

Dementia Action Alliance Action Plan

Guidance note for Fire and Rescue Services

This note states how Fire and Rescue Services in the UK can improve the lives of people with dementia. It also provides guidance on how they can join the Dementia Action Alliance and publically state their commitment through developing an Action Plan.

What is dementia?

Dementia is a disease of the brain which can affect memory, everyday tasks, communication and perception. It is not a result of the normal ageing process.

There are over 850,000 people living with dementia in the UK and this figure is set to rise. 225,000 people develop dementia every year, that's roughly one person every three minutes. (Alzheimer's Society 2014)

82% of the public believe people with dementia and their carers need more help and support. (You Gov 2011)

By not undertaking actions to support people with dementia your organisation may not be compliant with the Equality Act 2010, which recognises dementia as a disability. This means that your organisation should make reasonable adjustments to avoid discrimination.

Why is dementia important to you?

People with dementia face many challenges going about their daily lives. These include getting disorientated and experiencing memory loss. This can increase fire risks.

While there is no data specifically for dementia, over half of all fire deaths and injury in the home in 2010-11 were among people aged 60 and over. Recent research has shown that impairment, disability and dementia are a substantial factor in increasing someone's risk of injury or death from fire in the home.

Fire and Rescue Services have an important role to play by protecting people living with dementia and helping them stay secure and independent in their own homes for as long as possible. They can help to ensure families and carers are aware of fire risks, raising awareness of free home safety visits and advice and encouraging other local organisations to become involved in building dementia friendly communities.

The average cost of a fire in the home in England is £44,523 (The Economic Cost of Fire: estimates for 2008, Department of Communities & Local Government, 2011)

Chief Fire Officers Association's Dementia Pledge

As part of the Prime Minister's Dementia Challenge launched in 2012, the Chief Fire Officers Association developed the Dementia Pledge to outline the role fire and rescue services can play in delivering for dementia and the resources available.

Commitments in the pledge include:

- Raising awareness of dementia amongst our staff.
- Helping to ensure that families and carers are aware of the fire risks associated with the care and protection of people with dementia in their homes
- Raising awareness of home safety visits and other preventative measures available to help reduce the risk of fires in the homes of people with dementia.
- Promoting the education and information resources available to those caring for people with dementia.
- Promoting the use of simple design measures at the construction stage of building developments, so that people can stay independent and safe in their own homes for as long as possible
- Promoting the use of assistive technology that can enable people to stay independent and safe in their own homes for as long as possible.
- Taking an active role in encouraging partners and local groups to create dementia friendly communities.

The commitments outlined in the pledge can and should form the basis of your force's Action Plan which is discussed on the next page.

More information on the Dementia Pledge: <http://www.cfoa.org.uk/13552>

How can you help?

By joining the Dementia Action Alliance and developing a short Action Plan, you can become part of the national movement to improve the lives of people living with dementia.

Sign up to the National Dementia Declaration

The National Dementia Declaration lists seven outcomes that all businesses, charities and public bodies can collectively work towards to improve the lives people with dementia and their carers. These are:

1. I have personal choice and control or influence over decisions about me
2. I know that services are designed around me and my needs
3. I have support that helps me live my life
4. I have the knowledge and know-how to get what I need
5. I live in an enabling and supportive environment where I feel valued and understood
6. I have a sense of belonging and of being a valued part of family, community and civic life
7. I know there is research going on which delivers a better life for me now and hope for the future

By signing up to the Declaration you are publically stating that people can live well with dementia and that all of society has a responsibility for ensuring that it happens.

Join the Dementia Action Alliance

Dementia is everyone's responsibility. By joining your local Dementia Action Alliance you can have regular contact with likeminded organisations who are undertaking similar actions to improve the lives of people living with dementia. This could save you money by allowing you to bulk purchase training and through a local alliance you could work collectively with partner organisations to spread awareness and develop dementia friendly communities.

To join a local Dementia Action Alliance you just need to draft a short Action Plan. The Action Plan is a public statement of how your organisation is working to improve the lives of people with dementia.

Draft an Action Plan

The section overleaf provides guidance on how to complete your Action Plan, including suggestions for simple actions designed to improve the lives of people living with dementia.

Once completed it will be uploaded to the Dementia Action Alliance website where other organisations and the public can see your actions.

Existing Action Plans of Fire and Rescue Services can be found here:

http://www.dementiaaction.org.uk/members_and_action_plans?keywords=fire

Question template

1. The National Dementia Declaration lists a number of outcomes that we are seeking to achieve for people with dementia and their carers. How would you describe your organisation's role in delivering better outcomes for people with dementia and their carers?

For example:

[Name] Fire and Rescue Service serves a population of approximately xxx people with an estimated xxx people over 65 years of age, and xxx people living with dementia.

Nationally Fire Services have a duty to prevent fire incidents and the deaths and injuries associated with them. The national Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) also has this commitment and has recently launched a new Ageing Safely strategy and Dementia Pledge. We recognise that this duty is even more prevalent for some groups that are statistically at more risk than others. Older people and people with physical and mental health issues are among the high risk groups and therefore we welcome the opportunity to progress and develop prevention initiatives among these groups.

In working with responsible agencies and those supporting people with dementia we hope to provide targeted and relevant advice to people with dementia and their carers to ensure they can live safely.

We can do this through providing home fire safety checks and in some cases specialist equipment for reducing fire risk. This ensures that services and support are designed around individual needs. We also want to provide carers and support agencies with valuable fire safety awareness so that they can identify risks and recognise when risks are increasing. This supports the person with dementia to live their life safely.

2. What are the challenges to delivering these outcomes from the perspective of your organisation?

For example:

All [Name] Fire and Rescue employees whose work brings them into contact with vulnerable groups need to have an awareness and understanding of dementia, the specific risks, the available support, and how to work with and effectively communicate with all who have a cognitive impairment during home safety check visits and emergency incidents.

We need to identify those agencies working with people who have dementia and work with them to identify opportunities for referral mechanisms to ensure advice is targeted.

3. What are your plans as an organisation to respond to these challenges?

These are examples of existing actions by Fire and Rescue Services. They give an idea of the actions that can be in this part of the Action Plan. Organisations are encouraged to have between 3 and 10 actions.

- Raise awareness of dementia amongst our staff.
- Help to ensure that families and carers are aware of the fire risks associated with the care and protection of people with dementia in their homes
- Raise awareness of home safety visits and other preventative measures available to help reduce the risk of fires in the homes of people with dementia.
- Promote the education and information resources available to those caring for people with dementia.
- Promote the use of simple design measures at the construction stage of building developments, so that people can stay independent and safe in their own homes for as long as possible.
- Promote the use of assistive technology that can enable people to stay independent and safe in their own homes for as long as possible.
- Take an active role in encouraging partners and local groups to create dementia friendly communities.
- Through our Vulnerable Persons Learning Group continue to research and develop best practice and to offer a range of practical solutions e.g. mental capacity assessments, safer alternatives (smoking & cooking), linked alarm services, automatic sprinkler systems
- Work with agencies (such as local council dementia care teams) to identify and develop referral pathways to ensure home fire safety check schemes can be targeted to individuals with dementia and their carers.
- Provide training to all operational staff to ensure that they are aware of dementia signs and symptoms and can signpost those affected.
- Look at developing an 'after the fire' support package to help people recover from their experience and promote independence.
- Work with the Hospital Discharge teams and Occupational Therapists to ensure people are safe from fire and appropriate measures are put in place during periods of immobility or ill health following a stay in hospital.
- Identify suitable equipment to help mitigate risks and work with the client and partners to consider provision of this.
- To raise awareness of dementia within SYFR and deliver a training package to front line staff to help them to work with and engage with all vulnerable people, particularly those who have a cognitive impairment, during emergencies and home visits.
- Using the Dementia Friends initiative, make operational staff more aware of dementia through information sessions and key officers to become Dementia Friends

Champions to pass on further awareness sessions.

- Work with Housing Associations to fit misting systems in the most vulnerable properties.
- To continue to offer a revisit service for the most vulnerable to allow us to address any increase in risk as a result of a deterioration in an individual condition.
- To work with the Alzheimer's Society to hold a specific event with people with dementia and their carers to identify issues which Fire & Rescue can impact upon.

4) What networks or communication channels are available to your organisation that could help us to spread the word about the National Dementia Declaration?

For example:

- Promote dementia friendly approaches in our newsletters, and talk about the Alliance
- Advertise our sign up to the Dementia Action Alliance on our website
- Let partner organisations know what we are doing so they can do it too
- Share good practice via appropriate networks and forums
- Develop good practice with other organisations locally