

Dementia UK supporter magazine
Winter 2024

Closer to you

“Dementia affects our whole family”



Clare's story of caring for her mum

Your support changes lives



Working together to make a difference

Tips for a healthy brain



What you can do today



DementiaUK

Helping families face dementia

Welcome to the latest issue of Closer to you.



When my mum was diagnosed with dementia, Dementia UK's Helpline was a lifeline. In this magazine, you can read about how your generous support means the charity's dementia specialist Admiral Nurses are helping families when they need it most.

Thank you so much for your continued support, and I hope you enjoy your magazine.

Steve

Steve, Dementia UK supporter and Guest Editor

Read Steve's story on page 9 ➔

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News and views

Meet our newest Ambassadors

We are delighted to welcome TV and radio presenter John Suchet and his wife Nula as Dementia UK Ambassadors. John and Nula met when their previous partners – who have both since sadly died – were living with dementia in the same care home.

John was supported by a dementia specialist Admiral Nurse when caring for his late wife and is determined to raise awareness of



Nula and John Suchet

dementia and the life-changing support our nurses provide.

John and Nula told us, “We feel passionately – learned through experience – about how important it is to care for the carer.”

We’re so grateful to them for their support.

A step back in time

Beamish Museum in South Shields is enabling people with dementia to take a trip to the past with the opening of Clover Cottage, a reconstruction of a 1950s miner’s cottage. The museum’s Health and Wellbeing Team will use it as a space for activities to help tackle loneliness, isolation and mental health problems in people with dementia.

Clover Cottage has been designed to be accessible to people with dementia, with carefully planned lighting, paint colours, layout and furniture.



Helen Featherstone of the National Lottery Heritage Fund says, “It’s fantastic to think that this aged miner’s home will provide a supportive space for those with dementia and wider needs.”

Click here for more information and link to ➔ beamish.org.uk/explore-discover/1950s-town/



Ten years at the helm of Dementia UK

In September, Hilda Hayo celebrated her 10th anniversary as Dementia UK's Chief Admiral Nurse and CEO – a position she took up as a result of both her professional and personal experiences of dementia.

Hilda's journey began 43 years ago when she was a student nurse working with people affected by dementia in hospitals. "The standard of care I saw was appalling – I realised I had to try to make things better," she says.

Before being appointed to her role at Dementia UK, Hilda also cared for her mother-in-law with dementia. "It was a real eye-opener – I hadn't realised how all-encompassing it is to care for someone living with dementia," Hilda says.

"Caring for someone with dementia is all-encompassing."

Hilda, who still practises as an Admiral Nurse, continues to have ambitious plans for Dementia UK. "My hope for the future is that there are enough Admiral Nurses to support everyone who needs us," she says.

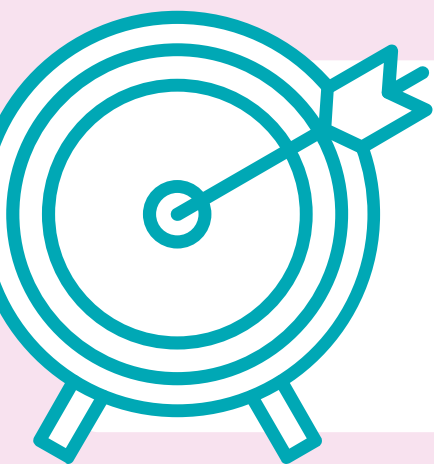


Donate to help this vision become a reality



How you helped change lives in 2023

Your support is at the heart of everything we do at Dementia UK, making it possible for us to offer a lifeline to thousands of families every year. Here's a snapshot of what we achieved together in 2023 because of generous supporters like you.



You helped us recruit **35** new dementia specialist Admiral Nurses, **40% more than our target**.

Thanks to you, even more families can now access expert, face-to-face dementia support in primary care (eg GP surgeries) and acute care (eg hospitals).

Your support enabled our Helpline to respond to a record

34,273

calls and emails, providing families with the expert, compassionate advice they need to look after their loved ones – and themselves.



* Figures taken from Dementia UK's Annual Report 2022-23





Because of your generosity, we increased our virtual clinic opening hours from four to five days a week. Around

3,200

families received expert support from an Admiral Nurse by phone or video call in our clinic, helping them through the challenges of dementia.



*Thanks to your support,
there are now an amazing*

444

*Admiral Nurses changing
lives throughout the UK.*



We published

13

*new information
leaflets*

Your support helped put expert advice on every aspect of dementia at people's fingertips. These include:

- **Keeping safe as a dementia carer**
- **Personal hygiene**
- **Medication and dementia**
- **Menopause and dementia**
- **Getting a diagnosis of young onset dementia**





Focus on... falls



Consultant Admiral Nurse for Frailty Kerry Lyons shares her advice on managing falls in a person with dementia.

Every year, one in three adults over the age of 65 will experience a fall – especially during the icy winter months. People with dementia are at greater risk of falls, linked to difficulties with:

- judgment
- sensory perception
- mobility and coordination
- communicating their needs (eg explaining that they need help getting out of bed)

As well as causing injury, falls can affect a person's mobility, confidence and independence.

Who can help a person who is experiencing falls?

The person's GP is the first port of call. They may recommend checks including a medication review, an

electrocardiogram (ECG) to measure heart activity, and a blood pressure check. They may refer the person to the falls prevention service, a physiotherapist or occupational therapist for specialist support.

Reducing the risk of falls

Many falls happen at home. Simple measures – such as securing rugs, fitting handrails in the bathroom, and ensuring there is good lighting – can make a big difference. A personal falls alarm may also provide reassurance.

You can request a free needs assessment and home assessment from social services to identify ways to make everyday life easier, for example with mobility aids like a walking frame, or home adaptations like a walk-in shower.



What to do if someone falls

If the person with dementia falls, keep calm. If you are sure they have no injuries and it is safe for them to get up, support them do so slowly and steadily. You may need another person to help.

To get up, the person should, with support:



Roll onto their hands and knees.



Look for a stable item of furniture such as a heavy chair or outdoor bench.



Hold onto this with both hands for support.



Rise slowly until upright – then sit and rest.

If the person is injured or cannot get up, call an ambulance. If you have a blanket, cover their legs and keep them comfortable. If it can be done safely, try to change their position slightly every 30 minutes to avoid pressure damage to the skin.



Personal falls alarm

Need more advice?

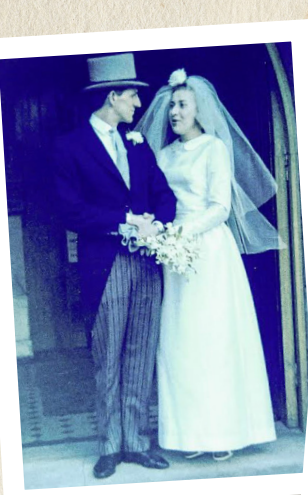
To speak to an Admiral Nurse, please call our Helpline on **0800 888 6678**, email

➔ helpline@dementiauk.org, or book a phone or video call appointment at

➔ dementiauk.org/book

➔ **Click here for more information on dementia and falls.**





Steve's story

After Steve's mum died with dementia, he found comfort in setting up an online Remembrance Fund in her honour.

“ The day I plucked up the courage to call Dementia UK's Helpline, I felt desperate. My mum was living with Alzheimer's disease, and I felt like I was losing bits of her every day. I was also worried about my dad – being Mum's sole carer was having a visible impact on him.

“It was a relief to find someone who understood”

Following a bad fall, Mum was hospitalised. It was during the pandemic so we couldn't visit her, and she couldn't understand why – it was very traumatic.

That's when I called the Helpline. I initially found it difficult to reach out, but when I spoke to Joe, a dementia

specialist Admiral Nurse, it was such a relief to find he understood what I was going through.

Joe was so understanding, and also gave me practical advice such as information on care funding. His male-to-male empathy was very reassuring – I remember crying down the phone. I called the Helpline many times after that initial conversation.

Sadly, after four weeks in hospital, Mum deteriorated rapidly. We knew the end was coming, but because of Covid, we could only see her for 30 minutes. It was a very sad ending for someone who had made such a contribution to other people's lives.



Steve's mum and family throughout the years



“Mum’s Remembrance Fund is a huge comfort”

To honour Mum, I set up a Remembrance Fund so people could write tributes and donate to Dementia UK in her honour. It gave family and friends a place to post memories and light virtual candles. I have posted stories about Mum, and it has been a comfort to others too.

The Remembrance Fund has also been a focus for my fundraising for Dementia UK. People have donated generously, and through their gifts and the various fundraising events I have taken on, I have raised £10,000.

Nothing will bring Mum back, but the Remembrance Fund has helped me translate my grief into positive action as well as being a place to celebrate her life. ”



To set up a Remembrance Fund, click here ➔

If you are able to make a donation, your gift will help more families access life-changing dementia support. Thank you for your generosity.

➔ Donate now



Help more families facing the fear and confusion of dementia

As someone who has shown how much you care about families living with dementia, can you give a gift today to make sure no one has to face dementia alone?

Your kind donation will be life-changing. It will help increase the number of specialist dementia nurses in the community, in virtual and face-to-face clinics, and on Dementia UK's free Helpline. With your support, families affected by dementia can live as well as possible – for as long as possible.

Will you give £33 today to help more families facing the fear and confusion of dementia?



£33

could cover the telephone costs of 10 families calling our free Helpline for expert advice from a specialist dementia nurse



Donate now



5 tips for a healthy brain

While there is no known way to prevent dementia, there are things you can do to reduce the risk – or keep your brain as healthy as possible after a diagnosis. Here are five tips to try in 2024.



1

Get on your feet

While ageing is the biggest factor in developing dementia, physical activity can help you avoid other health issues that are linked with the condition, such as stroke, heart disease, diabetes and high blood pressure. If running, cycling or the gym don't appeal, lots of everyday activities count as exercise: gardening, walking the dog, or going for a bike ride with the family.



**2**

Teach yourself a new trick

If you've been thinking about trying something new, now's the time. Whether you fancy mastering crochet, studying a foreign language or even joining a car maintenance course, learning a new skill can slow down the age-related brain changes associated with thinking and memory, prompting new brain growth even into later adulthood.

3

Break your bad habits

January is the season of resolutions, so if you've been meaning to stop smoking, cut down on alcohol or give your diet a healthy makeover, there's never been a better time. Changing long-held habits isn't easy, but what's good for your heart is good for your brain, helping reduce the risk of dementia.

4

Sleep easy

Whether you're getting too much or too little, poor sleep patterns may increase the risk of dementia, so getting into a good sleep routine is a wise idea. Simple steps like going to bed at a regular time, switching your phone off and avoiding caffeine and alcohol in the evening can make a big difference. Many people with dementia also experience sleep problems.



Click here to read our tips

5

Start the year sociably

Spending time with loved ones is good for the soul – and the brain. Research has shown that social isolation increases the risk of dementia, so it's important to make time for your relationships. Many people with dementia also report feeling lonely, with a knock-on effect on their quality of life. Even sending a text or email can help you stay connected, so why not take two minutes to catch up today?



Your month-by-month guide to changing lives in 2024



Help us support more families by joining one of this year's exciting Dementia UK fundraising events. There's something for everyone!

January

27th-28th:

London Winter Walk

February

1st-29th: Walk 1K a Day

March

1st-31st:

March Dog Walking Challenge



April

7th: Brighton

Marathon

7th: London Landmarks

Half Marathon

21st: TCS London Marathon

May

1st-8th: Time for a Cuppa

1st-31st: Walk 31 Miles in May

26th: Ride London-Essex 100 cycling event

June

7th-9th: Three

Peaks Challenge

15th: Spring Skydive Day (venues nationwide)

July

6th-7th: Peak

District Challenge

August

Fans vs Dementia – throughout the football league season

24th: London Summer Walk

31st: Summer Skydive Day (venues nationwide)



**Click here for
more information
on taking part in an
event for
Dementia UK!**



September

1st-30th: Walk 30
Miles in September
3rd-15th: Land's End
to John O'Groats
Cycling Challenge
8th: Great North Run
29th: Berlin Marathon

October

1st-31st: October Dog
Walking Challenge
6th: Cardiff Half Marathon
13th: Royal Parks Half
Marathon, London

November

1st-30th: November
Knitting Challenge

December

4th: Dementia UK Carol
Concert, London

Best paw forward!

Jen Jenkins works for Tails.com, who supported our October Dog Walking Challenge in 2023

“I took on the Dog Walking Challenge with my dog Alfie for my nanna, who passed away with dementia. It was a great opportunity to set myself a new target and discover areas that we hadn't explored before. I raised £270 – Nanna would have been really proud, and probably would have told me I needed a good rest after walking over 200km!”



NB all events and dates
are subject to change.



A day in the life of an Admiral Nurse

Ruth Bradford is an Admiral Nurse at Lister Hospital, Hertfordshire. She shares how she spends her day supporting families and colleagues.



6.15am It's Tuesday morning, and my day begins with a circuit training class – it gets me going before my day at work.

8.30am I arrive at the hospital and catch up on who I'm seeing today. On average, at least one in 10 people on our inpatient wards have dementia. Being in hospital can be frightening for the person and their family – I help alleviate that anxiety.

9am I'm meeting Saira*, whose dad has just been admitted. With the ward staff so busy, she's concerned they won't understand his unique needs. Together, Saira and I fill in a document that will help the staff get to know her dad as a person – not just a patient with dementia. He likes to be clean-shaven, listen to 70s music and watch sport on TV. By the time

we finish speaking, Saira says a weight has been lifted.

11am After meeting a family, I update their electronic patient records. I often write notes for the family, too – they sometimes struggle to remember what we've talked about when they're stressed and anxious.

12pm Part of my job is delivering dementia training to other professionals. Today, I'm speaking to newly qualified physiotherapists. There are people with dementia in many departments throughout our hospital – not just on elderly care wards – so it's important that every staff member knows how to support them.

1pm Lunchtime. I need to pause in the middle of the day as working with families can be emotional. Today, our hospital staff choir meets, which I love. Singing is so uplifting.

2pm I'm speaking to Paul*, whose wife Carol* has just had surgery. She has young onset dementia and is very confused. Paul is worried about how they'll cope once she's discharged.



“Being an Admiral Nurse isn’t easy - you go on an emotional journey with families. But I’m so proud to be making a difference.”



I reassure Paul that Carol won’t be sent home without support, and that I’ll liaise with the Discharge Team and social worker on his behalf. People often panic about how they’ll manage when their loved one is discharged, but with an Admiral Nurse, they won’t have to deal with it alone.

4pm When a person with dementia is admitted to hospital, family members often worry about them being lonely – like Marcus*, whose mum is in hospital. Our hospital has a team of dementia volunteers who are a wonderful support, so we arrange for a volunteer to visit her – they’ll leave a card by her bed so when Marcus next comes in, he can see she’s had some company.

5.30pm I finish my notes then head home for a bath, a cup of tea and some TV – I’ve walked thousands of steps around the hospital today!

Being an Admiral Nurse isn’t easy – you go on an emotional journey with families. Your heart has to be in it. But I’m so proud to be making a difference.

* Names have been changed



“Our whole family is living with dementia”

Since her mum was diagnosed with dementia, Clare has called our Helpline many times for support.



No one understands how traumatic it is to care for someone with dementia unless they've experienced it. You're losing the person you love. I do my absolute best for Mam, but it never feels good enough. Just when I feel like I'm getting the hang of something, something else goes wrong.

Mam was diagnosed with vascular dementia following a cardiac arrest five years ago – just four weeks after I gave birth to my twins. We'd suspected something wasn't right with her, but never considered that it could be dementia.

We had very little support when Mam was diagnosed and felt on our own as a family. Our whole world became insular. Mam went



“We had little support – we felt on our own as a family”

from going to parties and doing the flowers at church to not leaving the house. Nobody saw what we were going through. Usually when someone is unwell, everyone is there to offer support. But with dementia, everyone disappears.

“Our lives were on hold”

While Mam was still living at home, Dad's whole life was on hold. He couldn't even go to the shops. Mam is diabetic which is incredibly complicated with dementia. She was having constant hypos (episodes of





dangerously low blood sugar) so Dad had to monitor her throughout the night.

“The nurses’ support has kept me going”

By the time we heard about Dementia UK, Mam’s dementia was advanced, but since then, I’ve called the Admiral Nurse Helpline many times. The nurses have helped us tackle specific issues like putting us in touch with the Admiral Nurse in our local hospital when Mam was admitted, transitioning her into a care home and applying for funding for her care fees. Their support has kept me going during this devastating illness.

Our whole family is living with dementia – it’s tough on my dad, my brother and his family, me, my husband, my twins. But it’s important

‘We live with dementia’

Clare is supporting our ‘We live with dementia’ campaign to raise awareness of dementia: look out for our adverts online and in your area in 2024.

You can also donate to make it possible for more families like Clare's to receive the specialist support they need.

[!\[\]\(3211b5d1d968fc1665909b34f9f16010_img.jpg\) **Donate now**](#)



to keep talking – whether that’s to your friends and family, or to an Admiral Nurse. Try to be open about how difficult it is, because having no support is horrendous. No family should have to face dementia alone.





Speak up for dementia

Use your voice to make a difference – here's how your support could help us change more lives together.

Campaign for dementia care

We passionately believe that every family affected by dementia deserves the best possible care and support. To help make that happen, we campaign for local and national improvements to health and care to better meet people's needs.

this vital care funding, get the support they need. **To add your support, click here** ➡ If you would like to join our Campaigns Network and be part of future campaigns. **To join our Campaigns Network, and be part of future campaigns, sign up here** ➡

Our **'Fix the funding'** ➡ campaign is calling on the Government to urgently review the process of applying for NHS continuing healthcare funding so that families affected by dementia, who often face huge obstacles securing



Tell your story

If someone you love is living with dementia, you're living with it too – and by sharing your story, you can help other families feel less alone. If you have a personal connection to dementia, we'd love to hear about it, and we might be able to share your experiences on our website, in publications like this, on social media, in a video, or in the media (don't worry – we won't publish it without asking you first).



➔ **Share your story!**



Become a Volunteer Ambassador

Our amazing Volunteer Ambassadors are the face of Dementia UK in their local communities. They help raise awareness of dementia and the work of our Admiral Nurses – from visiting groups to talk about dementia to encouraging people to fundraise. Could you join our fantastic band of volunteers?

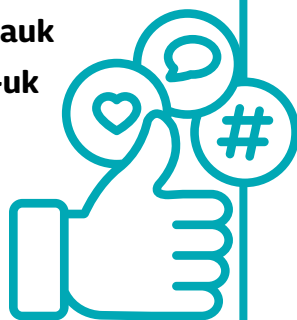
➔ **Join our fantastic band of volunteers today.**

Click here to hear from Volunteer Ambassador Penny ➔

Share our social media posts

Dementia UK is on Facebook, X, Instagram, TikTok and LinkedIn. When you share our posts, more people find out about Dementia UK and the support we offer, so please follow us on social media, and like and share our posts so our message reaches every family that needs us.

 **DementiaUK**
 **@dementiauk**
 **dementia_uk**
 **@dementiauk**
 **dementia-uk**



Supporter profile

“Everyone is united to make a difference”



What inspired you to become a Volunteer Ambassador?

When my mum was diagnosed with dementia, there were no Admiral Nurse services close to us. Their support would have been invaluable, so I wanted to help raise money so that more people can access a specialist dementia nurse in their area.

What does your role involve?

I have been in this role for a year. It began with a bang, speaking at an event in the House of Commons, and since then, I've written articles, collected cheques, attended fairs, spoken at Rotary Clubs, visited a dementia café and helped with social media content.

What do you enjoy most?

Meeting and talking to other people who recognise the emotional journey of caring for someone with dementia. Some have a connection to dementia or want to know more

Inspired by Penny?



[Click here to find out more about becoming a Volunteer Ambassador](#)

about it, others have stories to tell, but everyone is united in wanting to make a difference for those living with it. It's also good to share what I've learnt from my own experience to help others.

Why should people consider becoming a Volunteer Ambassador?

If, like me, you have cared for someone living with dementia, it's so beneficial to be part of a community that really understands and cares. You can tailor the role to suit you, and the team at Dementia UK is incredibly supportive.





In memory of Tony Husband

We were saddened to hear of the sudden death of cartoonist Tony Husband in October 2023. Tony was a passionate advocate for families affected by dementia. He supported Dementia UK in many ways, including sharing his experiences of caring for his father at our Admiral Nurse Forum and creating a series of cartoons to highlight the support of our specialist nurses. He also wrote and illustrated books about living with dementia.

Tony's legacy in raising awareness of dementia will live on. Here is just one of the many sketches he created for us.



Support families affected by dementia and be in with the chance of winning £25,000!

By playing our Weekly Lottery, you will make it possible for our specialist dementia nurses to support more families when they need us most. And it's a win-win situation because when you play, you could be the lucky recipient of an incredible £25,000 cash prize.

Play the Dementia UK Weekly Lottery by clicking below.

Every pound raised through our Lottery will make a vital difference to families facing dementia.



Full game rules can be found at lottery.dementiauk.org or by calling our player helpline on 0330 678 2711. Players must be 18+. Dementia UK is licenced and regulated by City of London under a small society lottery licence – licence number SSL/202202746. This Unity lottery is managed on behalf of Dementia UK by Sterling Management Centre Ltd. Sterling Management Centre Limited is licensed and regulated in Great Britain by the Gambling Commission under account number 3137. Registered charity in England and Wales (1039404) and Scotland (SC 047429). Dementia UK provides a range of services and money raised through the lottery will go wherever the need is the greatest.



BeGambleAware.org®