



PLYMOUTH
CITY COUNCIL

BECOMING DEMENTIA FRIENDLY WHY AND HOW?

A toolkit for Plymouth



DAA Dementia
Action Alliance

Working to become
**Dementia
Friendly**



What is dementia?

There are over 80 recognised forms of dementia; all are diseases of the brain which can cause:

- Problems with memory
- Problems with everyday tasks, like handling money.
- Problems with communication
- Problems with perception
- Problems with understanding.

Dementia is progressive; it starts off with very mild symptoms and gets worse over time. It affects everyone differently. No two people with dementia are the same.

What is a Dementia Friendly Community?

Dementia Friendly Communities aim to:

- Empower and include individuals
- Reduce social isolation
- Challenge stigma

- Raise awareness
- Support carers.

Why does Plymouth need to be Dementia Friendly?

In 2010 researchers at the Plymouth University investigating early diagnosis of dementia, found that many people with dementia in Plymouth were lonely and isolated in the local community.

- Individuals with dementia didn't feel able to access services and organisations for social support.
- Many stopped using local shops and businesses due to the fear that they would be unable to cope.
- Carers felt embarrassed due to the sometimes altered behaviour of their loved one and the social stigma of dementia.
- Significant rates of depression for both the individual and their carer were also noted.
- All of which may have contributed to early moves in to residential care.

Plymouth University, Plymouth City Council and 30 other interested organisations joined forces to establish the Plymouth Dementia Action Alliance (PDAA) with the aim of creating a Dementia Friendly City. As a Dementia Friendly City we want people to feel they have a choice and control over the decisions about their life, to feel a valued part of the community and live well with dementia.

Why now?

In 2012 800,000 people were living with dementia, this figure is set to rise to 1,000,000 in 2021. Creating dementia friendly communities that support and sustain people in their homes, neighbourhoods and social networks is an important element of the work that all councils will need to do to address the ageing agenda.

The cost to the UK economy providing care for people with dementia is currently £23bn, (with carers saving the UK government an additional 6bn). As a society it is not just compassionate to support and encourage others in our community to live well, it makes financial sense too.

How will being Dementia Friendly help my organisation?

It is estimated that by 2015 there will be over 3000 people with dementia living in Plymouth. Currently only **45 per cent** of people living with a dementia receive a diagnosis.

Increasingly, people with dementia are living for much longer in the community, and that will mean that increasingly, more and more of your customers, and potential customers will have dementia.

You probably already have some customers who have dementia.

You certainly have many potential customers who have dementia.

Making it easier for people with dementia to use your service, and supporting your staff to serve them more effectively has a number of very clear benefits:

- It will enable you to maintain your existing customers who might have, or be developing

dementia. If they do not find it easy to use your business, they are likely to seek out another.

- It will enable you to attract new customers. There will be an increase in the numbers of people with dementia living independently. They will use the businesses which are easiest to use.
- Your business may have a community charter, or a community benefit component to your quality assurance program. Making it easier for people with dementia to use your business will be a very big 'plus'.
- It will help with compliance to the Equality Act 2010.
- Staff who are unsure how to best serve customers with dementia may be hesitant in helping, causing delays to themselves, the customer with dementia, and other customers.

How can I make things easier for people with dementia to use my business?

The Plymouth Toolkit has been devised to help organisations and work towards becoming Dementia Friendly. There are a number of things your organisation can do, fairly easily and cheaply in order to help people with dementia:

Ask people with dementia what it is like to use your business

You may already know people with dementia – if so, that is a great place to start.

People with dementia will often be able to tell you very directly which aspects of your business they find easy to use, and which present barriers to them.

For more information

If you don't know any people with dementia, then contact the Plymouth Branch of the Alzheimer's Society, Tel 608909, who might be in position to arrange for people with dementia to visit and then let you know what they think.

Have a look around at your buildings and facilities – are they dementia friendly?

There are often some very simple changes organisations can make to the physical environment that can make life easier for people with memory problems.

For more information

Checklist for dementia friendly environments: A briefing note for organisations. This document outlines some very basic considerations as well as signposting to more detailed audit tools. It is not a prescriptive checklist, nor is it exhaustive, but it may give you a few ideas and some food for thought.

Raise staff awareness of dementia

People with dementia tell us repeatedly that it is the attitude of those they encounter in their communities which has the biggest impact on their lives in their community.

A basic understanding of the impact of dementia and how to support people can make a huge difference both to the experience of the customer and to that of the staff involved.

For more information

Raising dementia awareness - options for staff.

People with dementia have told us that it is the attitude of those they meet that is the most important aspect of a dementia-friendly community. Raising awareness of dementia among staff is therefore crucial and this document outlines a number of different awareness-raising options.

Guidance for customer-facing staff: A briefing note for organisations. This briefing note is focused on helping staff to support customers with memory problems more effectively.

Review support for employees

18% of people with dementia are currently in work. Undertaking a HR review to ensure that support is available for employees with dementia and those caring for someone with a dementia helps to retain valued members of staff.

For more information

The government provide an Access to Work grant which is designed to support individuals with a disability finding and remaining in work www.gov.uk/access-to-work

- Join the Plymouth Dementia Action Alliance
Membership of the Plymouth Dementia Action Alliance is free and can provide:
- Access to training packages for staff
- Guidance on approaches for developing a dementia friendly organisation
- Dissemination and sharing of information and advice
- Connection to a network of dementia experts
- Meetings and networking events
- Recognition of the Dementia Friendly commitment your organisation is making.

For more information

Contact Claire Puckey 01752 398922 or email: pdaa@plymouth.gov.uk

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