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The evaluation of a meeting centre in a hospital

Submission date
29/07/2025

Recruitment status
Recruiting

Registration date
19/08/2025

Overall study status
Ongoing

Last Edited
04/08/2025

Condition category
Nervous System Diseases

[ ] Prospectively registered
[ ] Protocol
[ ] Statistical analysis plan
[ ] Results
[ ] Individual participant data
[ ] Record updated in last year

Plain English summary of protocol

Background and study aims
Meeting Centres are local resources designed to support people living with mild to moderate dementia and their families adjust to the changes that a dementia diagnosis can bring. They offer ongoing expert and peer support and social opportunities, ordinarily operating out of community buildings. There is good evidence of the benefits of Meeting Centres, and there are now around 70-80 Meeting Centres across the UK. Being admitted to a hospital can have distressing and detrimental impacts on the health and wellbeing of people with dementia. Recent experiences of an expert by experience and Chair of Meeting Centres Scotland led to the development of the Meeting Centre in Hospital project. This study's principal research objective is to gain a better understanding of the facilitators and barriers to implementing a Meeting Centre within a hospital setting, and the impact the Meeting Centre has on the people living with dementia who attend, members of staff and visitors. NHS Tayside granted funding to Meeting Centres Scotland to develop and embed the first Meeting Centre within a hospital setting, namely The Royal Victoria Hospital, Dundee. This is a two-year study commissioned to explore the impact of the Meeting Centre on the hospital experience for people living with dementia, their visitors, and the clinical and Meeting Centre staff supporting them. It will also explore the process of setting up and running a hospital-based Meeting Centre to help similar initiatives in the future.

Who can participate?
Patients living with dementia who attend or have attended the Meeting Centre at the Royal Victoria Hospital, Dundee; staff, students, or volunteers involved in its delivery; family members or visitors of attendees; or clinical staff supporting people with dementia during their hospital stay.

What does the study involve?
The study will collect hospital metrics data across two wards identified as having a high number of patients who attend the Meeting Centre. The metrics will look at hospital stay duration, readmission rates, and instances of stress and distress before and after the Meeting Centre opened. Participants will be invited to complete surveys about their physical and emotional wellbeing to see the impact of attending the Meeting Centre. Interviews will be conducted with people attending the Meeting Centre and their family members/visitors to explore their experiences in greater detail. The study will also be capturing the views of clinical staff, students and Meeting Centre staff through focus groups and a survey.

What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?
Benefits:
By taking part in this research, participants will have the opportunity to reflect on and discuss their experiences and opinions regarding attending a Meeting Centre in the hospital. People living with dementia and their family carers/visitors will be able to reflect on any previous experiences of being in hospital if they wish, and how their experience when attending a Meeting Centre has differed. For some, speaking about their experiences may enable them to feel heard and listened to.

Clinical members of staff will be given the opportunity to reflect on and speak about their experiences of supporting people living with dementia and discuss their views on what the Meeting Centre has and can bring to patient experience and their job role. All research participants will have the opportunity to provide feedback as to how they feel the Meeting Centre can be enhanced for the future.

The research ultimately aims to support the most effective running of a Meeting Centre in a hospital and support other people living with dementia during their hospital stay. The findings from the research will be applicable beyond this single Meeting Centre, and could improve the process of establishing hospital-based Meeting Centres across the UK. Hence, participants will have the knowledge that they are playing a part in helping others, which can help boost self-esteem and a feeling of agency. All participants in the research will be provided with a list of support groups, networks and resources to approach and access if they require.

Risks:
Participants will be told that they do not have to answer any question they are not comfortable with and may ask to move on, pause the interview or stop the interview and leave the discussion at any time. Researchers leading the interviews and discussions will also be on alert for any signs of distress. If there is any sign of discomfort with a sensitive or personal topic that is not necessary to discuss, researchers will automatically move the conversation on to a topic that is less personal or sensitive. Participants will undertake the interviews and discussions within the Meeting Centre setting, with Meeting Centre staff on hand to help if they do become distressed or upset. If questions and concerns are raised that go beyond the research questions, researchers will provide participants with the contact details of further support.

Where is the study run from?
The Meeting Centre is based at the Royal Victoria Hospital, Dundee, NHS Tayside.

When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?
July 025 to December 2026

Who is funding the study?
This project is funded by the NHS Tayside Charitable Foundation through the McKenzie Legacy Award, granted to Meeting Centres Scotland. An evaluation of the Meeting Centre is being carried out in collaboration with the Association for Dementia Studies to evaluate the impact of the Meeting Centre.

Who is the main contact?
Dr Shirley Evans, Association for Dementia Studies, University of Worcester, shirley.evans@worc.ac.uk

Contact information

Type(s)
Public, Scientific, Principal investigator

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Integrated Research Application System (IRAS)
357118

Study information

Scientific Title
The evaluation of a meeting centre in a hospital: supporting people living with dementia during their hospital stay

Acronym
EMCH

Study objectives
To gain a better understanding of the facilitators and barriers to implementing a Meeting Centre within a hospital setting, and the impact the Meeting Centre has on the people living with dementia who attend, members of staff and visitors.

Ethics approval required
Ethics approval required

Ethics approval(s)
Approved 10/07/2025, Scotland A REC (Bath Street, Glasgow, G2 4JR, United Kingdom; +44 (0) 1314655680; Manx.Neill@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk), ref: 25/SS/0048

Primary study design
Observational

Study design
Mixed methods study

Study type(s)
Other, Quality of life

Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied
Supporting people living with dementia during their hospital stay

Interventions
Phase 1 - Research preparation

Phase 2 - Data collection
- Weekly reporting of demographic, attendance and engagement data
- Monthly hospital metrics from two wards, looking at hospital stay duration, readmission rates, and instances of stress and distress
- Repeated health and wellbeing measures – people attending the Meeting Centre with the capacity to provide informed consent will be invited (and supported where necessary) by Meeting Centre staff to complete the health and wellbeing measures upon joining the Meeting Centre and at approximately six-week intervals while they are still in hospital
- One-off interviews with optional case studies – people attending the Meeting Centre and their family member/visitor will be invited to take part in an interview at one of two time points during the study
- One-offsurveys – family members/visitors will be invited by the Meeting Centre staff to complete a short experience survey
- Staff focus groups
- Staff surveys

Phase 3 –Analysis to explore emerging findings and final reporting

Intervention Type
Other

Primary outcome(s)
Impact of the Meeting Centre on people attending, measured via the changes in health and wellbeing using the EuroQol health-related quality of life questionnaire (EQ-5D) and the short version of the Warwick–Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS) at baseline, repeated every 6 weeks

Key secondary outcome(s)
1. Reach of the Meeting Centre – the number of people supported by the Meeting Centre measured using data collected in weekly summary booklet
2. Impact of the Meeting Centre on clinical outcomes - changes in hospital stay duration and readmission rates measured using data collected from medical records, and instances of stress and distress through ward level data on key wards at 6 months prior to Meeting Centre opening, monthly
3. The benefits of the Meeting Centre for people with dementia, family members/visitors, staff, and the wider patient group/hospital measured using qualitative data captured during interviews and case studies at 9 & 18 months, focus groups at 9 & 18 months, and surveys ongoing for duration of study

Completion date
31/12/2026

Eligibility

Key inclusion criteria
1. Is over the age of 18
2. A patient at the Royal Victoria Hospital, Dundee, who is living with dementia, who is attending or has attended the Meeting Centre located within the hospital.
3. A member of Meeting Centre Staff, student or volunteer involved in the delivery/running of the Meeting Centre.
4. Is a family member or visitor to someone living with dementia who attends or has attended the Meeting Centre, who is a patient at the Royal Victoria Hospital (RVH) in Dundee
5. A member of clinical staff who works at The Royal Victoria Hospital, Dundee, whose work involves supporting people living with dementia during their hospital stay.

Participant type(s)
Patient, Health professional, Carer, Employee, Service user

Healthy volunteers allowed
No

Age group
Mixed

Lower age limit
18 Years

Upper age limit
110 Years

Sex
All

Key exclusion criteria
1. Is under the age of 18
2. Is not a patient living with dementia who is attending or has attended the Meeting Centre located within the hospital
3. Is not a member of Meeting Centre staff, student or volunteer involved in the delivery /running of the Meeting Centre
4. Is not a family member or visitor to a patient living with dementia who attends or has attended the Meeting Centre at the Royal Victoria Hospital, Dundee

Date of first enrolment
01/08/2025

Date of final enrolment
31/12/2026

Locations

Countries of recruitment
United Kingdom

Scotland

Study participating centre
NHS Tayside
Kings Croos
Clepington Road
Dundee
United Kingdom
DD3 8EA

Sponsor information

Organisation
University of Worcester

ROR
https://ror.org/00v6s9648

Funder(s)

Funder type
Charity

Funder Name
NHS Tayside Charitable Foundation - McKenzie Legacy Award

Results and Publications

Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan
The datasets generated during and/or analysed during the current study are/will be available upon request from Dr Shirley Evans, shirley.evans@worc.ac.uk

IPD sharing plan summary
Available on request

Study outputs

Output type	Details	Date created	Date added	Peer reviewed?	Patient-facing?
Study website	Study website	11/11/2025	11/11/2025	No	Yes