

NEW DEMENTIA CARE UNIT OPENS AT DCH

A SPECIALIST new facility for elderly patients suffering dementia will be unveiled by talented author Minette Walters at Dorset County Hospital NHS Foundation Trust on Monday 3 August. The unit, the first of its kind in a South West Acute Hospital Trust, will offer a supportive environment for patients at risk of dementia as they receive medical treatment for other health conditions.

Expert support will be available for dementia sufferers at the new facility that forms an extension to Barnes Ward at DCH. Staff will be on hand to care for dementia patients with reminiscence therapy, memorabilia and other effective treatments. Their primary care objective will be to ease the concerns of possibly confused elderly patients as they receive treatment for non-related health procedures.

The forward-looking Dorset County Hospital is the first Hospital Trust in the South West to open this type of facility. The League of Friends, a local charitable organisation has donated over £2,500 towards the special care unit. The Hospital's Foundation Trust will ensure additional funding is available and that skilled staff with specific training in elderly dementia provide hands-on support and assistance.

The facility forms part of the National Dementia plan and came about after a review team toured South West Hospitals to assess how services for the elderly could be improved at DCH. Minette Walters was invited to open the unit as part of her continued support for elderly care issues.

Debbie Baxter, Barnes Ward Head Sister at Dorset County Hospital, said:
'Nationally there is a real need for improved dementia services and capabilities. Dorset County Hospital prides itself on excellent patient care, which is reflected in this new unit run by expertly trained staff able to assist patients receiving medical treatment who suffer from dementia. We're delighted to welcome Minette Walters to open the unit – her ongoing support for hospital services is much appreciated here and in the community. This new unit will help those coming to the Hospital who suffer from dementia to receive medical assistance while being supported in an environment best suited to the memory-led patient care they need.'

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