

BACKGROUND – what was the problem we wanted to solve?

In 2023, Jo Weaver-Jackson, a newly appointed Community & Care Coordinator in SE Shropshire PCN tried to find out what groups were available locally to support patients and carers in their community. She discovered that following covid many groups had not returned to face-to-face activities and a number of volunteers had also been lost and not replaced. It became clear that many people living with dementia had not had any face-to-face contact since before covid and all of their support and social contact was being provided by formal and informal carers; GPs were seen as the first point of contact for most problems. Carer groups with Shropshire Carers were back up and running but their model only facilitated carers, the cared for person was not able to attend so for carers with no replacement care available this was a missed opportunity.

AIMS

- Increase the number of carers attending carer support groups
- Reduce the likelihood of social and health crisis that occur through social isolation thereby reducing the need for GP contact.
- Create resilience in the community and encourage self help

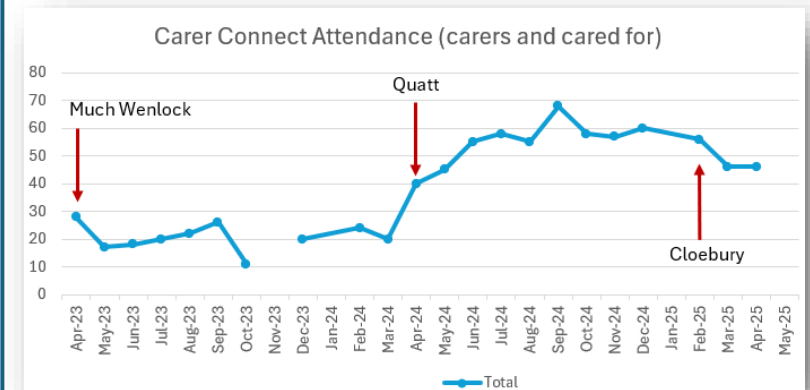
APPROACH

Carer Connect is a monthly held in 3 locations PCN: Much Wenlock, Quatt and Cleobury Mortimer. It runs in partnership with SE Shropshire PCN and associated GP surgeries, supported by the Alzheimer's Society, Shropshire Carer Support team, Age UK and the Admiral Nursing team. Funding comes from the Wenlock Forester Trust and Cleobury Compassionate Communities.

- Carers attend with the person they care for removing the need for alternative care and are able to connect with others in similar situations.
- Those living with dementia and their carers can meet and build relationships with support staff—something often difficult in clinical or telephone settings.
- Activities are all inclusive and can be enjoyed by the carer and cared for alike. They may be physical such as a Sit & Be Fit taster session or musical or art based. Activities are a taster of what people can attend in the community.

MEASURED OUTCOMES

Attendance April 23 – May 25



QUALITY IMPACT

Experience: Carers and those they care for form friendships with others in similar situations, as well as with support groups and professionals in the community. Carers report feeling emotionally uplifted, with the person they care for more orientated and communicative for days after a meeting.

Effectiveness: These groups reduce the social isolation that negatively affects the mental and physical health of both carers and those they care for. Carers often resume attending health screenings and review appointments. Friendships, activities, and connection promote overall wellbeing.

Safety: Regular contact with health, social, and community services enables quick referrals to individual support. Crises can be spotted and addressed early. Patients and carers trust and engage more readily with familiar support providers.