



Alzheimer Scotland
Action on Dementia

*Making sure nobody faces
dementia alone*

December 2014 NEWSLETTER

Edinburgh Branch

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St LEONARD'S St NEWS

It's hard to believe that we are approaching the end of another year but the calendar and the early darkness tell me it's so. I know that dull days and long hours of darkness can bring additional difficulties for many carers and people with dementia, so please don't forget that Alzheimer Scotland's 24 Freephone Helpline is there if you want any support or just the chance to talk to someone. Just call **0808 808 3000**.

It's been a relatively quiet time for the Edinburgh Branch and the challenge of recruiting new volunteers to a very quiet office has never been more real. I wrote last year (September 2013) of my hope that Edinburgh could develop a Dementia Resource Centre. This really would give a visible and more cohesive identity to Alzheimer Scotland in Edinburgh and I know the Branch would be a very valuable and willing partner. With the support of Ruth McCabe (Deputy Regional Manager) we are renewing our efforts to achieve this. I sincerely believe that what the Branch provided in its early days is now available through so many other routes: Dementia Advisor, link workers, and Helpline and this means decreased public contact with the Branch. We now have to find a different purpose and focus. We want to remain a voice and support for people with dementia and their carers and families in Edinburgh as the Branch has been for over 30 years but I believe that this has to be as part of a more visible presence of Alzheimer Scotland in Edinburgh. Please let me know your thoughts on this.

Alzheimer Scotland's mission is 'making sure nobody faces dementia alone'. As ever, if you have ideas how we might do this better, please let us know. Please contact the office with your telephone number and I will return your call.

Barbara Mitchelmore, Branch Chair

INTRODUCING OTs

I'm one of the occupational therapists (OTs) who works in the North Community Mental Health Team for Older People, based at the Royal Edinburgh Hospital. There is also a South Team. A major part of my job is to visit people, usually in their own homes, who have a diagnosis of dementia.

Some of the main areas in which I can help are: **improving safety in the home/carrying out risk assessments**. I can refer for Telecare Services (such as pendant alarms, falls monitors, cooker isolation packages) and advise people on how to stay safe and as independent as possible. **adapting the home environment** to make life easier by advising on/referring for suitable adaptations and equipment which can often be provided on loan from the Community Equipment Service (CES).

advising carers/partners on how to engage the person with dementia in purposeful activity such as continuing to carry out household tasks, attending an activity group together. This helps to maintain skills and routines.

providing practical advice on how to cope with the effects memory problems can have on lifestyle. In the Memory Skills Group (run at various times during the year) we have a different theme each week and there are opportunities to practise some new strategies and techniques. Topics may include: habits and routines, use of memory aids, communicating with others and remembering names.

helping people to access other services and organisations which could be particularly relevant to them and providing information.

If you think that you/your partner/person you care for would benefit from seeing an OT please speak to your GP in the first instance.

Allison Littlejohn, Occupational Therapist