



HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE



Kirklees Council

Empowering Residents with Dementia Through a New State of the Art Day Service Facility

Kirklees Council opened the new Knowl Park House in November 2024 providing transformed day services for people with dementia. The centre has been designed in collaboration with dementia specialists, based on engagement with those with dementia and their carers. The service promotes independence with a broad range of activities in a modern environment which fosters dignity, independence and connection.

The building has been designed in collaboration with the University of Stirling's Dementia Services Development Centre based on their standards for improving quality of life for people living with dementia. The centre is a safe, informal, friendly environment for people to meet others and take part in activities that help maintain their life skills, stimulate their minds and bodies, and have fun. The service gives carers or families a much-needed break. It is designed to help people with dementia continue to live in their own homes and remain as independent as possible. The service is working towards being a nationally recognised, gold standard model for dementia design in a day service setting.

Knowl Park House also hosts The Centre for Excellence, a flexible space – independent of the day service – where residents can work with the Council and partner services to access advice, training, and support relating to all aspects of dementia.

Our service continually develops to meet the **changing needs** of people with dementia and their carers by:

- enabling people to be independent and make their own decisions and choices
- improving their quality of life and helping them make use of community-based services
- providing a high level of personal and emotional support according to individual needs

- offering a safe, friendly, inclusive, and stimulating environment where people living with dementia can socialise and interact with peers if they wish.

Knowl Park House now offers users more: more diversity of activities, more opportunities to be involved in activity planning and delivery, a more person-centred experience, and more in terms of community-based experiences.

The **state-of-the-art facilities** include four zones:



Home therapy zone Maintain or learn new skills in the kitchen, reminisce in the lounge, or relax in front of the fire and TV. It also has a semi-immersive room with a virtual railway carriage.

Sensory gardens A positive and peaceful space that promotes wellbeing. Relax and unwind or visit the potting shed, greenhouse and raised beds. There is a water feature, outdoor seating and a covered Gazebo and pergola.

Wellbeing zone: Relax, reduce anxiety and unwind in the spa area or the cinema room, play a game of pool, or undertake some light physical activity.

Activity zone: Find companionship, have fun, receive mental stimulation and try new things. Activities include arts and crafts, tabletop games, use of our Rainbow table, and table tennis.



The importance of the right care. R's story

R is a gentleman living with dementia, he lives in his own home with his beloved wife and has the loving support of his grown up children. Until developing dementia R lived a full life with his family, and as an accountant with his own business. R was referred to our service in 2022 whilst in its temporary home in Heckmondwike. R settled into the service but often spoke of wanting to go out into the community and didn't always engage with the activities available. R reduced his time with the service from two days per week to one as he didn't feel at home.

When the service returned to the new Knowl Park House very quickly the team noticed a positive change in R. He seemed to relish the new environment, whether this was the increase in natural light throughout the building, the wide open corridors that offer a destination in every direction, the signage throughout the building that aided way finding, or the fact that our service user areas all look out onto our fabulous garden.

Following the move the service saw a different side to R, he was more engaged with activities and was connecting more with staff and fellow service users. R is often seen chatting with his peers and regularly steps in to offer his support to our new service users. He has even been known to advocate for the service when we're showing new referrals around.

R has always been active and likes to get out into the community, which was more difficult in Heckmondwike. Knowl Park House is well located in Mirfield, near local shopping, cafes and the library. The service now also has two minibuses so we can easily go further afield: R has enjoyed

trips to attractions in Leeds and Bradford. Experiences like these enrich the support and opportunities available and encourage people to maintain their social ability as well as other essential life skills.

As the service grows and develops into its new environment we look forward to a future where Knowl Park House continues to positively impact the lives of people living with dementia in Kirklees.

As for R, we want him to continue to feel part of the family and we will encourage him to take a lead, promote his independence, share his ideas and ensure he maintains that sense of purpose. Inevitably R's needs will change, but the service will adapt and we look forward to supporting R as long as he needs us.

For further information contact:

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