

HOW TO BECOME A DEMENTIA FRIENDLY COMMUNITY

A Dementia Friendly Community is a city, town or village where people with dementia are understood, respected and supported, and continue to live in the way they want and in the community they choose.

People affected by dementia are at the heart of every dementia-friendly community. Councils at all levels can help to support their community to become dementia-friendly. Large or small there is always something the community can do to be inclusive of people living with dementia. There may already be a Dementia Friendly Community group set up locally which you can join, or you may want to make, and have, your own community recognised as working to become dementia-friendly.

This information covers a wide range of councils we appreciate that some will only be able to do a little whilst some can achieve more due to their size. Whatever you can do makes a difference to someone living with dementia.

What you can do

Building your own Dementia Friendly Community

- Start by organising a Dementia Friends session at your council meeting, visit **www.dementiafriends.org.uk** to book a session.
- Put forward a council motion to become a dementia friendly parish, village or town.
- Do you want to be your own Dementia Friendly Community or join a larger local group? If there is one, you can find out by emailing **dementiafriendlycommunities@alzheimers.org.uk**.
- Agree to have Dementia Friendly Communities as a regular agenda item to monitor your progress. You may want to set up a separate group depending on the size of your community. This is good practice even if you are just part of a larger community.
- Appoint a dementia lead within the council to ensure the needs of people with dementia are considered and lead the work around Dementia Friendly Communities.

Getting started

- Plan how you are going to make your community dementia-friendly. Consult locally with people living with dementia.
- Commit to making any council buildings dementia-friendly if you have them – use the environment check list to see what changes can be made.

- **Environment checklist**
- **Dementia-friendly signage**
- Consider only procuring services from contractors who are willing to become more dementia-friendly as part of their contract.
- Map the businesses, organisations and groups in your community (i.e. shops, schools, retained fire service, businesses, social groups, faith groups, GP practices, library and so on).
- Publish your plans in your parish news outlets inviting local business to see how they can get involved.
- Work with local business and other organisations to enable them to play their part, a little understanding about dementia and its effects is the only way to create dementia friendly communities (e.g. all staff to attend a Dementia Friends session, complete an environment check list, look at their practices).
- Organise some Dementia Friends sessions for your community- have further information at sessions so organisations can see what else they can do. Give out supporter forms which show simple ways for organisations can get involved.

Other things you can do to raise awareness

- Celebrate Dementia Action Week (annually in the third week of May) and World Alzheimer's Day (21 September each year).
- Plan to make any events in your community dementia-friendly and promote at things like summer fairs.
- Link up with larger local communities for peer support.
- Look to become recognised as a Dementia Friendly Community.

People, Process, Place

Below potential activity is broken down further into people, process and place. The amount of activity you can undertake is dependent on the size of your council. Even small changes can make a huge difference to people living with dementia.

People

- Raise awareness of dementia by rolling out Dementia Friends Information Sessions with all current staff and add Dementia Friends to every staff induction.
- Provide open Dementia Friends Information Sessions so that the general public can increase their awareness about people living with dementia across communities.

- Talk to local people with dementia and carers about what is good and what is difficult for them locally.
- Dementia is everyone's business, not just adult social care. Hold Dementia Friends Information Sessions for everyone.
- Through your consultation, find out common problems that people with dementia report locally and take steps to solve them. Examples such as the refuse team helping residents to get their bins out on the right day, helping people access council tax benefit and exemptions, inviting people with dementia to consult on transport surveys and village plans.
- Lobby county and unitary councils regarding services and support in your community.

Process

- Share information with the Memory Service and GPs, PALs Service and local pharmacies on what services are available locally to support people with dementia and their carers'.
- Ensure information on services for people with dementia is shared across all communication channels (i.e. on paper as well as digitally).
- Talk about dementia in internal and external communications – promoting and supporting local initiatives.
- Promote Alzheimer's Society's educational resources on dementia to local schools. These range from age appropriate Dementia Friends Sessions to full curriculum resources.
- Introduce flexible working policies/ carers passport for staff who may have caring responsibilities. We appreciate that most parish councils don't manage staff but it is worth being aware that it is not just what you do externally but internal processes for staff and volunteers should also be considered.

Place

- Use the Dementia-friendly business guide environment checklist to make sure your premises are dementia-friendly and to alert staff to where more support for visitors with dementia might be needed where changes cannot be effected.
- Make small changes such as removing black mats from entrances and introducing clear signage.
- Consider introducing quieter areas, with computers or resources that staff or carers with dementia can use as needed.

- If you have any questions, get in touch with your Dementia Friendly Communities Officer, or contact **dementiafriendlycommunities@alzheimers.org.uk** for advice.

Useful link

Sector specific guides – range of useful guides and information.

Dementia-friendly councils case studies

Wembury Parish Council, Brixton Parish Council, Yealmpton Parish Council, Holbeton Parish Council and Newton and Noss Parish Council, Devon

This group of councils created the 'Dementia Friendly Parishes around the Yealm, 'building inclusive communities, changing lives', a group of local councils committed to improving the lives of people with dementia and their families and friends. Working alongside local groups, businesses and organisations, the partnership aims to make it possible for people with dementia to continue doing the things they love and are important to them. The partnership's work is designed with five main aims in mind: to support the lives of people with dementia and their families; to enable people with dementia to remain active and involved in community life; to work with local groups and organisations to develop suitable activities and services; to raise awareness and understanding of dementia both locally and nationally and to remain with the family throughout their journey. This is achieved by regular individual support to families by the part-time paid coordinator, which the group fundraises for. Their website is a hub of information and resources. The partnership organises a range of regular inclusive groups which welcomes all members of the community. This includes a weekly reading group, walking group and a move to music group. A monthly singing group, afternoon tea and a new board games group in collaboration with the local Women's Institute and, finally, a bi-monthly art and crafts group! The group stands by the phrase: 'We can't change the person living with dementia but we can change the experience they have within their own community'.

Holmes Chapel Parish Council, Cheshire

The council works with the Holmes Chapel Partnership to make Holmes Chapel a Dementia Friendly village. Several councillors and an officer attended a talk organised by the partnership and subsequently agreed to become dementia friends. The council is also assisting the partnership with the design and administration of a planned sensory garden which is intended to be of particular benefit to those with dementia. This will see the existing garden reformed, with

many new plants and shrubs planted which have been specifically chosen to bring a variety of smells, textures and sound to the area.

Hythe Town Council, Kent

The Dementia Awareness Forum, started in 2015 by Hythe Town Council, aims to bring awareness to its residents of the people living in the town who have dementia and the needs of their carers'. The forum meets every third Thursday of the month at the town council offices. Their website highlights key information and signposts to other organisations that may be of use to someone with dementia. Local clubs include: events at the library; 'COGS club'; Dementia Daybreak; Stepping Out with Carers; and, the Dementia Awareness Forum.

The Forget Me Not Activity Club, Mountnessing Parish Council, Essex

Founded in 1999, The Forget-Me-Not Club provides invaluable support to those living with and caring for people with dementia. With a dedicated and highly qualified team of staff and volunteers, the activity club run a host of activities in Banchory and upper Deeside. Whilst providing a diverse programme of activities at Bennett House, a resource centre in Banchory, they have also set up a branch of their charity named Active Forget Me Not. This allows many younger and physically fit people living with dementia an opportunity to continue taking part in sports and active pursuits that they love.

Forget-Me-Not also advises and educates carers on the complexities of the illness, providing information and knowledge of things that can be done to help, from coping strategies to financial advice, allowing clients to stay in their own homes for longer. The Forget-Me-Not Club currently provides over 600 hours of free care per week, only taking donations and relying on fundraising in order to provide varied and extensive services.

The club is open on Mondays at St John's Hall in Mountnessing, and then lunch is at The Prince of Wales pub nearby. The focus of activities is very much on cognitive and physical ability - tapping in to those precious skills and taking part in light physical exercise. Regular activities include pool, table tennis and volleyball, singing, and comedy to name a few. The club have a wonderful relationship with a local primary school that visit for intergenerational activity and take the members out to various places of interest. The club prides itself on giving their members the best day possible whilst providing respite to family carers.

Purton Parish Council, Wiltshire

The council works with Royal Wootton Bassett and Cricklade Area Board, Purton Doctor's Surgery and other associated bodies to raise awareness of dementia

locally. As part of this the council runs regular Dementia Friends sessions, offering insight into the condition and giving support to those suffering, their care givers and families.

Wythall Parish Council, Worcestershire

The council hosts a Dementia Café on the third Wednesday of every month. Those living with dementia and their care givers are invited to attend the café, based in Wythall village hall, and enjoy bottomless tea, coffee and homemade cakes. Each café session also features a guest speaker or theme.

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