

FACT SHEET

Focus on Prague, Czech Republic

Why Prague?

Sue Ryder Care first became involved with Prague in the 1990s when we recognised a gap in services for older people. The transition from Communism in 1989, had a traumatic effect on the State's ability to care for its more vulnerable citizens. This, combined with the low standards of care in State-run homes for older people, led to the establishment of the Domov ('home') Sue Ryder in 2000.

Who do we help?

The Domov Sue Ryder opened its doors to residents in 1998 providing care for older people. It welcomes individuals from across the Czech Republic, especially veterans of World War II and Holocaust survivors (to whom Lady Ryder felt especially close).

The home provides 24-hour residential care for 56 people and reaches a further 70 people through its Day Centre and domiciliary services.



How do we work?

Sue Ryder Care works in partnership with our sister organisation, the Domov Sue Ryder www.sue-ryder.cz. The Domov Sue Ryder is a highly regarded charity, registered under Czech law and subject to a Board of Trustees. Sue Ryder Care fundraises, to support the Domov achieve its charitable goal of providing well designed care for individual clients, and we share our expertise in health and social care, fundraising and charity shops, to support the Domov achieve a sustainable future.

What are our future plans?

Increasingly the Domov is focused on caring for people with **Alzheimer's disease**, the most common form of dementia. According to Alzheimer Europe there are between 98,000 and 105,000 people with dementia in the Czech Republic, a number which has doubled since 1960, and yet there is currently no specialist service in Prague.

Alzheimer's is a progressive disease which means that gradually more and more parts of the brain are damaged. In its mildest form, people with Alzheimer's suffer no impairment. In moderately severe or mid-stage Alzheimer's memory will worsen, significant personality changes may take place, and people become easily confused and disorientated.

In the final stages of Alzheimer's individuals lose the ability to respond to their environment, the ability to speak and, ultimately, the ability to control movement.

We need £560,000 of capital to develop new Alzheimer services in Prague. We will also need to raise £440,000 to cover the running costs.



HRH Princess Anne talks to residents during a visit to the Domov

Twenty per cent of the 250 people applying to the Domov are routinely rejected because they have mid-stage Alzheimer's, for whom the current building, where people can freely interact with the community of Praha 4, is inadequate.

For this reason, the Domov Sue Ryder is embarking on the ambitious plan to build Prague's first specialist centre for people with Alzheimer's disease.

Maria's and Jan's story

Maria and Jan have been married for 45 years. Two years after Jan retired, his behaviour started to change. Maria takes up the story:

“At first it was quite funny. We laughed when Jan couldn't find anything or couldn't remember the names of our favourite actors. But step by step I saw him become more and more nervous, uncertain when carrying out daily activities. Because he was aware of “memory black-outs” he tried to hide it from me. He didn't want to worry me. Finally I persuaded my husband to see a doctor who diagnosed Jan with first degree Alzheimer's disease. He prescribed medication to help stave off its effects. That was seven long years ago.”

Maria took sole responsibility for caring for her husband for many years until she came to Domov Sue Ryder to ask for a professional support and help. She had never complained, even though it became more difficult with each month.

The Domov are providing Jan with assistance in their home, and respite care in the Domov itself. Very soon, it is clear that Jan will require fully professional assistance on a 24 hour basis, which would be very difficult to find in Prague where they both live.

How can I help?

If you are supporting Sue Ryder Care you are already helping, but if you would like to do something specifically for the Domov in Prague, or would like to learn more about our work there, contact international@sue Rydercare.org or call 0207 400 0637.

www.sue Rydercare.org/czech