ISRCTN45641545 https://doi.org/10.1186/ISRCTN45641545

A brief psychosocial therapy intervention for dementia carers

Submission date
02/03/2026

Recruitment status
Not yet recruiting

Registration date
18/03/2026

Overall study status
Ongoing

Last Edited
13/03/2026

Condition category
Mental and Behavioural Disorders

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

Plain English summary of protocol

Background and study aims
The new digital programme with coaching support named Kindred has been developed to build upon the success of our programme for care home staff, combining live online coaching support, digital resources, and moderated peer support. The programme will be available for carers supporting someone living with dementia who is experiencing neuropsychiatric symptoms. These symptoms can include low mood, anxiety, reduced interest, restlessness, agitation, aggression, seeing or hearing things others do not, or becoming suspicious. These symptoms can be very distressing for individuals with dementia and very stressful for carers. This programme is offered free of charge and will be delivered via our online programme, supported by coaches using a virtual platform.
Kindred builds on an extensive research programme called iWHELD (Improving Wellbeing and Health for People Living with Dementia) that has demonstrated in clinical trials improved confidence in professional carers and improved quality of life and reduced agitation and aggression in people living with dementia in care settings, adapted here for family carers supporting someone living with dementia in the community.
The aim of this study is to find out whether access to the Kindred platform and group coaching helps family carers feel less distressed, more confident and improve their mood when supporting someone with dementia who experiences distressing symptoms, compared with usual support. We will also explore whether carers report any changes in the person's symptoms over the 4-week period. This is really important to find out to ensure that we are providing the best coaching and digital support to carers; if the programme is effective then we will be able to make it available to a lot more carers nationally.

Who can participate?
We are inviting any carers aged 18 years and over who are supporting a person with dementia who is experiencing one or more neuropsychiatric symptoms through our project partners: Alzheimer’s Society, Join Dementia Research and the University of Exeter PROTECT programme.

What does the study involve?
All participants will be asked to complete an assessment at the start of the study and after 4 weeks. This will include a 20-minute virtual assessment with a member of the research team about the neuropsychiatric symptoms experienced by the person for whom you are caring. In

addition, we will ask you to self-complete short questionnaires about your wellbeing, caregiving burden, and confidence. This will take about 15 minutes.
Whether you receive access to the Kindred platform and the virtual coaching or not for the first 4 weeks will be decided randomly so that half of participants receive the training and half do not. This will not be done until all of the initial information is collected about the people who are taking part in the study. This is to reduce bias so the researcher collecting follow-up information is not influenced by knowing your group. All participants will gain access to the Kindred platform and virtual coaching after this 4-week period.
Over the 4-week study period participants will be invited to use the digital platform, check out the various evidence-based tools, videos, and other bitesize resources; and join a weekly coaching group with a small number of other carers. Each coaching session will be 60 minutes in duration. You can use the online resources as much or as little as you wish.
We would also like to inform your GP that you are taking part in the study.

What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?
There are limited disadvantages to taking part and the study is low risk. Some people may find it upsetting to talk about difficult experiences. You can skip any questions you do not want to answer and you can take a break or stop at any time. Potential disadvantages may be the time commitment required to participate in the study. All information will be kept strictly confidential and will only be accessed by members of the research team.
Possible benefits include that accessing the coaching and the digital support programme, including the peer support element, may help you feel more confident and reduce how stressed you feel. You may also develop new approaches to help support the person that you are caring for. The research programme will also be valuable in helping us understand whether we should make this programme more widely available to carers in the future.

Where is the study run from?
University of Exeter Medical School (UK)

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

Who is funding the study?
Hilary and Galen Weston Foundation (UK)

Who is the main contact?
Dr Joanne McDermid, J.McDermid@exeter.ac.uk

Contact information

Type(s)
Public, Scientific, Principal investigator

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Integrated Research Application System (IRAS)
368166

Study information

Scientific Title
Kindred: building a human-led, digital platform for dementia family carers

Study objectives

Ethics approval required
Ethics approval required

Ethics approval(s)
notYetSubmitted

Primary study design
Interventional

Allocation
Randomized controlled trial

Masking
Open (masking not used)

Control
Active

Assignment
Parallel

Purpose
Health services research, Supportive care

Study type(s)

Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied

Carers supporting people with dementia who are experiencing neuropsychiatric symptoms (NPS) such as aggression, irritability, depression, anxiety and suspiciousness

Interventions
Participants will be randomised to intervention and treatment as usual groups using a minimisation algorithm, stratifying by (i) age (<65 or ≥65 years), (ii) gender, and (iii) NPI score (<12 or ≥12). The study statistician will undertake randomization, manage the data and ensure a surrounding quality assurance framework.

Participants will be randomly allocated to one of two groups:
1. Intervention group: receives access to the Kindred platform, BPST guidance, and group coaching
2. Control group: continues with treatment as usual (their normal care and support)
The study lasts 4 weeks for each participant.

The Brief Psychosocial Intervention combines a specific programme to plan a personalized brief enjoyable activities programme for 10-30 minutes a day between the carer and the person with dementia with virtual group coaching support. Carers will also have access to a digital platform (KINDRED) that provides tips, information and support for carers relating to neuropsychiatric symptoms.

Intervention Type
Behavioural

Primary outcome(s)
1. Neuropsychiatric symptom burden measured using the distress scale incorporated within the Neuropsychiatric Inventory (NPI-D) at pre and post intervention

Key secondary outcome(s))
1. Burden experienced by carers measured using the Zarit Burden Scale (12-item short version) at pre and post intervention

2. Confidence and symptoms of depression carers measured using the Caregiver Self-Efficacy Scale (CSES -8) and the Centre for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale (CES-D, 8 item short version) at pre and post intervention

3. Neuropsychiatric symptoms measured using the Neuropsychiatric Inventory (NPI-D) at pre and post intervention

Completion date
31/12/2026

Eligibility

Key inclusion criteria
Currently caring for someone with a diagnosis of dementia (clinical diagnosis by any medical practitioner), who is experiencing at least mild neuropsychiatric symptoms in one or more domains (a score of at least 1 on one of the 12 domains of the neuropsychiatric inventory)

Healthy volunteers allowed

Yes

Age group
Mixed

Lower age limit
18 years

Upper age limit
100 years

Sex
All

Total final enrolment
0

Key exclusion criteria
Severe neuropsychiatric symptoms requiring prompt clinical evaluation which are associated with potential risk or severe distress and may require pharmacological treatment

Date of first enrolment
01/05/2026

Date of final enrolment
31/07/2026

Locations

Countries of recruitment
United Kingdom

England

Wales

Study participating centre
University of Exeter
University of Exeter Medical School, St Luke's Campus, Magdelen Road
Exeter
England
EX1 2LU

Sponsor information

Organisation
University of Exeter

ROR
https://ror.org/03yghzc09

Funder(s)

Funder type

Funder Name
Galen and Hilary Weston Foundation

Alternative Name(s)
Selfridges Group Foundation, The Galen and Hilary Weston Foundation

Funding Body Type
Private sector organisation

Funding Body Subtype
Trusts, charities, foundations (both public and private)

Location
United Kingdom

Results and Publications

Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan

IPD sharing plan summary
Data sharing statement to be made available at a later date