

Over A Brew Session

25 July 2025

OLDER PEOPLE AND DEMENTIA

**CURATORS
OF CHANGE**

directors of
adass
adult social services
eastern region
connecting innovating improving





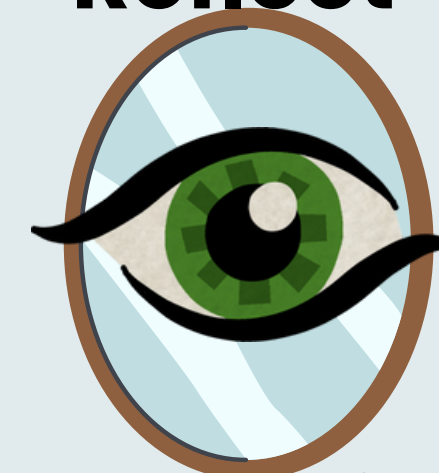
Guide

Grab a brew



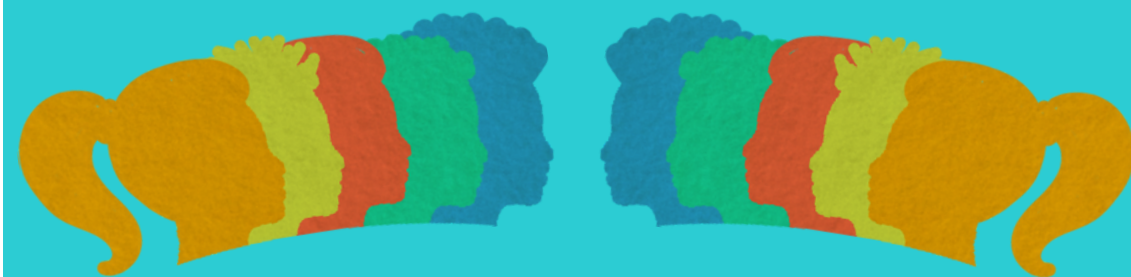
Once you have your brew, ask someone to be the timer

Reflect



Each person has time to think about the questions for ONE minute

Have your say



Each take it in turns to say your response
(TWO mins each)



Use the rest of the time to reflect on what's been said
(no fixing)

Still got some time?



Talk about:
What's not been said?
What are your lasting thoughts?

INFUSED WITH THE CAMERADOS PRINCIPLES

**MIX WITH PEOPLE WHO
ARE NOT LIKE YOU**



**ASK SOMEONE WHO IS
STRUGGLING TO HELP YOU**



**NO FIXING - JUST BE
ALONGSIDE ONE ANOTHER**



**IT'S OK TO DISAGREE
RESPECTFULLY**



**IT'S OKAY TO BE A BIT
RUBBISH SOMETIMES**



**TO BE SILLY IS TO
BE HUMAN**



INTRODUCTION

In this month's Over A Brew we talked about the big challenges faced by **older people living with dementia, and their carers**. We had a varied group of people attend the session including a head of safeguarding, commissioning managers, a workforce advisor, carers and people with lived experience, a social work manager, carer leads, and engagement officers.

The session highlighted how carers often feel exhausted in body and mind as they balance daily routines, work and family life, and they can feel very alone. Story tellers shared how the care system itself is hard to use, with confusing information, services that don't connect well, and no follow-up when people decline support.

We agreed it's vital to listen to both carers and people living with dementia to understand each other's views. Building caring, local communities, through peer support groups, dementia-friendly events and better public awareness can make a real difference. We shared practical ideas like having NHS and social care teams work side by side, using memory boxes, GPS trackers or hosting storytelling cafés. Everyone needs training that covers emotional support and building trust.

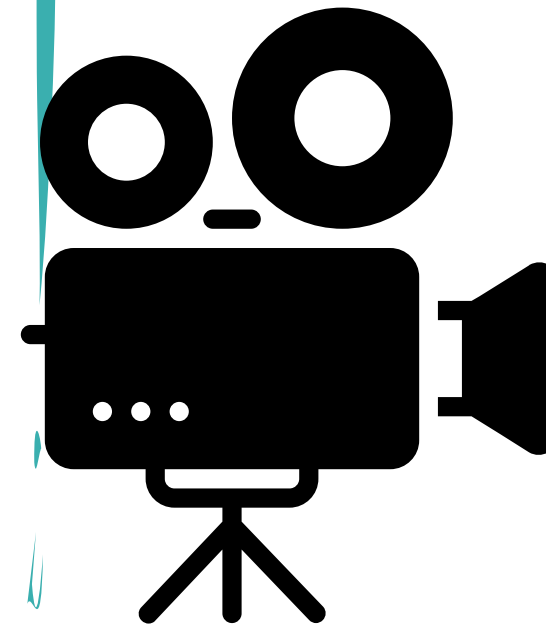
Carers face tough choices about keeping loved ones safe while also letting them stay independent and enjoy life. Finding that balance is key. Above all, dementia care is an ongoing learning journey. We must stay open, humble and willing to try new ways to help improve everyday life.

**Around 26 people
attended the
session to share
ideas, insights
and views... Over
a Brew**



We showed participants in the workshop a video and asked them to think about:

- **How it made them feel**
- **What they connected with**
- **What they learned**



**THE VIDEOS SHOWN IN
THIS SESSION FOCUSED
ON PEOPLE'S EXPERIENCE
OF DEMENTIA CARE AND
OLDER PEOPLE**

**The following pages show a summary of
what we heard from the people in the
session...**

STORY ACTIVITY – WHAT WE HEARD FROM PEOPLE

1 – The Emotional and Personal Toll of Caring

Many people connected with the emotional intensity of caring for someone with dementia. The stories reflected the burden, isolation, and exhaustion carers often feel. They said that carers often take on the role out of duty, not choice, with little or no support.

- *“Caring for her mum has taken over her life.”*
- *“The daughter lost herself. And so did her mum.”*
- *“Looking after a family member is stressful... just because it’s family doesn’t make it any easier.”*
- *“Sense of duty, no one else to help.”*
- *“Felt the burden of having no other family support – only child.”*
- *“Hurt, worry, hopelessness at the trajectory and reality of social care.”*
- *“Disempowerment, dehumanisation.”*



2 – Lack of Support, Especially Before a Crisis Happens

A major theme was the lack of early support, leaving families to cope alone until a crisis happens. Even where help is supposed to exist, it often feels confusing, inconsistent, or unavailable.

- *“The challenge of hitting crisis before help is accessible.”*
- *“No one door for help.”*
- *“Feels like there was no support with putting a plan in place for when the mum’s needs changed.”*
- *“Understanding what support is out there is still not available enough.”*
- *“Few services truly reflect or respond to need.”*
- *“The Care Act is clear... but it didn’t happen in this case.”*



STORY ACTIVITY – WHAT WE HEARD FROM PEOPLE

3 – Impact on Carers' Lives

Participants noticed how caring affects all areas of a carer's life, including health, finances, work, and identity. Many also felt frustrated that society doesn't value unpaid carers enough.

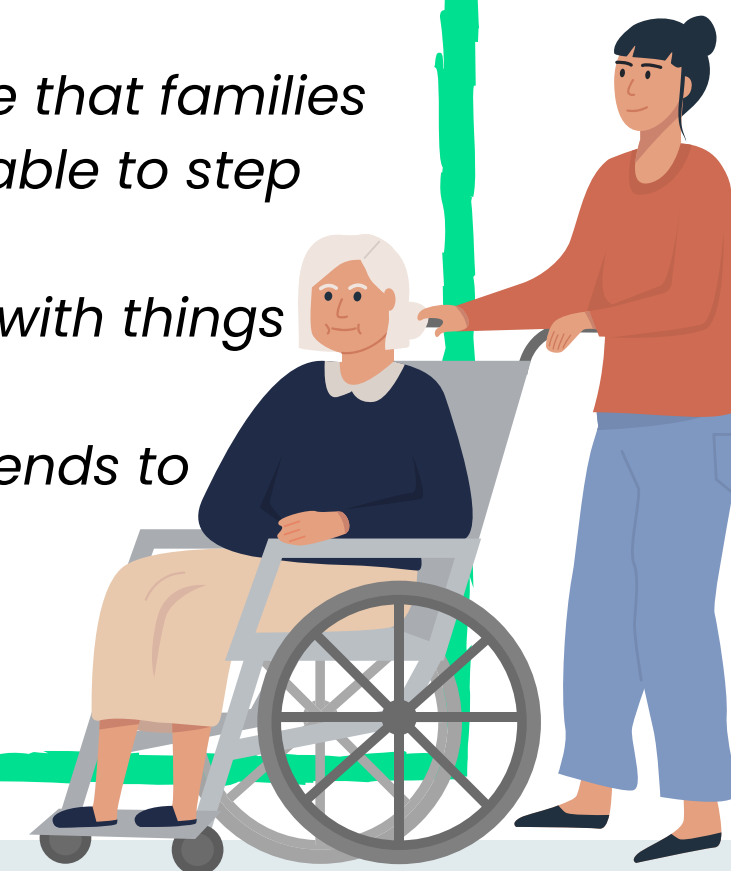
- *"Financial impact / not able to work."*
- *"Health & wellbeing of the carer is lost."*
- *"People lose their identity if they don't have purpose, connection and meaning in life."*
- *Many felt frustrated that society doesn't value unpaid carers enough:*
- *"Carers not paid enough."*
- *"The skilled role of caring and the lack of support."*



4 – Isolation and Assumptions About Family

There was concern about the assumptions made by systems, that families will always cope. Some people simply don't have a support network, and services don't always fill that gap.

- *"There is an assumption/reliance that families get on with each other and are able to step up."*
- *"Caring can be lonely – dealing with things yourself."*
- *"Not everyone has family and friends to create a circle."*



STORY ACTIVITY – WHAT WE HEARD FROM PEOPLE

5 – The Need for Community and Connection

People really valued stories where people had community around them. They saw the power in maintaining relationships, identity and purpose for both carer and cared-for.

- *“Good for him to have a purpose in his life still.”*
- *“Time and dedication to support meaning in a person’s life.”*
- *“Nurture a community circle feeling of support.”*

Participants wanted social care to prioritise connection and humanity.

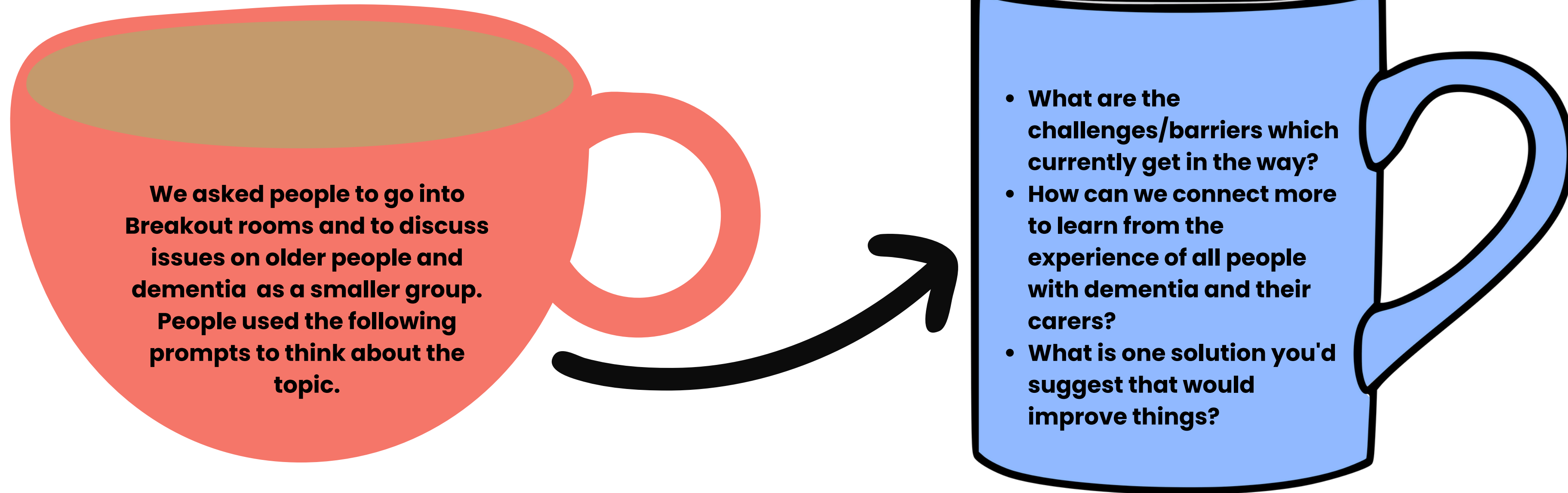


6 – Learning for Services and Systems

There was clear learning about what needs to change. People suggested that dementia and carer training was really important as well as providing better information and earlier, more human engagement.

- *“Dementia training is important – we should invest in this.”*
- *“Lack of choice and lack of a voice.”*
- *“This should be the core of how social care works to support people.”*
- *“Does the role of care or support worker need to be evaluated – creating roles that support needs beyond time and task?”*

BREAKOUT ROOM ACTIVITY



The following pages are a summary of what we heard...

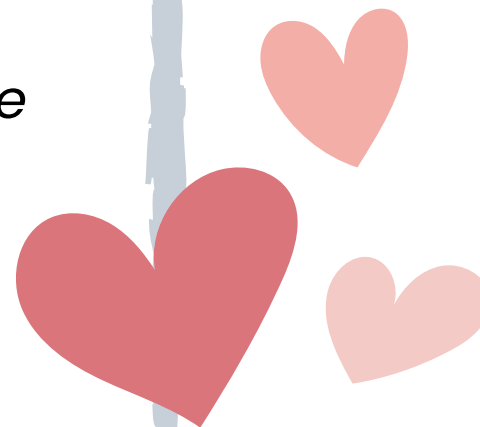
BREAKOUT ROOM ACTIVITY – WHAT WE HEARD FROM PEOPLE

1 – The Emotional and Physical Burden of Caring for People with Dementia



Carers face exhaustion, juggling family, work, and care. Physical and mental toll is often overlooked.

- *"It affects every part of their life, from routine to emotions... it can feel lonely and overwhelming."*
- *"Being a family member doesn't make it easier."*
- *"We keep going because we love the people we care for!"*
- *"It is important to strengthen the understanding of what people (carers) are living through."*



2 – Barriers of Navigating a Complex System

This includes poor signposting and fragmented support. There is also lack of follow-up when care is declined.

- *"It is difficult for people to navigate through a complex system and difficult to know what happens next."*
- *"Do local authorities ask for feedback if someone declines a care service to find out why that was the case.?"*
- *Signposting - isn't often great - but it needs to be - people need reliable (and supported??) signposting?*

BREAKOUT ROOM ACTIVITY – WHAT WE HEARD FROM PEOPLE

3 – Listening to Both Carers and People with Dementia

Participants empathised after watching the stories and thought about the Importance of putting oneself in the shoes of all involved.

- *“We found ourselves putting ourselves in the shoes of the person living with dementia and the loved one.”*
- *“How do we ensure we hear from people who are experiencing dementia as well as carers?”*
- *“Hearing from carers – how do we feel from people with dementia – how do we balance the carers and cared for needs.”*



4 – Building Compassionate, Connected Communities

Ideas shared by the group included encouraging dementia-friendly communities, Increasing public understanding of dementia and end-of-life care as well as peer-to-peer support for carers.

- *“More compassionate communities to create support systems around us to support one another and to allow services to better support – to create a better environment and world we want to live in.”*
- *“Peer to peer support would help.”*
- *“Collaborating with communities to ensure dementia friendly communities.”*

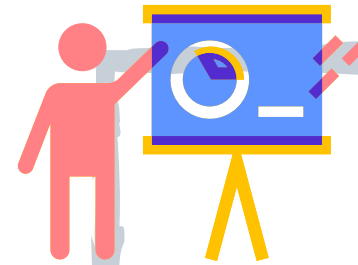


BREAKOUT ROOM ACTIVITY – WHAT WE HEARD FROM PEOPLE

5 – Innovation and Practical Solutions

People had lots of real and innovative ideas on how to change things. People talked about co-located NHS/Social Care teams to help reduce crisis. Others talked about AI and tech tools: memory boxes, GPS trackers, virtual cycling on memory lanes. Community cafés and storytelling to connect and reminisce were also suggested.

- *“It’s not rocket science – just a team of dedicated people who understand what the carer needs.”*
- *“How important digital and AI can be in helping family know their loved ones are safe. Story of grandad used to walk for miles – but never knew where it was – a tracker would help with that. Exercise bikes and memory lane... cycling down the lanes they remember.*
- *“Liverpool museum and how memory boxes can help with this...”*



6 – Training and Awareness

It was suggested that there needs to be emotional and psychological training of staff. Also there needs to be a better understanding of carer needs as well as allowing time to build real relationships with people living with dementia.

- *“There needs to be better dementia training available.”*
- *“It is important to strengthen the understanding of what people (carers) are living through”*
- *“Reflected on the need to build relationships (by professionals) and how important this is...”*

7 – Continual Learning

The group recognised that dementia is a journey for all those involved and emphasized the importance of flexibility and humility in professional practice.

- *“We are constantly learning and adapting when we care for a person with dementia.”*
- *“Dementia is like losing someone – but they are still there.”*



FEEDBACK AND TAKEAWAYS FROM THE SESSION

***Thanks everyone -
another great session -
take care***



***Thank you I also
really enjoyed my
first Over a Brew!***



***Excellent, really enjoyed
the session.***

***Thank you for having me
to my first Over A Brew
😊 lovely to meet you all***



***Thank you - as
always. I always look
forward to joining
these sessions. Take
care all 😊***

***It was a really good
session, thank you :)***



***Thanks for a well
prepared and helpful
session***





Thank You!



**Please join us for the next session
on Wednesday 29th October 2025...
to talk about Equality, Diversity and
Inclusion of all voices... Over a
Brew!**

**[https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/curators-of-
change/t-lnplzmd](https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/curators-of-change/t-lnplzmd)**