

Wellbeing activities

**Support available for people
experiencing memory difficulties or
dementia in Sunderland**

Issue 3 – Published September 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If you have information to add or notice anything outdated in the booklets, please contact us and these will be considered.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, 'Wellbeing activities', 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.

Wellbeing and activities

It is important for our wellbeing that we remain active and engaged with our communities. Exercise, outdoor activities, games, music, and art are just a few of the activities proven to be helpful for those with dementia or other memory difficulties.



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 Clients and Carer Combined Activities			
Activity	Time	Frequen- cy	Venue
Monday			
The Crafty Club Arts & Crafts Activity	10:00 – 11:30	Weekly	Essence Centre Mill Hill Road, Doxford Park Sunderland SR3 2ND
Muscle & Memory Memory games and gentle exercise	12:00 – 13:00	Weekly	
Living Well with Dementia Dementia Awareness Sessions	13:00 – 17:00	Monthly (contact us for details)	
The Avenue Group	14:00 – 15:30	Weekly	The Avenue 26 Zetland Square, Roker, Sunderland SR6 0EQ
Tuesday			
Essence Men’s Group	10:00 – 12:00	Weekly	Essence Centre Mill Hill Road, Doxford Park, Sunderland SR3 2ND
Ladies Carer’s Corner	10:00 – 12:00	Weekly	
Tuesday Singers	14:00 – 15:30	Weekly	
The Holiday Inn Group	14:00 – 15:30	Weekly	The Holiday Inn Keel Square, Sunderland SR1 3DS
Wednesday			
Lovely Ladies Group	14:00 – 16:00	Weekly	Essence Centre Mill Hill Road, Doxford Park, Sunderland SR3 2ND
Gentlemen Carer’s Group	14:00 – 16:00	Weekly	
The Biddick Group	14:00 – 15:30	Weekly	Biddick Arts Centre Biddick Lane, Washington NE38 8AB
Thursday			
Coffee Morning / Meet & Greet	10:00 – 11:30	Weekly	Essence Centre Mill Hill Road, Doxford Park, Sunderland SR3 2ND
Indoor Curling	14:00 – 16:00	Weekly	
Friday			
Music & Memories	10:00 – 12:00	Weekly	Essence Centre Mill Hill Road, Doxford Park, Sunderland SR3 2ND
Friday Lunch Club	12:00 – 13:30	Weekly	

Wellbeing and activities



Age UK Sunderland

A local independent charity run by and for the people of Sunderland. They support older people throughout the city through the provision of quality services and by campaigning on issues that affect them.

Call: 0191 514 1131

Website: www.ageuk.org.uk/sunderland



Memory Café – Whitburn Library

Sponsored by Seaburn Rotary Club this is a drop-in for people living with dementia, their families, friends and carers.

These sessions give an opportunity to relax with tea, coffee, cakes and activities, at a cost of £3.00.

Sessions take place monthly, on the third Friday of each month from 2.00pm – 4.00pm. For more information contact Whitburn Library.

Call: 0191 529 3098

Action on Dementia

Action on Dementia offer a Tuesday Friendship Group / Lunch Club from 10.00am – 1.00pm at the Chesters, Chester Road, Sunderland, SR4 7DR.

They also offer a support group at Woodridge Gardens, Oxclose Road, Washington, NE38 7NZ on the third Friday of every month, between 10.00am to 12.00 noon.

Contact Sheelagh Dilworth if you'd like to attend.

Call: 07740 111182

Email: actionondementiasunderland@gmail.com

Website: www.sunderlandactionondementia.co.uk



Links for life

Links for Life
Sunderland

**Making life-changing
connections in your community**

Linking people to activities, groups and services that
make a lasting difference to their health and wellbeing.

www.linksforlifesunderland.co.uk



Wellbeing and activities



Empire Theatre

The Empire Theatre in Sunderland offers relaxed performances. These are specially designed theatre shows that create a comfortable environment for people who need them. These performances make theatre more inclusive and accessible.

Call: 0191 566 1057

Website: www.atgtickets.com (search 'Sunderland Empire relaxed performances').

Golf in Society

Golf in society help people living with chronic conditions, including dementia enjoy the health and wellbeing benefits of playing golf and socialising. They run weekly golf sessions for 2 hours where carers can be confident to leave their loved ones and have some time to themselves. Their current venues are Wearside Golf Club in Coxgreen which is in Washington, Sunderland and Cocken Lodge in Houghton-le-Spring.

No previous golf experience is required, first taster session is free!

Please contact Anthony Etchells if you'd like more information or book a taster session.

Call: 07984374441

Email: anthonye.golfinsociety@gmail.com

Website: www.golfinsociety.com



Mission 2 Mobility

Ran by Active Families North East and delivered by highly trained and experienced exercise specialists, their 14-week programme helps with balance, boosts confidence and improves strength and mobility.

This benefits many older adults with strength, balance, and mobility issues. It is also suitable for those who have suffered physical or neurological injuries or have ongoing health issues that would benefit from a structured exercise programme. Before starting the course, all participants are checked to ensure their suitability for the programme.

The classes are fun and engaging and always sociable with refreshments and a chance to chat to others. It is their mission to keep people mobile and help them age well.

Call: 0191 516 6083

Email: info@activefamiliesne.co.uk

Website: www.activefamiliesne.co.uk and search 'Mission 2 Mobility'

Top tip

In Sunderland there are community centres around the city, who host a variety of different activities which can support our general health and wellbeing, as well as getting us out and about and meeting new people.

Why not pop into your local centre and ask what they have available.



FREE EXERCISE CLASSES

to improve your strength, balance and confidence!

Come and join our Strength and Balance programme for people who have had a fall, have a fear of falling or have problems with balance. Exercises will help to improve strength, balance and mobility.

Strength and Balance is a 14 week course with start dates throughout the year which is being held at various locations across Sunderland.

Is the class right for me?

In order to take part in the classes you should:

- Be in control of any long-term health conditions you may have
- Be able to either mobilise independently with a stick, 3 or 4 wheel rollator

- Be able to carry out standing exercises for a minimum of 5 minutes

To join a class please call:

- North area: 0191 563 4749
- East area: 0191 516 6083
- West area: 0191 516 6083
- Washington area: 0191 537 3231
- Coalfields area: 0191 584 3840

Wellbeing and activities

Washington Riding Centre

Washington Riding Centre are supported by a group of passionate volunteers and a team of qualified staff.

The centre is a purpose-built equestrian centre where riders of all abilities have the opportunity to be involved in riding, equine education and volunteering. In addition, they have an accessible sensory garden which is a therapeutic space that is relaxing, helping to reduce stress and improves mental health.

The centre organise sessions called 'Tea with Timmy' where groups get to meet Timmy the pony, groom him and have refreshments all in the tranquil setting of our Sensory Garden.

Call: 0191 416 2745

Email: wrcepro@gmail.com

Website: www.washingtonridingcentre.co.uk

FREE Volunteer-led walks

The Active Sunderland Walking Programme is a FREE and friendly programme of weekly volunteer led walks, that take place right across the city.

Discover the perfect way to enjoy the outdoors, connect with others, and stay active. These walks are dog friendly.

Their group walks are run for 60 to 90 minutes and are open to everyone—no matter your pace or experience. All you need is a pair of comfortable shoes, casual clothing, and a bottle of water.

You'll be warmly welcomed by their Walk Leaders, and the friendly walking community will help you feel right at home.!

For more information contact Sunderland Customer Service:

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Sunderland
SR1 3NE

MORE INFO:
TEL: 0191 565 9045
EMAIL: FRONTDOORADMIN@AGEUKSUNDERLAND.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**