

Brampton and District 50+ Forum

Report of the meeting held on Tuesday 23 January 2018 in Brampton Community Centre. The meeting took place after lunch in the community café.

26 people attended the meeting, almost filling the room; there were 5 apologies.

The Vice-Chair, Ann Oswin, welcomed members and introduced the guest speaker, Vera Nicholson, from Hospice at Home. <http://hospiceathome.co.uk/>

The speaker began by asking if any members present had used the services of Hospice at Home; two people had. Hospice at Home is in its 21st year. Originally housed at Eden Valley Hospice, but not connected with it, it now has its offices in Dalston. 23% of its funding comes from government, the rest - £20,000 per week is needed - is from donations. Any funds raised locally are used locally; 80p of every £1 raised goes to patient care.

Hospice at Home provides high quality care and support for adults who have palliative and end of life care needs, and also for their families and carers. Marie Curie Nurses perform a similar function to Hospice at Home but not in this area.

Nursing is just one of the services offered. There are 10 registered nurses and a similar number of assistants. They provide personal care, usually in the morning, but visits are not timed; there are no appointment times. A nurse might help with showering or a bed bath, give prescribed medicine, or just need to sit with someone. They can't provide 24 hour care. All registered nurses can and do provide night care between 10pm and 7am but again these visits are not time-limited. Afternoons are usually the time for 'block visits'. These allow the usual carer / family member to have a break, take a rest, or go shopping.

Hospice at Home also has a befriending service provided by volunteers, some retired nurses, who are able to chat, be a change of company, or help fulfil a special event.

Other services provided are:

Occupational therapy - making it easier to live at home, especially for patients with chronic diseases such as motor neurone disease and MS, and, for example, prescribing small items of equipment.

Lymphoedema. This is the swelling which often accompanies removal of lymph nodes affected by cancer. It often causes severe discomfort which may be relieved by the use of compression sleeves and stockings.

Family support. This is available to anyone, regardless of whether Hospice at Home is, or was, involved in the care.

Complementary therapy. This involves techniques such as massage, aromatherapy, reflextherapy, Reiki and yoga.

The speaker then answered questions from members, demonstrated how best to help yourself up (if not injured) after a fall in the home, and strongly advised members who had one to wear their personal alarm at all times.

Ann Oswin thanked Mrs Nicholson for her talk - it had stimulated plenty of interest and discussion.

After the meeting refreshments were available in the café. Forum members were given the opportunity to make a donation to Hospice at Home and a small contribution was also made from Forum funds.

The next 50+ Forum meeting is on Tuesday 20th March 2018.