INTRODUCTION
The Alzheimer’s Café (AC) Movement was developed by Dr Bere Miesen in the Netherlands in 1997. It is a monthly post-diagnostic group intervention, providing education and information about dementia, in addition to support for people with dementia, their carers and interested others. Three Allied Health Professionals from St Columcille’s Hospital noted the increase in the number of people presenting with dementia. The lack of integrated care pathways and difficulties knowing where to access community services resulted in social isolation and carer burden. After this training we began the process of setting up an AC in North Wicklow in-line with the targets of the National Dementia Strategy 2014 of:

- Reducing Stigma
- Encouraging early diagnosis
- Providing intervention and support
- Ensuring people with dementia remain active citizens in their communities

OBJECTIVES
1. To set up an AC using the experience and evidence base of a recognised International Model
2. To provide education and support to people with dementia and their carers
3. To encourage socialisation and interaction of people with dementia
4. To foster links between hospital and community services

METHOD
Key stakeholders from hospital, community, local government and a carer were invited to form a steering committee. We agreed a lead-in time of 6 months to the first AC and the following tasks were allocated:

- Sourcing accommodation and equipment
- Marketing and communication
- Recruiting volunteers

The ethos of the Alzheimer’s Café Movement is to be person-centred and provide a friendly atmosphere. Those who attended the first AC were surveyed so the educational ‘themes’ set for the year reflected their needs. Some of these themes are:

- The Range of Emotions
- Maximising Independence in the Home
- Communication
- Stress and Self Care
- What is dementia?

RESULTS
We have organised 7 successful Alzheimer’s Cafés to date. An average of 25 people with dementia and their carers attend each month. Groups are facilitated by 8 volunteers from hospital and community services. People have an opportunity to speak with professionals from varied backgrounds and have specific queries answered. The supportive social interaction between participants in a relaxed, natural environment has enhanced their overall experience. 20 people have returned to at least 80% of the meetings. Compiled feedback shows 100% satisfaction from participants in 88% of questions asked.

RECOMMENDATIONS
Due to the positive feedback from participants and the advantages of working in a collaborative way across hospital and community services, we recommend the Alzheimer’s Café is replicated in the Ireland East Hospital Group and across all hospital groups and communities in Ireland.

REFERENCES
Department of Health (2014) The Irish National Dementia Strategy