



The Crystal Project

# Overview

- The Crystal Project
- Volunteer visiting
- Crisis avoidance hours
- 'It's not just dementia' calendar
- Children's book



# The Crystal Project

- Trading name for Mallow Dementia Project Ltd.
- Charitable status
- Project Officer
- Led by HSE Occupational Therapist
- Collaboration between the HSE, The Alzheimer Society of Ireland, The Carers Association, families affected by dementia, UCC, local community groups and GPs



# Aims

- Support people with dementia
- Support families
- Increase awareness about dementia and reduce stigma

[www.crystalproject.ie](http://www.crystalproject.ie)



# Memory resource room

- Base for Crystal Project
- HSE floor of MPHC
- Information, advice and support
- People concerned about memory
- People with dementia
- Relatives





# Memory resource room





# Cairdre Maithe

- Volunteer visiting service
- Co-ordinated by project officer
- Match person with dementia with complex needs with volunteer in locality
- Match based on mutual interests
- Activity based support
- Garda vetting





*Cairdre Maithe contd.*

## Process

- Referral from project, person with dementia, families, PHNs, GPs, community groups
- Home visit and gathering of information from MDT where applicable
- Matching of person with dementia with volunteer
- Introductory visit - person with dementia, project officer, volunteer
- 'Getting to know each other form'
- One month trial period
- Monthly monitoring telephone calls
- Researched by OT graduate





*Cairdre Maithe contd.*

## Practicalities

- Not paying mileage – match locally
- Personality and mutual interests very important
- Driving – much debate!
- Christmas card and ‘one for all’ voucher
- Volunteer activity packs (not in use)
- Insurance



*Cairdre Maithe contd.*

## Figures

Since May 2015, 52 people have expressed interest:

- Matched but now discontinued - 5
- Matched and visiting - 4
- Match on hold - Volunteer request - 2
- Waiting on Garda Vetting - 0
- Not suitable - 4
- No longer available to volunteer - 6
- Waiting to receive application back - 14



## *Cairde Maithe contd*

### Testimonials

- *I love when Mary comes to visit, we chat together and make tea. She's really nice and she has a dog too' Eileen, matched with Mary through Cairde Maithe*
- *'It was really nice when Bridie's daughter introduced me to the neighbour as Bridie's friend. I feel we are friends now' Patricia, matched with Bridie through Cairde Maithe*



# Crisis Avoidance

- Individuals with complex needs (criteria)
- Self referral, PHNs, ASI
- 31 people supported for up to six weeks
- Individualised
- Hours ranging from 12 hrs to 96 hrs over 6 weeks
- Post service follow up to ensure individuals maximised use of existing services
- Cases made to HSE to increase services



## *Crisis avoidance contd*

- Examples – wife (carer) post surgery, dgt (carer) broken ankle, gap in private care, hospital d/c (change in level of function), family commitments (leaving cert).
- Service provided short term, explained to families 'get over hump'



*Crisis avoidance contd.*

- *‘Mam loved having the company - a different face coming in. By having time out with my own family, I felt more able to cope with things when I was at Mams. It really helped my daughter too as shes preparing for her Leaving Cert and needed me there on a Sunday’, Breeda, daughter.*



## 'It's not just dementia' calendars

- Its not just dementia calendars –2015, 2016
- Highly commended in Irish Healthcare Awards
- [www.crystalproject.ie](http://www.crystalproject.ie)





# Children's Book

- Through our facilitation of children's workshops we saw a need for an up to date Irish book explaining dementia to young children.
- Written from the perspective of a young girl named Aoife, our book outlines the realities of dementia and what it might mean to a young girl.





# Other project activities

- Family information sessions
- Family support meetings
- Public awareness – stands, talks with community groups
- Memory Group
- Goal focussed therapy
- Singing for the brain
- Memory Café



# What we've learnt

- Importance of one stop shop – website, memory resource room, mailing list
- Start small
- Flexible working hours
- Pool resources
- Things takes time
- Importance of branding
- Not everything will work/be popular - sc
- Inclusion of others is essential – for a different perspective, spreading the word, encouragement
- Use of media
- There will be mistakes - you don't know what you don't know!!
- Evaluation and monitoring of nos essential