

Are You  
Looking After  
Someone with  
Dementia?



## WELCOME

**This leaflet is for anyone who cares for someone with dementia.**

You may not think of yourself as a Carer, particularly if the person you look after is a close family member or friend, but the term 'Carer' applies to anyone who looks after someone, adult or child, who cannot manage without additional support - whether physical or emotional, or both - due to disability, illness, addiction or general frailty.



Looking after someone with dementia can be rewarding, however it can also be a very intensive, challenging, and at times overwhelming experience. Providing this type of support often places many demands and stresses on Carers, and this is where **Carers Link** can help. We are the local organisation dedicated to Carers in East Dunbartonshire, providing you with the support that you need and are entitled to.

## ARE YOU WORRIED ABOUT SOMEONE?

While there is no such thing as a 'normal' memory and we are all unique, you may have noticed differences in someone's behaviour and have become concerned that they are not just 'a bit forgetful', but that they may be showing the first signs of dementia.

Some of the most common signs of dementia are memory loss and confusion, and it can also cause personality and behaviour changes. It's important not to jump to conclusions because each of these can be caused by things other than dementia, but if you are concerned then it's a good idea to encourage the person that you're worried about to speak with their doctor, who can refer on to a specialist if necessary. A full medical assessment needs to be carried out before any diagnosis can be made.

If the person you care for does have a diagnosis of dementia then they may feel very emotional and require extra support. As a Carer you, too, will have questions and concerns about the future, and it might help to talk with a Carers Link support worker and with others in a similar situation. We are here to help.

**Carers Link 0800 975 2131**



## QUOTES

"Carers Link have been there for me since my husband was diagnosed with Dementia 4 years ago, I don't know where I'd be without their support"

"I was growing older myself and caring was beginning to take its toll, a friend suggested I phone Carers Link - thankfully I did"

"I couldn't believe someone was asking how I was"

"I picked up the Carers Link leaflet at the library and decided to give them a try. A friendly voice answered my call - little did I know that this one simple phone call would help so much"

## COMMON FEELINGS

It is natural to feel concerned when you see the person you care for changing and having to cope with many things in a different way.

Carers often have a fear of what the future holds because the nature of dementia may mean more changes as time passes. It's easy to start feeling isolated and lonely when the growing demands of caring mean less time to spend on things that you need or want to do.

Feelings of loss, frustration and guilt are very common, and some people may at times feel ashamed that their family has been affected by dementia and will not seek the help they need. Remember that there's no need to cope alone, and that talking things over can really help.



If you would like to talk to someone outwith your circle of family and friends then Carers Link can provide a listening ear, and if you'd like to speak with others in a similar situation we run several local support groups, including one specifically for you if you are caring for someone with dementia. You would be very welcome to come along for a coffee and a chat.

## ABOUT DEMENTIA

Dementia is a broad term used to describe a variety of symptoms, including impairment in memory, reasoning and judgement, and deterioration in communication skills. People with dementia often become confused and at times frustrated as familiar and day-to-day tasks become more difficult to perform.

Dementia is progressive, which means the symptoms will gradually worsen, with the time this takes varying enormously from person to person. Some people remain the same for years, while others may lose some skills and ability more quickly.

There are many different types of dementia and each has its own causes. The most common form is Alzheimer's disease. Other types of dementia include Vascular Dementia, Lewy Body Dementia, Frontotemporal Dementia and Korsakoff's Disease.



There are medicines that can be taken to help with dementia symptoms. They cannot cure it, but some people find their symptoms progress less quickly for a while and make the dementia easier to live with. A very important part of treatment is good quality support and care for the person with dementia, and for those who care for them.

## THE IMPACT OF DEMENTIA

Any diagnosis of dementia will naturally affect family and friends as well as the person diagnosed. Becoming a Carer in this situation may feel like a huge responsibility, with the future now changed and the wellbeing of someone else resting more with you than it did previously.

Caring for someone with dementia can place real strain on relationships, whether the person you are caring for is your partner, parent, sibling or friend.

As the dementia advances you may find the person you look after displays behaviour that is increasingly hard to understand and at times more difficult to manage - this can be stressful for both of you. It is particularly upsetting when someone you love sometimes behaves in a strange or hostile way towards you. There are many reasons why they may be exhibiting this type of behaviour, and it is therefore important to seek advice from their CPN or your own GP as soon as possible.

There is lots of help available for you and for the person with dementia, and Carers Link can help you to find this - we are always here to listen, and to provide information, advocacy and support, as well as Carer training courses and support groups.

**Carers Link 0800 975 2131**



## HERE TO HELP

At Carers Link we recognise that your caring role can leave you with little or no time to spare. We can help you identify what may help, and subsequently advocate on your behalf with the East Dunbartonshire Social Work team about the range of services that may be available, including:

- Equipment or adaptations for your home
- Homecare and help with personal care for the person you care for
- Lunch clubs and day care services for the person you care for
- Residential respite care so that you can get a break
- Home Based respite care to make sure that the person you care for is safe if you need to go out
- Self-Directed Support (SDS) which enables the person you care for to arrange some or all of their support, instead of receiving services arranged by the Social Work team. SDS allows a person more flexibility, choice and control over their care

Our booklet **Caring Choices** has more information about the above services - call us now on **0800 975 2131** for your free copy.

Alternatively you can find comprehensive information and links to many organisations relating to dementia on our website at [www.carerslink.org.uk](http://www.carerslink.org.uk)





## GETTING SUPPORT

Anyone who regularly provides a substantial amount of care is entitled to an assessment of their needs as a Carer. This is called a **Carers Assessment** and aims to find out what help you need with caring, and to help you maintain your own health and wellbeing.

The assessment provides an opportunity to think about yourself and about what help you need to support you with your caring role. The discussion around this will also examine whether you are eligible to receive services, and how your needs can best be met.

While the idea of filling in a Carers Assessment can be daunting, Carers Link staff can arrange the assessment - and provide you with help and support through the whole process. Or you can personally request the assessment by contacting the East Dunbartonshire Social Work team on **0141 355 2200**.

Importantly, you can also request a **Community Care Assessment**, which assesses the needs of the person you care for. An assessment is required to access most social work services such as Respite or Short Breaks.



## PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

Discussing and planning for the future can prevent difficult and stressful situations arising later. If the person you care for has a diagnosis of dementia then it is wise to encourage them to set up Power of Attorney as soon as possible in case they lose the ability to make important decisions about their financial affairs or their future welfare. It is important to note that a person can grant a Power of Attorney only if capable of understanding what he or she is doing.

Power of Attorney is a written document giving someone else authority to take actions or make decisions on a person's behalf should they themselves become incapable of doing so. Remember, no-one has the automatic right to take actions on someone's behalf without their authority, so without Power of Attorney for the person with dementia, you might have to go to court to get the authority to act on their behalf. This court order is called Guardianship.

For more detailed information contact:

**Carers Link 0800 975 2131**

**[www.carerslink.org.uk](http://www.carerslink.org.uk)**

**Office of the Public Guardian**

**01324 678300**

**[www.publicguardian-scotland.gov.uk](http://www.publicguardian-scotland.gov.uk)**



## LOOKING AFTER YOURSELF

Providing care and support to someone can be very rewarding but it can also affect other areas of your life such as your job, relationships, family life, and even your own health. If you are looking after someone on a regular basis, or are about to start providing care, Carers Link can:

- Provide individual support and advocacy from dedicated Support Workers helping you to explore different options, resolve issues or ensure your views or concerns are heard. This includes helping you with writing letters, attending meetings or filling out a Carers Assessment

- Give information about services or resources to help you

- Invite you to attend courses contained in the Caring with Confidence programme for Carers, which covers topics such as Spotlight on Dementia, Moving and Handling Awareness, Stress Management and First Aid

- Offer a telephone support service, Carers Call, providing a friendly listening ear

- Welcome you at a range of informal groups where Carers can come together and have a 'blether'

## CONTACT US



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[www.facebook.com/carerslink](https://www.facebook.com/carerslink)

**Normal hours:** Normal Office Hours  
Monday - Friday 8.30am to 5pm  
(Appointments outwith these hours can be arranged)

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Carers Link is also supported by



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**East Dunbartonshire Council**

[www.eastdunbarton.gov.uk](http://www.eastdunbarton.gov.uk)



**East Dunbartonshire**  
Community Health Partnership

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