

Summer 2025

Time for Dementia

brighton and sussex
medical school

Alzheimer's Society
**Time for
Dementia**

An Annual Update

This year marks 11 years of Time for Dementia – a programme that continues to lead the way in transforming dementia education for healthcare students. Now reaching over 10,000 students from medicine, nursing, and allied health professions, the programme has grown significantly in scale and impact. A major milestone this year was our expansion beyond southern England and into Northern Ireland, allowing us to engage even more students and families in this unique learning experience.

We've also continued to evolve and introduce new elements to enrich the programme. Our symposiums took on a new dimension this year with the introduction of creative reflections from students. We introduced informal virtual coffee mornings to bring participating families together in a relaxed setting, fostering community and connection, from this a

participating family opened their garden for local families to come together in person. Debs, Family Forum member said “We should be proud of the webinars, they've helped us feel like one big Time for Dementia family”.

A group of students inspired by the programme organised a sponsored walk in aid of Alzheimer's Society, raising £1,500 with help from their own families and friends.

A big thank you goes to all our participating universities, dedicated students, and—most importantly—our incredible families, who so generously give their time to share their lives and experiences. Their openness and generosity lie at the heart of Time for Dementia, shaping a generation of healthcare professionals with greater empathy, understanding, and respect for those living with dementia.



University Updates

Bournemouth University

This academic year has included the successful launch of Time for Dementia at Bournemouth University. Both Adult and Mental Health student nurses on our Registered Nursing Degree Apprenticeship (RNDA) and Master programmes, have participated in the programme and are just in the process of completing their final visits for this year. A range of positive feedback has been shared from the students, including how they have been able to develop their knowledge on dementia and the impact this diagnosis has on the person and their carer. Their feedback also suggests that experiences they have had so far, will shape their practice moving forward. We look forward to entering year 2 of the programme shortly and continue this positive work.

Brighton and Sussex Medical School

As we say goodbye to students who have just completed the programme, work is underway to prepare for our returning students and our 12th cohort of medical students in October. In April we held a virtual coffee morning where families got the chance to hear from a BSMS student about what they have learned from taking part in Time for Dementia. We have also just held our annual symposium, bringing together families and students who have

finished the programme and ran a creative competition for students to reflect on their Time for Dementia journey. The winning entries were excellent and very moving. One of our families also very kindly hosted a Time for Dementia garden party for other local families in June and fantastic few hours was spent chatting in the sunshine with cake.

University of Brighton

This year we reached the milestone of 1,000 mental health and adult nursing students who have participated in Time for Dementia since 2018. The programme continues to have a significant impact on their nursing journey. Students completing their visits described it as a truly special, insightful and inspiring experience. In the BSc Hons Physiotherapy programme, the 8th cohort completed three visits and 7th cohort completed their final visits. Students highlighted they have increased understanding of dementia and the different types. It has helped them consider communication strategies when working with people with dementia and families. Our graduating students commented that it was helpful preparation for practice – an ‘invaluable’ and ‘insightful’ learning experience.

University of Chichester

Engagement remains strong at the University of Chichester, with over 100 family visits completed since September 2023 by nursing

and physiotherapy students. Our first Time for Dementia Symposium took place on 4th June, bringing together families and nursing students to reflect on their shared experiences and celebrate learning from the programme. Student reflections continue to highlight the insight gained into living with dementia with positive feedback from families; one shared:



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“The students were lovely – we really enjoyed the visit and even had a good laugh together.” While the programme continues to thrive, there have been challenges, including variation in course visit windows, timely reflection submissions, and occasional delays in student communication which have served as useful learning.

University of Exeter

The University of Exeter has moved to an all virtual visit format and this June we held a celebration of learning event with the first cohort of students to complete this. For many the learning has been valuable with some of their comments including “I have learnt about a dementia I knew little about”, “I found the virtual visits initially a little difficult but as I became comfortable with the environment I was able to hear stories and ask questions without feeling my lack of knowledge was being judged”, “I wish we could do this for the whole of our training I am going to miss my Time for Dementia visits”. Moving to a fully virtual visit was not a decision we took lightly but the reflections the students have written does seem to support our decision.

Kent and Medway Medical School

Our inaugural cohort of medical students are set to graduate in September 2025. They will be taking their experience from Time for Dementia (2022-2023) into the NHS workforce, so thank you to all the families who hosted our students and shared your invaluable insights with them. One of our current 3rd year students, Lima, shared her thoughts: “... I reflected on how important it is to humanise the experience of families dealing with dementia. It was so much nicer to see these individuals in their own homes rather than in a clinical environment, where you don’t always truly appreciate their lived experiences. Our



Time for Dementia family were particularly warm and welcoming, and I am so grateful that they welcomed us into their home and gave us a glimpse into their lives.”

University of Portsmouth

The University of Portsmouth is coming to the end of its first year of the programme, and the last visit for this year took place in June. The first cohort has completed 3 visits during the academic year and we are in the process of gathering feedback on the student experience. Our 2nd cohort will begin Time for Dementia from September 2025 and work has already begun on the pairing of students with two preparatory sessions for this cohort timetabled to take place during the first weeks of September. The 2nd cohort will mean that we’ll have in excess of 80 student paramedics engaged in the programme with our first cohort due to complete their final visits by the end of April 2026.

University of Southampton

The first cohort of medical students have successfully completed the programme consisting of a virtual visit and four in person visits with families across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. A moving graduation event was held in March 2025 where students

were joined by two families involved in the programme, members of the Alzheimer's Society and key members of Faculty. Students showcased inspirational creative pieces representing their Time for Dementia journey, including poems, artwork, home made cakes and musical pieces. The second cohort of students have completed a virtual visit and 2 in person visits. The programme has been hugely successful with both families and students benefitting. Thank you to all the families across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight who make the programme possible.

University of Surrey

Students from Nursing, Paramedics, and Dietetics programmes continue to derive significant value from the Time for Dementia programme. It supports the development of person-centred communication skills, encourages students to challenge assumptions about dementia and ageing, and deepens understanding of the physical, emotional, and social impact of living with dementia. "Every time I meet a person living with dementia, I think of [the family I met] and the advice they shared. I see it made a real difference." Nursing Student. "This programme has bridged the gap between theoretical knowledge and compassionate care. It offered invaluable insight into the day-to-day realities of dementia and the importance of seeing the person beyond the diagnosis." Dietetics Student.

Ulster University

Time for Dementia is coming to Northern Ireland, and Ulster University is proud to begin delivering the programme from September 2025. This innovative initiative will be integrated into the BSc Adult Nursing and BSc Mental Health Nursing programmes at our Derry/Londonderry Campus. Students will gain real-world experience and deeper insight into dementia through regular visits with individuals and

families, starting in 2026. We believe Time for Dementia will positively shape our students' professional growth and strengthen their capacity to provide compassionate, high-quality care. This marks an important step in our ongoing commitment to enhance dementia education and shape a future workforce to better support people living with dementia and their carers in Northern Ireland.

University of West of England

What an amazing second year at the University of the West of England! Our first cohorts of mental health nurses and occupational therapists completed their two-year visits, ending with a joyful celebration. Students heard from families who shared their Time for Dementia experiences and also engaged in a creative reflection competition—Ewelina's winning sensory vase, adorned with hand-painted forget-me-nots, was a highlight. We wish these students every success and hope they carry their learning into person-centred practice. In September, we welcomed physiotherapy and paramedic students, along with second cohorts of Mental Health Nurses and Occupational Therapists. In May, our first virtual Afternoon Tea brought families together and introduced Debra, a student whose empathy and sensitivity truly impressed—just the kind of qualities we aim to nurture through the programme.



A Picture is worth a thousand words – A reflection on this year's symposiums

Symposiums have traditionally taken on the format of being in a lecture theatre followed by workshop activities as the family and students share their reflections on the visits from the last two years.

However, this year the format changed across several universities and students were asked to use the arts to create a reflective piece of their Time for Dementia experience. The results were astounding from poems to drawings, paintings and cakes to a heart wrenching piece of music that was created to reflect the person with dementia's upbringing in the troubled Northern Ireland and now his dementia, it brought a tear to everyone's eye.

One University took it one step further and asked the students and families to work in collaboration to create an image in the workshops. It was so lovely to see the families

being involved and students working alongside them, sharing both their experiences in their creative pieces.

These powerful, often moving contributions added depth to the day and highlighted the emotional and personal growth students gain through the programme. The saying 'a picture is worth a thousand words' was so true.



Annual research update

New findings

We are pleased to share that two new papers have been published, based on the findings from the evaluation of the Time for Dementia programme.

1. Student satisfaction

Students were asked to complete a survey once they had finished the programme to evaluate their satisfaction with the programme. The results from over 1,000 survey responses suggest that the majority of students were very positive about their Time for Dementia experience and felt that they had learnt more about the issues affecting people with dementia.

2. Experiences of dietetics

At the University of Surrey, dietetic students joined a two-year online Time for Dementia programme, regularly meeting virtually with

a person living with dementia and their carer. Fourteen students who completed the programme took part in focus groups to reflect on their learning. They reported a better understanding of life with dementia, improved skills for future practice, and insights into online learning. The study suggests virtual contact with people with dementia can be a valuable part of dietetic training.

“

...We all reflected on it... it kind of made us really sad that he had such a bad experience with the healthcare professionals that we all just didn't want to be that kind of healthcare professional when we qualify...”

Dietetic student

Researcher profile: Yvonne Feeney

We would like to congratulate Yvonne Feeney, TFD project manager at the Brighton and Sussex Medical School, on her near completion of her PHD research Project.

Yvonne wanted to understand how healthcare students learn to be more empathetic—that is, how they learn to understand and care about what someone with dementia is going through. To explore this, she reviewed 25 previous studies, interviewed 30 students twice over 18 months, and analysed survey responses from over 1,600 students.

Yvonne found that students' ability to show empathy was shaped by their personal values, how confident they felt handling emotions, their real-life experiences in care settings, and the role models they had during training. Some things made it harder for students to be empathetic—like not knowing enough about dementia, not having good support, or being afraid of emotional situations.

From this research, Yvonne has created a new model to explain how empathy develops over time in healthcare students. This model can

now be used to improve education and training, helping future healthcare workers give more compassionate, person-centred care to people living with dementia.



Keeping up to date with the research on Time for Dementia:

Research findings are regularly published on our website: Publications - BSMS

bit.ly/Info_Time_for_Dementia

Family Engagement Forum in Action: Connected, Committed, Making a Difference

It's been a big year for the Family Engagement Forum – a group of Time for Dementia participants helping to shape the programme. The Forum is a space where everyone's voice matters and real change begins.



For Mary, the group has been a source of strength. “It’s been a difficult year without Richard at home,” she shared, “but this has been a good forum to feel listened to and valued. We’ve all got first-hand experience to share, and this is a good channel for our energy.”

That energy has made a clear impact. “I feel very much a part of the direction Time for Dementia is going,” said Chris N. “It’s not just a case of being asked to comment – we’re involved from the ground up.” Whether reviewing documents or giving feedback, the Forum has been part of it all. “Our views are listened to – and that validates us. Even when we don’t all agree, there’s space to speak honestly. That’s what makes it worthwhile.”

Tom summed it up simply: “The biggest thing for me is feeling part of something – part of the decisions being made. I can’t remember every detail from the year, but the biggest difference is being surrounded by people – friends, now – who are likeminded and want to drive things forward.”

Heather shared how she and her family were welcomed. “We’ve enjoyed meeting the

other Forum members and the away day was a highlight. We’ve not shied away from challenges either, and I think we could go even further with family engagement in future.”

Debs reflected on what makes this Forum different. “In other groups I’ve been part of – in teaching or church, for example – it can feel like you’re there for the sake of it, to tick a box,” said Debs. “Here, everything we say is taken seriously. Even if something can’t happen straight away, it’s not forgotten. It’s clear we’re part of something meaningful.”

Tony kept his message clear: “You’re listening to us – and that’s really important. We’ve got the experience, and you’re taking it on board. Keep doing it.”

Zohra added, “I’ve learnt so much, and I’ve really enjoyed being part of the group. It’s such a supportive environment.”

And perhaps the most touching reflection came from Chris M: “When we meet the students, we build a real connection. That extends to the Time for Dementia staff, and everyone in the Forum. It’s really magical – especially at a time when people can feel so disconnected.”



The Forum continues to show the power of listening, sharing, and working together to shape the programme. A huge thank you to all our Forum members – the programme wouldn’t be the same without you.

Key contacts and getting in touch

Alzheimer's Society Contacts:

For questions about the Time for Dementia programme, your involvement or if you need advice and support contact Alzheimer's Society.

You can contact us by E-mail on **timefordementia@alzheimers.org.uk**

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T: **07562 430 204**

Rohan Charles, Project Manager
T: **07484 089 562**

Lauren Wonnacott, Project Manager
T: **07713 779 582**

Thabrez Khan, Manager
T: **07355 021 307**

New enquiries:

If you would like further information about implementing Time for Dementia within your training course please contact:

Thabrez Khan, Manager
E: **timefordementia@alzheimers.org.uk**

Research:

Our research findings are regularly published on our website:

http://bit.ly/Time_for_dementia

For questions about the research or how your data is used and stored, contact The Research Team.

Dr Stephanie Daley
E: **s.daley@bsms.ac.uk**

You can keep up to date with the Time for Dementia Team Follow us on X:

 **@Time4Dementia**

If you require this booklet in larger text, if you no longer wish to receive this annual newsletter, or would like to change your preferences of receiving by email or post, please let us know by contacting Senior Time for Dementia Co-ordinator Bik-Kay Talbot

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