

Memory Protection Service

healthwatch
Sunderland

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

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If you have information to add or notice anything outdated in the booklets, please contact us and these will be considered.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

The Memory Protection Service

If a person is experiencing memory difficulties, they can refer themselves or their GP may refer them to the Memory Protection Service for an assessment.

Once the service receives your referral, they will send patients a letter. This will inform them how long they are likely to wait for their first appointment. Patients will also receive a pack containing useful information and tips on how to protect their memory while they are waiting.

Before a diagnosis

The first appointment with the Memory Protection Service will be for an initial assessment. The current waiting times for this is 12 weeks (as of February 2025).

Patients will be given information, which includes contacts for local services, who can offer practical support.

Following the initial assessment, findings will determine what plan of care will be required.

Patients may be requested to attend for testing, which may include a head scan. They may receive appointments with other professionals. If the person is not found to have a dementia diagnosis, they will be discharged from the Memory Protection Service and signposted to the most appropriate service.

What is mild cognitive impairment?

Mild cognitive impairment can cause noticeable but mild memory and thinking difficulties. A mild cognitive impairment is not a dementia diagnosis. People with mild cognitive impairment can function and perform tasks without any difficulties.

A mild cognitive impairment can affect some memory, problem solving, attention, thinking and some visual ability. These can vary depending on what cognitive area of the brain is affected.

What happens if mild cognitive impairment is diagnosed?

If mild cognitive impairment is diagnosed the patient will be discharged from the Memory Protection Service. However, they can be re-referred if there is a deterioration or further concerns noted.

Please turn to the next page for more information and contact details for the Memory Protection Service.

The Memory Protection Service – continued

What happens if a diagnosis of dementia is received?

If you receive a dementia diagnosis from the Memory Protection Service, you will be given an information pack which includes;

- Information about the dementia diagnosed.
- Booklets about dementia and caring for people with dementia .
- Contact details for local support organisations.
- Details of their education groups, which share information on dementia and local support.

Patients with a mild to moderate diagnosis will be invited to attend Cognitive Stimulation Therapy groups. These are ran by the mental health trust, Cumbria Northumberland Tyne and Wear Foundation Trust. These help patients to keep their mind active and engaged. It uses a range of activities which enhance cognitive and social functioning.

If you have any questions or want to make a referral, please contact the Memory Protection Service:

Call: 0191 566 5422

Website: www.cntw.nhs.uk (search 'Memory Protection Service')

For information about promoting good brain health

Website: www.brainhealth.scot

The Alzheimer's Society provides lots of information about memory difficulties as well as advice and support:

Call: 0333 150 3456

Website: www.alzhiemers.org.uk

The National Institute of Health and Care Research

This network delivers research across 30 medical specialties, including dementia and is part of the NHS.



Their research aims to enhance the treatments, diagnosis, care or management in the future. They hold a list of names of volunteers interested in research. If there is a suitable study, those on the list may be contacted to see if they are interested in being involved.

They also have a separate Carers Register to facilitate recruitment into carer research. This research may involve gaining the views of those who currently or have previously supported people with the above conditions.

Call: 0191 246 7388 (and leave a message)

Email: dendron@cntw.nhs.uk

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

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