

## THE DEMENTIA CHALLENGE.

Dementia is a common condition which affects about 800,000 people in this Country. It is estimated that there are 67,000 dementia sufferers across Sussex Surrey and Kent alone, so the problem is a huge one, and one which will be a challenge in the future because people are living longer.

## SO WHAT IS DEMENTIA?

Dementia occurs as a result of the death of brain cells or damage in part of the brain that deal with the thought processes.

Dementia is a decline in mental ability which, to name a few, affects memory, thinking, problem solving, concentration and perception but can also cause aggression and depression.

Dementia mainly affects older people but there is a growing awareness of cases starting before the age of 65 (known as “young onset dementia”). In Kent there are approximately 400 people currently estimated to have young onset dementia. However, it is thought the prevalence of early onset dementia could be up to three times higher as it is often missed or undiagnosed.

Over 19,500 people aged over 65 are estimated to have dementia in Kent, but 2020 it is predicted that this figure will increase to 24,314 with nearly 6,000 people being over the age of 90.

## SO WHAT CAN WE DO AS A LOCAL AUTHORITY AND HOW CAN WE GET INVOLVED?

We can support older people by keeping them safe so that they can lead independent and fulfilled lives. Meet the housing needs of people living in the District including affordable and appropriate housing. Provide support for people with mental illness and raise awareness of mental health issues.

Cllr Faye Parkin

Having recently been given the privilege of being made “lead member for older people” on HACS this is my challenge, a challenge for which I intend to meet by working closely with my colleagues, Housing, Planning, Community Safety, RACDV, Age UK, the NHS and all other relevant partnerships.

UPDATE – 26th March 2015.

Attended Dementia Friendly Session SDC 7<sup>th</sup> February 2015

Attended Swanley Dementia Meeting, Orchard Academy, Swanley. 5<sup>th</sup> March 2015 – FYI - meeting notes attached.

Attended Housing/Planning sub group meeting SDC 9<sup>th</sup> March 2015.

Attended Dementia Action Alliance meeting SDC – 17<sup>th</sup> March 2015 – FYI - meeting notes attached.