

How wearable technology can support vulnerable people in the community – the headaches, learning and highlights

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Research and past police estimates suggest around 40,000 people living with dementia go missing for the first time each year in the UK (grampianonline.co.uk)



Dementia UK estimate about 70% of people living with dementia will go missing at least once in the course of their illness, with some individuals going missing multiple times

Initiative:



'Dementia Buddy tags' were first piloted in Lancashire in 2014



There is now a similar '999 Reunite' scheme operating in Manchester. We wanted to stay as close to these devices as possible to reduce confusion but felt having 999 may be interpreted as needing to call 999 and so decided to name our devices 'ReUnite' as its purpose is to reunite vulnerable people as quickly as possible, reducing distress and it is hoped would reduce the 999 calls.



'ReUnite' devices compliment the Herbert Protocol:- The Herbert Protocol provides information about the missing person and helps the police to start to focus in on likely areas the person may have gone (given previous homes, workplaces etc).



We wanted to work collaboratively with people living with dementia and their family carers to ensure they had a voice.



Background:

'ReUnite' devices initially were developed to support people living with dementia who were at risk of becoming disorientated, lost and distressed become reunited with their family carers as quickly as possible. Working collaboratively with our local community we designed and developed the devices and want to share learning and our hopes for the future.

Social media coverage makes us all aware of vulnerable people who have become lost and distressed when out of their usual environment.

Family carers also become distressed and trying to locate a missing person involves members from the emergency services.

Main Aims:

- To improve support for people with dementia and their family carers who live locally when they may feel more isolated, stressed and vulnerable.
- To improve safety and reassurance for people with dementia and their family carers. The device will provide peace of mind to family carers and help maintain some independence for the person living with dementia for as long as possible.
- To reduce time a person is missing, decreasing distress for both the person and their family and may also additionally reduce time emergency services spend searching for a missing person or supporting someone found by a member of the public who is unable to recall their full name/address/contact details for family members etc.



Supporting someone living with dementia?
Request your FREE ReUnite device

ReUnite Dementia Devices

Understand how you can play your part in supporting people living with dementia in West Yorkshire

Are you worried about a loved one who is living with dementia and may become disorientated, lost or distressed?

Look out for our ReUnite Dementia Devices.

How it works: Simply place your smartphone over the device and the person's first name and emergency contacts will be displayed.

Devices come as wristbands, pin badges and fobs.

Supporting someone living with dementia?

Request your free ReUnite device today by calling 01924 331400 or email dementiateam@wakefieldhospice.co.uk.

In partnership with Wakefield Hospice and Wakefield Memory Action Group, supported by West Yorkshire Police. Funded by West Yorkshire Mayor's Safer Communities Fund.



There are so many wristband in circulation we needed to have a colour that someone would be happy to wear.

Therefore we sought opinions from people living with dementia and also from their family carers

– Purple was chosen.

Headaches



Devices required an email address for each person – not many family carers we spoke to had these or were happy to share it –making us rethink the whole process –the biggest obstacle we faced

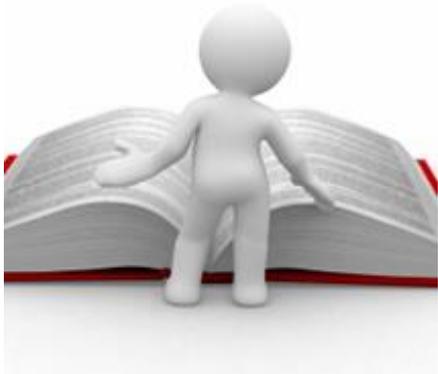


Getting started- our community felt the concept was a good one getting started was a challenge.

Time & Cost (especially being a charity)

Admin support/ Identifying who may help

Social Media – became the biggest challenge



Learning

Devices required individual email addresses – some of the family carers we consulted said they did not have an email address or weren't happy to share it.

Mark developed an in-house system that removed the need for email addresses.



This new in-house system also included data captured around the number of times the device is scanned helping with evaluating all of the devices activities.

My Name is
Debby

Please Contact
01924331400

Contact Sandra as above or
Debi

☰

LOG-IN

Username: (email address)

Password:

Log-in

logged on as debby.veigas

TAG SCAN HISTORY

Time	Tag ID	User Name	User Contact	Tag Type	View
09/01/2025 - 10:05	105	Debby	01924331400	Free	Click to view
08/01/2025 - 19:27	105	Debby	01924331400	Free	Click to view

The Technical Process

The out of the box solution from the tag manufacturer was long and clunky so we created our own web-based portal to interact with the tags

SET-UP NEW DEVICE

PLEASE COMPLETE THE FORM BELOW
AND CLICK CREATE USER PROFILE.

Name (as it will appear when tag is scanned)

Contact Number (this will appear when tag is scanned)

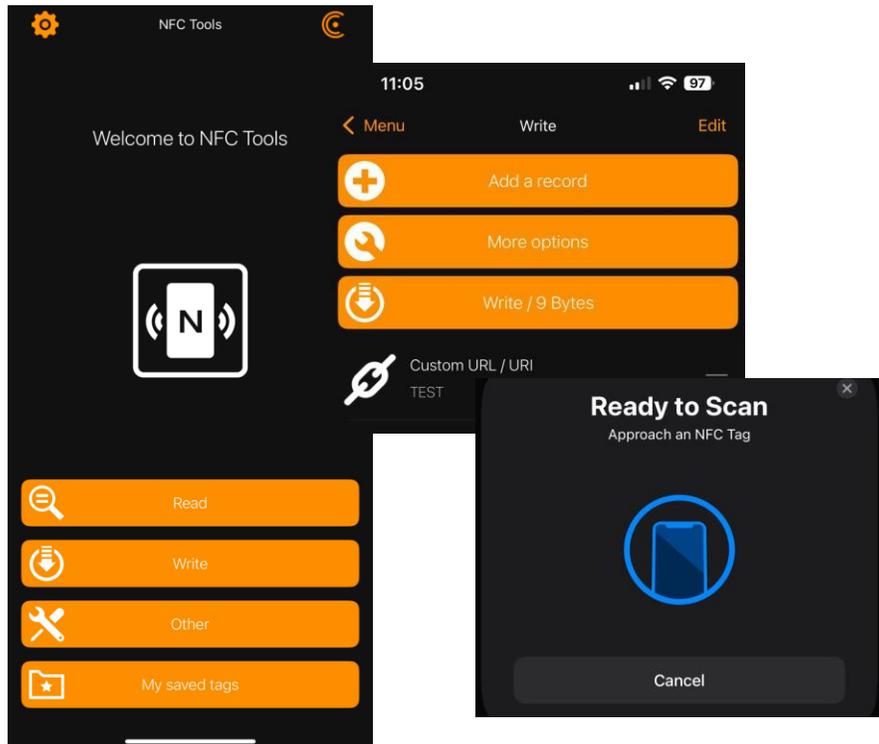
Other Info (this will appear when tag is scanned)

Built so the process takes less than a minute and anyone with a login can 'programme' a device without any tech knowledge.

And on website orders these details are already filled in!

The Technical Process

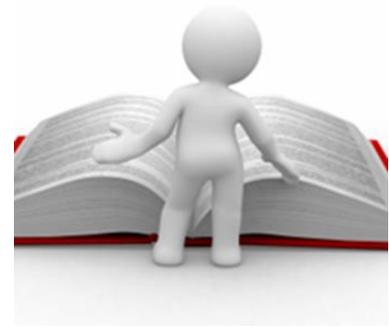
The portal creates a long url with 2 unique hash keys that are written to a device using a smart phone or tablet with a free NFC app



Every user has a unique url that can be used on multiple ReUnite devices.

When a device is scanned by a smart phone it will open a webpage on the phone that shows the public details of the person wearing the tag and will also update the portal database to show that the tag has been scanned.

Learning



We decided on a 'soft launch'- programming and giving out free devices to people with dementia who were known to Memory Action Group or Wakefield Hospice Dementia Services as we felt this was a good way of testing out the processes we had put in place prior to a full launch.

However what we didn't anticipate was someone in a community setting seeing the device and posting about it on FaceBook.

This led to 100's of enquiries from across the UK which took a lot of time to manage.

So someone came into work today who's husband has dementia and he had one of these on his coat. I've never seen or heard about them and she was saying how very few people have n i asked if i could post this pic on here and she agreed so let's raise some awareness... if you see someone alone and looking lost and they have one of these on show just scan this with ur mobile and it will bring up the details of family so you can get them back home safely. Such a good thing



So much positive feedback from the general public, the response was overwhelming

- Oh wow thats amazing, set it to share zoey xx
11h Like
- Set to share Zoe luv xxx
11h Like
- Brilliant idea x
11h Like
- That's a brilliant idea xx
11h Like
- Set it to share Zoe x
11h Like
- I've been in the care setting 19 years and I've never heard of this either, how lovely tho
11h Like
- Set to share love ! I'll repost xxx
11h Like
- Never seen this before!...what a brilliant idea!...
10h Like
- What a fantastic idea 🍌
10h Like
- That's brilliant. But never heard of them
10h Like

Highlights

An appetite for the training and devices

Training of ReUnite champions -a Multi-disciplinary approach (health and social care)

Created resources –leaflets, ‘how to programme ReUnite devices’ guide

Great support from Community teams, groups and wider networks

Now available on the Hospice Website

Highlights: Support and initial funding we received

This initiative would not have been possible without the collaborative work between Wakefield Hospice, Memory Action Group and West Yorkshire Police.

The testing out phase was made possible with the financial support given from West Yorkshire Mayors Safer Communities Fund.



Wakefield District Health & Care Partnership - Agenda
Dementia and Older Peoples Mental Health Strategy Group
Tuesday 22nd October 2024, 2.30-3.30, VIA MS Teams



Wakefield District Health & Care Partnership - Agenda
Dementia and Older Peoples Mental Health Strategy Group
Tuesday 23rd July, 2.30 – 3.30 2024, 2.30-3.30

Administration

Agenda no	Item	PPT / Paper	Lead
1	Welcome and apologies Apologies received from Kathleen Jones, Ruth Clarke		
2	Declarations of Interest		
3	Approval of minutes from the last meeting	 MINUTES - Dementia and older peoples MH	
4	Matters arising		

Main items

Agenda no	Item	PPT / Paper	Lead
5	ReUnite devices	 Older Peoples Mental Health Strategy Group Dementia Buddy Tags - YouTube	Debby Veigas
6	Dementia Life Goes on video		Katty Keyhani
7	Wakefield Dementia Road Show report		Katty Keyhani



Highlights:

- ReUnite Champions a Multidisciplinary approach with health and social care and local organisations
- 'How to Program a ReUnite Device' Leaflet



Care-Coordination

