

Care Direct
0845 1551 007

factsheet

Devon
County Council 

What is a Memory Café?

Factsheet 90 – 25 June 2010 (3 Pages)

Memory Cafés offer an informal setting for those affected by memory problems and their carers to access support and information.

Operating on a ‘drop-in’ basis, they give participants the chance to exchange experiences and information and receive practical information and emotional support. The cafes are run by trained volunteers with the support of health professionals, and usually meet monthly for a couple of hours although some meet fortnightly.

Memory Cafés are distinct from *Memory Clinics* which are formal assessment and diagnostic services for dementia run by the NHS.

People with memory problems or dementia and their carers have the opportunity to meet regularly with other people in similar situations. Information is available, as well as practical tips about coping with dementia and memory problems. Many people make friendships locally as a result and are able to support each other outside of the Memory Café setting. This informal setting provides emotional support and also reduces the isolation often felt by people with dementia and their carers and families.

Advice is available from health professionals who regularly attend the Memory Cafés. Some Memory Cafés offer activities such as reminiscence groups, games and discussions or visiting speakers, but all offer the chance to just chat informally.

Memory Cafés are not a formal care service and there is no formal assessment or referral process and no pre-booking is necessary.

Who is the service for?

The service is for people who have received a diagnosis of dementia or are worried about their memory.

Those with dementia or memory worries may attend unaccompanied where appropriate, or with family, friends or carers. However, the service is not suitable for people with dementia to attend alone if they have specific care needs such as problems with continence, mobility issues that require aid, high levels of anxiety, challenging behaviour or medical conditions that require monitoring.

Memory Cafés are not a ‘drop off’ facility for short periods of respite.

If the behaviour of the person with dementia is disrupting the event to the detriment of other attendees or the physical health of the person with dementia has deteriorated and their needs cannot be met within this informal social environment the service may no longer be appropriate.

Carers who no longer have caring responsibilities will not be discouraged from attending any Memory Café. However, the focus of the Memory Café is the person with dementia and whilst they may be able to support the former carer for a limited period of time, a more appropriate service will be sensitively suggested, such as specific support groups or Community Mentoring (Time for Life).

Memory Cafés are supported by Devon County Council, Devon Partnership Trust, Alzheimer's Society, RePoD (Rotarians easing the Problems of Dementia), Senior Council and a number of local voluntary organisations.

More information about times and venues can be found at <http://www.devon.gov.uk/index/socialcarehealth/dementia> or from Care Direct 0845 1551 007

Further factsheets can be found online at www.devon.gov.uk/factsheets

If you have any further questions please contact Care Direct 0845 1551 007. If you would like it in a different format such as Braille or audio, or in a different language, please contact our Customer Service Centre on 0845 155 1015 or email customer@devon.gov.uk.

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