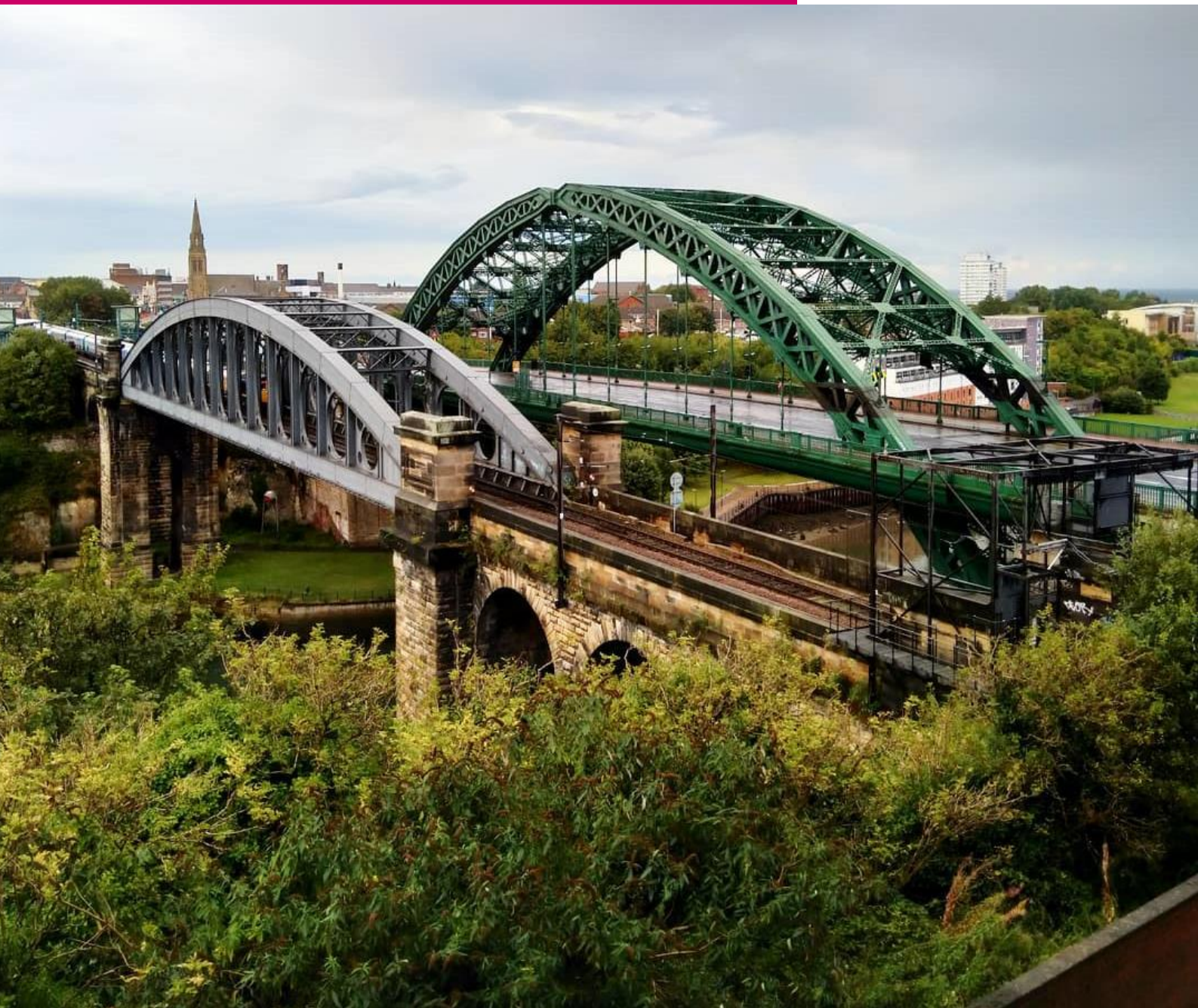


Getting out and about

Support available for people experiencing memory difficulties or dementia in Sunderland

Issue 1 – Published April 2025



The information in this booklet has been taken from 'Support available for people experiencing memory difficulties or dementia in Sunderland' which has information on a range of subjects which you may also find useful.

Find the full document at: www.healthwatchsunderland.com

Scan for the
latest edition
of this booklet



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The information in this booklet is a section that has been taken from the full booklet titled, 'Support available for people experiencing memory difficulties or dementia in Sunderland'. The full booklet has information on a range of subjects which you may also find useful.

Healthwatch Sunderland regularly updates these booklets. The copy you have may not be the latest version. For the most current copies of all the associated booklets, please visit: www.healthwatchsunderland.com or call us on 0191 514 7145.

If you have information to add or notice anything outdated in the booklets, please contact us and these will be considered.

About Healthwatch Sunderland

Healthwatch Sunderland is your local health and social care champion.

We make sure NHS leaders and social care decision makers hear your voice and use your feedback to improve care. We can also help you to find reliable and trustworthy information and advice.

It is our vision to live in a world where we can all get the health and care we need.

It is our mission to make sure people's experiences help make health and care better.

Our values are to:

- **Listen** to people and making sure their voices are heard.
- **Include** everyone in the conversation – especially those who don't always have their voice heard.
- **Analyse** different people's experiences to learn how to improve care.
- **Act** on feedback and driving change.
- **Partner** with care providers, Government, and the voluntary sector – serving as the public's independent advocate.

Why we did this work

During our engagement with the Essence Service, which supports people in the early stages of dementia and their carers, we heard from local carers about some of their experiences. They expressed concerns about the lack of information available on local support services following their family members' diagnoses. Many felt unsure about where to go for help and were not aware of the available resources. This feedback was also recognised by the Essence Service during their feedback sessions held in Dementia Action Week 2023.

In response to this need, we collaborated with the Essence Service, carers and other local partners to create a booklet named 'Support available for people experiencing memory difficulties or dementia in Sunderland'. This document offers key support information on a range of subjects. This may be useful for people experiencing memory difficulties and those living with dementia. The information in this booklet, 'Getting out and about', has been taken from the full booklet.

Please be aware that some of the services mentioned, are only available to people with a dementia diagnosis.

Getting out and about



Driving with dementia

If a person has certain medical conditions, including dementia and has a driving license, they **must** inform the Driving and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA).

Informing the DVLA doesn't mean that they will lose the license. It is to make sure people are keeping themselves and others safe on the roads. Also, anyone age 70 and over must renew their license.

Visit: www.gov.uk (search 'dementia and driving' to complete a CGI form).
Or call: 0300 790 6806

Blue badge scheme

This is a badge that can be displayed on the dashboard of a vehicle. It allows people to park in designated disabled parking bays. It is for those who are living with mobility restrictions where simple trips, such as visiting the doctors or local shops can prove to be a real challenge and stressful process. Having a blue badge can enable people to live more independently, enjoy greater freedom and ultimately, live the life they want.

To see the criteria and apply visit: www.sunderland.gov.uk (search 'blue badge scheme').

Call: 0191 520 5552

If you need support to access the blue badge scheme, Age UK's dementia hub, Essence Service can offer personalised support. Call them on 0191 522 1310.

Northeast drive mobility

Offer information, advice and assessments for people who have a medical condition, such as dementia.

For more information visit: www.cntw.nhs.uk and search Northeast Drive Mobility

Call: 0191 287 5090

Email: northeast.drivemobility@ntw.nhs.uk

Mobility care solutions limited

This service has many aids to help manage everyday activities more independently. They can also assist if vehicle adaptations are needed for independent travel. Their staff are based in Southwick Industrial Estate. They can help you find the right products and equipment to suit a person's individual needs.

Call: 0191 548 7747

Email: enquiries@mobilitycaresolutions.com

Website: www.mobilitysunderland.co.uk

Getting out and about



Dial a driver scheme

Age UK Sunderland provide a scheme which is available for older people 60 years old and over who find it difficult to use public transport to get to important appointments.

The scheme uses volunteer drivers who use their own cars for transport. You will be required to reimburse the fuel costs/vehicle "wear & tear" for the volunteer up to the sum of 50p per mile from the point the volunteer driver leaves their own home to their return. They will always try to get a driver who lives as close as possible to you (or your destination) to minimise costs.

The volunteer driver (all will have an up-to-date Disclosure and Barring check) will support you from the car to your appointment. They will usually be able to wait for short hospital/doctor appointments etc. When an appointment lasts longer than 45 minutes it may be necessary to book a separate return trip.

Bookings are made through Age UK Sunderland by giving them a call or sending an email. When the call can't be answered there is a voicemail facility to leave details and the call will be returned as soon as possible.

Call: 0191 514 8339

Email: dialadriver@ageuksunderland.org.uk

Website: www.ageuk.org.uk/sunderland (search 'dial a driver').



Patient transport

North East Ambulance Service provides a safe and reliable non-emergency transport service for patients who need medical or clinical support. This helps people to get to and from their appointments.

If you have a medical condition that prevents you from travelling to a treatment centre by any other means, or you require the skills of an ambulance care assistant during the journey, the Patient Transport Service can help.

If you are eligible for patient transport, your booking will be made either by your GP, hospital staff or you can call them yourself.

Call: 0191 215 1515. This line is open from Monday to Friday, 8am–6pm.

Read more by visiting www.neas.nhs.uk (search 'patient transport service').

Getting out and about



Wheelchair services

Sunderland's Wheelchair Assessment team provide advice and support for people who wish to buy their own wheelchair or be provided with one through the scheme funded by the NHS.

The team aims to find equipment that provides mobility, comfort, safety and most importantly, independence.

Call: 0191 520 5552

Website: www.sunderland.gov.uk (search 'wheelchair services').

Wheelchair maintenance and repair

If your wheelchair is broken and has been provided by Sunderland Wheelchair Services, contact Ross Care:

Call: 0191 4155151

Or email: www.northeast@rosscare.co.uk

Hiring a wheelchair

The British Red Cross provides wheelchair hire services across the UK. There is a cost for this provision.

They offer comfortable, safe, and reliable manual wheelchairs whether you're looking for self-propelled or transit wheelchairs.

Find out more information about the types of wheelchairs they offer and see how they may be able to support you to meet the financial costs too.

Call: 0300 456 1914

Website: www.redcross.org.uk (search 'hire a wheelchair').

Top Tip

Many local supermarkets and shopping centres have wheelchairs available to use while you are on their premises. It could be worth giving them a call to check before you make your journey.

Getting out and about



Radar accessible toilets in Sunderland

A RADAR key is a key that opens more than 10,000 disabled toilets across the UK. There are several locked accessible toilets in Sunderland. These can be accessed using a RADAR key. Please note that access will be limited to the venues opening hours.

In Sunderland

- The Harbour View, Roker seafront, SR6 0NU
- Lower Promenade, Roker seafront, SR6 0PL
- Park Lane interchange, SR1 3PE (daytime only)
- Southwick Green, SR5 2HY
- Revolution, Low Road, SR1 3QA
- William Jameson, Fawcett Street, SR1 1RH
- Yate's bar, Burdon Road, SR1 1QB
- Gala bingo, Pallion New Road, SR4 6UA
- Stadium of Light, SR5 1SU
- South Bents, SR6 8BB.

In Washington

- Concord Centre, bus station, Victoria Road.
- Sir William de Wessington, NE37 2SY (Wetherspoons)
- Gala Bingo, The Galleries, NE38 7SB.

In Hetton

- Easington Lane High Street, DH5 0JN
- Town centre car park, Front Street, DH5 9LZ.



RADAR keys can be purchased from Age UK Sunderland at the Bradbury Centre.

Call: 0191514 1131

Email: enquiries@ageuksunderland.org.uk

Or at their dementia hub, the Essence Service.

Call: 0191 522 1310

Email: essenceservice@ageuksunderland.org.uk

Keeping track of your loved one

If a person is prone to wandering, you may want to consider using a device such as an Apple AirTag, or an android alternative and link it to an Application (app) on your mobile phone.

This is a super-easy way to keep track of the person.

Attach one to their keys or ask them to pop one in their coat pocket to keep them on your radar.



Getting out and about



Changing places

Changing places are toilets which are designed for people who require extra facilities that are not offered by standard accessible toilets. They are bigger with room for one or two carers. They include equipment which may be needed, such as a hoist, privacy screens and an adult-sized changing bench. Sunderland changing places are situated in:

- Barnes Park, SR4 7PE
- Beacon Of Light, SR5 1SN
- Herrington Country Park, DH4 4NF
- Hetton Community Pool and Wellness Centre, DH5 9LZ
- Houghton Sports and Wellness Centre, DH4 5AH
- Leechmere Centre, SR2 9TQ
- Marine Walk, SR6 0PR
- Monkwearmouth Hospital (Main reception), SR5 1NB
- Raich Carter, SR2 8PD
- Roker Park, SR6 9PF
- Seaburn Shelter, SR6 8AA
- Silksworth Community Pool Tennis and Wellness Centre, SR3 1PD
- Sunderland Aquatic Centre, SR6 0DB
- Sunderland Royal Hospital, SR4 7TP (ask at main reception off Kayll Road)
- The South Hylton Tansy Centre, SR4 0QD
- Washington Library and Customer Service Centre, NE38 7RZ.

For more information about Changing Places and to find more go to:
www.changing-places.org



**Age UK Sunderland's Trishaw
is a way of transporting
older people
who enjoy the wind in
their hair.**

Our rides are **comfortable, fun and free**. They enable older people to explore Sunderland's amazing sights close-up.

For more information about Age UK Sunderland's Trishaw rides contact Age UK Sunderland at: frontdooradmin@ageuksunderland.org.uk or call our Community Club Coordinator on: 0191 514 8338

Getting out and about

'Wandering' (can be known as 'walking with a purpose')

Walking is good exercise and can help relieve stress and boredom. However, a person with dementia may walk repeatedly around at home or leave the house during the day or night.

When a person with dementia walks about, it is often referred to as 'dementia wandering'.

Walking may become a problem, especially if the person has difficulties with memory or can't find their way home. A change in walking habits can also be a sign that a person has a need that is not being met.

It can be difficult to understand why the person you are caring for is walking about. By exploring the reasons, you can support them with their needs and help them to remain independent and safe.

The reasons why a person with dementia might want to walk about may not be obvious. If you ask the person, they may not remember the reason or they may not be able to tell you.

As the person's carer, friend or relative, you are likely to know them best. Trust your instincts and try to use your knowledge of the person to understand why they are walking. This may help you find ways to support them.

If you are worried or have any questions about wandering contact the Alzheimer's Society:

Call their dementia support line: 0333 150 3456

Website: www.alzheimers.org.uk (search 'wandering').



The Herbert Protocol for if a person goes missing

If you care for someone with dementia, you can fill out a Herbert Protocol form which includes details about the person, their past, their habits and places they go.

Keep the form in a safe place, then if the person goes missing you can call 999, tell the police operator that they have a Herbert Protocol and give the completed form to the police. This saves time at the start of a search.

Find out more and access the form by visiting:

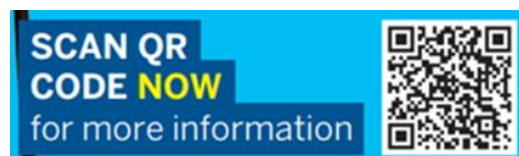
www.northumbria.police.uk (search 'vulnerable people at risk of going missing').

Local dementia support service, Age UK Sunderland's Essence Service can supply you with a form to complete yourself or can offer support to complete it if necessary.

Call: 0191 522 1310

Safe and Found online

You can now fill in a Herbert Protocol form online. This gives police quicker access to the information.



Getting out and about

The importance of appropriate footwear

People experiencing dementia often face several footwear-related challenges due to their cognitive and physical limitations.

These challenges may include:

1. Difficulty with laces
2. Increased risk of falls
3. Sensory changes.

The importance of comfort, safety, and ease of use cannot be overstated for shoes for dementia patients. Here are some things to consider:

Comfort – Dementia patients spend significant time on their feet, so choosing shoes that provide cushioning, adequate arch support, and a comfortable fit is crucial. This can help minimize discomfort and foot pain.

Safety – Shoes with non-slip soles and good traction are essential to reduce the risk of slips, trips, and falls. Look for footwear with slip-resistant features that provide stability and grip on various surfaces.

Ease of use – Opt for shoes with easy closure systems, such as velcro straps or hook-and-loop closures. These alternatives to traditional laces make it easier for dementia patients to put on and remove their shoes independently.

Proper fit – Shoes should fit well to prevent blisters, pressure sores, or rubbing against the feet. Ensure the shoes are neither too tight nor too loose, as either can cause discomfort and foot problems.

By prioritizing comfort, safety, and ease of use in shoes for dementia patients, you can enhance mobility, reduce the risk of falls, and promote overall well-being.

Information about Sunderland's Falls Service can be found in the Physical Health section of this booklet.

Buy easy dress clothing and shoes

The Alzheimer's Society work with suppliers to offer a wide range of easy dress clothing and footwear for men and women, including shirts, blouses, trousers, skirts, underwear and nightwear and trainers.

Call: 0333 366 0035

Website: www.shop.alzheimers.org.uk (search 'clothing and footwear').



Top tip from a local carer

Slippers designed for diabetics are particularly useful, as they have velcro fastenings to both the top and the heel, which make them a secure fit and easy to put on and remove.

Thank you to our partners

This work would not have been possible without the support from our partners and local carers with lived experience of living and supporting a loved one with a dementia diagnosis. Thank you on behalf of all at Healthwatch Sunderland for your time, your passion and your commitment to producing this booklet. It is hoped it will support and improve the lives of people experiencing memory difficulties, dementia and their carers across the City of Sunderland.

Thank you to:

Local carers





Website: healthwatchsunderland.com

Call: 0191 5147145

Email: healthwatchsunderland@pcp.uk.net

 **@HWSunderland**

 **Facebook.com/HWSunderland**

 **Instagram.com/healthwatchsunderland**