

# darts



## Case Study

Singing for Memory

# Kevin and Alice

## Singing for Memory – Age UK

Our Singing for Memory group runs on Monday afternoons at The Point, home of darts. We use the power of song, friendship, tea and conversation to connect people with dementia and their carers with others. The group provides a regular, safe space for people to have fun, sing familiar songs and create new ones. Professional musicians facilitate the sessions; their expert approach is different to other dementia services because of their person-centred and flexible approach and sessions are designed to gently challenge participants. Singing for Memory is part of Doncaster's Keep in Mind programme, led by Age UK Doncaster and commissioned by City of Doncaster Council.

Husband and wife Kevin and Alice were both members of their school choirs, but as they grew older, other priorities took over and singing disappeared from their lives for a while. When Alice was diagnosed with dementia, Kevin contacted Age UK Doncaster to explore what support might help them stay active and connected. A conversation with a member of the Keep in Mind team reminded them how much they used to enjoy singing, and when a place became available at Singing for Memory, they joined straight away.

From their very first session, they felt welcomed. They describe the group as easy to join, with friendly volunteers who greet all new people and help them settle in. The mid-session break, including a free cup of tea and biscuits, quickly became a highlight, giving them time to chat, meet other people and feel part of the community. Musician, Luke, includes everyone from the warmup onwards and Kevin says:

*"Everybody gets a chance for a personal involvement – a way of getting the group to know one another."*

The social atmosphere is one of the biggest reasons they keep coming back. They say everyone at Singing for Memory seems genuinely happy to be there and that warmth and connection has helped them build strong friendships. They've become especially close to one couple, whom they hadn't met before joining the group but now see regularly outside the sessions.

Through these friendships, they've also taken part in other Keep in Mind activities such as Remembering Rovers, which has even supported them to attend football matches together. At Christmas, they joined a carolling group led by a Singing for Memory participant who, they later discovered, used to be a band conductor.

For Kevin in particular, singing has come to feel like a form of release. As Kevin and Alice are together all day and night, Singing for Memory provides them with a break in their routine and something to look forward to:

*"It's something enjoyable and different from the everyday."*

Monday afternoons are now a very important point in the week, and they notice that everyone always seems relaxed and happy by the end. When they have to miss a session because of Bank Holidays, they say that it feels like a loss:

*"If there were two Singing for Memory sessions a week, we'd definitely be there! And I'm sure many other people feel the same."*

For Kevin and Alice, Singing for Memory has become more than just an activity they do – it's a community where they feel safe, supported and among friends.