



Memory Clinics in Ireland

A Guide for Family Caregivers and Health Service Professionals

2nd edition

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Introduction

Alzheimer's disease and the related dementias have recently been singled out as a domain of increasing importance, globally and at a European level. For example, within the EU, under the European Initiative on Dementia, progress has been made on mobilising political action on dementia and several European countries including Norway, England, Wales, Scotland, and France have already well-developed National Dementia Strategies or Service Plans. Common to each of these Strategies is a focus on assessment and diagnostic services in future dementia care reform, and an emphasis on the important role that Memory Clinics can play in the early detection, diagnosis, disclosure and treatment of dementia. In Ireland the government's commitment to developing a National Dementia Strategy by 2013 and the recent research review work undertaken to underpin this will undoubtedly heighten public debate about preferred approaches to diagnostic services and will shed further light on the role of Memory Clinic services in Ireland in this context.

In recognition of the need for information to be more widely available on Memory Clinic services in Ireland, a Memory Clinic booklet was first designed for health service professionals and family members in 2010. The aim of the booklet was to detail the location and range of Memory Clinic services available around the country for people worried about their memory or cognitive problems or for family members. Since the publication of this booklet and the successful hosting in 2011 by the Dementia Services Information and Development Centre (DSIDC) and Mercer's Institute for Successful Ageing of the first Memory Clinic conference in Ireland, further service developments have taken place, including the establishment of a Memory Clinic working group (see www.memoryclinics.ie) and the launching of new Memory Clinic services. For this reason a revision of this earlier booklet has been undertaken.

What is a Memory Clinic

Memory Clinics are independent clinics primarily aimed at improving practice in the identification, investigation and treatment of memory disorders including dementia. Staff employed at Memory Clinics are specially trained to diagnose memory problems and to provide people who are concerned about cognitive and memory problems with a diagnosis, information, treatment (when necessary) and advice. Whilst in Ireland (like other countries), many people with dementia have never had a formal diagnosis, it is noted that early diagnosis of Alzheimer's Disease or any of the related dementias is critical to acquiring appropriate treatments, to managing financial and legal affairs (including getting a Power of Attorney) and to accessing support services. Early diagnosis also enables the person experiencing the symptoms to be more proactive in lifestyle decision-making and in planning his or her own future care options. Once a diagnosis is made, treatment can also be initiated by Memory Clinic staff and advice can be given on a whole range of topics including the use of memory aids, driving, banking, family matters, employment and leisure time interests. Memory Clinics may also provide post-diagnostic counselling and emotional support for people newly diagnosed. In Ireland, some Memory Clinics are actively involved in research.

How many Memory Clinics are there in Ireland and where are they located?

There are currently 14 Memory Clinics operating in the Republic of Ireland. Details about each of these clinics are provided in this booklet. Of the 14 Clinics, six are located in Dublin, four in the South (Cork, Cashel, Carlow and Wexford), two in the Midlands (Mullingar), one in the West (Galway) and another in the North East (Navan). Some parts of the country known to support large numbers of people with a dementia have no Memory Clinics. Kerry and Donegal, for example, known to have within each county around 2,000 older people with dementia have no Memory Clinic facilities whatsoever. This is despite emerging international and national evidence pointing to the value of such specialist services.

How to avail of Memory Clinic services

Anyone is entitled to avail of a Memory Clinic service. However, most clinics only accept referrals from GPs or other medical doctors. Therefore, if you believe that your memory is not as sharp as before and if you are worried about this, you should discuss the matter with your GP. Your GP may decide that you are worrying unnecessarily or, following a series of tests make a diagnosis of dementia, or the GP may decide that further in-depth assessment is needed and may refer you to a Memory Clinic. Memory Clinics cater for people of all ages but the Memory Clinic in Clonsilla (Dublin) and the one in Robinstown (Mullingar) are dedicated to people with an Intellectual Disability and have a younger clientele.

What information will be asked of clients and their family members at the Memory Clinic assessment?

When an appointment for a Memory Clinic is made, people are usually asked to have a family member or close friend accompany them. The reason for this is that the latter can if necessary provide staff with additional information regarding the person's memory and cognitive problems and overall health. During the clinic appointment, a series of questions will be asked by clinic staff of the person referred to the clinic. Where appropriate, additional questions will be asked of the family member. First baseline information is usually sought about the person's general health; the onset of, as well as signs and symptoms of memory problems; risk factors for Alzheimer's disease and the related dementias such as smoking, obesity, diabetes, family history and blood pressure. Other information usually sought includes that on behavioural/personality changes, educational attainments and literacy level, physical functioning and activities of daily living. Neuropsychological assessment/testing which usually involves a series of questions assessing short-term and long-term memory, language, orientation, attention, perception and calculation may also take place. The latter can be brief or may be more in-depth.



Do all people who attend a Memory Clinic receive a diagnosis?

Generally, everybody who attends a Memory Clinic receives feedback on the results of the formal assessment. These results may show that there is no organic memory problem despite the fact that the person has a subjective memory complaint, or that the person has a Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI) - a condition which is not a normal part of ageing and which is characterized by significant cognitive impairment in the absence of dementia - or that the person actually has a dementia. If a clinical diagnosis is established, this will be discussed with the person in accordance with his/her wishes. It is generally recommended that clinic staff discuss the diagnosis with the person, unless there are clear reasons against doing this.

At Memory Clinics, what information is given to people worried about their memory and to those diagnosed with MCI or dementia?

Extensive information is provided to people who attend Memory Clinics. The type of information provided typically includes:

- Ways to improve and maintain cognitive health
- Clarification of memory problem symptoms
- Diagnosis, including differential diagnosis
- General tips for dealing with possible memory problems
- Treatment information such as advice about anti-dementia drugs and how they work
- Advice about continuing or not continuing to drive
- Advice about continuing or not continuing to work
- Leisure time activities

What treatments and services are offered at Memory Clinics?

Treatments and services offered at Memory Clinics vary and ideally they should be individualised to address each person's respective needs. These treatments are usually classified as pharmacological (drugs) or non-pharmacological (no drugs). In some cases pharmacological interventions such as anti-dementia drugs (cholinesterase inhibitors) are offered to people in the early stage of dementia or to those with a Mild Cognitive Impairment. These drugs may help to slow down memory loss or the rate of progression of dementia but it needs to be remembered that the drugs are not curative and do not tackle the underlying cause of the condition. Anti-dementia drugs can be effective in the short-term but unfortunately only work in about one third of all cases. A different type of drug called Memantine is sometimes offered to people with more advanced dementia.

Non-pharmacological interventions are also often offered through most Memory Clinic services. Such interventions include information, counselling, advice on practical everyday aids designed to help improve quality of life, and recommendations about relaxation therapies and ways to help reduce challenging behaviours.

Do Memory Clinics charge patients for their services?

Most Memory Clinics are funded through the HSE and, therefore, provide services to the public free of charge. However, in some instances there may be some "out of pocket costs" incurred by patients for CAT or MRI scans. Three of the fourteen Memory Clinics are privately run. In these circumstances some service costs may be recouped through health insurance schemes. The Memory Works clinic at Dublin City University, which is an assessment only and not diagnostic service, is unique in that it charges on a "pay-as-you-can" basis.

Does attending a Memory Clinic mean being admitted to hospital?

People should be reassured that most Memory Clinics are out-patient services and do not generally involve hospital admission. One exception is the Memory Clinic at St Patrick's Hospital, which is private, and offers both in-patient and out-patient assessment services. There, the average length of stay for assessment is three days and the cost of in-patient services is covered by private health insurance.



Mercers Institute for Research on Ageing (MIRA) Memory Clinic, St James's Hospital, Dublin

Director: Professor Brian Lawlor

Location and Contact: Hospital 4, St James's Hospital, James's Street, Dublin 8, tel: (01) 416 2640

Profile: MIRA offers diagnosis, information, advice and practical support about living with dementia for the patient and family members. It is run collaboratively between Medicine for the Elderly and Psychiatry of Later Life, and has a strong multi-disciplinary element. The Memory Clinic is consultant-led.

Catchment area: Nationwide

Frequency: Monday to Friday

Waiting time: Information not currently available

Referral: Mainly from GPs or medical doctors

Funding: HSE

Costs: No cost to patients

Treatment: Pharmacological and non-pharmacological

Follow-up: Clients with an uncertain diagnosis or those diagnosed with Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI) are followed up on a six/twelve month basis. Patients with a confirmed diagnosis are referred back to their GP or to an appropriate consultant physician for follow-up

Staff: Old Age Psychiatrist; Geriatrician; Neuropsychologist; Clinical Nurse Manager; Social Worker

Support Services: Psychological support, Social Work, family meetings, referral to community care services

Services available to patients under 65: Yes

Services available to patients with an intellectual disability: Yes

Memory Clinic at St Patrick's University Hospital, Dublin

Director: Dr Declan Lyons

Location and Contact: St Patrick's University Hospital Campus, St James's Street, Dublin 8, tel: (01) 249 3437 (Contact person: Prisca Coleman)

Profile: The Memory Clinic assesses and diagnoses people with a variety of subjective memory complaints and formulates a treatment plan. Consultant-led with a strong multi-disciplinary element.

Catchment area: Nationwide

Frequency: Once per week

Waiting time: Four to eight weeks

Referral: Mainly from GPs or from psychiatrists working within St Patrick's Hospital, as well as Neurologists, Psychiatrists and other specialists working outside of St Patrick's Hospital

Funding: Private

Costs: Costs for in-patients including scans are covered by private health insurance. There is a charge for out-patients, which is not covered by private health insurance, although the cost of most scans will be.

Treatment: A full broad-based treatment plan tailored to the individual is devised and the plan may include, where appropriate, drug treatments, Occupational Therapy evaluation, referral to Neurological and Psychological support.

Follow-up: As necessary

Staff: Principal Clinical Psychologist/Neuropsychologist; Psychiatric Registrar; Occupational Therapist; Clinical Nurse Specialist; Ward-based Nurse; Social Worker; Pharmacist

Support Services: Social Work; Psychological support

Services available to patients under 65: Yes

Services available to patients with an intellectual disability: No

Beaumont Hospital Memory Clinic, Dublin

Director: Dr Ciaran F. Donegan

Location and Contact: Beaumont Hospital Memory Clinic, Beaumont Hospital, Beaumont, Dublin 9, tel: (01) 809 2370

Profile: Memory Clinic and memory assessment service which provides access to investigation and diagnosis for people with cognitive impairment and dementia. Clinic is consultant-led.

Catchment area: North Dublin Local Health Office area

Frequency: Once per week

Waiting time: Approximately six weeks

Referral: Mainly from GPs but also from clinicians in Beaumont Hospital

Funding: HSE

Costs: No cost to patients

Treatment: Pharmacological treatment, as well as advice and assistance in accessing support and community services

Follow-up: Yes

Staff: Consultant Geriatrician with input from Registrars and Old Age Psychiatry

Support Services: Neuropsychology, Social Work and Occupational Therapy on referral

Services available to patients under 65: Yes

Services available to patients with an intellectual disability: Yes

Memory Works, Dublin City University, Dublin

Clinical Lead: Dr Kate Irving

Location and Contact: Memory Works, Healthy Living Centre, Dublin City University, Dublin 9, tel: (01) 700 7171

Profile: Memory Works is an assessment service which helps people get an early diagnosis by giving them access to information, providing screening and advocating for them in a referral process; also helps patients access support, information and advice on healthy living. Memory Works is nurse-led.

Catchment area: Nationwide

Frequency: Two appointments weekly

Waiting time: Approximately four weeks

Referral: No formal referral needed

Funding: Private through Dublin City University

Costs: Fee of €80 is optional and based on ability to pay

Treatment: Non-pharmacological such as psychotherapeutic treatment, health promotion, advice, support, education

Follow-up: Yes

Staff: Nurse

Support Services: Counselling and Psychotherapy services, nutrition service

Services available to patients under 65: Yes

Services available to patients with an intellectual disability: Yes

The Dementia Advisory Resource Centre, St Joseph's Centre, Clonsilla, Dublin

Director: Professor Mary McCarron

Location and Contact: The Dementia Advisory Resource Centre, St Joseph's Centre, Clonsilla, Dublin 15, tel: (01) 824 8658

Profile: A memory assessment service which screens people with intellectual disability over the age of 35 in order to identify cognitive decline. Clinic is nurse-led.

Catchment area: The Daughters of Charity services, Dublin and Limerick

Frequency: Monday to Friday

Waiting time: Three to four weeks

Referral: From the Daughters of Charity services and from Psychiatric or Psychology services

Funding: Privately funded by the Daughters of Charity

Costs: No cost to patients; possible charge for some scans

Treatment: A multi-disciplinary team works together and will recommend medication or psychosocial interventions as deemed appropriate to each individual

Follow-up: Yes

Staff: Clinical Nurse Specialist (in Dementia), supported by a multi-disciplinary team according to need

Support Services: Nurses, Psychologists, Social Work, Psychiatrists

Services available to patients under 65: Yes

Services available to patients with an intellectual disability: Yes

Highfield Hospital Memory Clinic, Swords, Co. Dublin

Clinical Director: Dr Denis Eustace

Location and Contact: Highfield Hospital Memory Clinic, Swords Road, Whitehall, Co. Dublin, tel: (01) 837 4444

Profile: Memory assessment clinic for early diagnosis of dementia. It is consultant-led.

Catchment area: Nationwide

Frequency: Monday to Friday

Waiting time: Approximately two weeks

Referral: Mainly from GPs

Funding: Private

Costs: There is a set cost for initial assessment (with potential charges for Neuropsychology, if needed; cost of scans may be covered by private health insurance)

Treatment: Pharmacological and non-pharmacological in the form of family meetings, assistance with accessing services, support and information

Follow-up: Yes

Staff: Old Age Psychiatrist; Neuropsychologist

Support Services: Social Work and Occupational Therapy; a Liaison Nurse provides services to community-dwelling patients

Services available to patients under 65: Yes

Services available to patients with an intellectual disability: No

Cognitive Clinic, Kennedy Road, Navan, Co. Meath

Director: Dr Aisling Denihan

Location and Contact: Cognitive Clinic, Kennedy Road, Navan, Co Meath,
tel: (046) 905 9002

Profile: The service provides assessment, early intervention and early diagnosis for people with memory concerns. It is jointly nurse/consultant-led.

Catchment area: Co. Meath

Frequency: One day per week

Waiting time: One week (following receipt of all required information from referring doctor)

Referral: Mainly from GPs

Funding: HSE

Costs: No cost to patients

Treatment: Pharmacological; referral to support services

Follow-up: At four weeks, then after 12 months

Staff: Old Age Psychiatrist; Nurse; Social Worker

Support Services: Social Work and Psychological support available

Services available to patients under 65: Yes

Services available to patients with an intellectual disability: Yes

Intellectual Disability Mental Health Service, Co. Westmeath

Director: Dr Mark Roe

Location and Contact: Intellectual Disability Mental Health Service, Unit 7E, Lough Sheever Corporate Park, Robinstown, Co. Westmeath, tel: (044) 939 0024

Profile: Memory Clinic service is incorporated into the general Intellectual Disability Mental Health clinic, and provides a specialised intellectual disability dementia diagnosis and treatment service. The clinic is consultant-led.

Catchment area: Laois, Offaly, Longford and Westmeath

Frequency: Two days per week

Waiting time: Four to eight weeks

Referral: Mainly from GPs

Funding: HSE

Costs: No cost to patients

Treatment: Pharmacological treatment; advice and support to patient and carers

Follow-up: Yes

Staff: Consultant Psychiatrist; Non-consultant Hospital Doctor; Community Nurse

Support Services: Social Work, Psychological support, Occupational Therapy, Speech and Language Therapy are all available through referral

Services available to patients under 65: Yes

Services available to patients with an intellectual disability: Yes

Midland Regional Hospital Memory Clinic, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath

Director: Dr Clare Fallon

Location and Contact: Midland Regional Hospital, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath,
tel: (044) 939 4528

Profile: Memory assessment service focusing on diagnosis, as well as Geriatric assessment. It is a consultant-led clinic.

Catchment area: Longford, Westmeath, Laois, Offaly; referrals also accepted from other counties

Frequency: Twice per month

Waiting time: Approximately eight to twelve weeks

Referral: Mainly from GPs; Consultant colleagues

Funding: HSE

Costs: No cost to patients

Treatment: Pharmacological; access to Occupational Therapy, Psychological support

Follow-up: Yes

Staff: Geriatrician; Nurse

Support Services: Neuropsychology, Old Age Psychiatry, Occupational Therapy and other community services through referral

Services available to patients under 65: Yes

Services available to patients with an intellectual disability: Yes

Sacred Heart Hospital Memory Clinic, Carlow

Director: Dr Rory McGovern

Location and Contact: Sacred Heart Hospital Memory Clinic, Care of the Elderly Facility, Sacred Heart Hospital, Old Dublin Road, Carlow, tel: (059) 913 6492

Profile: Consultant diagnostic service within a Geriatric outpatient service with a Memory Clinic focusing on post-diagnosis care support, maintenance and management.

Catchment area: Carlow

Frequency: Half a day per week

Waiting time: Varies/based on need (as person is referred from hospital Geriatric department)

Referral: from Geriatric day hospital at Sacred Heart Hospital

Funding: HSE

Costs: No cost to patients

Treatment: Post-diagnostic support including maintenance and management of medication and patient/carer social support, assistance with accessing services

Follow-up: Yes

Staff: Consultant Geriatrician refers patients to Memory Clinic from day hospital; Clinical Nurse Managers; Health Care Assistant

Support Services: Referrals to community services for Social Work support and Psychological support

Services available to patients under 65: Yes

Services available to patients with an intellectual disability: Yes

Wexford General Hospital Memory Clinic, Wexford

Director: Dr Eithne Harkin and Dr Michael Riordan

Location and Contact: Wexford General Hospital Memory Clinic, Day Hospital for the Elderly, Wexford General Hospital, Wexford, tel: (053) 915 3270

Profile: Memory Clinic service focusing primarily on diagnosis and memory problems. It is a consultant-led clinic.

Catchment area: Co. Wexford

Frequency: One afternoon per month

Waiting time: Approximately three to four months

Referral: Mainly from GPs

Funding: HSE

Costs: No cost to patients; possible charge for some scans

Treatment: Medication as appropriate; access to support services, Community Psychiatric Nursing, Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy

Follow-up: As necessary

Staff: Nurse; Community Psychiatric Nurse; Consultant Geriatrician; Occupational Therapist on referral

Support Services: Referrals to community support services

Services available to patients under 65: Yes

Services available to patients with an intellectual disability: Yes

St Patrick's Hospital Memory Clinic, Cashel, Co. Tipperary

Co-ordinator: Ann Quinn

Location and Contact: St Patrick's Hospital Memory Clinic, Cashel, Co. Tipperary,
tel: (062) 70325

Profile: Memory assessment focusing on early access and early diagnosis, supported by a full multi-disciplinary team. It is jointly nurse/consultant-led.

Catchment area: South Tipperary geographical area

Frequency: Two days per week

Waiting time: Approximately 12 weeks

Referral: Mainly from GPs but also from local acute hospital

Funding: HSE

Costs: No cost to patients

Treatment: Pharmacological; also information, support and advice on lifestyle

Follow-up: If requested

Staff: Nurse; Advanced Nurse Practitioner; Consultant Geriatrician; Consultant Old Age Psychiatrist; Occupational Therapist. Also access to a Consultant Neuropsychologist and a Public Health Liaison Nurse.

Support Services: Patients may be referred to the community Social Worker as appropriate, or other community based services

Services available to patients under 65: Yes

Services available to patients with an intellectual disability: No

Old Age Psychiatry Memory Clinic, St Finbarr's Hospital, Cork

Director: Dr Aoife Ní Chorcorain

Location and Contact: Assessment and Treatment Centre, St Finbarr's Hospital, Douglas Road, Cork, tel: (021) 492 7266

Profile: Diagnostic service offering assessment, diagnosis, follow-up, support and management of dementia and related symptoms.

Catchment area: Priority given to residents of South Lee Local Health Office area; service also extends to the rest of Co. Cork and to Co. Kerry

Frequency: One day per week

Waiting time: Four to six weeks

Referral: Mainly GPs

Funding: HSE

Costs: No cost to patients

Treatment: A range of treatments including pharmacological treatment, Occupational Therapy assessment, Psychological assistance, carers course, information sessions (treatment options available vary according to where clients reside)

Follow-up: Yes

Staff: Consultant Psychiatrist; Non-Consultant Hospital Doctors; Nurse; Psychologist

Support Services: Psychological support; community services on referral

Services available to patients under 65: Yes

Services available to patients with an intellectual disability: No

Galway Memory Clinic, Galway

Director: Dr Bernadette McGuinness

Location and Contact: Galway Memory Clinic, University Hospital Galway, Newcastle Road, Galway, tel: (091) 544860

Profile: Memory Clinic focusing on investigating and diagnosing memory impairment and dementia, treatment and follow-up. It is consultant-led.

Catchment area: Co. Galway and other parts of the West

Frequency: Once per week

Waiting time: Currently no waiting list

Referral: Mainly from GPs, but also from consultants

Funding: HSE

Costs: No cost to patients

Treatment: Pharmacological treatment

Follow-up: Yes

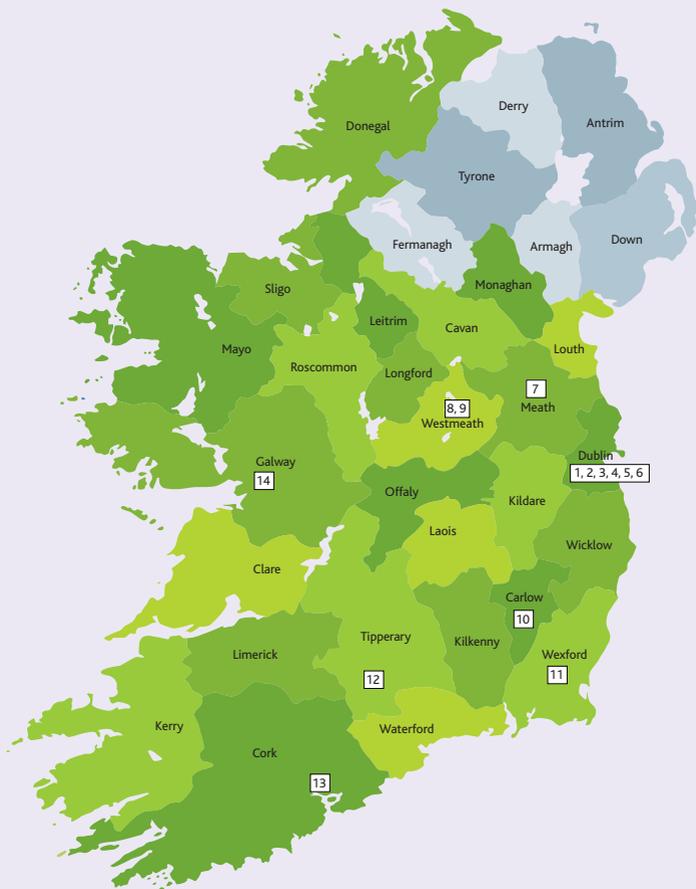
Staff: Consultant Geriatrician; Specialist Registrar

Support Services: Access to Neuropsychologist; patients also referred to community services

Services available to patients under 65: Yes

Services available to patients with an intellectual disability: No

Location of Memory Clinics in Ireland



1. MIRA, St James's Hospital, Dublin 8
2. St Patricks University Hospital Memory Clinic, Dublin 8
3. Beaumont Hospital Memory Clinic, Dublin 9
4. Memory Works, Dublin City University, Dublin 9
5. St Joseph's Centre, Clonsilla, Dublin 15
6. Highfield Hospital, Co. Dublin
7. The Cognitive Clinic, Navan, Co. Meath
8. Intellectual Disability Mental Health Service, Robinstown, Co. Westmeath
9. Midland Regional Hospital Memory Clinic, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath
10. Sacred Heart Hospital Memory Clinic, Carlow
11. Wexford General Hospital Memory Clinic, Co. Wexford
12. St Patrick's Hospital Memory Clinic, Cashel, Co. Tipperary
13. Old Age Psychiatry Memory Clinic, St Finbarr's Hospital, Cork City
14. Galway Memory Clinic, Galway



Summary

The National Dementia Strategy in England has a clear vision to make early diagnosis and treatment the rule rather than the exception and in England the Department of Health has already expanded the number of Memory Clinics available to the public across the country. The UK Prime Minister's recent challenge on dementia includes a commitment to ensure that GPs and other Health Care Professionals will make patients aged 65 and over aware of Memory Clinics and refer those in need of assessment. In Ireland, a recent research review has shown that Memory clinics are not available in every HSE area and where clinics do exist there is considerable variability between them, in relation to staffing composition, frequency of service, resources and costs. Our ageing population and the increasing numbers of people likely to develop a dementia in the future means there is an urgent need for more adequate resources to be invested into the expansion and enhancement of these important services.

Finally, many people still believe that memory loss problems are a normal part of ageing and do not believe they need to seek out medical help. Others delay making an appointment to see the doctor because they want to avoid hearing the truth about their condition. In fact, memory problems can result from a variety of medical conditions and making an appointment with a family doctor to discuss concerns about memory loss is the first step towards seeking a diagnosis. Pending the GP's assessment and decision, a referral to specialist staff at a Memory clinic may help to rule out the existence of other conditions, may help to identify the dementia sub-type or may provide treatments and strategies to reduce significant memory problems in the future. This booklet has attempted to bring together all available information on Memory Clinic services in Ireland. It is hoped it will be a useful resource to both the public and to health service professionals.

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Acknowledgements

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Useful websites

www.alzheimer.ie

www.alzheimercafe.ie

www.dementia.ie

www.dohc.ie

www.hse.ie

livingwithdementia.tcd.ie

www.memoryclinics.ie

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Other booklets from the Living with Dementia (LiD) Research Programme:

- Life for Caregivers after Placing a Relative with Dementia in a Nursing Home: A Guide for Family Caregivers and Nursing Home Staff
- Cognitive Impairment and Dementia: A Practical Guide to Daily Living for Family Caregivers
- Living in a Nursing Home: Quality of Life The Priorities of Older People with a Cognitive Impairment
- Finding a Suitable Nursing Home for a Relative with Dementia: A Guide for Family Caregivers to Placing a Relative with Dementia in a Nursing Home

Available from livingwithdementia.tcd.ie or alternatively by contacting the Living with Dementia Programme on **01-896 2442**

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