This year’s Dementia Awareness Week took place between 15th and 21st May. Partners worked together to develop a full and varied programme of events, from information stands to themed tea parties, coffee mornings to dementia friendly exercise classes and sing-a-long walks to The Great British Bake Off!

To mark the start of the week on Sunday, Doncaster Museum and Art Gallery hosted a Dementia Friendly Museum Tour. Those living with dementia and their carers were given the opportunity to have a free tour of the museum, enjoy a cup of tea and handle some of the original reminiscence artefacts.

From Monday, the Doncaster Culture and Leisure Trust (DCLT) promoted the message that keeping active is important for brain health as well as heart health by offering free entry to various activity sessions throughout the week. Activities included Primetimers, walking football, Aquafit and indoor curling.

Matt Windass from the Workforce Development Team at Doncaster Council delivered 12 Dementia Friends Sessions throughout the week from Monday to Friday, to staff members at the council. The sessions aimed to increase awareness of the condition and offer advice and support to those who attended. All sessions were well attended and well received with 106 members of staff signing up to become Dementia Friends.

In addition to the DF sessions, an information stand was erected in the Civic Office on the Monday and Wednesday of Dementia Awareness Week providing staff with further information and useful resources. A member of the Doncaster Admiral Service was on hand on the Wednesday to provide specialist advice and support and promote the work they are doing.

Alzheimer’s Society Central Dementia Café took place at the Trades Club in the Frenchgate Centre on the Monday morning. Their usual Memory Cafes and Singing for the Brain sessions continued throughout the week in various locations across the borough.

The Mallard Ward at Doncaster Royal Infirmary kicked off a week of activities with a 1950’s themed day for patients on the ward and their family members. Staff dressed up in 50’s style clothing, patients were able to get their hair and nails done and eat cakes whilst watching Gene Kelly. This proved so popular, the ward have decided to put on a themed day every month! Mallard Ward hosted an array of other activities throughout the week including; a cake stall and information stand, a Musical Morning with live music, a 6 Mile fundraising walk from DRI to Benton House in Rossington, finishing off the week’s events with a Family Fun Day to remember at The Cumberland on the Saturday. The week’s events raised a fantastic £1801.79 which will be put towards an Activities Equipment Library for all patients to use at DRI.
The Faith Community showed their support by giving their monthly Community Lunch at St Andrew’s Church a dementia theme. Information and a variety of resources were made available to members of the group.

The Doncaster Admiral Service hosted an information stand at Tesco, Woodfield Way in Balby to promote their new service which aims to support those with a diagnosis of dementia and their carers. The team were out again the following day with a stall outside Primark in Doncaster Town Centre. Armthorpe Community Library and Thorne Library worked in partnership with the DMBC Wellbeing Team and Healthwatch Doncaster to each run a Dementia Awareness Coffee Morning. Visitors were able to find out more about dementia and the services available in Doncaster to support those living with dementia.

On the Tuesday, Doncaster College played host to the 2016 Dementia Celebration Event “Getting There” – Progress one year on. The event brought together 110 delegates including people living with dementia and their carers and representatives from various partner organisations and businesses.

The aim of the day was to celebrate the work which has taken place since the launch of the initial “Getting There” Strategy in March 2015, to understand more about dementia and promote and encourage participation in dementia research.

The day included presentations from various guest speakers; Professor Clare Surr from Leeds Beckett University, Wendy Mitchell who was diagnosed with young onset dementia at the age of 49 and Clive Nicholson, Senior Research Nurse from NIHR Clinical Research Network. Roy Barnes, Commissioning Officer at Doncaster Council along with Mayor David Nevett and Cllr Pat Knight, Chair of H&WBB presented the first ever Doncaster Dementia Awards.

Winner of the individual award went to Eileen Harrington for her continual contribution to supporting people with the dementia and promoting awareness of the condition. The organisation accolade was awarded to Aspiring2 for their vintage tea parties. The awards proved a huge success and have already been confirmed for next year!

Other highlights at the Celebration Event included Doncaster Community Arts’ performance of ‘Unlocking Dementia’, music from Lost Chord and a personal message from Emmerdale actor and Alzheimer’s Society Ambassador Duncan Preston.

Several other activities took place across the borough on Tuesday including an open day at Making Space’s Day Centre in Bentley and a dementia themed Keeping Safe Forum at the Doncaster Deaf Trust. 18 members attended the
forum, taking away a range of helpful resources including the Herbert Protocol form.

On **Wednesday** morning, members of staff Sue Ryder took service users and individuals living with dementia from the Hayfield resource Hub on a ‘Stroll-a-Song’ walk around Sandall Park. A total of 25 people joined in the walk around the park, singing a variety of well-known songs from the musicals and the 60’s.

Making Space held the second of their open days, this time at The Crimpsall Day Centre in Hexthorpe. Those attending were also able to take part in a Dementia Friends Information to increase their knowledge and understanding of the condition.

Wednesday also saw the launch of DCLT’s two mile dementia Friendly Memory Walk around Doncaster Lakeside. This is something DCLT hope to continue on a regular basis.

Northfield Surgery based at The Vermuyden Centre in Thorne also joined in the fun by hosting a ‘Great British Bake Off’. The impressive selection of cakes were judged by Michele Clarke from Doncaster Clinical Commissioning Group and Eileen Harrington, Founder of DonMentia and Organiser and Chair of the Dementia Forum. An information stand was also available for patients attending the surgery who wanted to find out more about dementia and the support and services available in Doncaster.

**Thursday** was another jam packed day of events. Making Space hosted an Activities Day at Sandalwood Day Centre in Wheatley Hills.

Staff at Windemere Lodge treated patients to a 1950’s themed Tea Party with an array of sandwiches, pastries, scones and cupcakes for all to enjoy, whilst listening to hit songs from the decade.

Stainforth Community Library ran an Information and Coffee morning The Wellbeing team, Sue Ryder and staff and volunteers at the Holmescarr Cafe in Rossington put on afternoon tea with a 1940’s theme for those living with dementia and their carers.
Members of staff at Doncaster Clinical Commissioning Group ran a raffle and cake stall whilst taking part in the Alzheimer’s Society initiative ‘Denim for Dementia’. Colleagues ditched their every-day uniform to wear denim in the fight against dementia. Doncaster Council also joined in the initiative and encouraged staff to don their denim for ‘Dress Down Friday’ on the last Friday of May. Both these events helped to raise a total of £231.50 for the Alzheimer’s Society.

The Society were also presented with a 12 year record breaking cheque for £1940 as a result of all DCCG led DAW activities. The funds raised will go towards supporting activities at local dementia cafes.

Colleagues from Darts at The Point delivered two performances of ‘Unlocking Dementia’ to members of the Doncaster Deaf Community and staff at Home Instead Senior Care. The interactive performance based on real peoples experiences of living in Doncaster with dementia aims to change the way people understand condition and an alternative and innovative different way.

Sue Ryder Community Friends Group organised a ‘Remember When?’ reminiscence event at their Scott Lane store where customers were shown various photographs and reminiscence packs, prompting chats about past holidays, transport, toys and home life. The event attracted 15 attendees throughout the day.

One of Thursday’s highlights was the Technology Expo held at The Trades Club in the Frenchgate Centre. The event lead by Roy Barnes, DMBC Commissioning Officer, showcased a variety of assistive technology from 10 organisations around the UK which aim to help people with dementia to live safely in their own homes.

Around 60 people attended the event, including those living with dementia and their carers and representatives from various local partner organisations and community groups. The event received excellent feedback from both attendees
and exhibitors with some real interest in trialling some of the products in the future.

On Friday morning Woodlands Community Library and hub held a coffee morning to raise funds for dementia. Marilyn Cockett from Inspire came to speak to customers about the condition and the services they provide. Visitors were also got the chance to listen to a personal inspirational story from local author Carol Higgins, buy a variety of gifts and treats from local traders including crafts the Library’s very own Krafty Korner. Volunteers, residents and local shops all donated prizes to the raffle and coffee, tea, cakes and buns were available for a small donation. Overall, the Coffee Morning raised a fantastic £175.30.

The weather managed to stay fine for the Tea Party at the Walled Garden in the grounds of St Catherine’s House, Balby. Tea, coffee, scones and cakes were on offer and visitors were able to visit the recently opened Dementia Garden funded by the Doncaster Dementia Strategic Partnership.

Hallcross Medical teamed up with Doncaster Rotary Club on the RDaSH Health Bus at Clock Corner on the Friday and Saturday of Dementia Awareness Week. The team offered health checks and blood pressure checks to eligible members of the public as part of their work to raise awareness around reducing the risk of dementia. 208 blood pressure checks and 56 full health checks were taken over the two day period.

Positive Steps in Bentley finished off Dementia Awareness Week on Saturday 21st May with a fun filled exercise coffee morning. Staff were encouraged to wear denim and donate £2 as part of ‘Denim for Dementia’. Denim flowers with poems attached were sold alongside a tombola and raffle. A total of just under £400 was raised, which will be divided between Alzheimers Society and the Positive Step Garden fund.

The Doncaster Dementia Strategic Partnership would like to thank everyone for their time, energy and commitment in making this year’s Dementia Awareness Week a great success.