

What would be your one wish to better support the needs of family carers of people with dementia?

We posed this question to attendees throughout the day and here are the answers we received:

- One key person who can advise on issues and signpost to the correct support whilst providing continuity and a familiar face/a fundamental relationship. This should also be tangible (able to offer a hug as well as a listening ear).
- Family carers should be more included in the care of their loved ones whilst in hospital. To go from 24/7 responsibility to none can be tough for family carers. They will know the patient best of all so will have valuable contributions to make (these can be written down in the patient's 'This is Me' document).
- Knowledge
- Stop the dementia care tail wagging the dementia care dog!
- Support needs to react to changes and cover a wide range of interventions for the good and bad days, 24/7.
- Meaningful education (not e-learning), interactive and hands on. Who makes a carer an 'expert' on dementia on diagnosis?
- GPs especially need to listen to carers and believe their concerns.
- To fill the black hole between services for people eligible for memory drugs or with distressing behaviours only.
- Forums to share good and best practice in dementia care.
- Co-operation from GPs.
- Formation of dementia teams in hospitals should be mandatory.
- Respite for carers in appropriate dementia placements.
- Socialisation for both not isolation.
- Increase resources.
- More nurses to patients.
- GPs to be paid for recognising carers' needs. In the long term this may reduce costs on their budgets e.g. it will preserve physical and mental health.
- More intergenerational working with schools and colleges: "Reduce carer stress!"
Train up and utilise more befrienders in dementia care. This will improve the wellbeing of people with dementia and their carers who may enjoy short respite from caring to take out for themselves, to enhance enjoyment and look after their own needs which they often neglect. Alzheimer's Society and Age UK could do more on this especially in light of poor resources available now for day-care and respite.
- Listen, learn and act
- Department of Health figures say – 670,000 people with dementia, 550,000 carers. Let's not forget about the people who don't have carers!