

**Dementia Consultation with Yvonne Cairns (NHS Dementia and Delerium Lead), Lisa Wilson (NHS Falls Lead) and Jemma Gray (NHS Dementia Team Staff Member)**

**Held on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2026**

**at The Carers Centre, Falkirk**

## **Introduction**

The Session started with Yvonne, Lisa and Jemma introducing who they are and their roles and responsibilities.

Yvonne explained that this is the first time that they have delivered a session like this to Carers, usually this training is delivered to staff. Yvonne explained that she hoped that Carers today could provide honest feedback to see if this session is a good use of Carers time and if they feel that other Carers would benefit from attending such sessions. Yvonne went on to ask Carers at the session what they hoped to achieve from the day!

Carers commented that they hoped to feel/receive

- Excited
- Information
- Experiences
- Support
- Better Understanding
- Face to face sessions

Carers were split into 3 groups; there were 3 areas set up with different sensory experiences at each.

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# Meeting Minutes

Consultations for  
carers to share their  
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Lisa's space offered Carers the opportunity to wear weighted clothing that helped them to experience what it felt like to be in an older body.

Carers had to walk whilst wearing this equipment, holding on to a zimmer frame, they were then asked to sit down and also walk to collect a magazine. This experience helped Carers to recognise how hard simple tasks can be when you have an older body, as ankle stiffness, stiff joints, balance problems and loss of muscle mass are very common in older people, making everyday tasks harder to do! Lisa spoke about the importance of strengthening exercises.

Yvonne had a table set up with place settings, cups and crockery. Yvonne changed the colour of different items so that Carers could experience what people who are visually impaired might see or in many cases not see. Each Carer wore different specially made glasses that simulated a sight condition ie blindness in the left eye. Glasses of clear water were placed in front of Carers and plates were placed into Carer blind spots to help Carers recognise the need to be mindful of where and how items are presented to the person that they care for.

At Jemma's table, Carers had the opportunity to experience sensory overload, distractions such as noises and each Carer wearing glasses (similar to Yvonne's glasses) helped Carers to experience things from the perspective of the person that they care for. The Carers were asked to do things such as write down items from a spoken shopping list, this experience helped Carers to feel the frustration that can occur when you have a cognitive condition.

Whilst the sessions were taking place a staff member purposely came into the room and started to Hoover, this was to show Carers that everyday noises can be really distracting to someone with a cognitive condition.

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At the end of the session Yvonne asked Carers if the session delivered on the points that they hoped to achieve at the start of the session, all points were ticked. Carers in the room unanimously said that the session was great, they want more sessions like this and feel Carers would benefit from attending sessions like this one.

## Carers comments/feedback

### Yvonne's table

- I can't believe the difference with coloured plates and drinks; it made things so much clearer to see.
- Bamboo products are better as these are lighter to lift.
- Plastic plates that are coloured but not pattered as the patterns may look like food.
- Putting diluting juice into water, it's such a simple thing, but makes the liquid easy to see.
- The placemats make the plates easier to see, and the coasters, what a difference.
- I have a huge understanding now.
- If I read about this, it wouldn't be as good, I like to learn by doing.
- I use sweet potato's as they are easier to see.
- I never thought about the weight of the cups and jugs, I suppose they can be really heavy.
- If they can no longer use fork and knife, what do you suggest? Yvonne suggested plate guards, spoons, and finger foods.
- Yvonne commented that red is often the last colour to go, so red coloured plates can be a good option.

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- The person I care for could only see from one eye, I can understand a little how they feel.
- The patterns on the plate could be peas or corn, now I see why they keep scraping at the plate when there is no food left on it.
- Yvonne commented on the importance of thinking about the persons visual abilities when helping them to choose a seat at the dinner table, think about where you place cups and plates, can they see them.
- I ask the restaurant discreetly to cut up their food in the kitchen, that way when they get handed their plate they don't need to worry about cutting up the food.

## Jemma's table

- That noise distraction like the Hoover it really put me off.
- When the Hoover came in I thought, wow that is so annoying, it made me stop chatting as I couldn't concentrate.
- Simple things like writing my name, became too much with all the noise.
- The speed of people talking was really distracting.
- The glasses were an eye opener.
- I don't like the glasses its horrible.
- This is so hard to do, I feel like giving up.
- I never appreciated how off putting it is having lots of different things going on.
- I will make sure I put the tv off, so that they can focus on me.
- I never really thought about the different noises putting them off.
- This has really made me think.

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## Lisa's table

- Having the weights on my legs made it really hard to lift my feet, I can see why people shuffle.
- Anything on the floor is a danger, more risk of falling.
- With the weight on my neck all I could do was look up high.
- I am amazed at the amount of effort it takes to walk with all this weight on.
- I can see why they get tired so easily.
- I feel heavy even sitting on the seat.
- Made me think of trip hazards.
- I can see how they go to sit down and fall.
- I now have a better understanding of what it's like for them.
- The ankle weights are the worse.

## General comments

- Politicians don't see what we are going through, as really, we have a 24hr job.
- Social work only got involved when I was in crisis.
- We need to think about peoples lived experience, like their jobs in the past, I am used to working in a very busy, noisy, environment, therefore I am more able to cope with lots of distractions and noises, the person I care for worked in a quiet office, their noise tolerance will be much less than mine.
- The sessions have made me swap my thinking.

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- The person I care for stops when I say, “look at that”, the session has made me realise why they do this, it’s so they have one less thing to concentrate on doing, other Carers agreed with this comment.
- I am assessing places before we visit, thinking is the pavement even, might they slip on that.
- Lisa Wilson commented that sometimes 2 arms on a chair are better than chairs without arms, arms on chairs can be covered with a different colour so that they are more noticeable. A Carer commented that they bought bathmats in a darker colour and tucked these over the arms of a sofa.
- It must be so hard for people living with Dementia.
- This session has reassured me that I am doing the right things.
- We go to the Abbotsinch for lunch, and they have dark tables and white plates.
- Lisa Wilson commented that it’s important to make sure you have the right walking aid.
- Yvonne Cairns commented that discrete differences can help the person you care for continue to be independent and continue doing the things that they like to do, like eating out, placemats, plate guards and understanding of where to place food/drinks all help this.
- We redesigned our bathroom to help keep the person that I care for as independent for as long as possible, different coloured tiles and toilet seat.
- Yvonne Cairns commented that you can use your phone to take a photo of an area in black and white this can help you to see where colour changes may help, ie dark toilet seat on white pan.
- There needs to be more of these sessions.
- This is absolutely the right thing to do, it’s so difficult to care and this session gave me tips that I can use at home.

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- The more information we get, the better, it was wonderful today, please do more of these sessions.

Many thanks for coming to the session, I shall pass your feedback onto Yvonne, Lisa and Jemma, I will also speak to our training coordinators to let them know how useful you found the session 😊