

Wicklow Dementia Support Annual Report 2020

Wicklow Dementia Support (WDS) is a voluntary organisation, which supports people with dementia in Co Wicklow to continue to engage in their interests and activities and remain living in their home for as long as they wish. The organisation is registered with the Charity Regulator Authorities (RCN 20081539) and complies with their Governance code.

Wicklow Dementia Support delivered the following services from August 2019-to July 2020

- *AlzPals*, a befriending service providing a “compatible companion” for the person with dementia, while also giving a short break for the family carer. Volunteer AlzPals are recruited, Garda vetted and participate in a training course prior to being ‘matched’ to a person with dementia. They meet with the person with dementia once a week for approximately two hours. At the end of this reporting period, there were 24 people with dementia being supported by an AlzPal and seven AlzPals ready to be matched once COVID restrictions are lifted. This programme is grant aided by the HSE.
- *Meet and Eat* is a social eating programme part of the Healthy Ireland initiative being delivered through Local Community Development Committee. It is funded by the Department of Health via Pobal. Meet and Eat targets older adults who are socially isolated, living alone and in particular those who are vulnerable due to physical, mental, or cognitive impairment. Volunteers are recruited to assist with menu planning, preparing simple nutritious meals and providing companionship at mealtimes once a week in the older person’s home in the Arklow area. Volunteers receive training and Garda Vetting. This is an 8 week intervention programme. There were eight older people receiving this service in March 2020, when the programme had to be suspended due to COVID. However, some of the volunteers continued to drop meals, have a doorstep chat or phone call clients.
- *AlzClubs* are social clubs for people with dementia and their family carers run once a week in Bray and Wicklow Town. They are led by volunteers and provide friendship, support, information and activities. Fundraising and donations cover room hire, refreshments and any other costs. Both clubs have an average attendance of 10 people (includes person with dementia and their family supporter). They are currently suspended due to COVID restrictions. The social clubs are funded via donations and fundraising events.
- *Musical Memories* facilitates people with dementia and their family supporter to engage in musical activities including the dementia choir. It is led by volunteers and takes place on Friday morning in Greystones. Approximately twenty people take part in the weekly sessions (it takes place virtually since COVID restrictions). In 2020, Wicklow Dementia Support successfully applied and received funding from the HSE Dormant Accounts grant to pay for a choir leader for Musical Memories.
- *Carer Support groups* for family carers. These two peer support groups meet on a monthly basis in Newtownmountkennedy and Greystones and are led by a trained volunteer facilitator. The focus is on the members themselves and the format is informal. A cup of tea/coffee rounds off each meeting. There are regular short presentations on some aspect of interest and guidance is always available. Since COVID, support has been provided online. On average eight people attend each group. Room rental and refreshments are covered by donations and fundraising.
- *Bereavement Support Group (BSG)* provides once a month counseling and support to family carers who have experienced loss. The group is facilitated by professional counselor on a pro

bono basis. On average seven people attend. Due to COVID support was offered to those who required it via phone calls. Cost of room rental covered by donations and fundraising.

WDS is small charity with a board of five volunteer directors. It is managed and run in the main by our 50 volunteers. It has a contract with registered social worker to coordinate and provide training for the AlzPals and Meet and Eat volunteers. It has no employees.

The directors have submitted the financial statements of the company for the year ended 31 July 2020.

The surplus for the year amounted to €24,640 (July 19 – €25,695) based on a turnover figure of €57,795 (July 19 – €79,015).

Chairperson Marita O'Brien