falkirk & clackmannanshire carerscentre

Meeting Minutes

Consultations for carers to share their views with external organisations

FOR FALKIRK CARERS

Consultation with Emma Douglas Community Mental Health Team Lead (Older Adults)

Held on Thursday 23 July 2026

at The Carers Centre, Falkirk

There were 17 people in attendance including Carers, presenters and staff. Minutes were supported by Dana Horsburgh Carer Representative.

Quick recap

This meeting focused on discussing improvements to post-diagnostic support (PDS) resources for dementia patients and their Carers in Falkirk. Emma shared her ideas around a new information pack designed to replace the current brown envelope given to newly diagnosed patients, which includes personalized information about legal matters, resources, and support services. Participants discussed challenges, including inadequate support for Carers during the initial diagnosis period and difficulties accessing appropriate resources. The group explored ideas for making the process more supportive, improved communication with medical professionals, and the importance of specialized dementia clinics and outreach services. Several participants shared personal experiences about the challenges of caring for loved ones with dementia and highlighted the need for better coordination between different healthcare services and support organizations.

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Next steps

- Arrange for a professional from the Blue Badge department to come and speak at a future session.
- Keep attendees updated on the progress of the dementia-friendly cafes initiative and involve interested Carers in the working group. (please let Sharlene know if you too would like to be involved).

Emma emphasised the importance of people completing the Getting to know me form and updating this when needed, a Carer commented that staff within the hospital were reluctant to take their Getting to know me form, this led to a conversation around the work that Yvonne Cairns (Dementia and Delerium Lead) is doing with staff around the importance of patients completing this form and staff making time to read this. Many Carers commented that staff may be too busy to read this.

Link below for the Getting to know me form

Getting-to-know-me-form.pdf

Emma continued to discuss the information pack. This pack is a work in progress and Emma strives to co-produce this with Carers. Emma picked out key elements of the pack and discussed these with Carers in the room and online. The new packs will feature key information about legal aid, resources, and support services which will be presented in a more user-friendly format. Emma asked what was missing from the pack, Sharlene commented that perhaps a section for cultural and religious needs would be beneficial, some Carers in the room agreed that this would be useful. Many Carers in the room liked the idea of the pack and believed that it covered most things that would be important to know. Emma spoke about her hopes to have an electronic version too, for those who can access this online.

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Participants discussed challenges with current processes, including the need for better communication with medical professionals and the importance of identifying and supporting Carers early. John our Carer Representative discussed his hopes for creating dementia-friendly community spaces in collaboration with Katie Leckie from Dollar Park Dementia Services.

The discussion led to a conversation about dementia diagnosis. Emma mentioned that often people assume that dementia only effects people's memory, Emma explained that dementia impacts many aspects of people life, from vision to taste, socialising, independence and much more. Emma spoke about the initial diagnosis and how this impacts many people from partners to children to grandchildren. Emma emphasized the importance of people living with dementia still doing things that they enjoy and making plans, to ensure they stay as active and healthy for as long as possible. Emma explained that her team embrace the role of Carers, as they often can tell the team about the persons past, ie childhood trauma's, old work placements, fears and hobbies.

The conversation moved onto the reality that often people with dementia do not look like they have a health condition. Emma mentioned that often people with a dementia diagnosis have a "good social façade" meaning that although they have a dementia diagnosis the person masks this well and it's not until you enter a deep conversation you realise that the persons cognition/understanding is different, this is another reason why it is beneficial for Emma explained that this is another reason why it is good for his team to build good relations with Carers.

The discussion lead onto current accident and emergency waiting times and one Carer commented that they had to wait around 10 hours with the person that they care for, there was discussion around the benefits of volunteers helping in the emergency department, even to allow the Carer

time to visit the toilet or having someone to check in with them to see how they are.

Sharlene asked the room what they would wish for if there was a magic wand. A Carer suggested a green badge (a bit like the blue badge for people who have disabilities). This suggestion led to Carers discussion the blue badge process and Justine (Carers Centre Support Worker) explained that her team can support people to apply for the blue badge, Carers also commented that the application process can be difficult to navigate, Carers would like to chat with someone from this council department, Sharlene will reach out to them and keep you posted. Another Carer commented that they would like to wish the dementia diagnosis away. The conversation ended with Carers and Emma speaking about their wish that there could be a “Dementia Hub” where specialised workers could be based, so that Carers and the people they care for could have a “one stop shop” to specialist support, care and advise.

Carers comments and suggestions

- Carers would like someone from the Carers Centre’s Adult Carer Support team to come along and chat to them about the supports and services that they provide (Update Justine will chat with us in November an invite will follow closer to the time).
- Some Carers commented that the dementia pack is too much information at the one time, some Carers felt “overwhelmed” with the amount of information, where others liked that fact that they had everything and could “store it away to use at a later date”.
- Some Carers said that the pack would be better if it was “streamlined”, many Carers liked the idea of a booklet liked Emma showed on the day.

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- A Carer mentioned Dollar Park Dementia Services forms that are completed when someone starts using their service, this Carer highly praised this paperwork and discussed how they show all paid caring staff this pack so that they too know the preferences of the person who they will be providing care to.
- A Carer highlighted that they know the person that they care for best and professionals should be speaking with them too.
- A Carer mentioned that they first discovered the person they care for had dementia when the cared for person was admitted to hospital, this was a shock for the Carer and they did not get asked how they were, this Carer commented that it would be nice for someone within the hospital team to be available to chat with Carers when people are newly diagnosed in hospital (Emma said she would feed this back to the hospital team).
- A Carer suggested that everyone with a dementia diagnosis could have a bracelet so that if they get lost in the community people can identify them, some Carers liked this idea and others commented that perhaps there might be stigma attached to this or the person might refuse to wear this.
- A Carer spoke about the point of diagnosis and how emotional this is for both them and the person that they care for.
- A Carer spoke about the importance of continuity of staff for both the Carer and the Cared for person.