



Memory Hub Evaluation Executive Summary

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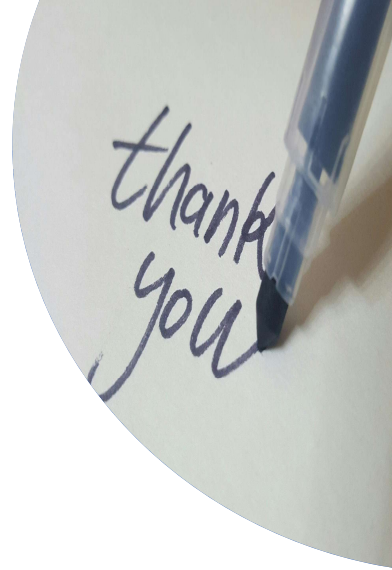
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Executive Summary

Background

Northamptonshire Healthcare Foundation Trust (NHFT) and Northamptonshire Carers, in association with the Alzheimer's Society Northamptonshire, considered ways that dementia care could be provided through a collaborative approach. As a result, a new Memory Support Hub Model, incorporating aspects of best practice from other community provision models (such as the Dutch Meeting Centre Support Programme and the University of Northampton (UON) UnityDEM Project (2018-2020) has been introduced to offer integrated care to individuals with a diagnosis of dementia and their family carers. Initially, the Memory Hubs include two sites, Corby and Northampton (2021 and 2022 respectively), but there was a longer-term goal to operate eight in different localities across Northamptonshire. The plan was for the Memory Assessment Service working collaboratively with Northamptonshire Carers to provide joined up post-diagnostic support. Since their inception, new sites have been set up around the county. This is a multi-agency provision which aims to provide a joined-up approach to the provision of community-based support and addresses an identified gap in service provision for those who have recently been diagnosed with dementia. Members are initially recruited via clinicians at the Memory Assessment Service, as being newly diagnosed but also engaging in Cognitive Stimulation Therapy and are physically well. The Memory Hub aims to provide support for those living with a diagnosis of dementia, through a community group that supports wellbeing, resilience and provides a better understanding of living with dementia. This approach is based on an integrated model of care that combines a psychosocial approach with input from health professionals, and fits within the Integrated Care across Northamptonshire. Sessions are delivered for 2hrs a week, with a minimum of two staff supporting up to 20 individuals per group. Signposting is also provided to other relevant services and support groups.

The University of Northampton was commissioned to undertake an evaluation of the Hubs, focusing on the initial two sites in Corby and Northampton, as these were the most established and acted as the flagship sites. The aim of the evaluation was to focus on the social support group element of the hub (known as the Oakley Vale and St Crispin Memory Clubs) by assessing how effective these groups are at improving the post-diagnostic psychosocial issues faced by individuals effected with a dementia diagnosis.

Aims of the Memory Hub evaluation

The aim of this project was to evaluate the Memory Hub as a concept with a focus on the delivery of the clubs at Oakley Vale and St Crispin. The evaluation explored attendance at each service through the routinely collected data and undertook qualitative data collection to understand what people's overall experience of attendance was. The existing services of the Living Well and cognitive stimulation therapy (CST) groups were not evaluated under this funding, these already being part of an extensive national evidence base.

Evaluation aims and objectives

The project aimed to evaluate the impact of the Memory Support Hub Model in helping to maintain the mental wellbeing, quality of life and independence of people living with the early stages of a dementia diagnosis. Further aims were:-

1. To explore the experience of attending a Memory Hub for people living with dementia and their family caregivers.

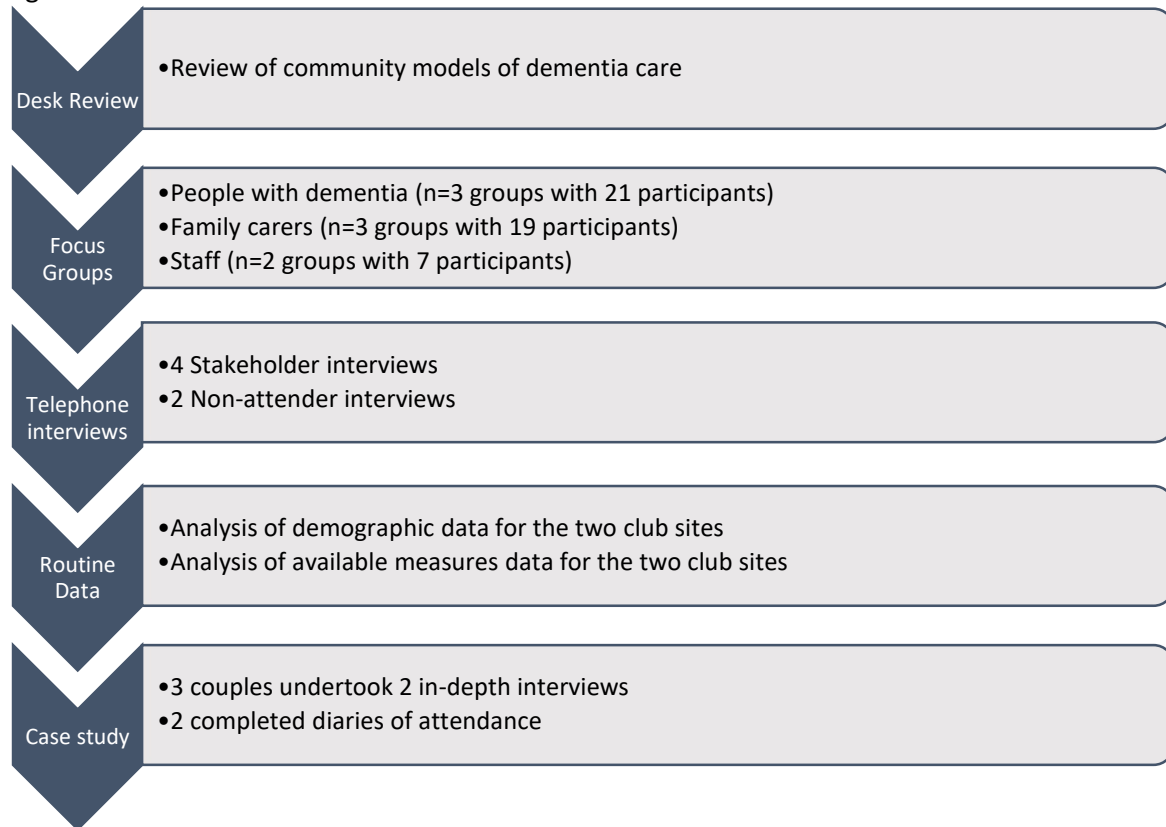


2. To identify whether the Memory Hub delivers cost-savings and positive social impact to the beneficiaries and commissioners.

Method

A mixed methods approach was adopted for this evaluation, with a qualitative dominance. The methods are summarised in Figure 1:-

Figure 1: Evaluation method



Key Findings

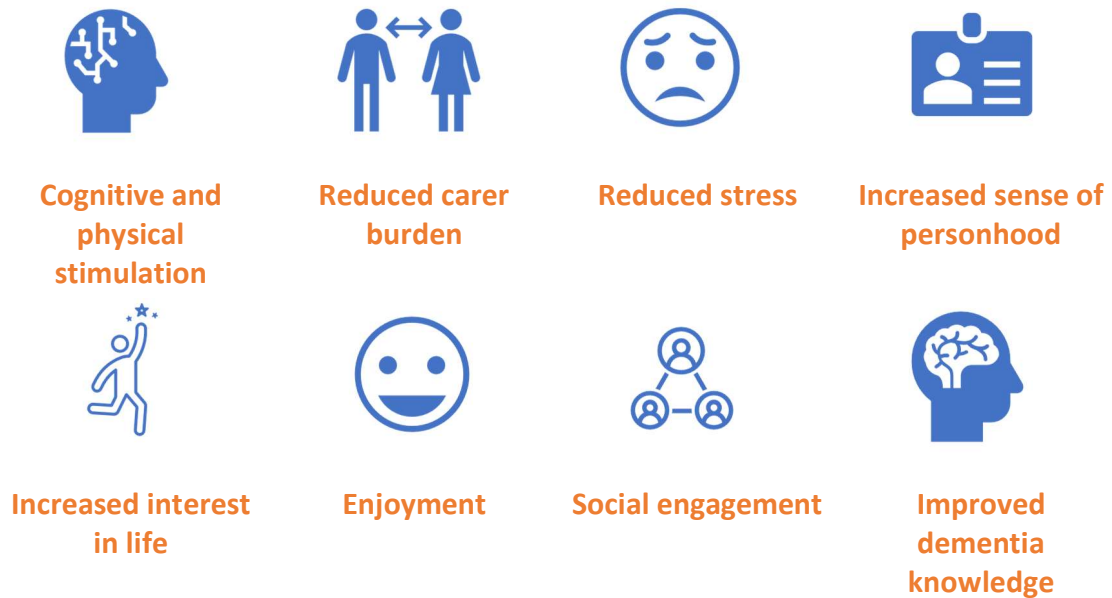
The aim of the Memory Hubs was to provide an integrated service which delivered a community psychosocial intervention alongside health and social care. This wrap around service is at the beginning of its journey to being delivered and still has several areas to consider and develop to reach its ultimate ambition. What is working well and has developed at pace is the delivery of the clubs across the county. The ethos of the Memory Hubs and their person-centred approach is key to their success to date, with staff delivering an interesting and structured programme that is tailored to the needs of the group. This evaluation focused on the original and most developed sites in Corby and Northampton. These clubs were evidenced to be working well overall and to be greatly relied upon by those attending the service.

Members Feedback

The overall report from members was that this was a valuable and much needed service for which it would be very difficult to manage without, although all the members spoke about their apprehension of attending initially. For those diagnosed with dementia the reason for this was primarily to support their social and cognitive function. For the family members, the Memory Hubs are providing a vital outlet that helps them to manage their roles as carers by being with others,

seeing their cared for person actively engaging in activities out of the house, supporting their knowledge of dementia and their relationships. There was also a genuine sense from members that they did not know where they would go to get similar support if not at the Memory Hub. The members did raise a review of the delivery of the service in terms of hours and activities. The key benefits for members are highlighted in Figure 2.

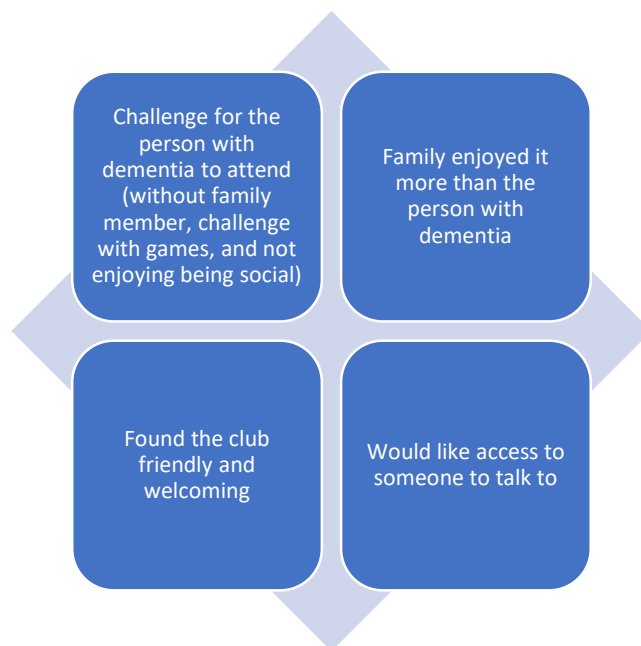
Figure 2: Member benefits of attending the Memory Hub



Non-members Feedback

Former members reported that they had enjoyed attending the Memory Hub, but that it had not been appropriate for their person with dementia. This varied with some of the activities not suiting some and others not enjoying the social aspects. The family found the support valuable and would have liked to continue to attend or have someone they could continue to speak with.

Figure 3: Non-member feedback

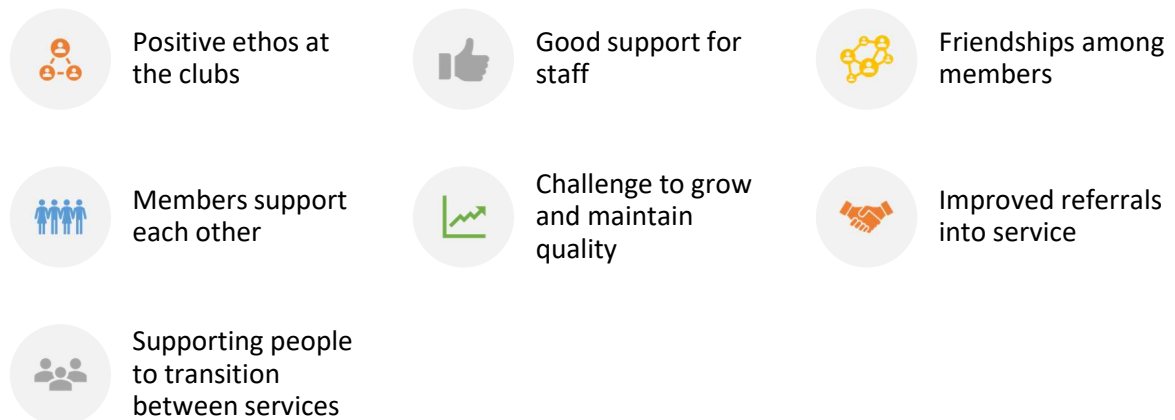


Staff Experiences

The staff reported finding personal and professional benefit from working at the Memory Hubs. They felt that the Hub's offer was supporting those who attended, and they could see the benefits through the friendships that were forming, their non-judgemental approach to each other and the way members were engaging more with the activities. Overall, they felt the Hub had a positive ethos that was welcoming, inclusive, person-centred, creative and flexible.

Some challenges were raised, which focused on the way the Hubs were growing and how the service could support more people without losing the quality of what had been achieved to date. This included a review of the referral approach and how people could be supported to transition out of the Memory Hub when it was no longer of benefit to them. While staff felt that they were able to manage such situations internally at present, there is the potential that this will be disruptive for current members and may require more specialised dementia skills and/or health care provision.

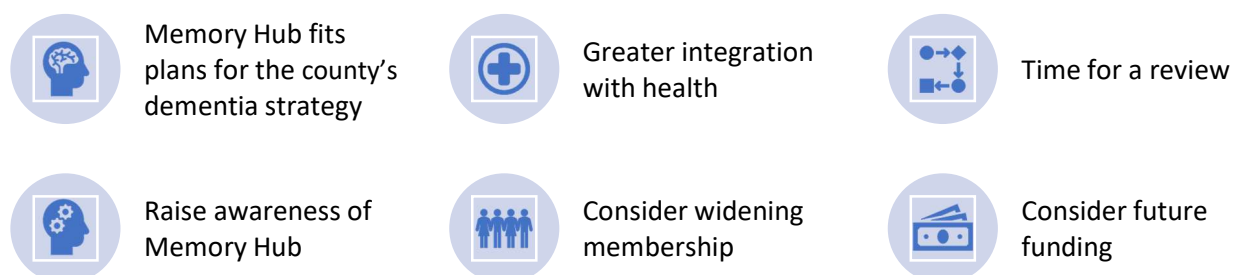
Figure 4: Staff feedback



Stakeholder Experience

The stakeholders considered the Memory Hub to have a good fit with the plans for the county's new dementia strategy and that it filled a gap in the provision of services for those who are newly diagnosed and living in the community. However, they identified that this evaluation provided a positive opportunity to review the progress to date and to explore ways that the service can be scaled up, and how it can be sustainable. This included consideration of widening the membership, future commissioning and greater integration with health services. Future funding was most likely to be from the Frailty Programme where greater opportunities were possible, or through potential member contributions.

Figure 5: Stakeholder experience



Cost and Service Review

Currently only anecdotal and verbal reports from Hub members are available to show how their attendance at the Hubs might reduce the impact on other services. The evaluation has identified that eight members called an ambulance or went into hospital since the Memory Hub's inception, although these instances were not necessarily related to their dementia.

While one of the key aims of the Memory Hubs is to reduce hospital admissions, it should be noted that due to Covid 19, the early referrals coming through to the Hubs included people who were three to four years post diagnosis. Recent evidence presented to the Ageing Well Programme Northamptonshire by the Transformation Lead for Integrated Care Across Northamptonshire Community Resilience (Ageing Well) Programme, has indicated that the Memory Hubs are seen to be contributing to the successful acute health outcomes, such as Emergency Department admissions. Benefits yet to be calculated include reduced GP time and reduced long term spend cost for complex home and 24 hr care packages as this data is not yet available.

A comparison of costs from a range of support and care models for people living with dementia and carers locates the Memory Hub as higher than some community-based interventions, but offers considerably more value for money than acute, residential or at home care.

Recommendations

The Memory Hub is a much-needed asset that aligns with the Northamptonshire Dementia Strategy. However, there was a sense that there needed to be a review of systems and progress to date that captured evidence surrounding the referral and recruitment of members, the cost benefit and impact of the hubs for commissioners, the routes to future commissioning of the Hubs, the inclusion of diagnostic processes, and the need to become more public facing and accessible to the wider community. This was acknowledged across the stakeholders and staff. This review also needs to consider how the Memory Hubs can grow to enable more people living with dementia and their families to access this service, especially those from different backgrounds, while also maintaining the quality of provision it has achieved to date. While the running of the Hub sites was largely positive, there was also discussion to review its offer, in terms of times of day, number of sessions delivered per week, and the potential to offer additional activities within the groups.

While the report has found that the Memory Hub may not be right for everyone, there are perhaps ways to promote the Hubs in different ways that show the positive benefits of attending. Working on the theories of positive framing, which suggests that the use of positive language and impacts can support decision making (Gong et al., 2013), the marketing of the Hub could reduce the potential anxieties that are faced by those deciding to attend. The use of a video or positive flyer/poster may support this decision process.

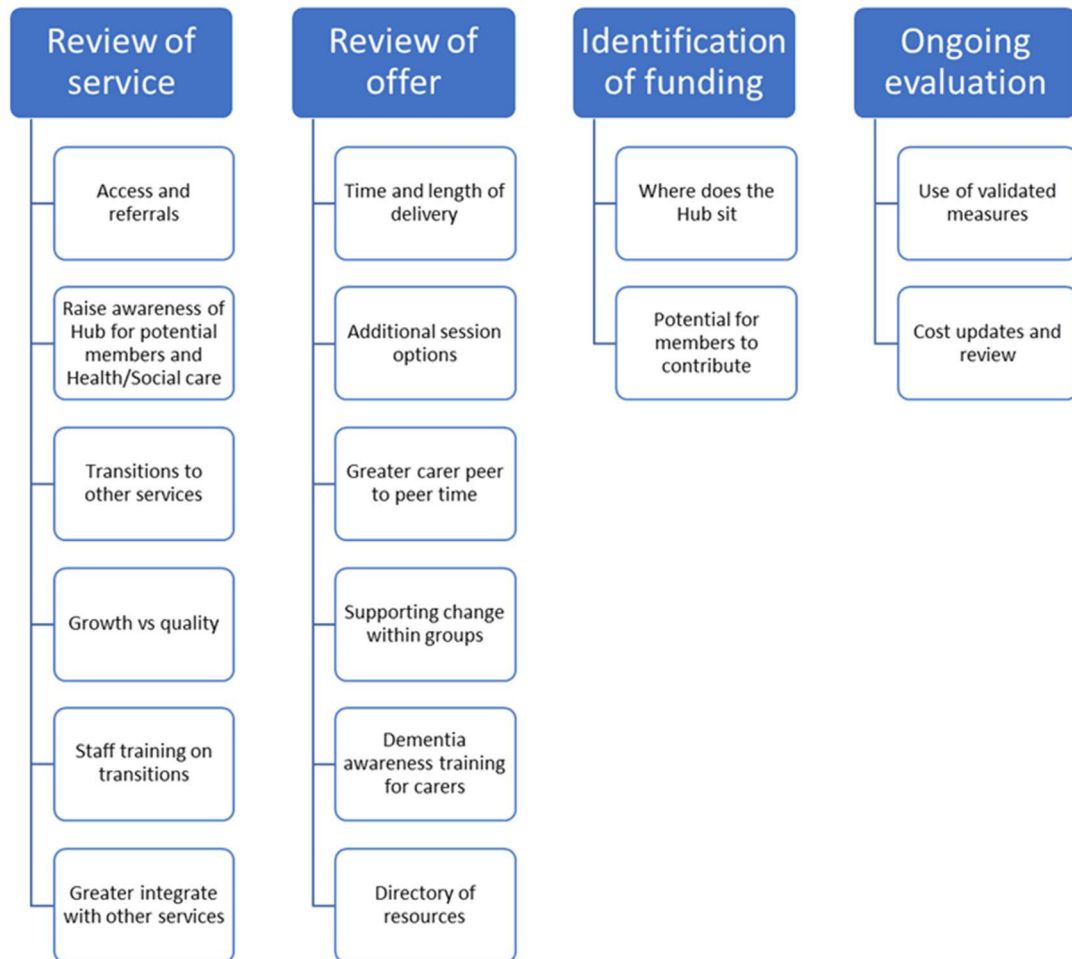
There is also a need to extend the 'wrap around' service to support those who can no longer benefit from attending the Hub. This should include consideration of how to transition members onto other more appropriate services when the Hub is identified as no longer meeting the needs of those whose dementia has deteriorated. Greater training for staff on how to manage these situations will support these changes and help them to support those in transition while also managing group dynamics and emotional response to the loss of group members and friends.

Finally, in order to secure further funding, there would need to be a robust business case, including funding strategies, staff development and training, and transition out of the Hub to appropriate

services. The business case should showcase the work while also highlighting the learning from the pilot, with a template for the service to be replicated elsewhere.

The benefits of the Hub have mainly been reported qualitatively, and recommendations will be made that systems are put in place to continue to collect quantitative data to add further evidence in the form of responses to validated measures. The recommendations for consideration are summarised in the following Figure 6:

Figure 6: Recommendations for Future Development



Conclusion

The Memory Hub was found to offer a unique service in Northamptonshire that is providing numerous benefits for those who attend and deliver the service. The uniqueness comes from the ability for family carers and the person living with dementia to attend together, reducing concerns and anxieties that can come with separation. The ongoing nature of this service is also unique as it is not time limited as some services (e.g. CST) are. The service also compliments the wider dementia care offer in the community by providing a different approach to community care. This service is valued and needed by those who attend and brings value for money in terms of its benefits, and when compared to similar service provisions. There is potential to deliver a more integrated dementia service, but this has yet to be fully realised. This evaluation identifies several key areas which would need to be addressed to support this ultimate goal, and if developed in the short to medium term, could support and further enhance the ongoing evolution of the Memory Hub.