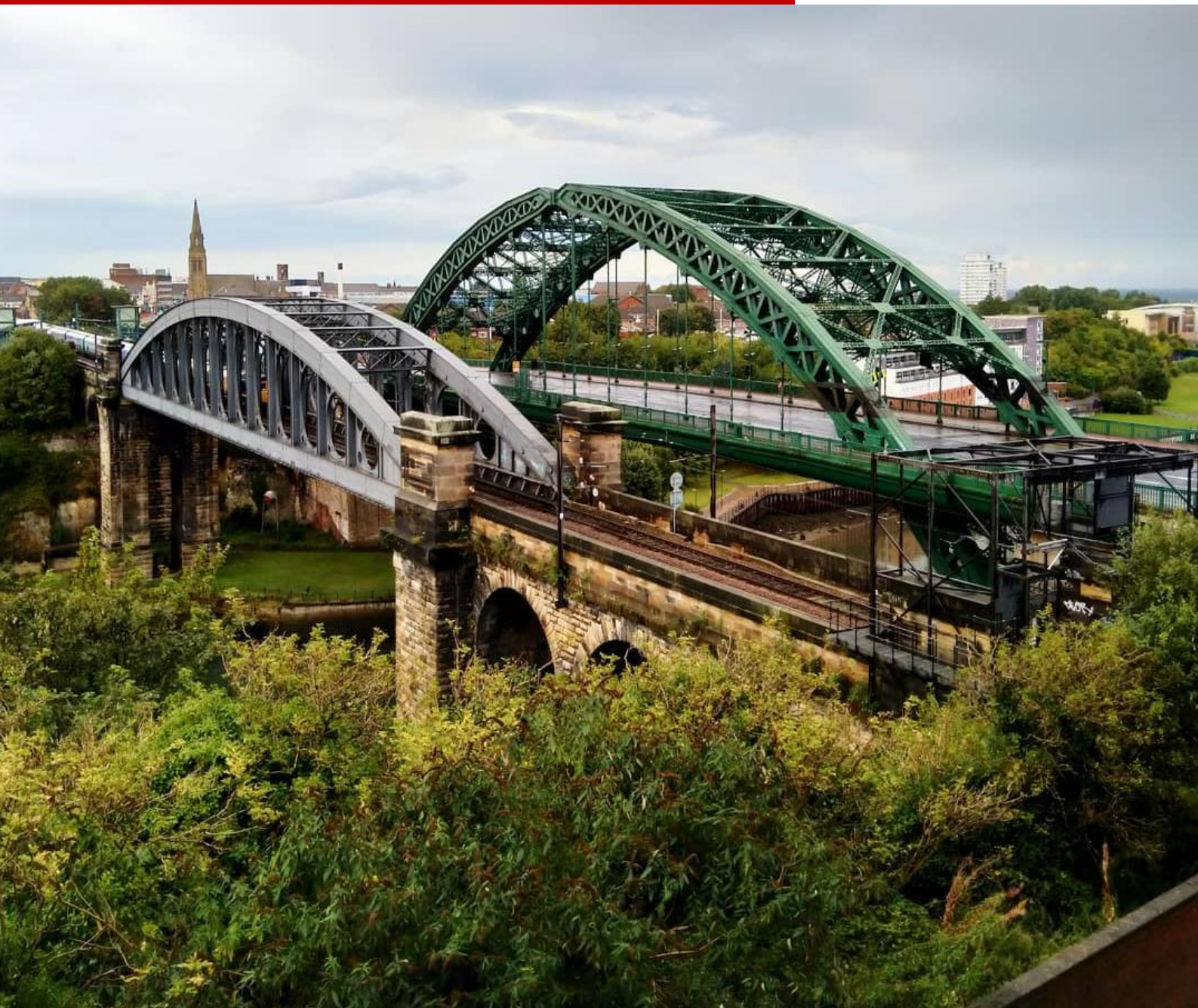


Support for carers and friends

healthwatch
Sunderland

Support available for people experiencing memory difficulties or dementia in Sunderland

Issue 2 – Published August 2026



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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latest edition
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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If you have information to add or notice anything outdated in the booklets, please contact us and these will be considered.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, 'Planning for the future', 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.

Support for carers, family and friends



It is really important for carers to look after themselves as well as the person they are caring for, and that they seek support when they need to. This section includes some of the support available to carers.

Age UK have written a guide which is full of practical and emotional help for carers who are looking after someone at home.



You can order this and other helpful guides and factsheets by calling their advice line or printing them from their website.

Call: 0191 514 1131

Email: enquiries@ageuksunderland.org.uk

Website: www.ageuk.org.uk/sunderland (search 'information and advice' and scroll down to free booklets and online information).

The Essence Service

The Essence Service recognises the vital role of carers and the impact caring for someone with dementia can have. They support carers throughout the dementia journey and when their loved ones' dementia progresses. Their staff continue to provide carers with bespoke person-centered support, social prescribing and peer support groups (please see below).

Peer support groups are an opportunity for carers to join other carers and talk about their experiences in a relaxed, confidential environment. This can reduce feelings of guilt, loneliness and isolation and can enable them to access information and support during and, after your caring role ceases.

All activities are FREE for people registered with the Essence Service
To take part in any activity, call the Essence Team on: 0191 522 1310
Email: essenceservice@ageuksunderland.org.uk

ESSENCE PHASE 1 – CARER ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY	DAY & TIME	VENUE
Ladies Carer's Corner	Tuesday 10 am – 12 noon	Essence Centre Mill Hill Road, Doxford Park Sunderland SR3 2ND
Gentleman's Carers Group	Wednesday 2 pm – 3:45 pm	Essence Centre Mill Hill Road, Doxford Park Sunderland SR3 2ND

ESSENCE ACTIVITIES IN LOCAL COMMUNITY VENUES

ESSENCE PHASE 2 – CARER ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY	DAY & TIME	VENUE
Carers Peer Support Group	Tuesday 2 pm – 4 pm	The Millennium Centre The Oval, Concord, Washington NE37 2QD
Carers Peer Support Group	Thursday 2 pm – 4 pm	The Avenue 26 Zetland Square, Roker, Sunderland SR6 0EQ

About Us

At Sunderland Carers Centre we provide support to children, young people and adults who look after others and are by our definition, 'a Carer'. Many people do not see themselves as carers. They are parents, grandparents, husbands, wives, children, partners, relatives or friends, just doing what needs to be done for the person they care for.

However, if you support a family member or friend to maintain their health, wellbeing and quality of life, then you are a carer.

We offer a **Dementia Advice Service** that can provide information, advice and guidance to any family member or friend of someone with dementia, awaiting a dementia diagnosis or worried about someone's memory. We will provide support throughout a person's dementia journey. The Carers Centre is a dementia friendly building and staff have a range of specialist knowledge.

Support can include:

- General Dementia condition information and how to obtain a diagnosis.
- A guide to caring for someone with Dementia.
- Carrying out Carers Assessments on behalf of Sunderland City Council. A Carers Assessment will look at how caring affects your life and consider how your own well-being can be supported now and in the future.
- One to one support and a listening ear.
- General information, advice and guidance.
- Signpost to other agencies who might be able to help you.
- Representation and support at meetings with other services.
- Peer support (groups) and social activities.
- On-going support with no time limit that is individual to you and your family.
- Targeted Young Carers support which can include; 1-1 listening support, peer support, advocacy and family support and help with education, employment, training and transition.

Check us out on our website
www.sunderlandcarers.co.uk
and Facebook
@SunderlandCarersCentre

Support for carers, family and friends



Carers' breaks and respite care

If you need to take a break from caring, Sunderland City Council may have a duty to arrange services for the person you care for. This is known as respite care. These services are means-tested so the person you care for could have to contribute towards the cost.

Sunderland City Council can give you information about local support.

Call: 0191 520 5552

Website: www.sunderland.gov.uk/adult-social-care

Healing Opportunities Sunderland (HOPS)

HOPS support unpaid carers, those with long-term health conditions, and anyone in need. Their therapies benefit mind and body, easing pain and stress and lifting self-worth. Classes and activities bring communities together to support wellbeing.

Monthly carers' time out days provide a much-needed break for unpaid carers, offering varied group activities, therapy treatments and a tasty lunch, with plenty of time to chat and make new friends.

Call: 0191 548 3722

Email: info@healing-sunderland.org.uk

Website: www.healing-sunderland.org.uk



Sunderland's Dementia Hub

Essence Lifestyle

Essence Lifestyle supports Essence carers, caring for someone with a mild to moderate diagnosis of dementia

Essence Lifestyle offers the following practical support, to benefit the carer:

- Light housework
- Shopping support
- Preparing meals
- Companionship for the carer
- Collecting prescriptions

Essence carers are allocated 12 free Lifestyle hours in total

If you would like further information, please contact the Essence Service on: **0191 522 1310**

Email: essenceservice@ageuksunderland.org.uk

Website: www.essenceservice.org.uk





Your free, all-in-one support app for people caring for loved ones.

Connect with others who understand, access expert advice, and join supportive session

www.mobiliseonline.co.uk



Carers UK runs Employers for Carers, providing practical advice and recourses to help employers support carers in their workforce.

You could talk to your employer about joining Employers for Carers.

Find out more at:

www.employersforcarers.org

Support for carers, family and friends



Sunderland Talking Therapies – carers therapy

Accessing carer's therapy will help you to focus on you and think about what you want. The therapist will work with you to think about your situation, consider your options and find ways to cope. In therapy, you will be able to explore your feelings, including your relationship with the person you care for. This is likely to help you find your own solutions and make decisions about your life.

You can self-refer for this service:

Call: 0191 566 5454

Website: www.sunderlandtalkingtherapies.co.uk/referrals

Dementia Friends

An Alzheimer's Society dementia friend is somebody that learns about dementia so they can help their family and the wider community.

Dementia Friends help people living with dementia by taking actions – both big and small.

These actions don't have to be time-consuming. From visiting someone you know with dementia to being more patient in a shop queue, every action counts!

It is really easy to become a Dementia Friend as their volunteer ambassadors run in-person information sessions as well as virtual information sessions that you can book on to attend. Or you can watch a short online video to join.

Call: 0330 333 0804

Website: www.dementiafriends.org.uk



Essence Service dementia awareness training

Dementia awareness training is an essential activity freely available to people affected by dementia, their carers and professionals who support them.

The training is designed to enhance knowledge and understanding of dementia, its causes and effects, and encourages a positive mind-set to help all people impacted to live well. The focus is to 'See Me'. 'Know Me'. 'Understand Me'. 'See the whole person not just the dementia.'

Contact for more details and to book your place:

Call: 0191 522 1310

Email: essenceservice@ageuksunderland.org.uk

Website: www.essenceservice.org.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

Email: healthwatchsunderland@pcp.uk.net

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 **[Instagram.com/healthwatchsunderland](https://www.instagram.com/healthwatchsunderland)**