

Becoming Dementia Friendly

Why take action on dementia?

- There are 850,000 people with dementia in the UK, with more than 16,000 people living with dementia in Surrey alone.
- 225,000 will develop dementia this year, that's one every three minutes.
- 1 in 6 people over the age of 80 have dementia.
- 70 per cent of people in care homes have dementia or severe memory problems.
- There are over 40,000 people under 65 with dementia in the UK.
- More than 25,000 people from black, Asian and minority ethnic groups in the UK are affected.

Did you know that...

- Dementia is not a natural part of ageing? Dementia is a disease of the brain.
- There are more than 100 different types of dementia? Alzheimer's disease is the most common affecting over 60% of people with a diagnosis.
- The condition is progressive and is as unique as the individual themselves

How does dementia affect people?

Dementia can affect different people in different ways. There are many more symptoms to dementia other than memory loss, and these signs are not always obvious. . Other symptoms include:

- Difficulty communication
- Difficulties with thinking things through and planning
- Confusion about time and place
- Sight and vision problems, such as hallucinations or difficulty with perception.

Why now, why not?

People living with dementia tell us that their world, and that of their carer, gets smaller and smaller with isolation and loneliness increasing. People don't understand the symptoms, are scared of the condition and fear the unknown. Around two thirds of people with a diagnosis of dementia are living at home and Alzheimer's Society want to see people included, welcomed and a part of their local community.

What is a Dementia Friendly Community?

People with dementia and their carers talk about the everyday challenges they face in living well with dementia. This can include difficulty using technology, getting appropriate service in shops, banks and post offices and in using transport, going on holiday, maintaining social contact and hobbies. Although help from health and care services is vitally important, making it possible for people affected by dementia to live well will require help from people and organisations across society

Many people with dementia tell us they want to engage with society but need support to take part in activities they enjoyed before they developed the condition.

A dementia-friendly community is a city, town or village, religious organisations, leisure centres or emergency services, where people with dementia are understood, respected, supported, and confident they can contribute to community life. It focuses on stigma reduction and the inclusion of people with dementia. In a Dementia Friendly Community, people living with dementia feel supported whether they are at the Post Office, a shopping centre, using a transport service or enjoying hobbies out in the community.

What is a Local Dementia Action Alliance?

A Local Dementia Action Alliance (LDAA) is the structure which enables a community to become dementia friendly. An LDAA is made up of a network of stakeholders - such as businesses, organisations and community individuals (all known as members) - who want to improve the lives of local people affected by dementia through action.

Typically, an LDAA holds a steering group of about 8-12 people who meet quarterly to decide the priorities for that particular community, by involving or consulting with people affected by dementia. Each member organisation in the LDAA commit to a number of actions outlining the ways in which they aim to become more dementia friendly. Such as: An LDAA will help to connect the community to ensure they are working towards the same dementia friendly goals.

How do I become a Local Dementia Action Alliance?

- ✓ Who will be part of the steering group?
- ✓ What will the structure look like? Who will be nominated as the leader and administrator?
- ✓ How often do you need to meet?
- ✓ How will people contact your DAA? Perhaps a generic email address that more than one of you can access?
- ✓ What will your local priorities be? For example raising awareness of dementia, looking at how dementia friendly certain environments are.

Once this is in place, you can register your LDAA on the Dementia Action Alliance by completing the LDAA registration form enclosed in this pack and send it back to dementiafriendlysurrey@alzheimers.org.uk for us to register for you. You will then be given access to the www.dementiaaction.org.uk website where you can see what else is happening both locally and nationally.

Next steps?

Once your LDAA is established it is ready for a launch event. You can work with all your members in the local community as well as Alzheimer's Society to showcase what you are achieving and raise the profile of your Local Dementia Action Alliance.

A launch event is a great networking opportunity for those members and communities who are registered to your LDAA to meet and share ideas. You could invite a local group to showcase what they have been doing and get some key speakers about dementia to present. Why not even invite the local press?

You will be asked to provide an update annually to the National DAA on your progress.

What does it mean to be Dementia Friendly?

We want people with dementia to feel understood, respected and supported, and confident they can contribute to community life.

Dementia Friendly means that your organisation is aware of and understands dementia and has committed to some actions which can help to make people affected by dementia feel included and involved, so that they have choice and control over their day-to-day lives.

How do I become Dementia Friendly?

To become Dementia Friendly all you need to do is identify at least three actions you will do to make your organisation more dementia friendly.

- ✓ Complete the membership form enclosed in this pack and return it to dementiafriendlysurrey@alzheimers.org.uk
- ✓ Your action plan can then be registered on the Dementia Action Alliance website at www.dementiaaction.org.uk where you will be aligned to your Local Dementia Action Alliance (LDAA), the Surrey LDAA, or both.
- ✓ You will then be a member of that LDAA and have the opportunity to network with other members who you may not regularly come into contact.
- ✓ You will still have your own webpage and log in details on the national website so that you can update your action plan progress. You will be asked to provide an update of how you are getting on every six months which will be shared with the Surrey LDAA.

How do I get recognised for being Dementia Friendly?

The recognition process is designed to enable communities to be publicly recognised for their work towards becoming dementia-friendly, which includes the use of specific logos. All recognition will come from within the Local DAA, and any member of the Local DAA can use the logo.

Once you have begun to make changes to improve the lives of people living with dementia in your community, your Local DAA will be able to apply for the “working to become Dementia Friendly” logo on behalf of its community members.

Actions taken to become dementia friendly should fall within at least two of the below areas:

- arts, culture, leisure, and recreation
- businesses and shops;
- children, young people and students;
- community, voluntary, faith groups and organizations;
- emergency services;
- health and social care;
- housing; and
- transport

The community needs to demonstrate how they have committed to becoming dementia friendly by meeting seven criteria below:

1. Ensure the right local structure is in place to maintain a sustainable Dementia-Friendly Community
2. Identify a person to take responsibility to drive the work forward to support a community to become dementia friendly
3. Have a plan in place to raise awareness about dementia in key organisations and businesses within the community that support people with dementia
4. Develop a strong voice for people with dementia living in communities
5. Raise the profile of the work to increase reach and awareness to different groups in the community
6. Focus plans on a number of key areas that have been identified locally
7. Have a plan or system in place to update the progress of your community.

An LDAA can apply for recognition here: <https://www.dementiafriends.org.uk/register-community-admin>

The Local DAA will be required to report annually on the status and progress of the community and the plans for the coming year.

What actions could I take?

In local communities, it is evident that small changes are making a real difference.

A good place to start is by identifying what people living with dementia in your community want. Sometimes it's easy to presume, but the real value of getting it right is asking those that matter. Have you considered a quick questionnaire that you can leave in the coffee shop or bank?

Suggested Actions

- **Raising awareness and understanding of dementia** - Hold a free 45 minute Dementia Friend's information session for your organisation or community to combat the myths around dementia and learn more about the condition and how it might affect people. You will also receive a badge which is generally recognised by people affected by dementia.
- **Listen to people living with dementia** – Invite someone with dementia to do a 'walking tour' of your town centre/shop/leisure centre to offer suggestions about the environment, signage, accessibility or customer care.
- **Create relationships and networks** – invite the bank, solicitor or fire service to visit a local dementia service to talk about their services and support available
- **Sharing good ideas** – Produce a very quick reference guide for local shops/businesses with details of where they can get help or advice if they meet someone who has dementia that needs support in their community.
- **Environment** – use our dementia friendly environment check list and think about how your environment could be adapted through the use of signage or lighting to be more dementia friendly.
- **Shops** – Consider a dedicated 'no hurry' checkout lane, some seating for people, or dementia friendly parking
- **Parks** – do you have enough park benches for a little breather on the way round, are there Key points at the park with a map for "you are here" or direction indicators back to car park.
- **Leisure** – could you run a dementia friendly cinema screening, gym or swimming class? Is there space for a carer to assist someone in the changing rooms? Could you have dedicated seating in a theatre that is near to exits or aisles so people can leave if necessary?
- **Safe Haven** – could your organisation offer its building as a place of safety in the town which could be accessible to people with dementia and their carers where they could go if they needed help?
- **Resource Pack** – could you create a resource pack of information, local contacts and groups for people affected by dementia to sign post people to.

Dementia Friendly Environment Checklist

There are some quite small changes that can have a major impact on improving accessibility for people with dementia. Some such as clear signs and lighting can be done at minimal cost, others will involve some investment, and should be considered as budgets allow, and when replacing fittings.

Use this check list to have a good look round the public areas in your building. Remember to check corridors for example leading to the toilet – people can go in following the signs – but not remember which door they came in by. A simple way 'out sign' on that internal door will help.

For further information on the impact of design on people with dementia, you can visit the International Dementia Design Network website (<http://www.international-dementia-design.org/page/getting-out-and-about>) and search for information and resources.

Quiet Space:

Do you have a quiet space for someone who might be feeling anxious or confused? A few minutes with a supportive person might be all that's needed to continue the transaction.

Signage:

Are your signs clear, in bold face with good contrast between text and background?

Is there a contrast between the sign and the surface it is mounted on? This will allow the person to recognise it as a sign

Are the signs fixed to the doors they refer to? – They should not be on adjacent surfaces if at all possible.

Are signs at eye level and well-lit?

Are signs highly stylized or use abstract images or icons as representations? (These should be avoided).

Are signs placed at key decision points for someone who is trying to navigate your premises for the first time? – People with dementia may need such signs every time they come to your building

Are signs for toilets and exits clear? – These are particularly important.

Are glass doors clearly marked?

Lighting:

Are entrances well-lit and make as much use of natural light as possible?

Are there pools of bright light or deep shadows (these should be avoided)?

Flooring:

- Are there any highly reflective or slippery floor surfaces? – Reflections can cause confusion.
- Do you have bold patterned carpets? – Plain or mottled surfaces are easier; patterns can cause problems to people with perceptual problems.
- Are changes in floor finish flush rather than stepped – changes in floor surfaces can cause some confusion due to perceptual problems. If there is a step at the same time you also introduce a trip hazard.

Changing rooms and toilets:

- Do you have a changing room (where applicable) where an opposite sex carer or partner can help out if the person needs help with their clothes? If not are staff briefed in how to meet this need sensitively.
- Do you have a unisex toilet or other facility which would allow someone to have assistance without causing them or other user's embarrassment?
- Toilet seats that are of a contrasting colour to the walls and rest of the toilet are easier to see if someone has visual problems.

Seating:

- In larger premises – do you have seating area, especially in areas where people are waiting? This can be a big help.
- Does any seating look like seating? People with dementia will find this easier - so for example a wooden bench would be preferable to an abstract metal Z-shaped bench.

Navigation:

- Research shows that people with dementia use “landmarks” to navigate their way around, both inside and outside. The more attractive and interesting the landmark (which could be a painting, or a plant) the easier it is to use it as a landmark. Have you had a good look round and thought about these landmarks?

Other issues:

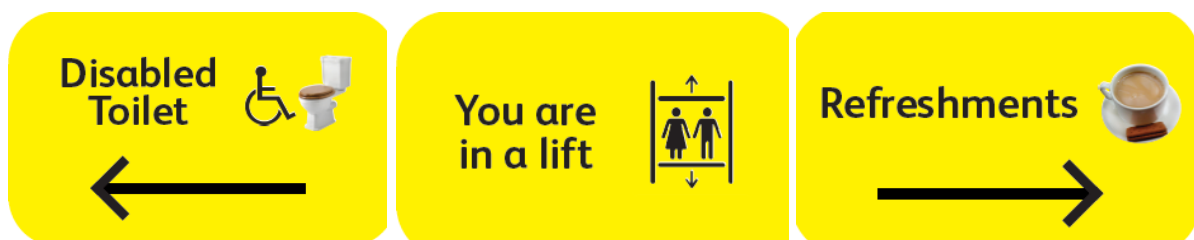
- This list is not exhaustive – if possible speak to people living with dementia and ask them how they find your premises. Other unexpected things can cause problems –for example reflections can be confusing.

We would like to acknowledge Innovations in Dementia, a Community Interest Company, whose original check list formed the basis of this checklist and the Bradford Alzheimer's Society; who further developed this checklist to include all of the points above. The original Innovations in Dementia checklist can be found in the guide 'Developing dementia friendly communities' which was written on behalf of the Local Government Association. The full guide can be found at <http://www.local.gov.uk/ageing-well> following the links to resources.

Dementia Friendly Signage

Alzheimer's Society's dementia friendly signage has been developed to support with dementia friendly environments and communities.

Using dementia friendly signage can help a person living with dementia to orientate themselves in unfamiliar surroundings.



Guidelines for sign creation

There are several aspects that need to be considered when creating Dementia Friendly Signage:

- **Contrast** – there should be a clear contrast between the background colour and the text and images on the sign. This is so the information on the sign is easily recognised. A white background is not advised as it can easily blend into its background. Yellow is recommended as a strong colour that stands out, and can be easily perceived by people affected by dementia. Black text and symbols on yellow creates a clear sign which someone with dementia can recognise.
- **Text** – the text on signs should be in title or sentence format, and never all in upper case. People with dementia tell us that the easiest font to recognise is Arial.
- **Symbols and images** – Use easily recognisable symbols and images on signs to help someone living with dementia to recognise what the sign is saying. For example the male, female and disabled symbols plus a picture of a toilet on toilet signs, and a picture of a plate of food, a drink or cutlery for a kitchen, restaurant or refreshment room. Make sure the symbol you use is recognisable, it is also worth consulting with someone affected by dementia to ensure the symbols and images you use are appropriate.
- **Size** – for most situations A4 sized signs will be adequate. Signs in large areas or outdoors may need to be larger.

- **Positioning** – the position of your signs is as important as what is on them, we would suggest eye height. If a sign is leading to a room or a toilet, there must also be corresponding signs to lead the way back; they should be spaced so as not to cause confusion. It is important to note that a “way out” sign is important inside toilets, kitchens and other rooms which may have a closed door to pass through.

If a person living with dementia has to go through a door which does not have a window in it, they need to know what is on the other side. It is advisable that where possible doors that a person with dementia may need to go through are made to stand out by being painted a contrasting colour to the walls.

In an enclosed space, such as a lift, a sign indicating where you are is helpful. Also in a corridor with doors without windows, where the doors lead should be signposted.

- **Production** – signs should be matt, as reflection can obscure or distort the information, and be confusing.

Room signs

If you have a meeting room or special event that may be attended by someone living with dementia, it will help them to recognise where they are by informing them of the day, the date, the location and what they are there for.

Example:



Other examples of Dementia Friendly Signage available:

