The Dementia Buddy scheme is a pilot project running for one year to end of March 2013. It is funded by Kent Adult Social Services and was awarded following a competitive tender process. The tender for £30,000 was won by Alzheimer’s & Dementia Support Services (ADSS), a local independent charity (www.alzheimers-dementia.org.uk).

It is hoped that the project will make a significant difference to the well-being of patients with cognitive impairment and it will continue to be funded in subsequent years.

We believe that this project is a good example of collaborative working between the health, social care and the voluntary sector and is already enhancing the experience of cognitively impaired patients in hospital.

Role of Dementia Buddy:
- Ensure patients with dementia receive increased social interaction.
- Escort patients with dementia to appointments within hospital grounds.
- Engage in activities with patients with dementia to maintain cognitive capabilities.
- Encourage and assist with food and drink.
- Provide information and support to carers including signposting to support services.
- Work in partnership with ward staff to ensure best outcomes for patients with dementia.
- Keep basic records.

Potential Outcomes:
- Reduction in number of re-admissions within one month
- More patients returning to their own homes rather than Care Homes
- Reduction in length of stay
- Improved overall experience of hospital stay for patients

Feedback so far:
Patients with dementia have said they have enjoyed being with the dementia buddy
Carers have commented on the supportive atmosphere on the ward
Staff have noticed benefits of having dementia buddies on the ward to both patients and nursing staff