

Harrow Times – Focus on Dementia

Linda Matthews, Alzheimer's Society Services Manager

Last year, the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), which is responsible for planning and buying health services needed for people in Harrow, was forced to cut its services due to budget restraints. As a result, a wide range of dementia services are no longer available for local residents.

Before these cuts were made, Alzheimer's Society managed services which supported people living with dementia in Harrow for over 18 years. Today, the Society has no funded services in the borough, which means a limited level of support is available for people affected by dementia.

There are over 2,500 people living with dementia in Harrow and many more who are affected by the condition in some way. So it is vital we unite and take action now.

The Harrow Council website features some information on local support for people living with dementia, however for some people a website page cannot provide the same level of support as direct services and human contact. Often those who require our services the most cannot access the internet, so it is vital there are services which can support these people in other ways.

On a local level, Alzheimer's Society will always take telephone enquiries and give as much support as possible to improve the lives of people living with dementia in Harrow. However, it is becoming increasingly difficult to direct people who need support to specific services in Harrow.

In recent years, Alzheimer's Society has managed information stalls at Northwick Park Hospital, which strives to improve the care of patients living with dementia and their carers. However, once people are discharged there are fewer resources available to help them in their local areas.

A Dementia Action Alliance was formed in 2014 to encourage Harrow to be a dementia friendly community, however due to changes within the CCG and Harrow Council this important project has been delayed.

Alzheimer's Society funds research into the cause, care, cure and prevention of all types of dementia and has committed to spend at least £150 million on research over the next decade. This includes a £50 million investment in the UK's first dedicated Dementia Research Institute. As an Alzheimer's Society Service Manager, I would like to ignite the fire of hope for people with dementia in Harrow.

If you have experiences of dementia care in the Harrow community you would like to share, please let us know on www.facebook.com/AlzheimersSocietyLondon or www.twitter.com/AlzSocLondon