

RAISING DEMENTIA AWARENESS: OPTIONS FOR STAFF

A briefing note for organisations





Resources to help raise awareness

People living with dementia will encounter a range of staff in organisations on a day to day basis as they go about their business.

They may experience a range of symptoms associated with their dementia, which have the potential to impact on their ability to interact with those they encounter. Similarly those they encounter may be unsure how and whether to help people who appear to be experiencing difficulties.

People with dementia all differ in the way they experience their dementia, but generally speaking in public situations people with dementia may have a range of difficulties including:

- Problems remembering what they are doing
- Difficulty in communicating clearly
- Problems handling money
- Problems navigating in complex or confusing environments.

How staff respond to people who may be experiencing these kinds of difficulties can make a real difference. 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 ability to continue with their daily business and remain independent.

What do staff need to know?

Research has shown that those with good “people skills” or those working within organisations with a strong focus on customer care may already have many of the attributes or skills they need to be able to support people with dementia as customers.

However, 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.

This paper is aimed squarely at staff whose role is not specifically to support people with

dementia, but who may encounter people with dementia as customers on a day to day basis. For staff who support people with dementia as a significant part of their role, the Plymouth Dementia Action Alliance produces a training catalogue which has a variety of training courses run by different local providers aimed at this training need.

The amount of information staff will need will depend upon their role, as staff in diverse organisations will encounter people with dementia in different situations. The needs of people with dementia may also differ from one encounter to the next. For example, the role and training need of a police officer will be very different from that of a shop assistant.

It is important therefore to recognise that training and awareness raising is at its best when it is designed for the audience in mind.

However, there are likely to be some similar themes and needs across all public-facing situations:

- Why dementia awareness matters
- How to recognise that people may be having problems
- How to respond to people who may be having problems
- How to communicate more effectively with people with memory problems
- What to do if someone needs help.

There are a range of training and awareness-raising options available locally for businesses and organisations who wish to improve the customer service experience for people with a dementia, and these are outlined right.

Dementia awareness and training resources

The options presented are readily available training options (these options are not mutually exclusive):

- Formal training sessions.
- Dementia Friend Awareness sessions.
- Online training.
- Help pack for customer-facing staff.
- Printed materials – e.g. booklets from Alzheimer's Society.

Formal dementia awareness training from the Alzheimer's Society and other local providers.

Formal training offers an insight into the everyday experience of the person with dementia and looks at how the person may be affected physically by dementia, as well as the signs, symptoms, impact of and treatment of the disease, alongside best practice methods of empowering those living with a dementia. Formal training covers a huge variety of options from a half day session to a course over several months with assessed assignments, and can be tailored to staff within individual organisations.

Suitable for

- Staff who may come into regular or sustained contact with people with dementia.
- Organisations with specific training needs i.e. Police or Search and Rescue team.
- Organisations with a number of staff who can attend training at the same time.

This training is comprehensive, delivered by an accredited facilitator, and can be targeted to workforce. Costs vary.

More information

Plymouth Dementia Action Alliance produces a catalogue of local training providers with courses on dementia available at:
www.dementiaaction.org.uk/local_alliances/1961_plymouth_dementia_action_alliance

Dementia Friends Information Sessions

Dementia Friends is a national initiative run by Alzheimer's Society. It is funded by the Government, and aims to improve people's understanding of dementia and its effects. The Alzheimer's Society is working with many volunteers and other organisations to achieve this goal, with the aim of helping to create dementia friendly communities.

People with dementia sometimes need a helping hand to go about their daily lives and feel included in their local community. Dementia Friends gives people an understanding of dementia and the small things that they can do that could make a difference to people living with dementia.

Suitable for:

- Any staff who may come into contact with people with dementia. Organisations with limited resources.

The free sessions last an hour. They are fun, informative and available in local libraries.

More information

www.dementiafriends.org.uk

Or email: pdaa@plymouth.gov.uk

Dementia Friends Online interactive video

For staff who are unable to access face to face dementia friends sessions, an online session is now available in a 10 min interactive information video.

Suitable for

- Staff who may come into contact with people with dementia but have difficulty accessing face to face friends sessions.

More information

www.dementiafriends.org.uk

Dementia Friends Champions Training

A Dementia Friends Champion is a volunteer who encourages others to make a positive difference to people living with dementia in their community. They do this by giving an understanding of the personal impact of dementia, and what they can do to help, in the form of the Dementia Friends information sessions.

Dementia Friends Champions attend a one day training session to receive the information and guidance they need to hold a dementia friends session. This includes PowerPoint presentations, informal exercises, quiz sheets, suggestions for book club and reading sessions, bingo sheets, and sample talks. They also will have access to support and information networks via the Dementia Friends website.

By facilitating a Dementia Champion within an organisation, it becomes easier to cascade friends awareness at a time and location convenient to the organisation.

This training is suitable for staff with an interest in dementia awareness, those who are confident presenters, and organisations with limited resources.

The one-day sessions run from 10am to 4pm.

Online training - SCIE e-learning Open Dementia Programme

The Open Dementia e-learning Programme is aimed at anyone who comes into contact with someone with dementia and provides a general introduction to the disease and the experience of living with dementia. This programme is designed to be accessible to a wide audience and to make learning as enjoyable as possible and so allows users to fully interact with the content and includes video, audio and graphics to make the content come alive.

These courses are suitable for staff who come into contact with people with dementia, those

who have internet access, and organisations with limited resources.

The course is free and flexible and can be completed in about four hours. It provides a good grounding for people who want to know about dementia and how they can support people who may be having problems.

Some modules might not be relevant for all staff. For customer-facing staff who do not have a specific role in supporting people with dementia we would particularly recommend:

- **Module 1** – What it is and what it isn't (20 minutes)
- **Module 2** – Common difficulties and how to help (30-40 minutes)
- **Module 7** – Positive communication (20-30 minutes).

More information

www.scie.org.uk/publications/elearning/dementia/index.asp

Online training – Dementia e-Learning Course

This course, run by Kwango focuses on the recognition, care and treatment of dementia with evidence of training being recognised from a certificated quiz result. Highly interactive and engaging content entuses trainees to complete the course. The module is designed to help participants to:

- Recognise dementia: what is and what is not dementia
- Understand the causes of dementia
- Be guided to the treatments that are available for dementia
- Deal with challenging behaviour resulting from dementia.

This programme is designed to be accessible to a wide audience and visually stimulating and interactive. All courses can act as a pre-learner or subject refresher and can be accessed 24 hours/ day 7 days a week.

The courses are suitable for staff who come into contact with people with dementia, those with internet access, and organisations with limited resources.

This free, flexible course can be completed within one hour.

More information

www.kwango.com/dementia_elearning.php

For login details and a password contact: pdaa@plymouth.gov.uk

Written resources

The Alzheimer's Society 'How to help people with Dementia' is available for download from www.alzheimers.org.uk/customerfacing (hard copies are available 25 copies for £5 plus p+p)

Alternatively the Dementia Friendly Plymouth Help Pack for customer facing staff is available at www.dementiaaction.org.uk/local_alliances/1961_plymouth_dementia_action_alliance

The Alzheimer's Society produces range of information free to download or for a small fee as printed booklets, including:

- Leaflets on a variety of aspects of Dementia with information on social, legal and medical impacts.
- On-going information about dementia and what's going in locally via national and local newsletters and factsheets.

Suitable for

- Staff who may come into contact with people with dementia.
- Staff who want more in-depth knowledge on a particular aspect of dementia
- Staff and organisations with little time or money.

These booklets are free to download.

More information

www.alzheimers.org.uk/site/scripts/documents.php?categoryID=200308

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