



## Redditch Borough Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**Scrutiny Task Group  
June 2020 to June 2021**

**Investigation into Dementia**

**REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

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## **Membership of the Task Group**

Councillors Michael Chalk (Chair), Joanne Beecham and Jenny Wheeler.  
John Fisher was also a member of the Task Group however stepped down as a local Councillor at the Local Elections held in May 2021.

## **Support Officers**

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Completed  
June 2021

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## **FOREWORD**

Faced with an aging population, Dementia is likely to become an increasing problem with more and more of us succumbing to this most incapacitating disease.

This Task and Finish Group worked hard to achieve a result in difficult circumstances for which I am extremely grateful, and I include the officers in this.

Our recommendations are straight forward and suggest more appreciation of the needs of our constituents. Only minor changes are needed to the present situation and the reinstatement and development of groups and gatherings that took place before the various Covid-19 lockdowns, should be activated.

It is understood that, as a Council, we do not have a direct impact on health issues, but we have a duty to do what we can to improve the overall wellbeing of the population.

Given that there will be an anticipated 1.6 million Dementia sufferers in the next few years, some of whom will be in Redditch, there is a need for these to be considered. We do need to be fully aware of the problem.



**Councilor Michael Chalk - Chair of the Dementia Task Group**

# **SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

## **Recommendation 1**

### **Promotion of Dementia Services**

**We recommend that officers work with local agencies including the Older People's Forum, Age UK to hold a Dementia Awareness Event in the Town Hall and promote the event on the Council's website.**

**Legal implications:** There would be no Legal implications

**Financial Implications:** Officer time and any costs incurred with setting up such an event at the Town Hall

## **Recommendation 2**

### **Promotion of Dementia Services**

**We recommend that officers undertake a refresh of the Older People Services Booklet which is currently available on the Redditch Borough Council website and include a specific section regarding Dementia Services available in the Borough**

**Legal implications:** There would be no Legal implications

**Financial Implications:** Officer time for the refresh of the Older People Services Booklet.

## **Recommendation 3**

### **Increasing Awareness**

**We recommend that Dementia Training be provided to all Elected Members in order for them to better understand the changing needs of the residents in the Borough.**

**Legal implications:** There would be no Legal implications

**Financial Implications:** There would be financial implications regarding the provision of training for Members.

# Introduction

During a meeting attended by the Leader of the Council, the Chief Executive and the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in 2019, several potential Task Group items were identified and presented for Members' consideration at a meeting of the Committee in June 2020.

Dementia diagnosis was one of the areas of interest identified by Members which would benefit from a Task Group investigation. At the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held in July 2020, Councillor Michael Chalk presented a Topic Proposal Scoping Document which set out proposals to look at Dementia in the Borough including existing support services available to those living with Dementia and their families. Based on the information contained in the document, Members agreed to launch the review and the first meeting was scheduled in early September 2020.

Members of the group were tasked with reviewing the following areas:

1. To analyse the current levels of residents living with Dementia and whether they are higher or lower than the national average in order to understand how prevalent the illness is within the Borough.
2. To clarify the different types of dementia that a person might develop and the different needs of those patients.
3. To consult with relevant Council Officers and partner organisations regarding the services available to residents living with Dementia in the Borough.
4. To assess the existing support services available for residents living with or in the process of being diagnosed with Dementia, and in particular the availability and accessibility of services and care home facilities.
5. To research steps taken by other councils in their Dementia support services.
6. To establish how Dementia services are communicated to residents.

It was considered that this investigation was linked to the Council's Strategic Purpose - 'Living independent, active & healthy lives'.

# Approach to Evidence Gathering

During the review, Members gathered evidence from a range of sources and information about Dementia in Redditch was obtained from the following:-

- An interview with the Redditch Partnership Manager from Redditch Borough Council in respect of Dementia services that were currently available in the Borough.
- An interview with the Service Manager from Age UK Herefordshire & Worcestershire to understand what Dementia Services were available in the Borough
- An interview with the Director of Services and the Living Well Team Leader/Veteran Wellbeing from Age UK Herefordshire & Worcestershire to understand what Dementia Services were available to Veterans living in the Borough.
- An interview with Councillor Julian Grubb, Armed Forces Champion.

In order to gather as much information as possible during meetings, witnesses were provided with questions prior to those meetings. This enabled the discussion to be focussed and witnesses were able to give as much detailed information as possible.

The questions included were as follows:-

1. What, if any, services and support did the Borough provide in respect of support for patients and their families?
2. What County-wide projects had previously been undertaken in respect of Dementia?
3. What are the different types of Dementia that effect residents?
4. What is the process for diagnosis?
5. How did Redditch compare with the rest of the country in respect of patient numbers and services?
6. What examples of good practice were available in terms of council services (ours and other Councils)?
7. What other scrutiny investigations had been previously undertaken by other Councils and what were the-outcomes?

It should be noted that one of the objectives included in the Scoping Document was for Members to gather information from a clinical source regarding the types of Dementia and the process involved in diagnosis. However, this proved difficult



to coordinate during the Covid-19 pandemic. Further information regarding this can be found in the 'Areas to Note' chapter of this report.

# Chapter 1 – Dementia Services in Redditch

## The Council

<b><u>Recommendation 1</u></b>
<b>Promotion of Dementia Services</b>
<b>We recommend that officers work with local agencies including the Older People’s Forum, Age UK to hold a Dementia Awareness Event in the Town Hall and promote the event on the Council’s website.</b>
<b>Legal implications:</b> There would be no Legal implications
<b>Financial Implications:</b> Officer time and any costs incurred with setting up such an event at the Town Hall

Members gathered evidence regarding what Council services were available within the Borough for those living with Dementia and discovered early into the investigation that Dementia Services were not a statutory function provided by the Council. However, it was confirmed that Dementia services were supported through the Council’s work within the community. These support services included Dial-a Ride, LifeLine and Sports Development Services.

The group noted that the Council had previously played a larger role in the support of Dementia Services including a campaign in raising awareness in the local community. In addition to this, it had previously been involved in the Redditch and Bromsgrove Action Alliance; a group who worked with local authorities, police, places of education, transport, MPs and candidates and businesses. However, the Council was not directly involved in the work of the Alliance at the current time.

It was explained to Members that Redditch Borough Council had also previously been involved in events such as the Older People’s Services Showcase held at the Town Hall in partnership with the Older People’s Forum in 2019. Members were advised that these events were well attended and provided an opportunity for residents to understand what services were available to older people living in the Borough.

During consideration of this part of the investigation Members were informed that the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic had inevitably prevented these kinds of

events from taking place and the event scheduled for 2020 had to be cancelled. Members recognised the impact the pandemic had made on large events such as these, particularly those that included the attendance of vulnerable groups such as older people.

Members discussed the importance of these kinds of events which provided invaluable information for older people living in the Borough. However, due to the ageing population it was felt that it would be appropriate to host an event that specifically involved raising awareness of Dementia.

In this context the group is proposing that officers work with local agencies including the Older People's Forum and Age UK to hold a Dementia Awareness Event in the Town Hall and promote the event on the Council's website. Members acknowledge that this may not be possible whilst the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic is still being experienced but that it was important to consider organising this event for the future.

<b><u>Recommendation 2</u></b>
<b>Promotion of Dementia Services</b>
<b>We recommend that officers undertake a refresh of the Older People Services Booklet which is currently available on the Redditch Borough Council website and include a specific section regarding Dementia Services available in the Borough</b>
<b>Legal implications:</b> There would be no Legal implications
<b>Financial Implications:</b> Officer time included in the refresh of the Older People's Services Booklet.

Members were informed during the investigation that Redditch Borough Council produced an Older People Services Booklet that provided information on services available to Older People in the Borough. The booklet had been due to be refreshed in March 2020 however, due to Covid-19 and the associated lockdowns some of the services included within the booklet had been suspended. It was thought that the refresh should be delayed until a clearer picture emerged in respect of the services still available. Members acknowledged that this delay was understandable. However, they were keen that when the refresh took place that a specific section on Dementia services should be included in the booklet to

provide information to those residents living with Dementia and their families and carers.

It is in this context the group is proposing recommendation 2.

### **Age UK**

During two in-depth interviews with Age UK, the services that they provided were discussed in detail and Members learnt that a large range of services were accessible for those living with Dementia, their families and carers. A 'Living Well' wrap around support service provided by Age UK was already in place for those who had been diagnosed with Dementia, and offered support for clients accessing services, funding, and carer support. Members noted that this support was provided initially for 12 months however follow-up support was available if necessary.

The main services provided by Age UK were as follows:

- Welfare calls and visits.
- Additional homecare assistance such as home maintenance and cleaning.
- Support in securing a council tax reduction and benefits.
- Links to social groups and local activities.

Members were encouraged to hear that the services were provided in a wide range of areas including how to access benefits for those who needed financial support post-diagnosis in addition to the provision of welfare services.

Age UK advised that their services were advertised locally in GP practices, local shops and religious centres in addition to national and local media advertising which helped to ensure far reaching communication. However, Members concluded that the further promotion of these services at a more local level was important, and that the Council could play a part in raising awareness in the future.

Further to the services outlined above, Members were informed during the interview with the Living Well Team Leader/Veteran Wellbeing from Age UK Herefordshire & Worcestershire that more specific and bespoke services were also available to veterans from Age UK Hereford and Worcestershire's Veterans Service. Although Dementia was not the only area that this service supported it was noted that it did provide respite care and financial support advice for veterans living with Dementia. This financial advice was considered vital as many of those diagnosed with Dementia were sometimes reluctant to access financial

support as they had never had to access this kind of support prior to their diagnosis. It was noted that, in addition to these services, sessions were currently being developed in order to help Veterans maintain cognitive stimulation.

It was during this detailed discussion that Members were informed of the role of the Armed Services Champion (AFC) in Redditch. In 2020/21 Councillor Julian Grubb was the champion for Redditch, and as part of his role he undertook work throughout the Borough on behalf of local veterans. Members were surprised that this role was not more prominent within the Council and were interested in understanding what the role entailed.

Further information was provided on this role and Members discovered that the AFC role was a positive focus for their local community and although working with Dementia service support was part of the role it was not the sole focus of the role.

Members were encouraged by the huge variety of services available through Age UK and were eager to help to promote the services to residents and it is within this context that both recommendations 1 and 2 are being proposed.

## Chapter 2 – Increasing Awareness

### Recommendation 3

#### Increasing Awareness

**We recommend that Dementia Training be provided to all Elected Members in order for them to better understand the changing needs of the residents in the Borough.**

**Legal implications:** There would be no Legal implications

**Financial Implications:** There would be Financial implications regarding the provision of training for Members.

The group were informed during the investigation that Dementia was underdiagnosed nationally and, according to the Public Health England Fingertips website, there was a poor rate of diagnosis in Redditch that fell below the national average. This confirmed to Members of the group that more needed to be done in order to promote awareness of Dementia, the symptoms and the potential risk factors. Although no witness from Public Health attended a meeting of the task group, this data had been confirmed at a meeting of the main Overview and Scrutiny Committee held in October 2020 when Dr Liz Altay attended and informed the Committee that the Dementia diagnosis rate had been falling in Redditch over the previous two or three years. At that time, it was noted that in Redditch the rate was 59% compared with the national average of 68.7%.

As part of the investigation, the group were provided with a Worcestershire Health and Wellbeing Board Dementia Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) that was undertaken in 2019 in respect of Dementia. During this area of investigation, it was discovered that there were several risk factors that could possibly contribute to the causes of dementia. These risk factors included age, education, diet and amount of exercise and activity. Included in this JSNA were the following aspirations for the people in Worcestershire:

- The knowledge, opportunities and skills to reduce their risk of dementia
- Be diagnosed earlier if they develop dementia
- Access and knowledge of the correct services to support them and their carers to live well in their communities

- Be helped to plan for their future, and supported with the correct services for end-of-life care

Members of the task group felt that it was increasingly important for them to understand the needs of their residents in respect of Dementia given the low diagnosis rates and evidence regarding risk factors and causes.

At present there is no training provided to Members in respect of Dementia or other areas of health. The group agreed that further information about health and local demographics might be useful, especially those who are newly elected, to help them appreciate the challenges facing their communities/wards.

It is within this context that Members are proposing recommendation 3. It is noted that this recommendation would need to be referred to the Member Support Steering Group which determines the Members Induction Training Programme.

In addition to recommendation 3 Members agreed that both recommendations 1 and 2 would help raise awareness of the impact on Dementia on residents in the Borough.

## Chapter 3 - Areas to Note

Although not an area that Members were originally investigating, during the course of the review it became increasingly apparent that the Covid-19 pandemic had impacted greatly on Dementia services and diagnoses of Dementia. As a result of this the group thought it would be useful to revisit the Task Group's findings in 12 months to fully understand the impact of the pandemic on Dementia patients and services.

Members understood that difficulties had been experienced in securing the attendance of some witnesses due to the pressures the Covid-19 pandemic. This was particularly apparent when trying to gain a better understanding of the different types of Dementia. Members suggested that both this and the impact of the pandemic, as outlined above, could be addressed in the future, perhaps by inviting a clinician to a future meeting of the main Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

An additional area that was identified as part of the investigation was that there was currently no Public Health Practitioner (Dementia) working with Redditch Borough Council. The last practitioner had left the post and had not been replaced. It was hoped that a replacement would be made in the future.



# Conclusion

The Investigation into Dementia Task Group has taken longer than anticipated. This was partly due to the availability of witnesses and officers. Nonetheless the information that was gathered as part of the investigation proved useful in highlighting the wide range of Dementia Services available in the Borough.

Members discovered that there were many services available to residents that they could access post-Dementia diagnosis which they felt was encouraging. However, they were keen to increase awareness of these services, risk factors and the symptoms of Dementia for the benefit of residents.

It was apparent during the investigation that Covid-19 had greatly impacted on many Dementia services provided to vulnerable residents. The majority of face-to-face sessions had been suspended in order to keep residents safe throughout this time. The Group concluded that this kind of loss of provision could result in residents who relied on these kinds of services becoming more isolated and therefore it was even more important to promote Dementia services once they resumed.

The group's recommendations have been informed by the evidence that they gathered during the review. Members urge the Executive Committee to approve their recommendations.

## APPENDIX 1

### Scrutiny Proposal Form

## Scrutiny Proposal Form

(This form should be completed by sponsoring Member(s), Officers and / or members of the public when proposing an item for Scrutiny).

**Note:** The matters detailed below have not yet received any detailed consideration. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee reserves the right to reject suggestions for scrutiny that fall outside the Borough Council's remit.

Proposer's name and designation	Cllr Michael Chalk	Date of referral	17/06/2020
Proposed topic title	Dementia Task Group		
Link to local priorities including the strategic purposes	Living independent, active & healthy lives		
Background to the issue	<p>With an ageing population and advances in medicine we are all living longer. Numbers of dementia patients in the UK as a whole are reportedly rising. I am interested in finding out what impact this is having, in terms of the number of Dementia patients living in the Borough.</p> <p>It would be interesting to find out what services are available in the community and the care home availability for those who are living with Dementia.</p> <p>Are there causes of Dementia? Does lifestyle have an impact in diagnosis? These would all be areas of interest.</p>		
Key Objectives Please keep to SMART objectives (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timely)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. To analyse the current levels of residents living with Dementia and whether they are higher or lower than the national average in order understand how prevalent the illness is within the Borough.</li><li>2. To clarify the different types of dementia that a</li></ol>		

	<p>person might develop and the different needs of those patients.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. To consult with relevant Council Officers and partner organisations about services available to residents living with Dementia in the Borough.</li> <li>4. To assess the existing support services available for residents living with or in the process of being diagnosed with Dementia, and in particular the availability and accessibility of services and care home facilities.</li> <li>5. To research steps taken by other councils in their Dementia support services.</li> <li>6. To establish how Dementia services are communicated to residents.</li> <li>7. To determine whether any action can be taken to improve services available to residents with dementia living in Redditch.</li> </ol>
<p>How long do you think is needed to complete this exercise? (Where possible please estimate the number of weeks, months and meetings required)</p>	<p>Estimated time for this task group is 3 to 4 meetings over a 6 month period starting from the end of September 2020.</p>

**Please return this form to: Jess Bayley or Jo Gresham, Democratic Services Officers, Redditch Borough Council, Town Hall, Walter Stranz Square, Redditch, B98 8AH**  
**Email: [jess.bayley@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk](mailto:jess.bayley@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk)**  
**[joanne.gresham@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk](mailto:joanne.gresham@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk)**

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **Acknowledgements**

The group would like to thank the following people for providing evidence during the course of their review:

Helen Broughton, Redditch Partnership Manager

Sonya Murray – Service Manager – Age UK Hereford and Worcestershire

Jude Henderson – Service Director - Age UK Hereford and Worcestershire

Gemma Warden – Living Well Team Leader/ Veteran Wellbeing

Councillor Julian Grubb – Armed Forces Champion, Redditch

## **APPENDIX 3**

### **Papers**

[https://www.redditchbc.gov.uk/media/4435991/OlderPeopleBooklet\\_RevisedSummer19.pdf](https://www.redditchbc.gov.uk/media/4435991/OlderPeopleBooklet_RevisedSummer19.pdf)

Worcestershire Health and Well-being Board Dementia Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)

Local Government Association and Dementia Action Alliance - Dementia Support Guide for Councils

## **APPENDIX 4**

### **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were made during the course of the Task Group meetings.

## **APPENDIX 5**

### **Timeline of Activities**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Task Group Activity</b>
14/09/2020	Scoping meeting.
15/10/2020	Interview with Helen Broughton, Redditch Partnership Manager.
17/11/2020	Planned meeting was cancelled as no clinician was available to speak to the group.
2/12/2020	Interview with Service Manager, Age UK.
25/03/2021	Interview with Director of Services and Living Well Team Leader/Veteran Wellbeing from Age UK Hereford and Worcestershire
13/04/2021	Interview with Redditch Armed Forces Champion, Councillor Julian Grubb and recommendation discussion