

# The Difference We Make:

## Annual Evaluation of the impact of our services



**October 2023**

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# Summary

**Almost one million people in the UK are living with dementia<sup>1</sup>, and the majority of these are over the age of 65 years and living with other health conditions.**

Across Kent and Medway<sup>2</sup>, there is currently an estimated 27,000 people living with dementia. Of these, approximately **15,000 people have mild dementia, 8,750 have moderate dementia, and 3,500 have severe dementia**. Currently, two thirds of people with dementia live in their own homes, and one third live in care homes. The number of people living with dementia in Kent and Medway is expected to rise to over 38,000 by 2030.

At Alzheimer's and Dementia Support Services (ADSS), it is our mission to give people affected by dementia the knowledge, support and care they need to take back control of their lives, take part in family and community life and manage their symptoms. Our **annual evaluation** not only helps us to ensure we are achieving that, but it also helps us to further develop our understanding of what people affected by dementia want us to do to continue achieving that mission.

In April 2022, we expanded our services beyond **Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley**, which we have served since our inception in 1991. Thanks to securing new contracts with **Kent County Council (KCC)** and **Kent & Medway NHS** we are now providing services in **West Kent, Swale and Medway**. We carry out an Annual Evaluation to help us understand the impact our services have on the people we support, and to ensure we are meeting the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) of our contract with KCC.

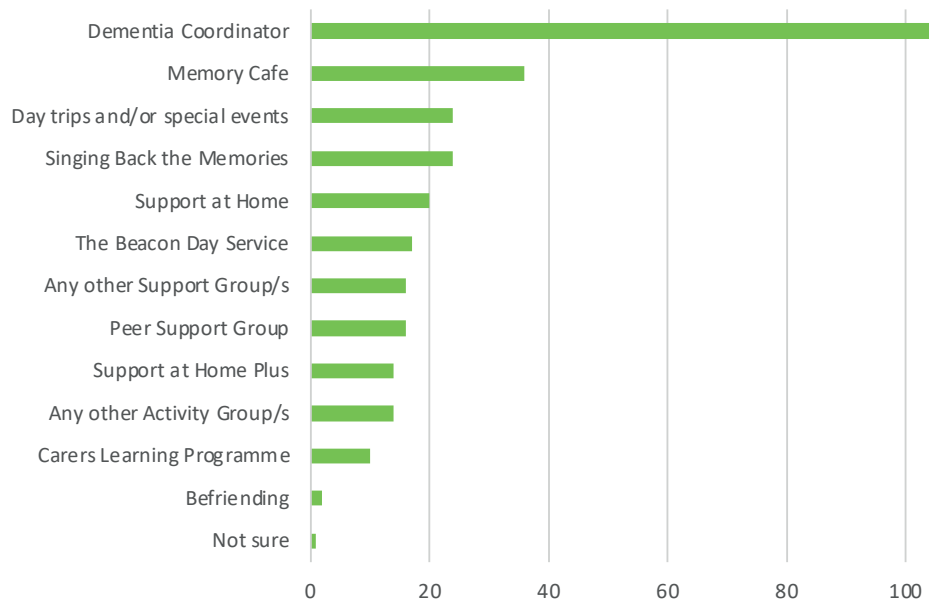
A total of **137 people** took part in the evaluation; 77 of whom are people living with dementia (PLwD), 67 Carers or relatives and 3 'others'. From this point forward, when we use the term 'Carer' we are including family members and/or friends that support those living with dementia. The evaluation was facilitated through 1-2-1 discussions with a member of the relevant team or through an online form. 112 people took part in the 1-2-1 discussions, and 25 people completed the online form. The discussions took place face-to-face, wherever possible, otherwise over the

**At ADSS, it is our mission to give people affected by dementia the knowledge, support and care they need to take back control of their lives, take part in family and community life and manage their symptoms.**

phone or by video call. The discussions were focussed on the people's overall experience of the charity; however, we did ask which specific services they had accessed in the last 12 months. The key findings throughout the evaluation addressed 11 broad questions, listed on the contents page.

All our services were represented within the feedback received. Our **Dementia Coordinator service** was accessed by a larger number of people taking part, which was to be expected as this service is available in all areas that ADSS now serves, whereas others are only available in Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley. Of the 137 people that took part, 78 have accessed more than one of the services ADSS provides.

### Services accessed in the last 12 months



# Background

**ADSS is Kent's biggest independent charity dedicated to providing support to people affected by dementia. Working within the Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley area since 1991,**

**Around 900,000 people in the UK are living with dementia, and the majority of these are over the age 65 and living with other health conditions<sup>1</sup>. There are estimated to be 27,000 people living with dementia in Kent and Medway<sup>2</sup>. Between April 2022 and March 2023 ADSS supported 4,821 people, an increase of over 3,000 people from the previous year.**

ADSS is Kent's biggest independent charity dedicated to providing support to people affected by dementia. Working within the Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley area since 1991, ADSS provides a range of services including information and guidance, community support and activity groups, 1-2-1 support in people's own homes and day support.

In April 2022, ADSS expanded its reach and began supporting people living in Medway, Swale and West Kent. The services provided aim to ensure that those diagnosed with dementia feel supported throughout their experience of dementia and can live the life they want. They also aim to ensure Carers, family members, or others involved, are supported. This report describes the findings from evaluations undertaken throughout May and June 2023. This is the third annual evaluation to take place following a pilot evaluation that took place in 2021.

The evaluation questionnaires were designed based on our learning from previous annual evaluations and the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) set by Kent County Council (KCC) for their wellbeing contracts. Additional questions that relate to our Organisational Values were also included. It was a key priority to ensure that those living with dementia could actively partake in the discussions, offering a combination of minimal multiple-choice responses and the opportunity to speak freely.





*My brother has more social interaction than before. He has grown in confidence and even going out of his comfort zone to attend different groups known to us through the Dementia Coordinator. ””*



*I love coming to the club it breaks up my week. I think it does my wife good as she can have a day off from me ... it's good to have something to talk about ..... Life is better since coming to the club. ””*



## Aims of the Evaluation 2023

As well as helping us to understand if we are delivering on our mission and purpose, our evaluation aimed to answer two broad questions:

1

How do the services we provide impact on the people we support?

2

Has ADSS met the KPIs set by KCC?

## How did we gather people's views?

To explore these questions in detail we conducted evaluation discussions with those affected by dementia that have accessed our services. In total, 137 people gave us their views, an increase from 99 that took part last year. The evaluations were carried out through 1-2-1 discussions, face-to-face, or over the phone with a member of the relevant team, or by completing an online form.

## Who took part in our evaluations?

Of the 137 people who took part, 77 were people living with dementia (PLwD), an increase from 59 last year, and 57 were Carers or relatives, an increase from 40 last year. In addition, three people selected 'other', two described themselves as working in health and social care, and the third was a person living with dementia and their carer completing the online form together

## Interpreting the findings

Selection of those living with dementia invited to take part was carried out by the relevant service leads to ensure they had accessed the service recently and could therefore provide current feedback and were also not going to be caused any distress by taking part. The online

“  
**We have made lots of friends with people in the same position and ADSS staff are always supportive and welcoming.**”

“  
**Because of my illnesses I had to isolate during covid so lost a lot of confidence and contact with old friends. Since I got diagnosed and was allowed to start going out we were referred to ADSS and haven't looked back.**”

“  
**I feel well supported and know that I can phone Pam at any time for advice, support or a chat. By going to the activities we have made friends and feel that there are people I can socialise with and not feel isolated as a Carer.**”

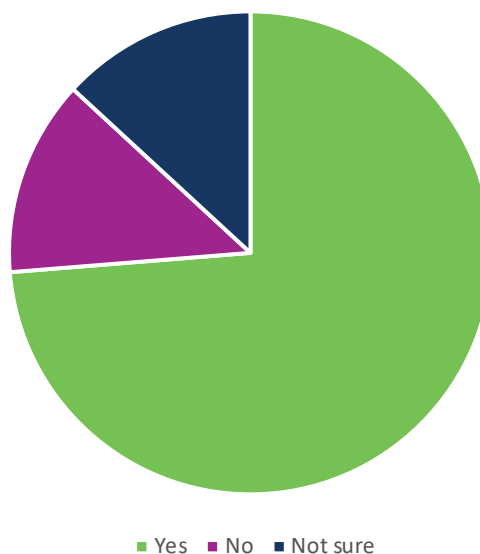
form was sent to all people that have accessed our services in the last 12 months that we had email addresses for, it was also shared on our website and through our social media channels.

Although Carers are not directly supported by The Beacon, Support at Home or Support at Home Plus services, they were invited to take part in evaluation discussions so that the impact of this support on their caring roles could be measured. They could also provide feedback regarding their observations of the impact on the person with dementia.

## Do you feel less lonely since accessing our service/s?

74% of people taking part in this year's evaluation told us they feel less lonely since accessing our services. Those that responded with 'no' further explained that they did not feel lonely before accessing our services, one person explained that they still feel lonely because they are waiting on non-ADSS services. Of those that were 'not sure', one person explained that it was too early to tell, and another explained that they were waiting for Befriending to start.

### Do you feel less lonely since accessing our services?



It is clear from the additional feedback that because of our services people feel more connected, not just with our staff, but with the other people they meet through our services. Many talked about the friendships they have built.



*I started having Support at Home when I came out of hospital, after losing my wife I felt I wasn't coping on my own, the carers have helped me become more independent. ””*



*It's made me realise I can do everyday tasks still, which has made me realise I don't need to worry about doing these things. ””*



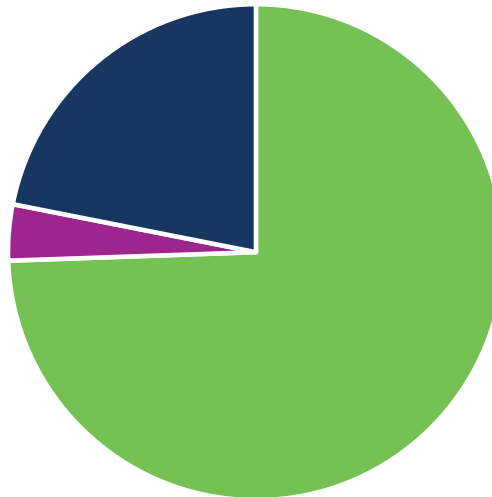
*Having Support at Home is a real comfort in knowing my brother has care workers going in once a week. I can get updates on any concerns and generally just feel he is safer than before. ””*

## Do you feel our service/s helps you to live safely and independently?

74.5% of people that took part in this evaluation felt that our service/s help them to live safely and independently. 22% of people were 'not sure', however, further discussion helped us to understand this is due to circumstances beyond ADSS's control, for example they are waiting for social services input. Those that answered 'no' explained that they already live independently or did not feel the question was applicable to them. One person that was 'not sure' explained that they'd found out a lot of information themselves before accessing ADSS and another explained that they find out a lot of information from other people they meet at ADSS services.

services, they were invited to take part in evaluation discussions so that the impact of this support on their caring roles could be measured. They could also provide feedback regarding their observations of the impact on the person with dementia.

### Do you feel our service/s helps you to live safely and independently?



■ Yes ■ No ■ Not sure







**ADSS helps people to live safely and independently. In some cases, it is because we have linked them up with other relevant services, such as Kent Fire and Rescue for a home assessment. For those that access our Support at Home service, it was clear that our care staff encourage the people we support to do what they can for themselves whilst also ensuring they are safe.**

### **Alan's story..**

Alan lives alone, and his grandson had been supporting him with paying bills etc. His grandson was growing increasingly concerned about Alan – he would regularly take out large sums of money from the cash point, but there didn't seem to be any trace of how the money was being spent. Alan had also recently been prescribed medication to help with some of his symptoms of dementia, but he wasn't taking them as prescribed.

Our Support at Home team commenced three visits per week with Christine, with the plan being that she would get to know Alan and his routine, and gradually work towards supporting Alan with his unmet needs.

At the start, Alan didn't want any help but Christine noticed that Alan's clothes were often unclean and in need of repair, and he was regularly visiting the pub every evening (we discovered this was where the money was going!) with very little food in the house.

Alan is now having a visit every weekday and he is taking his medication as prescribed, with Christine's support. Alan laughs and tells Christine that she now 'runs the household' and, because laundry is being done regularly, Alan always looks smart and presentable.

Christine has Alan's best interests at heart and will always involve Alan in any decisions or choices that need to be made. Alan is no longer preoccupied with cash, as his grandson is now managing his finances. Alan will ask Christine if he has other cash – she'll tell him how much he has, and he trusts her when she reassures him that he doesn't need to go to the cash point as he has enough money in his wallet. Alan enjoys Christine's company and has told her how much he likes having her there and that he feels sad when she leaves.





*I was given all information needed. I was told where I could go to find certain things. Sometimes just re-explaining the services was helpful as I heard about them before but hadn't thought to get back in touch. I felt as though not every problem can be solved, there are places I can go to that can help with what I am experiencing. I can see how this service could really benefit others too. ””*



*ADSS do such an important job in the community. We wished we had found it sooner in her diagnosis as we were educated by your staff. ADSS are very clear in what they do. ””*

## Have you been provided with relevant specialist information and advice by our service/s?

82% of people that took part felt they had been provided with specialist information and advice. Eight people answered 'no' to this question, one of whom explained that they had had to find a lot of information before they accessed our service, but now can share information with people they meet through ADSS. Those that said they were 'not sure' further explained that either they didn't feel they needed it or that they know they can ask if they do. One person commented that we possibly could give more information; they opted for us to contact them after the evaluation which we did and were told they are very happy, they feel so included in everything we do and a part of something.

When discussing this question further with people we learnt that, whilst we provide people with a lot of the information they need, it is important that we reach people as early as possible. We work closely with local memory services and GPs to try and ensure this happens.

## Have you been able to access social activities that you enjoy within our service/s?

Since our social activity groups are not currently available across all the geographical areas we serve, people taking part had the option to select 'Not applicable' for this question. Where this question was applicable, 71.5% felt that they have been able to access social activities that they enjoy. Individuals that answered 'no' to this question provided explanations that included the PLwD not being able or not wanting to attend or they've not tried the groups yet. One person stated that they did not feel the groups were suitable and were not local enough.

It is clear that we provide a lot of fun within our wellbeing services. However, we are aware that there are inconsistencies across the whole area we serve as our wellbeing services are only available in Gravesham, Dartford, Swanley and Swale. We are working hard to expand our reach so that everyone we support can benefit from all the fun, peer support and stimulation we have to offer.



*Kindred Spirits, everyone more my age, it is more like going out socialising. I like having fun.*



*I did feel quite anxious when I went but felt supported by Leanne running the group.*

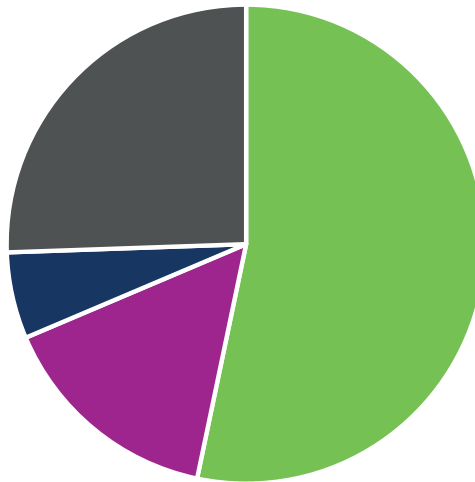


*Singing was enjoyable and Mum has carried this into her home. Chrissy was her befriender and was kind and cheerful.*



*Pam was able to give me advice about how to apply for financial help and has explained about other services that maybe useful to us in the future.*

## Have you been able to access social activities that you enjoy within our service/s?



■ Yes ■ No ■ Not sure ■ Not applicable

## Do you feel treated as an individual when accessing our service/s?

92% of people felt that they had been treated as an individual when accessing our services. One person that was not sure explained that they did not feel the question applied to them, another stated they had not needed to access any services and two others went on to say staff had taken the time to listen to them and that they had talked about dancing. Two people answered 'no', however did not explain further.

Additional discussion provided great examples of what our team do that makes people feel treated as an individual, particularly how we demonstrate understanding of the different support needs those living with dementia and their Carers have. There were lots of examples of how we recognise the uniqueness of everyone we support; our Birthday Boxes are a great example of this.

Birthday Boxes are given to people accessing Support at Home on their birthday. The team get to know the person, including their likes, and then put the box together making sure this is person centred. This could include things such as a mug with their favourite animal on as they love drinking tea and have mentioned their love of this animal. Or even a personalised cushion of their pet! It also includes interesting facts in relation to the year the person was born, which can be used as a form of reminiscence or a conversation starter. Each year the team add to the box, re-stocking things like crosswords they have enjoyed or new pens, and this is then given with a personalised birthday card wishing them well on their day.

“  
Kerry was very understanding and listened to what we had to say, explained things in simple terms that we could understand.”

“  
Everybody is called by their first names and are treated as someone special. There is no talking down to the PLwD.”

“  
There are people here that like you, it is not a place where no one wants to talk, I feel you treat me like I am ‘Helen’.”

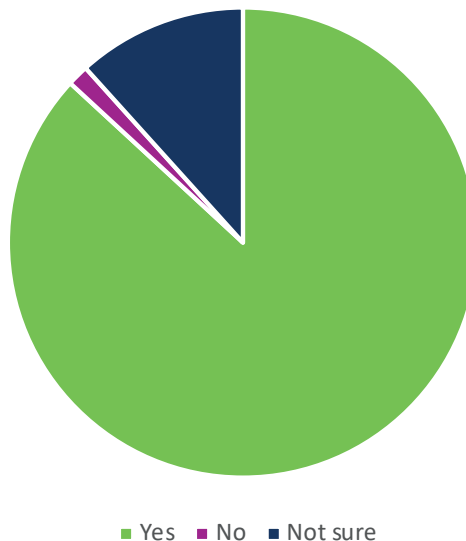
“  
I have a funny sense of humour, and everyone laughs. I never feel out of place.”

“  
Absolutely ADSS look at the grey areas. Match the person to the service not just push things on to them.”

## Do you feel you have been able to make your own choices when accessing our service/s?

87% of people that took part in the evaluation felt they had been able to make their own choices when accessing our service/s. Two people answered ‘no’ but went on to explain that as Carers their choices have been restricted due to factors beyond ADSS’s control. For example, one gentleman stated that his wife has refused to continue attending therefore he is not getting the respite he needs. Of those that said they were ‘not sure’, some went on to explain that either they’ve not accessed much yet or they’ve not needed to. One person recalled choices being restricted during the covid pandemic, in particular groups being invitation only, but we are happy to report that we now offer more groups than we did before the pandemic and therefore have more places available.

### Do you feel you have been able to make your own choices when accessing our service/s?



People really feel listened to which ensures they feel able to make their own choices. This applies across all our services, from making plans for the future with our Dementia Coordinator right through to choosing activities at The Beacon.



“  
**The two of them  
would then sit  
together at lunch;  
Terry making  
everyone laugh with  
his fun, infectious  
personality and  
confidence, and Bill  
laughing and rolling  
his eyes at Terry's  
antics!**”

Bill had been attending the Beacon day centre for a few months; Bill's dementia means that he struggles with communicating his thoughts verbally, and the team would always make sure that Bill was able to communicate his thoughts by spending time getting to know his personality and taking lots of advice and guidance from Bill's wife.

### **Bill and Terry's story...**

Bill also has very poor mobility and can need extra time and support to stand up from a chair and walk around.

Bill wasn't so keen on attending the Beacon at first; he wouldn't participate in any activities, but would sit back and watch others.

A few months after Bill started attending, another gentleman called Terry joined the group. Terry also struggled to articulate his thoughts, but this didn't stop either of them forming a friendship.

Terry made a beeline for Bill on his first day he sat next to Bill and shook his hand; Bill and Terry then spent the rest of the day chatting and laughing amongst themselves – and became a 'duo' from this moment onwards!

Terry would stay with the Support Worker while they were assisting Bill to transfer from his chair into the café for lunch and give Bill encouragement to get up and join him in the café, just like a friend would. The two of them would then sit together at lunch; Terry making everyone laugh with his fun, infectious personality and confidence, and Bill laughing and rolling his eyes at Terry's antics!

Terry loved to sing and dance – Bill never did – but once he saw Terry was up and having a boogie, Bill would want to join in too. Much to Bill's wife's amazement, we have video evidence of Bill having a dance!

Seeing their friendship blossom and Terry's influence on Bill has been so rewarding to witness, and just shows that even with a diagnosis of dementia, you can still have fun, laugh, be silly and practice new skills that even your wife never thought she'd see!





*I feel reassured that we are not the only people in this situation. My wife is in early stages of her journey with dementia but feel reassured that we will be able to access what we need if the time comes.* ””



*Having the same care worker is very important, we get on very well I look forward to seeing her.* ””



*It feels like a community made friends through the groups and been on holidays and outings with them.* ””

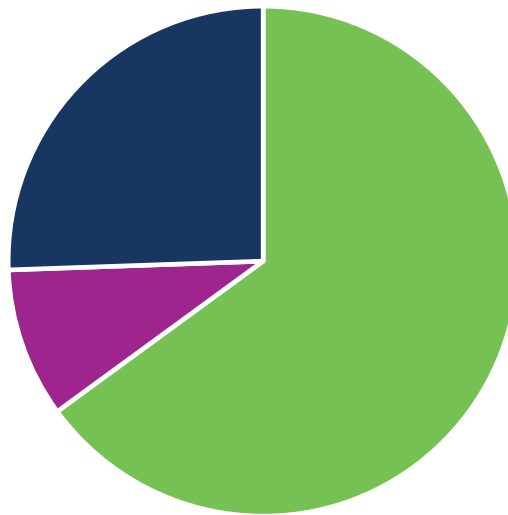


*I know faces and enjoying talking.* ””

## Do you feel like you are part of a community since accessing our services?

65% of people felt that they do feel like part of a community. Thirteen people answered 'no', further explanations included PLwD not wanting to engage in services therefore Carer feeling that they can't either; already felt part of a community and not accessing group services. People that were 'not sure' further explained that they did not feel the question was applicable to them; they hadn't attended any groups; or it's too early in their time with us to tell. One person did tell us about a time they tried a new group but, unfortunately, on that occasion did not feel they were made to feel welcome so did not go back. Whilst we are pleased that most people have not had this experience, we appreciate that we need to ensure that in future all people are made to feel welcome. We are developing our internal quality assurance methods and are confident that we will be able to ensure consistency across our services.

### Do you feel like you are part of a community since accessing our services?



■ Yes ■ No ■ Not sure



“  
**We went on a coach trip to Herne Bay, lunch included. I was nervous, I didn't know anyone and didn't know how Tom would cope. I needn't have worried. ADSS were very supportive and helpful, making sure we were alright and enjoying the day.**”

**Our wellbeing and care services help people to feel part of a community, people generally feel reassured, included, comfortable, and importantly, not alone in their situation. We again notice a theme of people making friends by using ADSS services.**

## **Tom and Pauline's story...**

*By Pauline*

My husband, Tom, was diagnosed with Lewy Body Dementia in October 2020. He had various warning signs for a while before that but resisted being tested. In September 2019 I left work to become his full-time Carer, as I realised he shouldn't be left alone for long, if at all.

From that time, until October 2022, Tom had undergone six operations (not related to Dementia). After one of these operations the hospital set up a care package for one week and they decided ADSS was the best company for us. Thank goodness they did. Tom really connected with Danielle. He was relaxed and chatted to her, opening up about his parents, etc., enjoying her company, having lots of laughs.

Following that Tom was given a place at The Beacon Day Centre. It really made a difference now I could do our shopping, meet friends, or just do things in the house and garden. Even better was the fact that Tom was being stimulated, meeting new people, in a different place and was safe.

We went on a coach trip to Herne Bay, lunch included. I was nervous, I didn't know anyone and didn't know how Tom would cope. I needn't have worried. ADSS were very supportive and helpful, making sure we were alright and enjoying the day. It felt like a holiday for me (first one in two years).

When we joined ADSS, I was a bit nervous of Tom going to The Beacon Day Centre, and us going to various groups and outings. It didn't take long for me to feel comfortable, and staff felt like friends. We know quite a lot of people now and everyone is so friendly. I feel much more confident. We are with people who understand.





*Emily gave me all the time we needed, probably more than we should have taken. I felt that Emily was patient and understanding.*



*ADSS could not have been more helpful, which is even more obvious now when I speak with other organisations and professionals who treat us more like just a patient.*



*Even when its busy the staff still find time to listen to you.*



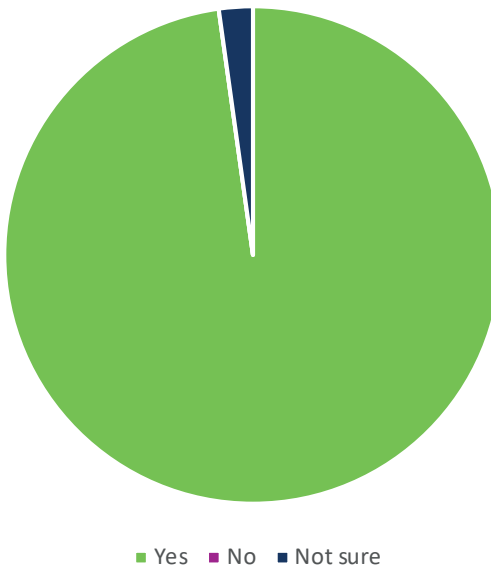
*The knowledge shared with me and talking and understanding how I feel has been invaluable.*

## Do you feel listened to by our staff?

98% of people taking part do feel listened to by our staff. Three people were 'not sure', one of whom went on to state that since diagnosis his wife has become very passive to others, only complaining to him afterwards. "Her only demand is tea, white no sugar. The tea lady at Safeharbour knew this and didn't even need to ask her, she just brought it."

People taking part further explained what we do to make them feel listened to, examples include being attentive, acknowledging what they've said, and knowing them and their circumstances.

### Do you feel listened to by our staff?



## Do you feel our staff have the right knowledge and understanding to support you?

95% of people felt our staff do have the right knowledge and understanding to support them. Seven people were 'not sure', one of whom explained that unless you have lived with a PLwD you do not really understand. Two others went on to state that they think we do; we seem to; and that they'd got support to get a wheelchair so we did understand what they needed. One person did later comment that they felt we could increase our knowledge of specific conditions, please see the 'Anything we could do better' section for our response.





*Carers learning course, clear information and the opportunity to talk and listen to others who are facing the same issues as me.*



*It's great to have information and support from a more practical route rather than medical.*



*They have never not been able to answer my questions.*

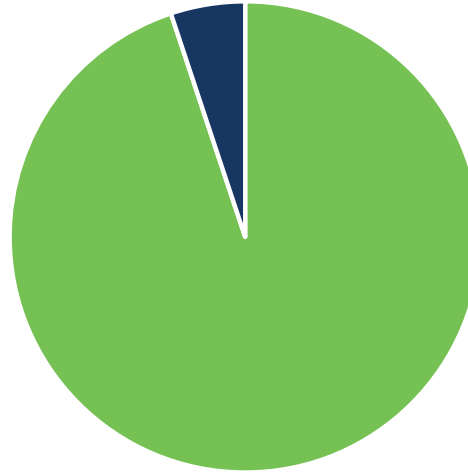


*She took the time to listen and chatted along with us. My wife has problems with her speech, but she did not feel under pressure at all with her there and was understanding that it may take more time than usual.*



*The staff listen to me, we have a laugh and they cheer me up.*

**Do you feel our staff have the right knowledge and understanding to support you?**



■ Yes ■ No ■ Not sure

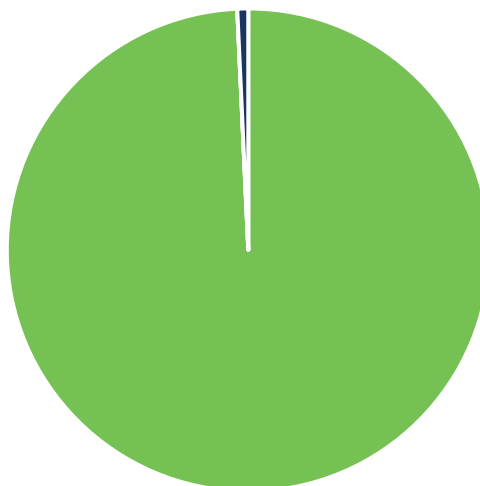
Additional discussion provided us with examples of how we demonstrate we have the right knowledge and understanding, such as our awareness of resources and understanding of dementia.

## Do you feel our staff are caring and compassionate?

Nearly **100%** of people feel our staff are caring and compassionate. One person was 'not sure' but went on to say that they feel looked after at the singing group.

There were so many examples of how we demonstrate care and compassion, making people feel that we have time for them was a standout example.

**Do you feel our staff are caring and compassionate?**



■ Yes ■ No ■ Not sure



*I was encouraged to go along to a group even though I was very anxious to go. Leanne has also spoke about future activities being arranged and encouraged me to join in with them.* ””



*To go on trips, to go singing, to go on bikes! My parents would not have done this before and wouldn't have tried this without encouragement.* ””

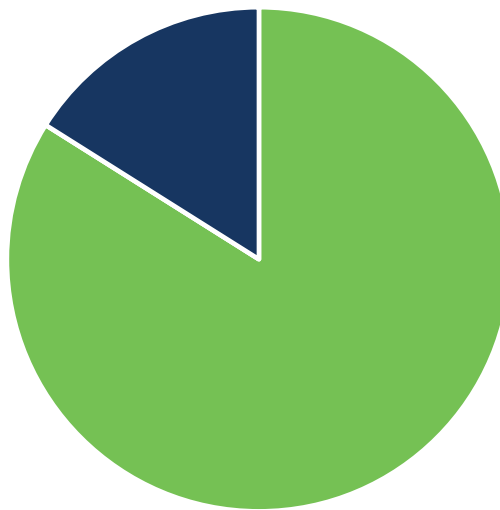


*The encouragement to take time for yourselves as Carers.* ””

## Do our staff encourage you to do the things you are able to do?

84% of people feel encouraged by our staff to do the things they are able to. 22 people were 'not sure', some people commented that it was too early to say, and others felt they did not need encouraging. One person explained that they have information about groups but currently have difficulty getting out of the house, however that may change once adjustments have been made.

Do our staff encourage you to do the things you are able to do?



■ Yes ■ No ■ Not sure





People feel that ADSS is key to them doing the things they want and need to do. There was a variety of examples of what we encourage people to do, from giving a new activity and try to speaking in public.

## Brenda's story

By Roger (Brenda's husband)

In July 2021, Brenda received a diagnosis of Dementia. Initially, she was in denial, attributing her symptoms to the natural aging process. However, over time, she came to recognize the gravity of the situation and adjusted her perspective. While understanding that the condition would not improve, she embraced the possibility of maintaining a good quality of life. We both realized the importance of taking a positive approach and engaging in suitable pastimes and activities to slow down the progression of the disease.

When Ross who is one of the Senior Dementia Coordinators at ADSS suggested that we attend a support group session at Temple Hill, Dartford, we had reservations about its suitability for us. However, we were pleasantly surprised to discover the benefits of interacting with others in more advanced stages of the condition. I attended the sessions with the intention of enduring them if it meant providing Brenda with a partial replacement for her lost activities. When singing back the memories sessions started in Dartford, we decided to give them a try, despite my initial concerns about my singing ability. As restrictions eased, we found ourselves attending an average of 3-4 sessions per week, including a Memory Café, Chairfit, Carers Support, Peer Groups, and various one-off events and outings.

The wide range of sessions and events not only caters to the diverse needs and capabilities of attendees but also provides a variety that encourages regular participation for individuals like us. The structured nature of the sessions helps those with Dementia feel at ease, and Brenda looks forward to the weekly schedule, always having at least one event to anticipate in the slightly longer term. Moreover, the friendships we have formed with fellow attendees have become invaluable, including a group of us visiting a café on the premises for lunch during one of the sessions. These connections contribute significantly to our overall quality of life.

“  
It's great to have information and support from a more practical route rather than medical.”

“  
They have never not been able to answer my questions.”

“  
She took the time to listen and chatted along with us. My wife has problems with her speech, but she did not feel under pressure at all with her there and was understanding that it may take more time than usual.”

“  
The staff listen to me, we have a laugh and they cheer me up.”



*Without Bryony on the end of the phone we would have been almost completely unsupported in looking after dad with very changeable and challenging dementia symptoms. ”*



*It's helped me cope with difficult situations caring for my loved one and I don't feel alone. I know if I'm not sure of something I can ask for help without being judged. ”*



*I get a lot of love since i have been coming to groups I can say and act the way I am. ”*



*It has changed our lives for the better. Given my husband stimulation, company and friends. I have gained new friends and 'me' time to shop do housework and meet old friends so we can both have a break. ”*

## What difference has accessing ADSS made to you?

This question generated a lot of positive feedback. Lots of people talked about it being good to know there is support when they need it; some made particular reference to the 3-monthly check in calls carried out by our Dementia Coordinators. One person highlighted that they now know they won't have to struggle when not able to get support from their GP surgery. Another person stated that they now feel more connected to services. Many people talked about knowing what other support is out there and feeling informed, understood, and reassured.

Many people talked about the value of being enabled to meet others in a similar situation, and others explained that the social opportunities we provide have reduced their loneliness and boredom and made them feel involved. Several people talked about how much happier they now are, that they have more fun, and how good it is to have something to look forward to. One person stated that they are more active now.

One Carer explained that as they have Support at Home, they can now be less hands on so have the time to do other things.

Two people stated that they hadn't noticed much of a difference; one explained further that they just now know about services available to them that they didn't know about before.

When discussing this further with those taking part, there were lots of different ways that we make a difference to people's lives. For some, it was feeling more supported and reassured, meaning that they could cope better with the challenges dementia can bring. Others talked about feeling comfortable and relaxed, and life just generally being better.



## 83 of the people taking part told us that our staff have gone above and beyond.

They further explained that our staff are cheerful, supportive, and make them feel comfortable and listened to. They are caring and encouraging. People talked about how our staff have advocated for them, are responsive and make things happen. One person showed their gratitude for always being informed about all the activities.

Angie is a great help to [PLwD].

Names I am no good with, they talk to us as equals and as human beings which makes [PLwD] feel a lot better about himself.

Been made to feel welcome from the beginning.

Staff in general do this on a regular basis including Tracey, Leanne & Lorraine. Ese happily printed something off after the Wednesday group.

Leanne, Maria and Chrissy really did a lot to make my mother more comfortable and less anxious. It gave her something to look forward to and kept her home longer, especially the befriending service.

Encouraging me to do things when [family] say I can't.

Kerry has answered our calls when feeling very low, arranged to come and see us the very next day bringing a smile and cakes. We felt much better after a lovely chat.

Carley helped [PLwD] to use his mobile phone, how to send an email to the office and showed [PLwD] how to do an online shop.

Ross - his name pops up all the time, a wonderful first point of contact to this community.

Rachel and Jacque are so good to us all. They are lovely ladies.

Not any one person, you are all great, you make me feel like I am me.

Kelly has provided lots of information and support...It's also great to have a friendly voice to speak to.

Danielle - home support, always happy and supportive ... Lynne - Fantastic help and support on discharge. Sorry I have not mentioned everyone, there are so many including the minibus drivers and day care staff.

## Some people asked us to respond to their comments.

One lady told us she is very happy with our services and would just like more aimed at Carers; we told her about the day trips and Saturday Carers group which she would like to try. Another lady told us she is happy with our service, the groups that we run have been a great support to her and her husband and she really enjoyed the trip to Herne Bay. A gentleman we followed up with explained he opted to be contacted to ensure he's kept up to date with activities and events, he is more than happy with all the support he receives.

YOU SAID...	OUR RESPONSE...
<b>We would like more days out.</b>	<p>In 2022 we facilitated two days out and three social events. In 2023 we have facilitated three days out and one social event and are planning a 2nd event for Christmas. We are so pleased to hear that people have enjoyed these activities and we aim to continue to facilitating days out and social events. Day trips take a lot of organising and are very costly, in September we took a record number of people, 72, to Herne Bay. Unfortunately, we do not currently have the capacity to facilitate more days out or events, but we will review this on a regular basis.</p>
<b>We would like more support for just the carer.</b>	<p>We currently offer 12 support groups across the area we serve, that welcome both the person living with dementia and their Carer, Carers are also welcome to attend on their own. We also offer a Carers Learning Programme that is aimed at providing information and support for Carers only. Although this is not a long-term programme, we encourage and have found that those that attend continue to meet up after the programme has finished to provide each other with peer support.</p> <p>In early 2023 we secured funding from Childwick Trust to fund our monthly Carers Support Group which offers not only a specific carers support group but also activities to entertain the person they are caring for in another room. This takes place once a month on a Saturday.</p> <p>Our Dementia Coordinators have undertaken a piece of work to ensure they help Carers as well as the person living with dementia, and we will soon be implementing our Carers checklist.</p> <p>If you are a Carer and feel in need of more support please contact one of our Dementia Coordinators. They will work out how we can help and they can put you in touch with your local dedicated Carers Support Organisation.</p>

YOU SAID...	OUR RESPONSE...
<p><b>We would like more visits in person.</b></p> <p><b>(Relates to DC)</b></p>	<p>Dementia Coordinators primarily visit people once initially to ascertain what support would be beneficial, they then stay in contact via phone and/or email but can visit again as circumstances change. This enables them to reach more people that need this vital support. However, there other services we offer that provide regular visits at home. Our Befrienders are volunteers that provide a regular social opportunity for people. Support at Home care workers also provide social contact but can take people out.</p>
<p><b>We would like for you to make sure everyone knows what is available/we would like a newsletter.</b></p> <p><b>(missed out on trips)</b></p>	<p>We are happy to let you know that you can now subscribe to receive regular email updates from ADSS. This will ensure you know about all the services we offer and the exciting upcoming trips and social events. Please just fill in your name and email on the form at the bottom of the home page of our website <a href="https://www.alz-dem.org/">https://www.alz-dem.org/</a></p>
<p><b>We would like more variety in activities in the groups.</b></p> <p><b>(less bingo)</b></p>	<p>We continually aspire to be service user led, particularly within our groups and choice of activities. However, we are aware that within groups settings some voices can be heard more than others and therefore activities can be repetitive. However, following this feedback we are reviewing how we plan and offer activities to ensure there is more variety. We have already started doing things, like mindfulness, in Dementia Cafes and we are seeking funding to set up further arts groups that will encourage self-expression through creative medium.</p>
<p><b>Increase staff knowledge about specific conditions</b></p>	<p>All our staff attend Dementia Awareness training as part of their induction, and we provide specific dementia training regarding communication, young onset, and rare dementias. We also encourage our team to share their knowledge and experience with each other. We recognise that knowledge of dementia and other health conditions is something that continually needs updating and during October we will be reviewing our staff training plan.</p>

**“ ADSS has been brilliant, mum has deteriorated so much, it has been good to have Bryony there, I get overwhelmed with appointments for my mum and Bryony has really helped reassure me, just by listening. You`ve just been brilliant. ”**



*When the diagnosis was established ADSS made a big difference as he thought that he would be made to go into care. As soon as PLWD got support from ADSS he was so happy.*



*You treat us like normal people.*



*The service has provided the social wellbeing for my mum. Having access to all the support and activities is really good. I don't know of any other services that are under one roof.*



*We are always shining.*

## Developments since last year's evaluation

**In last year's evaluation we responded to some specific requests for development. Here's what we have done as a result of this feedback.**

Whilst we adapted the support we provided throughout the covid pandemic, e.g. virtual support groups, welfare phone calls, postal activity packs, we were pleased to be able to resume face-to-face services. In fact, we are proud to report that our face-to-face services have grown, and we now provide more support than we did before the pandemic.

We have now grown the number and variety of support groups we offer, as well as reviewing the venues we use, and as a result have increased capacity for the number of people we can support. We have expanded the types of activities and events we offer so that there is something for everyone. Examples of activities that have taken place in the last year include trips to Deal, Dymchurch, and Rochester Christmas market, and parties to celebrate Christmas and the King's Coronation.

We have set up more shared email addresses, and we have also given more staff access to the info email inbox to ensure timely responses. We have asked all our team to ensure good practice by having an email out of office reply with alternate contact details for when they are away. Our Dementia Coordinators have direct contact numbers they can give to the people they support. Our new Dementia Coordinators have now become a clear point of contact for people living with and affected by dementia. They can be contacted via direct dial. Our new automated phone system helps people get to the right person and if in doubt people can always select to speak to someone who will help them find the right person.

We have increased our capacity at The Beacon and can therefore support more people each day. We try to facilitate attendance on people's preferred day of the week, but this isn't always possible. If you have been on the waiting list for a second day at The Beacon, we would urge you to consider choosing a different day to attend. In any case, as soon as a place becomes available, you will be notified. We have increased our capacity to support 18 individuals each day, Monday-Saturday. We cannot increase the capacity any further within The Beacon as the





**ADSS are a fantastic organisation and do incredible work in the community.**

**Our new Dementia Coordinators have now become a clear point of contact for people living with and affected by dementia**

room is simply too small. We plan, as part of our long-term strategy, to facilitate 'satellite' day centre services where the same level of support provided within The Beacon can be replicated in other areas within our catchment areas. People attending The Beacon can also access The Hub (previously known as the café) for lunch and quieter activities. We have received funding to go ahead with our plans for a garden area, accessed via The Beacon, to not only provide people with the opportunity for fresh air, pottering in the shed or tending to plants, but to also create another space for small group activities, which in turn will help reduce the amount of time all attendees are together in one room.

We continue to share a schedule for the week ahead every Monday on social media, and we are happy to report that we now also publish this on our website each week. The next stages of development on our website include being able to see and book activities and events further into the future.





*I would highly recommend ADSS to anyone who needs the service. I mean it from the bottom of my heart. ””*



*Thank you for the music. ””*



*Outstanding, amazing and brilliant with knowledge. ””*

## Conclusions

**Living with the symptoms of dementia is very challenging. It is a life limiting illness that slowly reduces a person's ability to take care of themselves, live independently, and take part in family and community life.**

People often feel written off and do not know where to turn. It is therefore very pleasing to see that in all questions we have exceeded 60% of people answering yes. In fact, seven of the eleven questions resulted in over 80% of people answering yes.

The question that resulted in the most people feeling unsure was whether they feel like they are part of a community since accessing our services. It was clear from the comments that this was a difficult question for people to answer if they have not accessed more than one of our services, in particular if the only service they accessed was the Dementia Coordinator. Those that answered yes felt that way because the services they access provide an opportunity to spend time with other people, for example support groups, Support at Home and The Beacon.

The question with the most people answering no was regarding loneliness, however many of those people further explained that they had not felt lonely in the first place. In addition, when asked about being able to access social activities, a few people answered no but also explained that it was due to circumstances beyond ADSS's control. The feedback we received tally's with national statistics which tell us that two out of three Carers are lonely compared to one out of three PLwD, evidencing that we need to do more for Carers.

Four questions resulted in nobody saying no; it was no surprise to us that these questions all relate directly to our staff. It is safe to say that our staff team are living and breathing our values. We believe in being person centred and focused on people's abilities and in being caring and compassionate in all we do. It is clear from the questions relating to these values that the vast majority of people we support feel that we always work this way. ADSS proudly lives our values day in, day out to deliver the best of care and support to those who need us. We have robust recruitment and training but, above all, we are all passionate about the work we do and helping people with dementia get the most out of their lives.

**ADSS is achieving its mission to give people the support and care they need to take control of their lives and manage their symptoms where they are able to use our services**

Overall, this year's evaluation has provided us with extremely positive feedback, however we are pleased to also have received some constructive feedback which we will use as part of our service development.

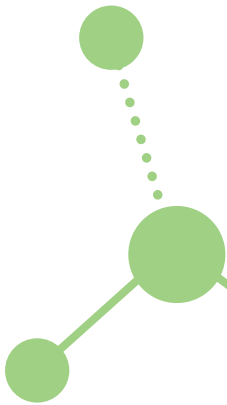
We can now confidently say that we are meeting the Key Performance Indicators set by Kent County Council. Most people accessing our services feel less lonely, live safely and independently, and feel part of a community. They have been provided with specialist information and advice, been able to make choices and, where required, have been able to access enjoyable social activities.

ADSS is achieving its mission to give people the support and care they need to take control of their lives and manage their symptoms where they are able to use our services. We know that we not only need to keep continuously improving but we also have to find a way of ensuring everyone who needs us gets the support they need.

## References


1. <https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/about-us/news-and-media/facts-media>
2. <https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/documents/s102567/Appendix%20-%20Improving%20Care%20for%20people%20living%20with%20Dementia%20Report%20-%20final%20report.pdf>






## Let's get social

To keep up to date with all our latest activities or if you would like to leave a review, please connect with us on social media!!

 **Alzheimer's and Dementia Support Services**

 **@alzdemsupport**

 **Alzheimer's and Dementia Support Services**

 **@alz\_dem**

Plus check out our website [www.alz-dem.org](http://www.alz-dem.org) for regular blogs relating to dementia and our work.

