

Guidance for businesses

This guidance note states how businesses can improve the lives of people with dementia by signing up to the Dementia Action Alliance, and helping to make more dementia-friendly communities.

Why is dementia important to you?

- 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)
- Two thirds of people with dementia live in the community, and they, their family and carers are your existing or potential customers.
- An estimated 22 million people in the UK have a family member or friend who has dementia. Consequently 49% of the public state they are more likely to support a company if they know it supports people with dementia. (YouGov, 2011)
- 82% of the public believe that people with dementia and their carers need more help and support. (YouGov, 2011)
- 51% of people caring for someone with dementia are still in work and might need support from their employers. Some of your existing employees may also develop dementia.
- Undertaking actions to support people with dementia would help your organisation to be compliant with the Equality Act 2010, which recognises dementia as a disability. This means your organisation should make reasonable adjustments to avoid discrimination.

What can you do?

Dementia awareness for customer-facing staff

You could raise awareness and understanding of dementia among your customer-facing staff to assist them in serving your customers living with dementia. Below are some of the tools you could use.

1. Dementia Friends (online)

These videos will enable your staff to understand a bit more about dementia. They give helpful tips to improve the customer experience of people with dementia and their carers.

Relevant modules:

- Understanding dementia
- On the phone
- Travelling around
- Paying for things
- Reading & writing

<http://www.dementiafriends.org.uk/customers>

2. Appoint a Dementia Friends Champion

Delivered by Alzheimer's Society across the country, you could encourage a staff member to become a Dementia Friends Champion by completing a free one-day course. They will then be able to pass on a 40 minute awareness session to colleagues.

You can find out what a Dementia Friends Champion is, and view upcoming training courses, on the Dementia Friends website: <https://www.dementiafriends.org.uk/>

3. Guide for customer-facing staff

This booklet provides guidance for those working in a customer service role, on how they can help to support people with dementia who they encounter in their jobs. The booklet can be downloaded for free or copies can be ordered from Alzheimer's Society.

<http://www.alzheimers.org.uk/customerfacing>

Changes to the physical environment

People with dementia may encounter issues around the physical environment of public places, for instance around signage, lighting or design. Here are some practical tips you could take to make a difference.

1. Checklist for dementia friendly environments

This is a simple checklist with practical advice, ideal to use when looking at your public spaces to identify small changes you could make.

<http://www.dementiaaction.org.uk/resources/checklist>

2. Further guidance

The Social Care Institute for Excellence has developed further guidance. While aimed at social care situations, some design choices may be relevant to your business.

<http://www.scie.org.uk/publications/dementia/dementia-friendly-environments/>

3. Consider long-term changes

You could include more dementia friendly design as a consideration when you next make large changes to your public spaces or signage.

Support for employees

With 51% of carers still in work, you could provide support for employees who may be a carer or develop dementia.

1. Employment and dementia briefing

This is a briefing on employment and dementia by Alzheimer's Society. _

http://www.alzheimers.org.uk/site/scripts/documents_info.php?documentID=1836

2. Tips for employers

Co-produced with people with dementia, this guide provides tips for employers wanting to support employees who may develop the condition.

<http://dementiavoices.org.uk/resources/deep-guides/>

3. Support for carers

This report by Carers UK and Employers for Carers sets out emerging issues and key recommendations to support working carers.

<http://www.carersuk.org/for-professionals/policy/policy-library/supporting-employees-who-are-caring-for-someone-with-dementia>

Join the Dementia Action Alliance

Organisations join the Dementia Action Alliance by writing a short action plan outlining the actions they will undertake to improve the lives of people with dementia. These actions could include the tools already covered in this document. Once complete, it will be published online.

This public statement allows your business to gain recognition, and be part of a growing movement to change the lives of people with dementia. Members of the public and other organisations will be able to see your commitments, allowing the sharing of best practice.

Membership

For local organisations, it is free to join the DAA. National organisations are asked to pay a voluntary contribution.

We expect local members to provide an update after 12 months; however you are able to edit your action plan at any time.

DAA members are allowed to use the DAA logo, or other relevant local dementia friendly symbols, as appropriate.

Local Dementia Action Alliances

Once you have joined the DAA, you can take part in your Local Dementia Action Alliance. These are groups of organisations working together to make their community more dementia friendly.

To find your local alliance, contact us or visit: http://www.dementiaaction.org.uk/local_alliances

Contact details

You can contact us for help or guidance when writing your action plan, or to learn more about getting involved with your Local Dementia Action Alliance.

National team: dementiaactionalliance@alzheimers.org.uk

Regional leads: http://www.dementiaaction.org.uk/contact/regional_leads

Writing your action plan

The following three questions make up an action plan. Once complete, your organisation will become a member of the Dementia Action Alliance.

- Complete the online form here: <http://www.dementiaaction.org.uk/join>
- Alternatively, you can request a document and send it to us

Search for existing action plans here: http://www.dementiaaction.org.uk/members_and_action_plans

1. How would you describe your organisation's role in delivering better outcomes for people with dementia and their carers?

Here you should describe your organisation, the role it plays in the community, and how it may interact with customers living with dementia and their carers.

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

Here you may mention lack of existing knowledge among staff, an old building, time constraints, etc.

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

Think about anything your organisation could do. You could include suggested actions already covered in this document, and should aim for simple statements.

We suggest a minimum of three actions and a maximum of ten. Here are some example actions:

Example actions

- We will encourage our employees to become Dementia Friends and appoint a Dementia Friends Champion to deliver awareness sessions to colleagues
- We will distribute Alzheimer's Society's guide for customer-facing staff
- We will review the environment and signage of our public spaces using a dementia friendly checklist to ensure they are as accessible as possible
- We will support employees who care for people with dementia
- We will take part in our Local Dementia Action Alliance and attend meetings where possible
- As part of Dementia Awareness Week this year, we will put up posters and leaflets to increase public awareness of dementia
- We will advertise our commitments in our newsletter and website