

# darts



## Case Study

Singing for Memory

# Singing for Memory Opened Up a New Social World

## Singing for Memory

Singing for Memory uses the power of song, friendship, tea and conversation to connect people living with dementia and their carers with others. The weekly group, based at [The Point](#) in Doncaster, provides a regular, safe space for people to have fun, sing familiar songs and create new ones. Each session starts with a relaxed welcome. After warming up our voices we sing a variety of familiar and new songs. We always make time for a cup of tea and a chance to chat. Singing for Memory is part of Doncaster's Keep in Mind programme, commissioned by City of Doncaster Council, and is a referral only programme.

Bill\* has always loved music and his time as a DJ means he has developed a real eclectic taste over the years. From Pink Floyd and The Beatles to classical music, Bill can name most tunes just by hearing the first few bars. Bill lives with multiple system atrophy – a neurodegenerative condition that affects movement, autonomic functions, and cognition, causing daily pain and fatigue.

As Bill's condition progressed and their social circle grew smaller, Margot worried that life at home had become too quiet and repetitive. Hoping it would do Bill good to be around others, she contacted the Keep in Mind Service at Age UK Doncaster to see what was available to them. When she saw Singing for Memory on the list of options, Margot knew the group would be a great option for music-lover Bill. She remembers being a bit nervous before the first session, but she needn't have worried:

*"Everyone made us feel so welcome and after a few weeks we felt like part of the family."*

Musician Luke Carver Goss was leading the day Margot and Bill joined. They quickly grew to appreciate Luke's relaxed, inclusive style, and the way he makes sure everyone can join in. The group spans a wide range of ages but all musical tastes are catered for, with large-print lyric sheets and plenty of opportunities to make requests. The mid-session tea break also offers a welcome chance for a natter over a cup of tea and a biscuit.

However they feel when they first arrive, Bill and Margot always leave the sessions feeling happy – often still singing part of a tune! They enjoy the group so much that they have been attending Singing for Memory for over two years now, and it's become a firm favourite amongst their weekly activities:

*"Bill finds the darts sessions very engaging, and it would take a lot for us to miss a session."*

They prioritise the group and have only missed a handful of times over the years, when illness or hospital appointments have made it impossible. As well as making Bill feel part of a social group – something that he didn't have before Singing for Memory – the free weekly sessions have also benefited Margot:

*"It's a lovely couple of hours. It lifts our spirits. We have a laugh, a good old sing, it's brilliant."*

Singing for Memory has become a steady source of joy and friendship, adding colour and companionship to their lives well beyond the sessions themselves.

\*All names have been changed.