

## DEMENTIA CARE PRACTICE

## An Integrated Approach to Dementia Support: Sage House

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## Abstract

The rising prevalence of dementia, economic costs and growing demand on secondary care services has highlighted the need to start evaluating how we support individuals with dementia and their care givers (Wittenberg et al., 2019). In 2016 the World Alzheimer's report recommended a shift to post-diagnostic support services being based in primary and community led care (Prince et al., 2016). As outlined in the WHO global action plan these services need to be accessible, integrated and comprehensive, empowering people with dementia to live in the community for longer (World Health Organisation, 2017).

A model of support that meets this directive is an Integrated Dementia Support Approach (IDSA), exemplified by a centre called Sage House. Sage House is an integrated hub for dementia support, offering a range of services for individuals with dementia and caregivers that spans across the dementia journey from diagnosis to day care. This provision includes access to assessment, information, cognitive and social enrichment, and care services in one carefully designed setting.

In order to gain a better understanding of the potential of IDSA, a series of research projects were co-designed with Dementia Support as part of their National Ambition Programme. Three research projects were developed to examine the impact of this integrated approach on outcomes such as wellbeing, quality of life and health economics. The first of these studies is a mixed-method exploratory service evaluation, that combines survey and interview methods to understand the lived experience of attending Sage House for individuals with dementia and caregivers.

Overall, the integrated approach was rated highly, with participants highlighting how the approach was practical and helped to reduce stress. This included reducing the load related to locating services and optimising time by being able to access multiple services in the same visit. Moreover, the continuity helped to facilitate the development of friendships and a sense of familiarity and safety. The evaluation also gave insight into how this innovative approach can impact well-being, quality of life and engagement with health and social care services. Findings are discussed in light of the potential of this impactful integrated approach to Dementia care.

**Table 1**

*Example Quotation from the Evaluation of Sage House*

Individuals with Dementia	Caregivers
"I enjoy all the atmosphere, <b>friendship</b> and <b>knowledge.</b> "	"From my very first encounter, I knew I was in a very <b>safe supported place.</b> "
"I like the integrated approach - It helps to chat, <b>make friends</b> "	"Caring for someone with dementia is very hard & to have access to help of all kinds in one place <b>makes it much less stressful</b> "
"I love coming here. <b>home from home.</b> "	" <b>Can link several things in one visit</b> (e.g., haircut/ lunch then afternoon activity). <b>Makes better use of time and travelling.</b> "