Overview
There are 45,000 people in Wales with dementia. Each of those people represents a reason why Wales needs a Dementia Strategy.

Alzheimer’s Society welcomes recent proposals which would see a strategy be developed before the end of the year – but the next Welsh Government must make good on this promise, and any strategy must cover the right areas and be properly-resourced.

Dementia in Wales – key facts

- **Diagnosis rates:** The diagnosis rate for dementia in Wales is currently 43.4% – the lowest of any nation of the UK. No local health board has a diagnosis rate higher than 50%, and the lowest is 37.2%. We also know that less than half of people with dementia were given enough information about dementia when they received their diagnosis. In the first year after receiving a diagnosis of dementia, only 39% were given a named support worker, whilst nearly 1 in 10 received no support at all.  

- **Barriers to diagnosis:** Known barriers to diagnosis include low public awareness of dementia; fear and stigma; poor understanding of dementia by health and social care professionals; under-resourcing of memory services; and disinclination to diagnose in areas where support services are not available.  

- **Coping with dementia:** Dementia can be difficult and destabilising both for the individuals diagnosed themselves and also their families. Alzheimer’s Society is highlighting three specific areas of concern:
  - **Dementia in hospital settings:** At least 25% of hospital beds are occupied by people with dementia at any one time; anecdotally, we hear from hospitals that the proportion is much higher, nearer to 40%. Hospitals need to be properly-equipped to support these patients by ensuring they are dementia-friendly environments.  
  - **Impact on carers:** Carers Wales have identified how the impact of caring results not just on carers missing out on advice and support, but also prejudice, discrimination and social exclusion. Caring for someone with dementia can be a particularly overwhelming experience, bringing irreversible changes to lives and relationships. £622 million is contributed in Wales each year by the work of unpaid carers of people with dementia; we cannot afford not to support those carers.  
  - **Dementia and younger people:** Younger people with dementia need particular support as they may face specific problems such as needing to be able to work and to support dependent children.  

There are #45000reasons Wales needs a dementia strategy. 
Find out more by going to www.alzheimers.org.uk/45000reasons
What needs to change?
Alzheimer’s Society is calling on candidates and political parties in Wales to commit to an appropriately resourced National Dementia Strategy in order to meet the aspiration for Wales to become a dementia-friendly nation. This strategy should cover five key areas:

1. Dementia diagnosis rates
   - Commit to increase diagnosis to at least 75% in each local health board by 2021.
   - Ensure that all people diagnosed with dementia receive access to a dementia adviser or similar professional to help access meaningful post-diagnosis support.

2. Public awareness of dementia
   - Public Health Wales to run a sustained public awareness campaign on dementia, with a focus on reaching Welsh language communities.

3. Training for health & social care professionals
   - NHS Wales to require all GP practices to roll-out Wales Mental Health in Primary Care Managing Dementia in Primary Care training package.
   - NHS Wales to commission the development of similar training resources for other professionals.
   - Local authorities to specify in contracts with providers minimum levels of training required for staff caring for people with dementia in care homes and home care.

4. Support for unpaid carers
   - Welsh Government, local authorities, health and other key statutory agencies to work together to develop good practice on how the new duties in the Social Services & Wellbeing (Wales) Act can promote tailored advice and information to carers.

5. Hospital care for patients with dementia
   - NHS Wales to publish annual statement on the quality of dementia care in hospitals including falls, emergency re-admissions, timely & efficient discharge, and levels of staff dementia training.
   - Health Boards to commit to all hospital settings being dementia friendly based on existing models of good practice.

How you can help
Alzheimer’s Society is urging candidates and political parties to pledge their support to develop a Welsh dementia strategy which reflects the priorities outlined above. You can show your support today through social media (#45000reasons / @AlzSocWales) and by speaking to our team at the spring party conferences.

4 Royal College of Psychiatrists 2013) National Audit of Dementia Care in General Hospitals 2012-13, London: Royal College of Psychiatrists.

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