolk. It provides support for people who are:

- **with or without a formal diagnosis of dementia**
- **at any stage of the illness**
- **caring for or supporting someone with dementia**
- **worried about symptoms, either for themselves or for someone else**

Since launching on 1 April, over 70 people have been registered with the service, which is designed to be a single point of contact for people at any stage of the condition. The helpline is for anyone who may be just curious and have questions about Dementia, to those that may be feeling concerned and in need of more practical support.

The Dementia Together team is made up of trained Helpline Co-ordinators who are able to give advice and information and a supportive listening ear via the telephone, and Dementia Navigators who are able to provide home visits and holistic needs assessments. Jo Marshall, Centre Director at Sue Ryder, said "I am delighted with our new friendly and knowledgeable team, who all bring a wealth of skills and experience in supporting people with dementia and a simple desire to make a positive difference. This has been evident from day one as the team have been responding to referrals."

*One example is Barry (name changed for confidentiality), who contacted the helpline after hearing about the new Dementia Together service while listening to the radio. Barry is the main carer for his wife, who has a diagnosis of dementia. He wishes to continue to care for her at home but, as his wife's condition had deteriorated, was in need of some support and was not sure what help was available or how he could access support in his local community. A home visit was arranged with a Dementia Navigator, who listened to Barry and his wife's story and concerns. Barry explained that he has had differing experiences of services in the past. They discussed his wife's condition, deterioration in mobility and increased care needs. The Navigator was able to explain how statutory and/or voluntary services could help. They also discussed the impact of the caring role upon the family carer and the need for Barry to look after his own health and wellbeing.*

*The Navigator established that Barry could be entitled to certain benefits as a family carer, and he agreed that the Navigator would refer him for a carer's assessment. The Navigator would also contact Suffolk Adult and Community Services for an updated assessment for his wife as a result of her increased personal care needs.*

*Barry agreed to try out some local community dementia friendly groups with his wife, including a social lunch group and a dementia café; Barry also agreed to try a carer support group.*

*A referral was also made to Suffolk Family Carers' Moving and Handling project and Caring with Confidence programme. A request was also made for a Family Carer Emergency Plan form to be sent to Barry, to give reassurance of care arrangements, should Barry be suddenly unable to care for his wife.*

*Barry was extremely grateful for the information and support given, including the information resource booklet. He said, "I have never been given information and support in this way, and feel very pleased to have a single point of contact to help me navigate the system."*

*The Dementia Navigator will continue to support Barry until necessary services are in place and local support is established.*

Sue Ryder is delivering the service in partnership with local Dementia Action Alliances and health and social care organisations, to ensure that people receive joined up support and only have to tell their story once.

**For more information:**

Visit the website: [www.dementia-together.com](http://www.dementia-together.com)

Email: [SRYC.DementiaTogether@nhs.net](mailto:SRYC.DementiaTogether@nhs.net)

Sue Ryder



## Dementia Together

Call free: **08081 688 000**

Monday to Friday: 9am – 6pm

Saturday, Sunday & Bank Holidays: 10am – 4pm