

How to engage with the community

A care home guide



A guide written by the team behind the Airedale Social Movement. This project was funded by NHS England as part of their New Models of Care; Health as a Social Movement Programme and aims to encourage members of the community to become actively involved in care homes.

This How To Guide will give care home managers and staff, guidance on how to create a community within the care home and bring members of the local community into the home to volunteer, befriend, run activities and form friendship groups with their residents.

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Community involvement

All members of the community can play a vital role in ensuring the health and wellbeing of residents in care homes.

Social prescribing/ community referrals:

To improve general health and wellbeing, social prescribing is becoming more popular. This is a referral made by a GP or other health professional that will assess your resident's needs and make recommendations about what kind of community activity would benefit them.

Contact your local GP surgery and ask about this service for your residents.





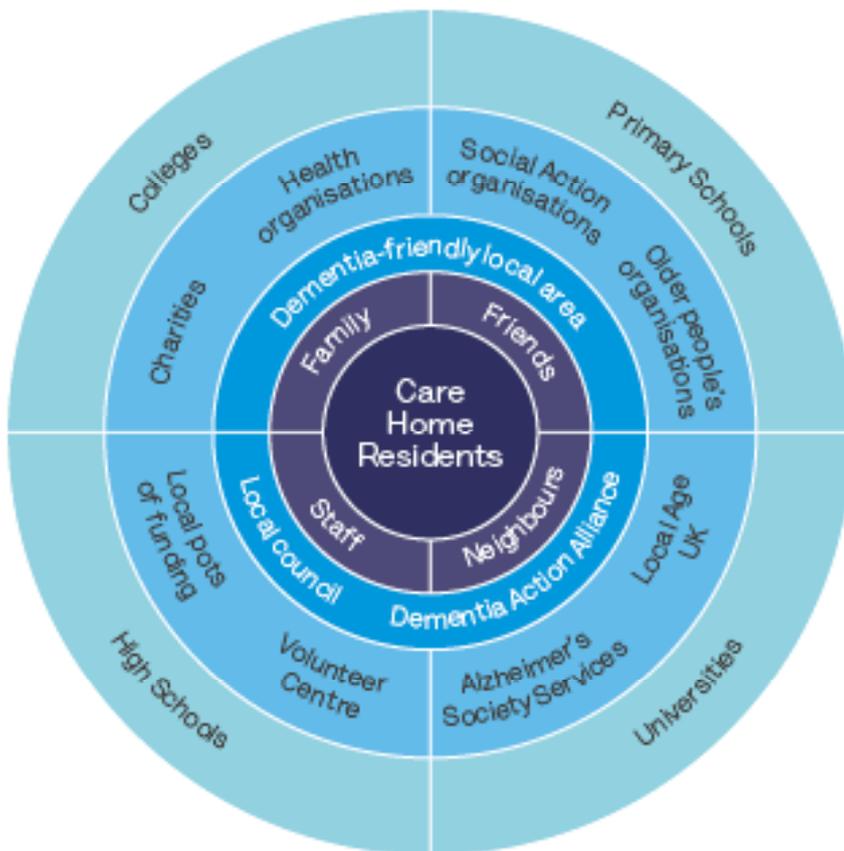
Asset maps

Assessing what is in your area

Draw an asset map of your local community and put your home at the centre of it. What schools, colleges, community groups, religious groups and local businesses are there in your area?

Write down a list of all the groups and think about ways in which they may be able to get involved with your home and residents. Do they have befrienders and/or volunteers who could run regular sessions in your home?

Find their contact details and get in touch. If you don't ask you'll never know.



Top tip!

If you're unsure how a local group can get involved, just ask them. They may be able to think of creative ways to work with your residents. Could you offer something in return e.g. a room for showcasing their activity or publicity?

Ensuring your care home is at the centre of the community

Encourage your local community to see your home as a valuable part of and as an asset to their community. Encourage staff to welcome visitors into your home, you can do this by:

- nominating someone to offer drinks and ensuring the visitors have everything they need each time they visit
- selling or giving space in your homes for meetings
- allowing the community to use what you already have: your gardens, kitchens, equipment for activities
- joining a Dementia Friendly Community (see DFC section)
- holding open Dementia Friends information sessions and invite the community (see DF section)
- open up activities so that local people can join in; advertise this in the local area.



Top tip!

You must manage the risks associated with all activities but don't let risk stop your community and residents coming together. The benefits often far outweigh the risks.

Person-centred care

Getting to know the residents

Person-centred care involves tailoring a person's care to their interests, abilities, history and personality. This helps them to take part in the things they enjoy and can be an effective way of preventing and managing behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia.

The key points of person-centred care are:

- treating the person with dignity and respect
- understanding their history, lifestyle, culture and preferences, including their likes, dislikes, hobbies and interests
- looking at situations from the point of view of the individual
- providing opportunities for the person to have conversations and relationships with other people
- ensuring the person has the chance to try new things or take part in activities they enjoy.

[Name of resident]

Alzheimer's Society
United Against Dementia

Insert picture of resident

I was born in:
[Insert place]

I have lived in:
[Insert place(s)]

I worked as:
[Insert job(s)]

My favourite holidays have been:
[Insert place(s)/occasion(s)]

My hobbies are:
[Insert sports/hobbies/things I enjoy]

My favourite type of music is:
[Insert genre/artist/songs]

My favourite films are:
[Insert genre/titles]

I like to play:
[insert card/board games]

Insert picture of family

My family are:
[Insert names of family members]

Insert picture of friends

My friends are:
[Insert names of friends]

Top tip!

Can you display a profile of your residents in their rooms so that all staff and visitors can see what their interests and hobbies are? A visual aid is a good conversation starter. Download our template at: alzheimers.org.uk/carehomeposters

Alzheimer's Society also provide a useful 'This is Me' support tool to enable person-centred care. This can be downloaded at: alzheimers.org.uk/downloads/download/399/this_is_me_tool



Benefits to your CQC rating

Your CQC rating may be improved by having strong links with your local community and their reports often reflect this.

CQC reports can also note how Dementia aware care homes are, including whether they are part of a **Dementia Friendly Community** and how many staff are **Dementia Friends**.

Quotes from outstanding care home reports:

'Strong community links had been established which benefited people in the home and the wider community'.

'People from the local community were welcomed and encouraged to become part of the home'.

'The registered manager was committed to raising awareness of dementia related conditions, and its impacts on people and their families, in their role as a dementia friends champion.

This included fund raising within the local community, giving talks to raise awareness and supporting the development of dementia friendly communities'.

Top tip!

Keep an activity log which includes how many members of the local community are involved in your home as evidence for CQC.



Dementia Friend Information Sessions

How much do your staff know about dementia?

Alzheimer's Society's Dementia Friends programme can play a key role in your venue becoming more dementia friendly. Through face-to-face sessions or online videos, Dementia Friends helps people to learn more about dementia and the small ways that they can help.

Key points

- Ensure all of your staff are given the opportunity to become Dementia Friends as part of their induction.
- Holding regular Dementia Friends sessions at your home will raise dementia awareness amongst your staff, residents, volunteers, visitors and members of the public. Invite these Dementia Friends to volunteer at your home or to do a social action by linking you up with a community group.
- These sessions can be delivered by volunteer Dementia Friends Champions or you can have your own staff train as in-house Champions.
- Wear your badge with pride and invite members of the community in to also become Dementia Friends.
- Download our invitation at alzheimers.org.uk/carehomeposters



Top tip!

Visit dementiafriends.org.uk to find out more about these ideas and see how the Dementia Friends programme can transform dementia awareness within your care home.

Joining your Dementia Friendly Community

Many organisations, villages, towns and cities are taking steps towards becoming or have an ambition to become Dementia Friendly. Why not join your local Dementia Friendly Community (DFC) and place your care home as a central part of your community.

A Dementia Friendly Community can be described as:

A city, town or village where people with dementia are understood, respected and supported, and confident they can contribute to community life. In a dementia friendly community people will be aware of and understand dementia, and people with dementia will feel included and involved, and have choice and control over their day-to-day lives.

During the set-up of a dementia friendly community it is vital that there is a process that enables communities to be part of an officially recognised group working towards becoming dementia friendly. The recognition process will ensure that communities are able to work towards a common and consistent vision based on what we know is important to people affected by dementia and will truly change their experience.

To become part of the dementia friendly communities recognition process, a representative from a community will need to fill out an online application form. This can be accessed through the Alzheimer's Society website: alzheimers.org.uk/recognitionprocess

Top tip!

If you want more advice on how to become a part of a DFC, call Alzheimer's Society on **0300 222 11 22**





Top tip!

Contact schools in July so that they put your events on their calendar for the following academic year.

Making community links

Linking with the younger generation

National Citizen Service (NCS)

National Citizen Service is a national initiative for young people aged 15–17. As a part of the NCS journey young people have to take part in a Social Action Project. They can come and do a project within your care home and can also fundraise for you as a part of this.

Schools

Encourage your local schools to adopt your care home and encourage a long term commitment. It's a good idea to link with both a primary and secondary school.

Schools can come into your home to:

- sing/perform or you could take a group of residents to watch their performances in schools. Secondary students often need an audience for performance exam moderations; could you ask your local school to come into your home to perform?
- do arts and crafts with residents
- share story time led by teacher/pupils/residents
- talk to residents about their school work and what they have learned in school. How does this compare to your residents school experiences?

- work on a project together – chosen by pupils and residents. This could be around the subject of a national event such as sporting events, charity days (e.g. Elf Day or Cupcake Day with Alzheimer's Society), festivals and nationwide social events.
- pupils can create a tea party in your home to enjoy with residents
- signpost your school to Alzheimer's Society's school resources:
alzheimers.org.uk/info/20117/creating_a_dementia-friendly_generation

Social Action projects are becoming more and more popular with schools and colleges. Approach your local school to open up a discussion about how you can work with their students and what projects they can do to link up with your home and residents. Speak to them about how a project can fit in with their curriculum.

Top tip!

Find out more about NCS and register your interest at:
www.ncsyes.co.uk/social-action-partnerships

Work Experience

Speak to your local college, school or university about how their students can do work experience or volunteer in your care home.

Think outside the box; it's not just Health and Social care students who can do work experience in care homes:

- beauty students can come and pamper your residents
- arts and performance students can perform their shows, sing with residents or run arts/craft sessions
- catering students can come and run a community café in the home or bake/cook with your residents
- medical/nursing students can get practical experience of what working in a care home is like
- textile students can make something with the residents
- horticulture students can come and work with residents in your garden.



Top tip!

Ask for the work experience officer's name. They should be able to help you with all of the above.

Beavers, Scouts, Girl Guides and Brownies

Link up with your local Scout, Beaver, Girl Guide, Brownies or Rainbows group.

Most Scout/Beaver groups work towards a Community Impact badge. Approach your local group and ask them to do a project within your home as a part of their badge.

Girl Guides/Brownies are encouraged to take part in Social Action projects, ask your local group to work with your home.

Some ideas for projects:

- make memory boxes/personal profiles with residents
- create a sensory room or garden in the Care Home as a therapeutic way of stimulating residents' memories from scent and touch
- learn and perform songs from the resident's era – ask for requests!
- create a group arts/performance project
- fundraising to buy the residents some equipment for activities in the care home.

Top tip!

Work in a person-centered way and encourage the Scouts/Guides and residents to talk about what they want to do as a project.

For Beavers and Scout groups:
www.scouts.org.uk/get-involved

For Rainbows, Brownies and Girl Guides: www.girlguiding.org.uk/social-action-advocacy-and-campaigns/social-action-and-campaigns/social-action-at-girlguiding

Ideas for activities in care homes

The Airedale Social Movement programme tried and tested various activities in care homes which all included community involvement. Here are some good examples:

Utilising Local Hobby Groups: Are there any groups who get together regularly who can showcase their talent or run their activity with your residents?

Dance groups, choirs, amateur dramatic groups are always looking for ways to showcase their talents.

Alternatively, are there sports or craft groups that can cater their activities to your residents?

Can they hold their groups within your home to include residents and save on room costs?

Spare Chair Social: An easy activity where one day a month your home provides a meal to lonely isolated people within the community to come into the care home, mix with the residents and enjoy a meal. The only ask is that they mix with residents. Use our poster template at alzheimers.org.uk/carehomeposters

Knit and Natter Circles: Knitting is based on a repetitive motion and is remembered by body memory which is still intact even if cognitive memory is failing. Invite members of the community (try local Women's Institutes or your local knitting groups) to help you run the groups.

Why not work in partnership with local charities, chosen by the residents, to ensure the work produced by the residents is useful to the vulnerable members of our society?

Boccia (Indoor bowls): An attack and defend game; the aim is to score as many points as possible by placing their set of coloured balls closest to the white jack ball. A shoot is used to roll the balls and all players must be seated so it is ideal for people with limited mobility.

There is no need for expensive equipment – and can be played on any carpeted surface. Could you raise money to fund this?

Ping Pong: A relatively cheap activity which keeps residents active. All you need is some bats and balls and you can use dining tables. The activity can include balancing a ball on the bat, throwing the pin pong ball to each other in a circle, tapping the ball in the air and tapping the ball to each other. It's a good idea to put a net at either side of the table to ensure the ball is kept on the table. This activity can be run by a volunteer/ member of the local community.

Story-telling/Reminiscence: By stimulating cognitive ability through reminiscence, experts agree that the effects of memory loss can be delayed. It provides older people with opportunities to talk about their life experiences, family, friends, work history, hobbies, often using photographs and personal belongings as triggers to discussion. Reminiscence can provide greater insights into resident's needs and aspirations.

Try delivering reminiscence sessions in your home in partnership with local heritage groups.

Reading Groups: Have a volunteer run a reading circle. Take short paragraphs from various books/newspapers/articles and encourage residents to read them out. This can then generate discussion and story-telling from residents. A cheap and easy activity.

Community Café: Set up a regular community café within the care home. The refreshments can be provided by the home and the residents can help set up and serve on the day. You can ask people who come along to give a suggested donation. This will bring the local community into the care home and reduce social isolation for the care home residents as well as isolated members of the community.

Put up posters in your local area for this event, see our template at:

alzheimers.org.uk/carehomeposters



Top tip!

Ask your residents what they enjoy doing and try and cater these activities for a care home setting. Ask them to help you set it up; care home residents enjoy feeling useful.

When writing letters to organisations, use our templates at: **alzheimers.org.uk/carehomeletters**

Case study

Jean: The Coach House

Jean lives at The Coach House care home. She loves to knit but had lost motivation to carry on knitting as she felt as though she didn't have a goal and had no one to share it with.

Jean joined the Airedale Social Movement's Knit and Natter group; a circle of residents and volunteers who meet up in the care home to knit items for use by their community/refugees.

Health benefits: Jean says that she feels much more energetic and motivated and the activity helps keep her hands flexible as she has arthritis in both hands.

Wellbeing/quality of life: Jean states that she feels more positive and useful now that she has a goal and is helping vulnerable families and refugees when donating her knitting.

Social interaction: Jean really enjoys it when the project staff and volunteer comes in. She has lovely chats to them both and feels much happier and involved. It has also given a focus for her internal relationships with other residents.



'Julie (ASM project officer) has been wonderful. She really listened to me and arranged for someone to come and collect my blanket and send it on to help the Syrian refugees. I so look forward to the visits from Julie and Diane (the volunteer). They are so kind to me and it keeps me going.'

Jean

Case study

Inter-generational work in care homes

Southlands and Berkeley Court

Two care homes involved in the project recently held an event for Alzheimer's Society's annual Elf Day. They invited local schools into the homes to interact and work with residents.

The activities enabled residents in both homes to socialise with the pupils and the teachers; they participated in arts & crafts as well as singing and reading with residents. They found that the residents really opened

up to communicating with the children and were encouraging them to tell stories about their lives and their schools. There were some lovely conversations in the group.

The schools have come to the agreement that they will commit to doing something more sustainable with the homes and they have all agreed to do Elf Day again in 2018.

'Elf Day was the best day I've had in a long time, I helped the children with their crafts and I enjoyed joining in with their singing; when are they coming back?'

Marjory, resident

'Elf Day is a fantastic opportunity to bring together both young and the older members of our community. It's a great way to show the younger generation how much care homes and residents have to offer the wider community. The children and adults all enjoyed themselves and it was great to see such amazing connections and new friendships been made.'

Alex, ASM project worker

'Elf Day was excellent and our residents fully enjoyed themselves, we are in contact with the school to organise our next event.'

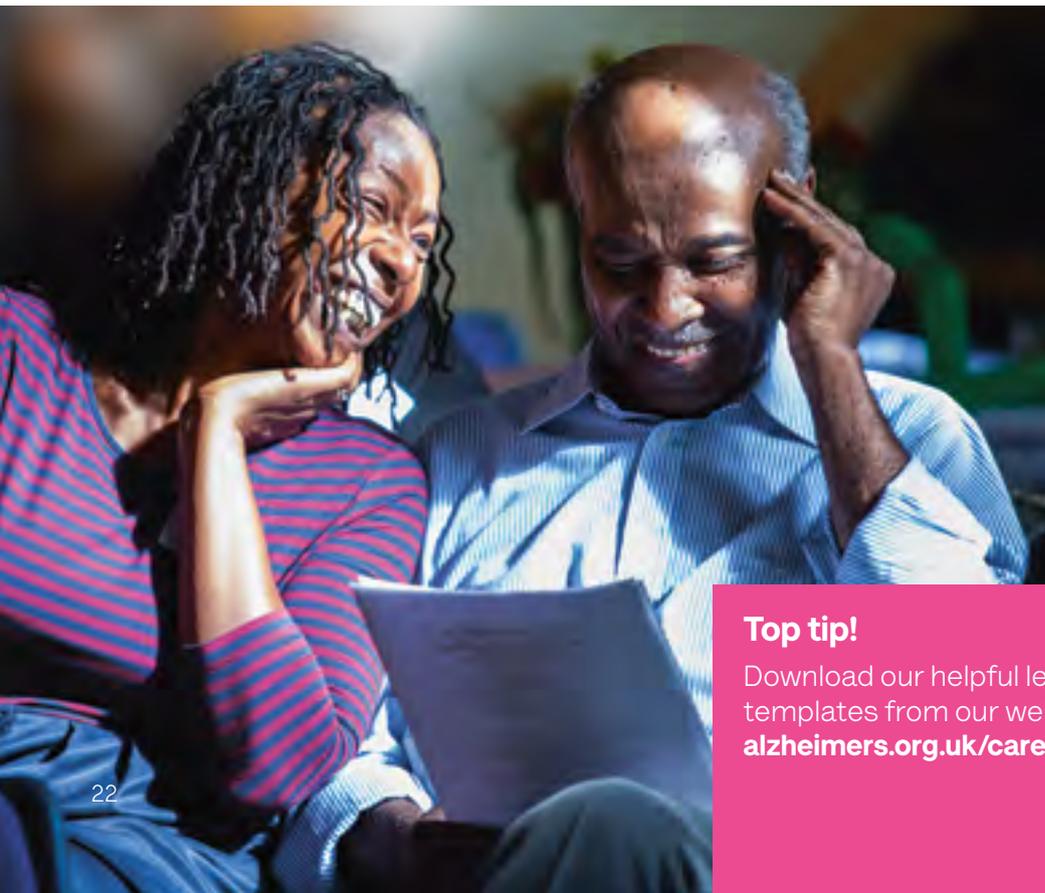
**Mark, care home worker,
Berkeley Court**

Long term commitment

Encourage a long term and regular commitment from your community groups. Once a link has been set up, send the group a letter to confirm what has been discussed and list the dates and times that they have agreed to.

Keep a log of each of your community links along with names, contact numbers and email addresses and ensure the management know where these are kept. This ensures that if staff leave the links can continue.

If you have made links and are about to leave your job, send an email to the group with details of a new contact at the home so these links can continue.



Top tip!

Download our helpful letter templates from our website:
alzheimers.org.uk/carehomeletters

Volunteers

Corporate volunteers: Local businesses or organisations often give up some hours for staff to volunteer in the community. This can be either by pairing up with residents and doing what they enjoy, running a regular activity for residents or completing some refurbishment for the home.

Individual Volunteers: Local people are often willing to give up some hours to come and volunteer in a care home. This can be either by pairing up with residents and doing what they enjoy, running an activity for residents or going on some trips to provide support.

Useful websites

Look at the following links to find local volunteers:

- www.employeevolunteering.co.uk
- [www.timebank.org.uk/
employee-volunteering/community-partners](http://www.timebank.org.uk/employee-volunteering/community-partners)
- [www.volunteermatters.org.uk/
want-volunteers](http://www.volunteermatters.org.uk/want-volunteers)

Advertise on local noticeboards, through your local Voluntary Action organisation or the following links:

- NAVCA – National association for Community action www.navca.org.uk
- NVCO – National Council for Voluntary Action www.nvco.org.uk
- [www.ncvo.org.uk/ncvo-volunteering/
volunteering-in-care-homes](http://www.ncvo.org.uk/ncvo-volunteering/volunteering-in-care-homes)
- www.do-it.org/opportunities/landing



Fundraising

Why not look at external funding to help you pay for the activities which your residents enjoy?

There are several pots of funding which may be suitable for your care home and residents. Read the criteria carefully and adapt your proposal accordingly.

See the following websites for more information:

- www.gov.uk/apply-funding-community-project
- www.princes-trust.org.uk
- www.thegoodexchange.com
- www.mycommunity.org.uk/funding
- www.biglotteryfund.org.uk



Top tip!

Always ensure your budget is detailed and correct as funding approval can often centre on whether the numbers add up.

Useful information

These website ideas may help you find local community groups for your home:

Local websites

- Local Council directories (local council website)
- Local Community hubs (local websites)
- Local churches and Parish councils (local websites)

Other helpful websites

Please find more details about community networks and volunteering by visiting the below websites:

- www.thewi.org.uk
- www.ukcommunityfoundations.org
- www.mylocalcommunity.org.uk
- www.nationalcareassociation.org.uk

Alzheimer's Society offers a range of training, standard and bespoke for care home staff. To find out more go to:

alzheimers.org.uk/info/20050/training_and_consultancy



Resources

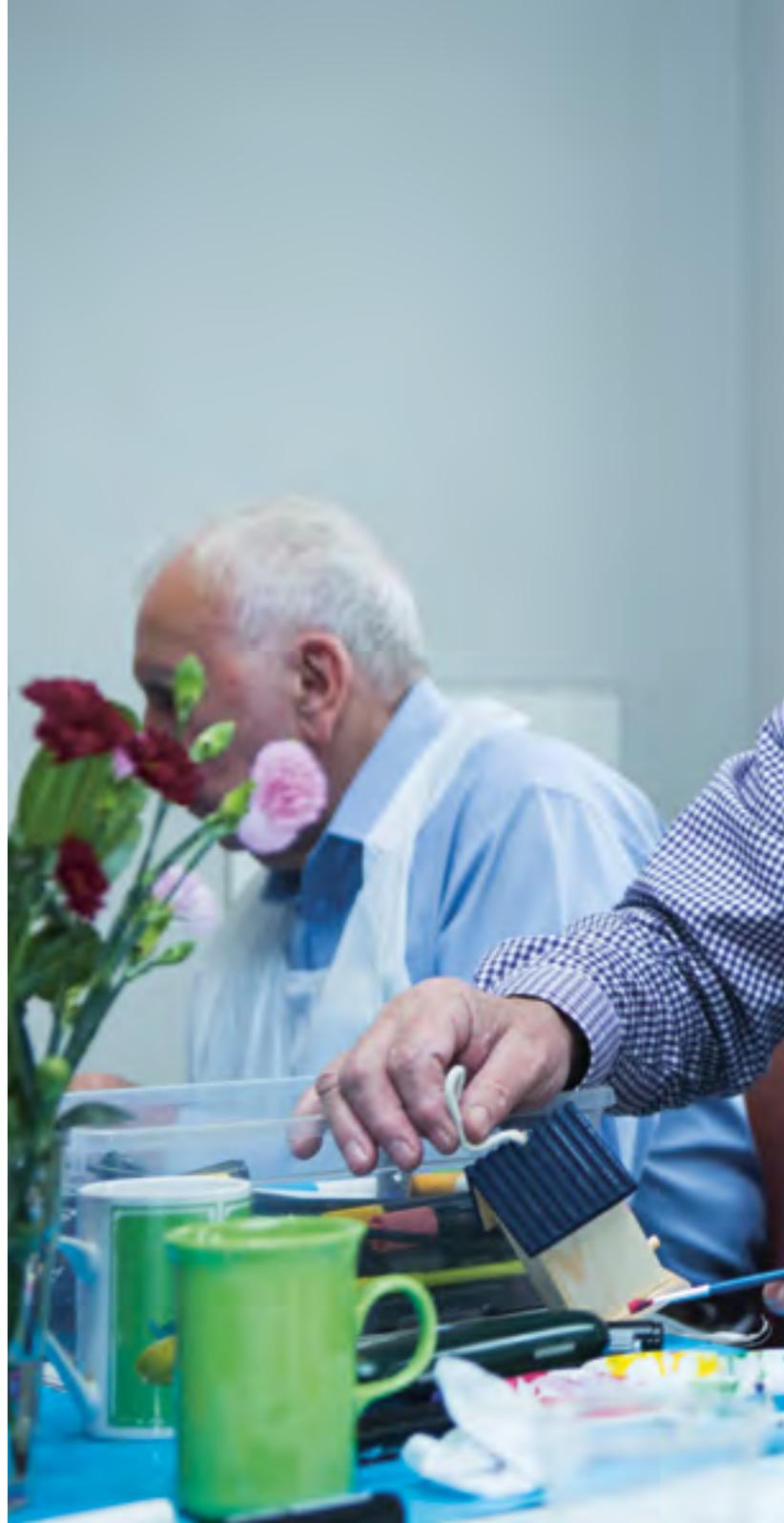
To download this free toolkit, please go to:
alzheimers.org.uk/carehometoolkit

To find our letter and poster templates,
please go to:

- **alzheimers.org.uk/carehomeletters**
- **alzheimers.org.uk/carehomeposters**

Thanks

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House, Berkeley Court, Springfields
and Southlands
- **Leeds City Council**
- **Bradford Council & CCG**
- **The programme's national partners:**
RSA, NEF and NESTA
- **NHS England**
- **All the fantastic ASM project volunteers**





Registered office
43–44 Crutched Friars,
London
EC3N 2AE

Alzheimer's Society operates in
England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Registered charity no. 296645

Call us

0300 222 1122

Email us

enquiries@alzheimers.org.uk

Visit us

alzheimers.org.uk

