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Stevenage Dementia Involvement Group

Care Homes and Activity Providers

February 2023



Introduction

Stevenage Dementia Involvement Group provides opportunities for people with experience of dementia to have influence on research and the planning of new services. In each session the group will discuss a particular topic relating to living with dementia or health and social care services in Stevenage.

Stevenage Dementia Involvement Group met face-to-face on 16th February 2023.

In attendance were four people with experience of living with or caring for somebody with dementia.

Attending the group were guests Lisa Irvine, Gizdem Akdur and Elspeth Mathie, researchers from the University of Hertfordshire.

The topic of discussion was **Care Homes and Activity Providers.**



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IMAGE | Members of the Stevenage Dementia Involvement Group on 16/2/23

What happened?

Elspeth, Lisa and Giz provided an outline of the CHAPPI project which aims to understand how care home activity providers and researchers can work with care home residents to enable them to get involved in research and have their voices heard.

The research aims to explore whether this could be a meaningful and positive activity for care home residents.





Question: What are your initial thoughts on activity providers in care homes?

The group were asked about their thoughts on the activity provider role in care homes, whether they recognised this term and are aware of the role.

The group said:

- "Activity co-ordinator" was the most recognised term
- A particular care home was mentioned where there are always activities going on for every holiday and occasion (e.g. theme days such as valentines day)
- Dedicated activities co-ordinator but all staff seem to get involved in this particular care home
- People felt that some people who enter a care home might be unable to participate in certain activities
- One care home had a brochure advertising lots of activities however in reality residents were packed around a TV as there were not enough staff to facilitate.



Question: What sort of activities in care homes are you aware of?

The group talked about examples of activities at Day Centres as well as care homes.

Examples of activities mentioned:

- **Craft activities:** colouring in, knitting
- "Magic table"
- **Cognitive activities:** quizzes, competitive games, dominoes
- **Physical activities:** throwing bean bags, hoops
- Family time and pets



Questions and advice?

The group were asked how they felt about activity time being spent talking about research? They were also asked if it is better to talk about research with activity providers or the researchers themselves (new faces)?

- Some people with more advanced dementia might find this activity difficult
- Sometimes people living with dementia have a different version of reality. Open questions can be difficult. Some people like to please the person asking the questions.
- Known person likely to be more in tune with the resident than researcher meeting them for the first time
- Important to involve the family too as carers have insight and support the resident.
- Familiar things are more reassuring and comfortable to people living with dementia. An example was given of a new flashy sensory room that isn't used by residents.

Next steps

This group provided the opportunity for people living with and affected by dementia to share their opinions and experiences about activity providers in care homes.

For the guest, the session enabled them to ask questions and listen to people's experiences at the very beginning of their research.

This summary report has been read and approved by the group members who attended.

This group is organised by researchers from the University of Hertfordshire as part of the National Institute of Health Research Applied Research Collaboration (ARC) East of England. For more information, or if you are interested in joining or visiting the group, please contact Nicole Jones (nicole.jones@cpft.nhs.uk) or visit our website <https://arc-ee.nihr.ac.uk/stevenage-dementia-involvement-group> (or use the QR code below)



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