

Our Elderflowers deliver smiles and magical moments to ladies and gentlemen living with dementia in hospitals and care homes right across Scotland. Behind the Clowndoctors programme is the charity, Hearts & Minds.

www.heartsminds.org.uk

Elderflowers help ladies and gentlemen living with dementia by:

- reducing stress, anxiety, boredom, and feelings of isolation
- encouraging movement, communication, and interaction with others
- offering an outlet for creativity and humour

Get in touch!

To find out how we can help the children in your care, please email us at info@heartsminds.org.uk or call us on 0131 229 4037



Hearts & Minds
Improving lives one smile at a time

Follow us on social media for latest news

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Hearts & Minds is a Registered Scottish Charity No. SC027040
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Photographers: Eoin Carey, Kelman Greig-Kidds

Elderflowers

Delivering smiles and laughter across Scotland and a lot more besides...



Elderflowers
Delivering smiles & magical moments

Have you met the Elderflower family yet?

Our Elderflowers are an extended family of siblings and cousins who share moments of respite together with older people living with dementia in hospitals and care homes. We work in pairs, wear quirky vintage clothing and a red nose, and are therapeutic clowns. What this means is that a unique visit from us can have a therapeutic effect – it can stimulate cognitive functioning, decrease anxieties, increase communication, social interaction, resilience, and self-esteem, and create lots of happy, long-lasting, hormones from laughing. Each visit is made on the same day of the week so that everyone knows when to expect us. We fit in with your routines – but we're very flexible and understand that things can change at any minute!

Professional performers with specialist training

Each Elderflower is a professional performer with specialist training in clowning, music, improvisation, and clowning in healthcare environments for older people living with dementia and other associated cognitive difficulties. We're also trained in some medical vocabulary, the pathologies we might encounter and hygiene procedures. In addition, we are specially trained to work non-verbally.

Relationships and referrals

We work in close collaboration with hospital or care home staff. In fact, good clown-staff relations help to ensure the success of the Elderflowers programme. Information regarding each individual's condition, their likes and dislikes, and the nature of their dementia, helps us to deliver the best possible interventions. A brief verbal referral is indispensable as it lets us know if anything significant has happened to the lady or gentleman that day as well as their communication difficulties, sensory sensitivities, and any hygiene precautions we should observe. This information allows us to tailor our interactions appropriately and is, of course, treated in the strictest confidence.



A 'made to measure' approach

Each intervention is 'made to measure' and improvised. Empathy, authenticity, and playfulness sit at the heart of our approach and while interventions might involve music, singing, magic, mime, or gentle slapstick, we always put the individual's needs first, focusing on bringing humour, sensitivity, and positivity to their space. Each visit is as unique as the individuals we visit.



Communication and feedback

Before changing into costume at the start of each visit, we check in with the appropriate staff to see who they'd like us to visit that day and how they are; we also ask about goals or themes that they'd like us to focus on. We record the successes or developments of each interaction and provide feedback and helpful information on each individual's wellbeing, based on their responses to us. All referral documents and details are treated in the strictest confidence and don't leave the hospital or care home; our Elderflowers sign a confidentiality agreement. We may visit some participants once or twice and others we may see for years and develop a strong relationship.

It's important to be direct. If the Elderflowers' presence is ever inappropriate (for example, in a medical emergency) please just let us know. Hospitals and care home are assigned a Unit Lead who's responsible for carrying out an annual review to make sure that everything is running smoothly. This is the ideal opportunity for detailed feedback, questions and to discuss any specific issues.