

Early diagnosis campaign

Dementia diagnosis rates are shockingly low. Of the 800,000 people living with [dementia](#), less than half have a [diagnosis](#). Without this, they are denied access to [support](#), [information](#) and potential [treatments](#) that can help them to live well with their condition.

The Early Diagnosis campaign aims to increase diagnosis rates by improving public awareness of dementia through the [Worried about your memory?](#) campaign, and by increasing health professional understanding of dementia.

We are running two local awareness raising projects, and we are also looking to [improve memory clinic waiting times](#).



Find out more >

Key findings

- One in three people over the age of 65 will end their lives with [dementia](#)
- Only 46% of people [living with dementia](#) living in the UK ever receive a [diagnosis](#)
- Diagnosis rates vary from as low as 35% in Southwest England, to over 70% in parts of Scotland and Northern Ireland
- Without a diagnosis, [people with dementia](#) cannot receive the support, information and [treatment](#) that they need to live well with dementia

More information

[Find out what Alzheimer's Society are doing to increase diagnosis rates.](#)

Read our [Worried about your memory?](#) leaflet. Email waym@alzheimers.org.uk for more information.

Join our [Campaigners' Network](#) and help increase diagnosis rates in your area. Contact campaignersnetwork@alzheimers.org.uk to find out more.

What are we doing to increase diagnosis rates?

Alzheimer's Society is carrying out a range of activity to increase diagnosis rates

Government and decision makers

- We are supporting the [Prime Minister's Challenge on dementia](#), which highlights diagnosis rates as an important area for change. Find out more about plans for improvements [here](#).
- We have worked with the Department of Health and the devolved governments to produce their [dementia strategies](#), with early diagnosis being prominent in each strategy.
- We are sharing results of the [All Parliamentary Party Group on dementia's](#) inquiry into diagnosis rates

Public awareness

- We are increasing public awareness of dementia through our [Worried about your memory?](#) campaign
- We have updated our [Dementia Map](#) which shows the number of people diagnosed with dementia in different parts of the UK
- We are running two pilot projects to increase diagnosis rates in [Dorset and Warwickshire](#).

Health professionals

- We are working with [health professionals](#), sharing [training resources](#) and signposting them to [local services](#)
- We send [Worried about your memory?](#) leaflets to over 9,000 GP practices in England, Wales and Northern Ireland
- We have set up a [General Practice Reference Group](#), to advise on Alzheimer's Society's work

Mapping memory clinic waiting times

Memory clinics are where dementia specialists perform in-depth [assessments](#). They are a key part of an effective [diagnosis](#) system.

[There is great variability in memory services](#). While there are many memory clinics providing an efficient service, other do not. Some people wait just a few weeks for an appointment, whereas others wait more than a year.

What is being done to improve the system?

The [Memory Services National Accreditation Programme](#) (MSNAPs) has been set up to work with services in the UK to assure and improve the quality of memory services for people with memory problems and their carers.

At the moment accreditation is voluntary. Less than half of memory services in the UK are thought to be accredited at present which may in some way be contributing to the low level of diagnosis.

What can I do?

We are currently mapping the waiting times for appointments at memory clinics, by asking MPs to write to their local PCT for information about memory services.

We need your help to complete the picture. [Write to your MP using our template letter](#). When you get a response, [share it with us](#).

What will happen next?

When we have a full picture of memory service provision across the country, we will compare this to existing data on diagnosis rates.

If we can show a strong link between memory clinic waiting times and diagnosis rates, this will provide the evidence needed to lobby Westminster for improvements in memory service provision.

Early Diagnosis Pilot Projects

As part of the Alzheimer's Society [Early Diagnosis](#) campaign, we are running two pilot projects in Dorset and Warwickshire. These aim to increase [dementiadiagnosis](#) rates in the two areas.

Diagnosis rates remain low, at only 46% nationally. Without a diagnosis, people are denied access [support](#), [information](#) and potential [treatments](#) which can help them to live well.

We believe that [diagnosis rates](#) will increase at greater speed if targeted awareness raising is carried out at a local level, among both the public and health professionals.

The projects are running between September 2012 and March 2013. Activity so far has included:

- targeted media highlighting the issue of underdiagnosis
- engagement with local stakeholders who can make lasting changes in dementia care
- dementia awareness events throughout the community
- distribution of Worried about your memory? materials in the community and through partnerships with other organisations
- engagement with local GPs and health providers

[Find out more about the Early Diagnosis campaign](#)

Do you want to increase diagnosis rates in your area? Join our [Campaigners' Network today](#)



Prime Minister's Challenge on Dementia: Improving diagnosis rates

As part of the [Prime Minister's Challenge on Dementia](#), the Department of Health has been working on a number of projects to improve diagnosis rates. Alzheimer's Society welcomes these developments, and is also working to see similar improvements in Wales and Northern Ireland.

Dementia Diagnosis resource pack

The [NHS Commissioning Board](#) have developed a resource pack for commissioners and GPs to help more people get diagnosed. It identifies 10 key steps to improve diagnosis and next steps once someone has been diagnosed. This will be issued by the Department of Health soon.

Dementia Prevalence calculator

This will help local areas improve diagnosis by providing a guide to working out local dementia prevalence. This will enable local areas to set a local ambition to improve their dementia diagnosis rates.

NHS Health Checks

From April 2013, all local authorities will be required as part of the [NHS Healthcheck](#) programme to give information to people aged 65 - 74 to raise their awareness of dementia and the availability of memory services.

Provision of appropriate social care support

[Clinical Commissioning Groups](#) will be expected to work with their social care and wider local authority partners to ensure that the right care services are in place.

Provision of memory clinics

The Department of Health aims to increase the number of memory clinics across the country, and the number of services accredited by the [Royal College of Psychiatrists](#).

Dementia CQUIN

The dementia [CQUIN](#) encourages best practice by financially rewarding hospitals that find, assess

and refer people with dementia.

Dementia Friendly Hospitals

Tools and support for Trusts are being developed to encourage every hospital to sign up to becoming dementia friendly. Currently 65 Trusts have signed up to become dementia friendly.

Alzheimer's Society National Dementia Helpline

England, Wales and Northern Ireland: 0300 222 11 22

9.00am-5.00pm Monday-Friday

10.00am-4.00pm Saturday-Sunday

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