Welcome to the first edition of the HRCH newsletter especially for carers of people living with dementia. We have a special interest in making sure that you and the people you care for are aware of the services available to you both locally and nationally. This newsletter will help by providing links, offering helpful tips and advice, and by answering your questions.

In addition, your newsletter will run news about events and goings on in the area, as well as a regular column on issues around the theme of dementia and caring. Our aim is to help you and the person you care for tolive well with dementia, and to cope better with the demands that caring puts onto families and friends. There's plenty of evidence that people can live well with dementia; and so can you.

**Identifying dementia as early as possible**

When an individual is made aware that they have dementia they are able to take personal ownership of the many things that they need to consider to promote and maintain a state of wellbeing. This is likely to mean reaching out to a range of professionals who can help them with legal, financial, health, support and care issues.

If you are caring for or living with someone who you think might have dementia, the first thing to do is to visit your GP and ask for a screening assessment which may lead to a formal diagnosis. Yes, we know that it can be a hard first step to take. But from a health perspective, the earlier we know of a person's dementia the more likely we are able to support the individual and you, their carers, to receive planned care focusing on maintaining good health. Rather than urgent care or presenting to health services in crisis.

Another advantage to having a diagnosis is it can make it easier to access social care help if you qualify, for instance dial a ride or reduced council tax.

If the person you care for is already referred to or being treated by another HRCH service (for example receiving treatment for another condition), ask your nurse or therapist to provide an initial screening assessment and we will make a referral to your GP for further assessment if needed.
Carers are not a static population and each year millions of people take on caring responsibilities, whilst caring comes to an end for millions of others as the person they care for recovers, moves into residential care or passes away. Every year over 2.1 million adults become carers and almost as many people find that their caring responsibilities come to an end. This ‘turnover’ means that caring will touch the lives of most of us, as we all need or provide care or support family members caring for loved ones.

Three in five of us will become carers at some time in our lives; one in ten will care for someone with dementia. The number of carers over the age of 65 is increasing more rapidly than the general carer population. Many of these of course care for someone with dementia, a partner or close family member.

You are not alone.

Where to Find Help

There are many professional services and voluntary organisations ready to help carers to enjoy a good life in spite of the responsibilities they fulfil. You may not be aware of the help and funding you can receive from Government and other institutions. So, what can you do? Well the first step you can do at any time is talk to your great local carers’ support services in Hounslow and Richmond that will offer you as little or as much as you need to fulfil your caring role. Richmond Carers Centre and Hounslow Community Partnership have useful guides that will help; take a look at their websites or give them a call to book an initial discussion. There is no obligation for you to continue this relationship, it is entirely voluntary.

You can keep in touch with us on our Facebook page. HRCH Facebook: www.facebook.com/dementiapages/
Richmond Carers Centre call: 020 8867 2380
www.richmondcarers.org
Hounslow Community Partnership call: 020 3693 4003
www.cp-hounslow.org.uk/information-for-carers/
www.hrch.nhs.uk

Everyone Come Down to Kew in Lilac Time

Since we put together a map of dementia related services last year we have been overwhelmed with advice on what other help is available to people with dementia and their carers. From Hampton to Barnes and Feltham to Chiswick facilities are available run by health providers, local authorities, charities, institutions and the community. We’ll be telling you more about these in the coming weeks, together with issuing a new map that will point out where the services are and how to get hold of them, so please keep an eye out for it.

One great initiative is at the Royal Botanical Gardens in Kew. Working in partnership with Health Walks in Richmond and Richmond Alzheimer’s Society, Kew offers health walks specifically for people with Dementia and their carers. The walks are free and take part within the beautiful surroundings of Kew Gardens and are led by trained volunteer walk leaders. Health walks are also free to Hounslow residents.

Search for information on the ‘Kew Discovery Programme’ on their website www.kew.org or call us on 020 8332 5655.