‘Sleep Matters’ is a service for people living with dementia and their carers, who are experiencing difficulties with their sleep patterns. Our aim is to work alongside families using strategies and methods that could help improve their situation and lead to a better nights sleep.

**Sleep Support Volunteer**

**Skills Needed**

Whilst there are no specific qualifications required to be able to apply as a Volunteer Sleep Support Worker, it is essential that all volunteers have an empathic approach to people living with dementia and their carers. An understanding of the difficulties and issues faced by families affected by dementia is helpful, but an information and awareness session is included in the initial training.

All volunteers are encouraged to become a Dementia Friend – an initiative lead by the Alzheimers Society to make local communities more dementia friendly.

Volunteers are asked to commit to the training provided and to regular meetings and supervision sessions. A commitment of an average of 2 hours a week is also requested in the volunteering role (up to 4 hours at the start of each referral).

**Role Description**

Each volunteer is supported by the Sleep Matters Project Manager, to deliver this service to up to 4 families over six months. Full training is given and all volunteers are engaged subject to DBS checks and 2 references.

Volunteers will be given a dedicated mobile phone and all expenses will be covered including use of own car at 45p per mile.

Regular supervision and volunteer team meetings will be held to ensure everyone involved feels fully supported and confident in being part of this new initiative.

**Training**

Before engaging in supporting people with dementia and their families, volunteers must be willing to undertake the following training:

* Induction - a half day session looking at the aims of the service, the role of the volunteer, personal safety and administration tasks.
* Sleep Support Workshop – a two day training course to become a Sleep Support volunteer for people with dementia and their carers.
* Dementia Friends – a half day session with the Alzheimer’s Society. This session gives an insight into the illness and helpful tips on how to support people living with dementia and their carers.

Lunch and/or refreshments are provided at all training events.

**Volunteer tasks**

After training, volunteers are asked to commit between 2 and 4 hours a week, starting with supporting one family and building up to a maximum of 4 families over six months. Supporting a family will typically involve the following:

* 1st appointment (2hours) – A home visit to meet the person living with dementia and their carer, discuss the sleep issues of concern and complete a Sleep Assessment Form. This visit also includes undertaking a pre-project evaluation assessment and looking at the sleeping environment.
* The Sleep Support Volunteer then analyses the Sleep Assessment Form with the Project Manager and a range of strategies, therapies and methods of support are decided.
* 2nd appointment (1hour) – A home visit to deliver the sleep programme designed by the Sleep Support Volunteer and Project Manager.

Over the following eight weeks telephone support is offered on a weekly or fortnightly basis. Phone discussions may lead to another visit and/or making adjustments to the programme

* 3rd appointment (1hour) – a review meeting is held to conduct a post-project evaluation assessment. At this point either the case is closed due to a level of success, or adjustments made to the sleep programme before continuing.

The maximum length of time families will receive the sleep support is 6 months as this is currently a trial service to evaluate the effects of the sleep programmes put in place.

The role and findings of the volunteer support will be summarised in a final report as evidence for a larger scale service for people with dementia and their carers.