



Pathways

Pathways is a small charity providing information, contact and support to people living with young onset (working age) dementia and their partner/carers.

We provide monthly support group meetings in person at University of Bradford and online support group meetings on Zoom. We also provide further information through our Facebook page and Twitter feed.

Pathways is led by a team of experienced volunteers who provide evidence-based information on all aspects of dementia and signpost members to other organisations for additional support, such as memory cafes, carer support services and information relating to benefits.

Membership is free as we fundraise throughout the year to help pay for our activities. People can self-refer to our group by emailing pathwaysdementia@gmail.com or filling out our online referral form. We also welcome referrals from memory services and other organisations.

Find us on Facebook by clicking [here](#) and follow us on Twitter @PathwaysBfd

Our online referral form is [here](#) = please complete this if you wish to become a member of our group or you would like to refer someone else. If you are referring someone else, please seek their permission to share their details first.

Social Activities

Our members have told us that when a person is diagnosed with dementia, it can be hard to carry on doing things like going to the pub, eating in restaurants, or enjoying hobbies like bowling, swimming, running, or going to the cinema. Dementia can make many people feel anxious, self-conscious and fearful resulting in a loss of self-confidence. Some people stop doing the things they once enjoyed and even withdraw from friends and social circles as keeping up with conversations or doing the things that once came naturally can become difficult and stressful.

Sometimes doing things as a group with others who are in a similar situation, can feel less intimidating. We hold regular social activities to enable members to take part in some of the things they once enjoyed or even try something new in a safe, supportive environment.

We have a Social Group volunteer Sue who listens to members to find out what they would like to do and using this information, plans activities such as ten pin bowling, meals out, quiz nights and theatre trips. We try to ensure these as inexpensive as possible, sometimes when appropriate, subsidised by Pathways, accessible to all in the best inclusive, dementia friendly environments we can find.

Sue is always looking for new ideas for social activities so if there's anything you'd like to do or try or somewhere you've been and think others will enjoy it, let Sue know, by emailing pathwaysdementia@gmail.com and we will explore it.

Pathways Annual Supported Holiday

Since Pathways started over 20 years ago, one of the things people with dementia and their partner/carers told us that they miss is having a holiday. Holidays can become a huge struggle for people living with dementia and their families as dementia progresses – airports are confusing places at the best of times but add disabilities such as visual difficulties, poor spatial awareness, problems finding people in a crowded space or problems with time, place and memory, airports can become a nightmare. There are also problems in hotels – all the doors inside and outside the hotel room look the same, doors lock automatically if you step into the corridor, the light is often poor making it difficult to see and unfamiliar surroundings can pose further issues.

This led us to fundraise and provide an annual supported holiday. For many years, we went to Ashbourne, Derbyshire in pine cabins but more recently, we have changed to a hotel-based holiday. In 2021 we went to Llandudno in Wales and had a wonderful five-day break. We travelled by coach and enjoyed good food, great entertainment, and good company as well as trips and activities, including a ride on the big wheel.

All members and former members are invited to join us, and information is usually circulated by email but feel free to ask about it.



Young Onset Dementia

According to YoungDementiaUK, there are more than 42,000 people in the UK diagnosed with young onset dementia. Young onset dementia is when someone is diagnosed with dementia at working age, usually between the age of 35 and 65. As it is usually more difficult to diagnose dementia when someone is younger, it is estimated that this figure is much higher. People diagnosed with dementia at a younger age are more likely to have rarer types of the disease and are also more likely to have a genetically inherited form of dementia. More facts and figures on young onset dementia and some useful information can be found at www.youngdementiauk.org



POIGNANT: Ashley's family and friends gather at his bedside to say goodbye

Bradford families inspire TV soap

Emmerdale wins praise for realism as actors tell of their inspiration

By Emma Clayton
 01274 705261 emma.clayton@telegraphandargus.co.uk

THE actor at the centre of Emmerdale's moving dementia storyline, which reaches its tragic conclusion this week, has revealed he based his performance on a man he met through a Bradford organisation helping people with the condition.

The soap has been praised for its sensitive portrayal of vicar Ashley Thomas's vascular dementia. Viewers have watched Ashley and his young family struggle to cope. Now suffering from pneumonia, Ashley has days to live and in Friday's poignant episode family and friends gather by his bedside to celebrate his life.

Emmerdale has worked with

the Alzheimer's Society and MHA (Methodist Homes)'s Glen Rosa care home in Ilkley, where actors John Middleton, who plays Ashley, and Charlotte Bellamy, who plays wife Laurel, met residents and families. They also worked with Bradford Pathways, which supports people with early onset dementia.

"We arranged for people with dementia and their carers to come to the studio for a tour. We're usually the storytellers, but this time we listened to their stories. Some were funny, some incredibly painful," said Mr Middleton. "Through Pathways I met a man who became the person I had in my mind playing Ashley. I met his wife recently, she told me he had gone into a home and she started crying."

"Every aspect of this storyline has come from real people. It would be a massive insult to them if the whole Emmerdale team hadn't approached this

SEE MORE ONLINE
 Read the latest news from the district at telegraphandargus.co.uk

with such respect and integrity." Series producer Iain MacLeod said a touching scene with Ashley and his family singing John Denver's *Leaving on a Jet Plane* came from Pathways. "We found families often shared moments that were funny and warm. We wanted that in Friday's episode too. There are moments of joy," he said.

Kathryn Smith, the Alzheimer's Society's director of operations, said: "Portraying early onset dementia like this hasn't been done before. In the UK 50,000 people have dementia at a younger age - with a job, children and partners. One of the myths of dementia is that it's a natural part of ageing. Emmerdale has shown that isn't always so."

Linda Zaidi, MHA regional director, said: "We were sent scripts from the beginning and were involved in discussions about Ashley's dementia. Factual accuracy is very important."

"Staff and residents at Glen Rosa watch Emmerdale, and now feel a sense of ownership of this storyline."

BUILD
 BOSCH | NEFF
 HOVERFLIP
 IBERNA HC DW1605
 60CM Fully in

Pathways – COVID and beyond

During the Covid-19 pandemic, our group quickly adapted to the changes brought about by the virus. We held weekly Zoom meetings to make sure our members stayed connected and regularly sent out activity packs to support people to keep active and engaged, doing activities which were stimulating and fun.

We became members of the DEEP network (Dementia Engagement and Empowerment Project) which introduced us to lots of other people living with dementia who were interested in our group and many of these people joined us online for our Zoom meetings.

Since the lifting of the Covid restrictions, we have continued to meet online and blend these meetings with the in-person meetings at the University of Bradford. The beauty of the online meetings is that we have maintained contact with our friends who live outside Bradford. Through our Zoom meetings, we have gained members who live in Stockport, Stoke-on-Trent, Wales and Kent and they've made all our lives richer for knowing them.

We now provide:

- A monthly in-person meeting at University of Bradford
- A monthly online meeting for all members
- Social activities
- An annual supported holiday
- Trips out
- Access to the Experts by Experience group at University of Bradford and opportunities to get involved in dementia research, training and education.



Library

We run a library of books relating to dementia.

Some of our books are reference books, giving information on all aspects of dementia. Some of the books are those written by people living with dementia themselves, or those who care for and support them. Other books in the library include novels which have a dementia focus or one of the characters' lives with dementia.

We share reviews by group members and encourage those who borrow the books to submit a review. If you wish to send us a review for one of the books you've borrowed from the library, please email it to pathwaysdementia@gmail.com

Alison, one of our volunteers' co-ordinates the library, please speak to her if you are interested.

Books can be borrowed for as long as needed but we will send you an email after one month as a gentle reminder to return any books borrowed.



