



Alzheimer's Society Research Delivery Plan

2018/2022

Transforming
the lives of
people affected
by dementia
through research





Foreword

At Alzheimer's Society, we draw on research to speed up progress and make a difference to people affected by dementia.

We focus our efforts on where we can make the biggest impact. It may be new drugs, ways to prevent or diagnose dementia or support for people living with dementia, their carers and their families. Throughout our biomedical research, social science and design-led innovation we work with inspiring groups of people to deliver progress that changes lives. Through research, we will transform the lives of people affected by dementia.

The new Alzheimer's Society Research Delivery Plan sets out our largest ever investment into all forms of dementia research. Our research is predominantly led by the ideas and expertise of the scientific

community through open calls for research proposals that will have the greatest impact in all areas of relevant research. The delivery plan provides guidance for researchers and practice professionals who want to unite with us to defeat dementia, and sets out how we will deliver the Alzheimer's Society strategy, the 'New Deal for Dementia'. We are building on our 40 years of supporting dementia research, and stepping out further than we ever have before to ensure we recognise and maximise the clinical and human impact of all of our research.

Our plan is built around five features:



Funding discoveries in dementia diagnosis, treatment and prevention



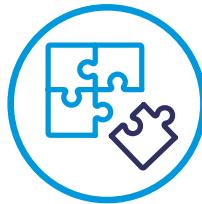
Accelerating progress to better care for people affected by dementia



Partnering with people affected by dementia



Developing the dementia researcher community



Connecting research and society

These features will help us to address the gaps in our understanding of dementia and what we need to do to transform the lives of people affected by dementia through research.

James Pickett
Head of Research, Alzheimer's Society



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Our bold and ambitious approach to research

Alzheimer's Society is now funding more research than ever into the prevention, cure and care of all types of dementia. We invested £10 million in research in 2017 and will increase this further over the coming years.

Our previous strategy presented a daunting challenge. We set ourselves ambitious targets across a wide range of areas in dementia research, ramping up our own capacity and activity considerably. This scaling up has been successful, achieving and exceeding the ambitions we set

ourselves to establish our position as a leader in dementia research.

Since starting to fund research in 1990, we have now invested £60 million and funded over 400 research projects.

Alzheimer's Society research highlights since 2014:



Doubled our funding from **£5 million** per year to **£10 million** in 2017



Launched **eight** Doctoral Training centres across the UK, supporting **52 new** PhD student and Clinical fellows



Quadrupled the number of publications our researchers produced, to **over 300** publications in 2017



Supported **over 200** early career researchers as part of our **'Dementia Research Leaders' programme**



Led the way in patient and public involvement in research, celebrating **20 years** of the **Research Network**



Launched **five clinical trials** of repurposed drugs



**Through research,
we will transform
the lives of
people affected
by dementia**

What's new in Alzheimer's Society research?

We fund and support relevant, high-quality research to transform the lives of people affected by dementia. Within this delivery plan, we have introduced new initiatives to increase our capacity to deliver more research, and maximise the impact of research findings:

- **Prioritise more human-oriented and clinical research through our biomedical research grants programme**

Basic research with high relevance to dementia in people remains a crucial part of our dementia research portfolio, but we especially want to support more human-orientated and clinical research.

- **Increase activity that supports the implementation of care-focused research into practice**

We have merged our Implementation and Care, Services and Public Health grants into a single funding stream. Demonstrating a pathway to implementation will become a core principle of all our funding. We encourage more research that addresses the population and real-world factors that impact delivery of care, as well as interventions and care pathways at an individual level.

- **Founding funder of the UK Dementia Research Institute (UK DRI)**

This focuses on developing a fundamental understanding of the underlying mechanisms of dementia and towards the development of technology to advance care.

- **Address barriers for the delivery of research**

Additional specific activities and funding calls will address gaps in research translation as were identified in our 'Research Roadmap for Prevention, diagnosis, intervention and care'. These activities will improve the efficiency of research as well as making research outputs more useful and representative.

- **Expand our network of Centres of Excellence in dementia care**

Building research capacity in crucial areas of dementia care and linking up a wide network to support high-quality research and implementation.

- **Establish a new programme of innovation**

Open to anyone with a good idea to help improve the lives of people affected by dementia, we identify high-priority areas through crowdsourcing and use design-based principles to rapidly understand, develop and evaluate solutions.

For more information about open and future grant funding opportunities visit:

alzheimers.org.uk/ForResearchers





Alzheimer's Society Research Delivery Plan 2018–2022

Our research programme is predominantly led by the ideas and expertise of the scientific community through open calls for research proposals that will have the greatest impact in all areas of relevant research. Our **Research Grants programme** will fund research programmes, PhDs and Fellowships at UK hospitals and higher education institutes. Our **Research Development programme** will support researchers and non-researchers to bring the best ideas into the real world.

Two grant funding streams have biannual deadlines for proposals: **Biomedical research** and **Care, implementation and public health research**.

Submitted grants will be peer reviewed and assessed by one of two Grant Advisory Boards, made up of academic and clinical researchers and people affected by dementia to prioritise funding.

Biomedical research

High relevance to dementia in people



Care, implementation and public health research

Clear route to benefit people affected by dementia



Better understanding of:

- causes and mechanisms of dementia
- risk reduction and dementia prevention
- clinical, social and economic impact of dementia.

Development and testing of:

- better diagnostics
- effective treatments
- better services, support and products for people affected by dementia.

Funding discoveries in dementia diagnosis, treatment and prevention



We especially welcome high-quality, human-oriented research programmes into all types of dementia.

Dementia researchers are beginning to understand and unravel the underlying diseases and mechanisms that cause dementia, and how we might prevent, slow or stop them in their tracks. But we still have a long way to go.

Recognising the pathway, from basic science to clinical research, remains a crucial part of our dementia research portfolio. We will prioritise research with high relevance to dementia in people, and clear routes to benefit people affected by dementia. Researchers applying to our biomedical funding stream should be able to demonstrate the translational relevance of their model systems to human disease.

Alongside our open grant calls (see page 6), we support some specific activities.

alzheimers.org.uk/ForResearchers

UK Dementia Research Institute

We are collaborating in dementia research on a scale never seen before in the UK.

The UK Dementia Research Institute (UK DRI) will transform the way dementia is diagnosed and treated, to bring us closer to the day we have a cure. We have committed £50 million over 8 years and teamed up with the Medical Research Council and Alzheimer's Research UK as founding partners of the UK's first Dementia Research Institute.

As a founding charity partner, we will shape the UK DRI to ensure its scope includes biomedical, care, technology and public health research. We will make sure the voice and experience of people affected by dementia inform all aspects of the institute.

alzheimers.org.uk/UKDRI

Brains for Dementia Research

We support access to vital human brain tissue for dementia research.

The Brains for Dementia Research (BDR) brain bank is unique in that it monitors each prospective donor from recruitment until donation. Researchers can search for brain tissue using an online database and are provided with a complete medical history to accompany the donated brain tissue, including assessments of cognitive function.

With the support of Alzheimer's Society, Alzheimer's Research UK and the Medical Research Council, an established network of brain bank facilities now exists across England and Wales, providing a nationwide gold-standard service for brain donation.

We will ensure the dementia research community have access now, and in the future, to the unique and rich data from the BDR brain bank in the UK and worldwide.

alzheimers.org.uk/BrainsForDementiaResearch

Drug Discovery Programme

We are funding ways to bring the new treatments we need for dementia, faster.

We know treatments for dementia are urgently needed – but developing a treatment from scratch can take up to 20 years and millions of pounds in investment.

Our Drug Discovery programme aims to develop new treatments in a fraction of this time and at a fraction of this cost. It focuses on drug repurposing and repositioning – this tests whether drugs already used to treat or in development for other conditions could be beneficial for people with dementia.

We will deliver our portfolio of Drug Discovery preclinical research and clinical trials and continue to partner with other organisations to co-fund research to reach out even further.

alzheimers.org.uk/DrugDiscovery

Accelerating progress to better care for people affected by dementia



We will fund clinical and care research with a clear route to implementation.

Our existing health and social care systems are struggling to provide the care and support that people affected by dementia need today and are not able to adapt to the imminent increase in demand. Alzheimer's Society is the only UK charity to fund research into care for people affected by dementia, as well as cause, cure and prevention.

Our Care, Implementation and Public Health research funding stream supports the aims laid out in our **Research Roadmap for Prevention, Diagnosis, Intervention and Care**. This funding stream prioritises care-focused research and the implementation of this research into practice, including development and testing of new interventions for the health and social care system. Our research programme will also bring to light those factors in the real world and at a population

level that influence how people live and are supported in their community.

Researchers applying for these grants should be able to demonstrate a pathway from their research outputs to the benefit of people affected by dementia, which includes those living with a diagnosis of dementia, their families and those who provide care. We will also work with researchers to increase and accelerate the impact of research. This includes increasing the involvement of care providers and other key stakeholders in constructing, conducting and using research.

Alongside our open grant calls (see page 6), we support some specific activities.

alzheimers.org.uk/ForResearchers



Centres of Excellence

We are funding research into the most urgent areas of need in dementia care.

The Centres of Excellence are our ground-breaking initiative to address areas in dementia care that are in urgent need of more research. Each Centre, led by an expert in dementia care research, focuses on a specific theme that has been identified as top priority to people living with dementia and their carers.

In addition to funding, we work with researchers at each of these Centres, drawing on expertise from across Alzheimer's Society and beyond to support translation of the research outcomes to the real world.

We will reinforce dementia care research through our current Centres of Excellence, and additional Centres as suitable opportunities are identified.

alzheimers.org.uk/CentresOfExcellence

Research Translation programme

We bring together expertise to increase and accelerate the impact of dementia care research.

Research translation aims to bridge the gap between research and practice. As the UK's leading authority on dementia, we draw on our expertise across Alzheimer's Society to make sure research reaches the people who need it. This includes expertise in Policy and Service Delivery, and our connections within the UK's health and social care sector. Partnering with researchers, health professionals, people affected by dementia and other key stakeholders, we can guide research and maximise the use of evidence to improve outcomes for people affected by dementia.

We will drive the implementation of relevant and useful research findings into practice through our Centres of Excellence and wider clinical and care research portfolio.

alzheimers.org.uk/ResearchTranslation

Innovation funding

We are accelerating the development of solutions for challenges faced by people affected by dementia.

For some challenges, we can fast-track the process and make quicker progress towards change for people affected by dementia. Our innovation approach allows us to rapidly understand, develop and evaluate solutions to break down barriers to living well with dementia. We can adapt our approach to tackle any challenge, from a simple product to make everyday tasks easier to a new care home service.

We have the expertise and techniques to guide the innovation process and bring ideas to life. Our innovation funding is open to all – anyone with a good idea that could make a difference to the lives of people affected by dementia can apply and crowdsourcing guides us to the best ideas to fund.

We will work with people affected by dementia, our network of innovators and key stakeholders to drive innovation that makes a difference to the lives of people affected by dementia now.

alzheimers.org.uk/Innovation

Partnering with people affected by dementia



We work with people affected by dementia at all stages of the research process to make sure our research meets the priorities of people affected by dementia.

We have been pioneers of involving people affected by dementia in research since the Research Network was launched in 1999. Since then, our model and approach have been replicated both in the UK and across the world by medical research charities.

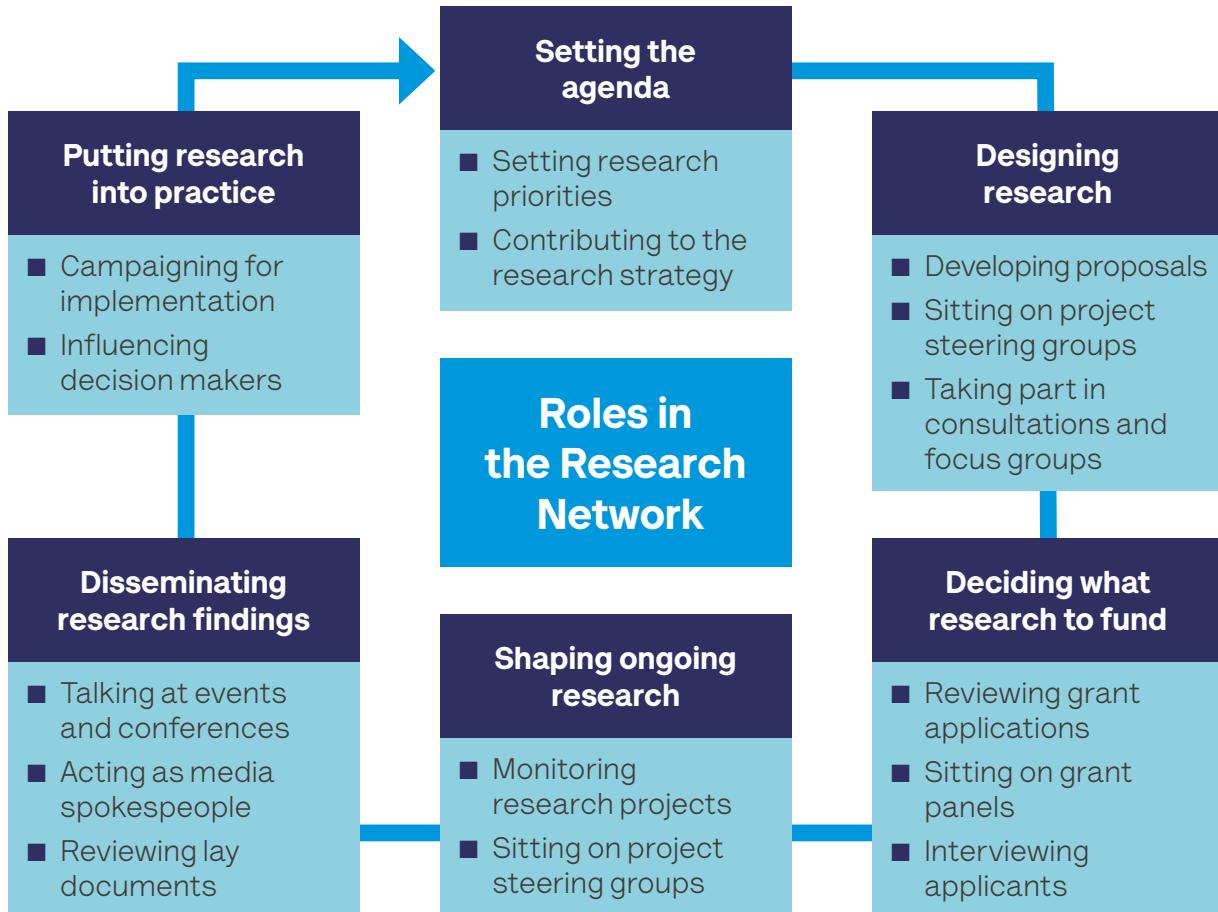
The Research Network has now grown to become an active and engaged group of over 300 volunteers, all of whom either have a diagnosis of dementia, are carers or former carers. These people are involved in every aspect of our funded research, from research design to raising awareness of research findings and sharing the importance of dementia research.

As well as our own funded research, we have processes in place for our Research Network to support researchers in developing and delivering research funded by other organisations.

We will continue to involve our Research Network in our funding decisions and strategic priorities. We will highlight the successes and impact of the Research network and develop new ways to involve people affected by dementia in research.

alzheimers.org.uk/ResearchNetwork

Involving people affected by dementia at all stages of our research



Developing the dementia researcher community



We support dementia researchers throughout their career to bring new perspectives into dementia research and keep them there.

The number of researchers, clinicians and allied health professionals working in dementia research is increasing, but dementia still lags behind other health conditions. This inevitably slows the progress we urgently need in dementia research. New researchers, including those from research and clinical backgrounds outside of dementia, bring fresh ideas that help expand the boundaries of dementia science and accelerate discovery and learning.

Dementia Research Leaders

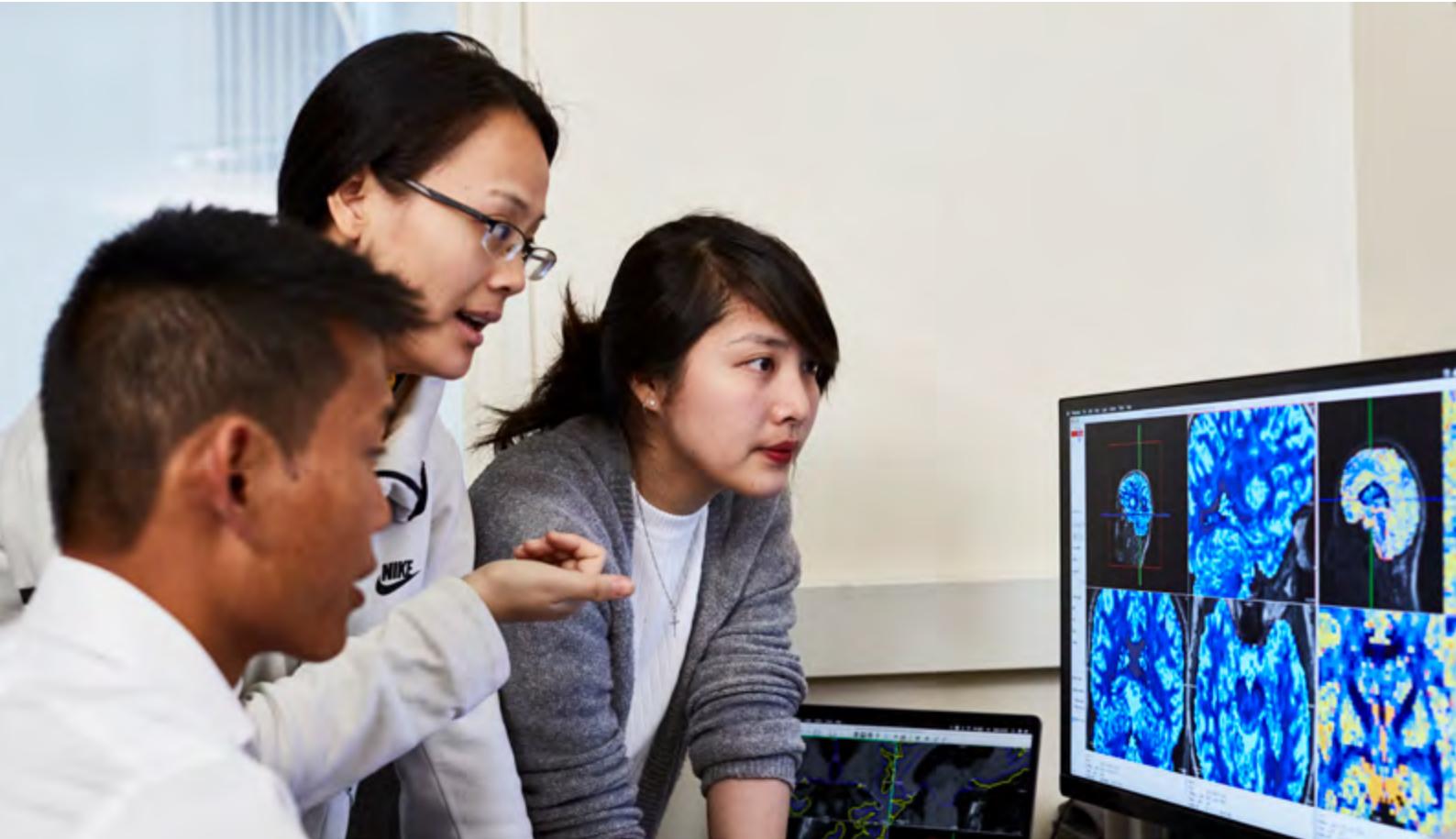
We have an outstanding record of investing in researchers committed to dementia research. Since launching in 2014, we have funded over 200 early career researchers through the Dementia Research Leaders programme.

Our research funding programme increases the number of researchers carrying out all types of dementia research through:

- funding opportunities and support to individuals with biomedical, clinical, social science and allied health professional backgrounds
- funding throughout a research career, from undergraduate summer bursaries through to senior fellowships
- education and training opportunities to develop core skills, including our researcher mentoring scheme
- support with maternity, paternity, adoption and sick leave
- access to guidance and opportunities through our wider research networks

We will increase the number of committed and driven people working hard to deliver the ground-breaking research that will beat dementia.

alzheimers.org.uk/SupportingResearchers



Connecting research with society

We support collaboration to take on the biggest challenges in dementia research.

Through our wide-reaching research activities, we support collaboration and bring together:

- researchers from across disciplines, institutions and countries
 - people affected by dementia, policy makers, service providers and funders
- to share knowledge, develop ideas and work together to address significant challenges in dementia research.

Join Dementia Research

Join Dementia Research (JDR) is a UK-based platform that acts as a matching service between research studies and thousands of potential volunteers. JDR is run by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) and supported by Alzheimer's Society, Alzheimer's Scotland and Alzheimer's Research UK.

Researchers can use the service to identify potential participants, screen and contact volunteers as well as run feasibility tests for future studies. Any ethically approved dementia study can sign up to JDR and be matched with suitable volunteers straight away.

We will champion dementia research to make sure people affected by dementia, and the wider public, are aware of opportunities and empowered to take part.

alzheimers.org.uk/JoinDementiaResearch



Research Partnerships

Our Research Partnerships programme connects researchers to our network of expertise in dementia. We support researchers not funded by us to tap into knowledge across Alzheimer's Society, get support from our Research Network, or share exciting new research with our supporters.

We provide practical support to ensure greater relevance and high quality of all dementia research.

alzheimers.org.uk/ResearchPartnerships

Developing the national and international research landscape

We are committed to achieving a world without dementia, but we know we can't do this alone. We partner with all other major funders of dementia research in the UK to encourage the ambitious ideas and new initiatives that will drive benefits for people affected by dementia. Through our role in the Dementia Research Funders Forum and leadership of work streams under the Dementia Challenge 2020, we are changing the dementia research landscape forever.

Our funding supports research in the UK, but the reach of our work is far wider. Researchers disseminate their findings internationally and set up close collaborations around the world to speed up progress. International collaborations make our investments go further, support exchange of knowledge across borders, influence the dementia landscape worldwide and ensure UK researchers benefit from international initiatives and funding. Our leading role in the World Dementia Council puts us at the heart of driving the international dementia research agenda.

We will nurture our local and international partnerships where there is a clear benefit to research that supports people affected by dementia in the UK.



The way we work

Developing our research programme and governance

The Alzheimer's Society Research Delivery Plan reflects a growth in our research budget up until 2022 and an opportunity to influence change in the external dementia research landscape.

Whilst we know where we want dementia research to get to, our plans for getting there retain flexibility. This is so we can respond quickly and effectively to changes that arise in the field of dementia, develop new partnerships and adapt when necessary to secure research funding.

Our research programme is developed with and guided by our Research Strategy Council, Grant Advisory Boards and people affected by dementia from our Research Network. Their advice ensures we fund research that is relevant and of a high quality.

When it's appropriate, we will create special interest groups from our wide network of advisers, people affected by dementia and other experts to work on specific topics.

Our operating principles for funding research

All research proposals submitted to Alzheimer's Society are assessed through peer review and by our Research Network of people with dementia, carers and former carers. This makes sure the research we fund is relevant, of a high quality and a priority for people affected by dementia.

Our Grant Advisory Boards, which are composed of independent chairs, experts in the field of dementia research and people affected by dementia, make final funding recommendations. All applicants for funding are provided with feedback relating to our decisions. Applications that receive funding from Alzheimer's Society and the overall percentage of bids that are successful are featured on our website.

Volunteers from our Research Network are connected to our funded research projects to monitor and support progress and spread awareness of relevant information to external audiences.

Alzheimer's Society is a member of the Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC) and all our funding processes follow recognised best practice. Our peer review processes were audited by AMRC in 2015 and recommended for meeting the five set principles of accountability, balance, independence, rotation and impartiality.



Keep up to date with our research developments

As our research programme evolves, we will announce new funding opportunities. Find out more and sign up to receive email alerts at alzheimers.org.uk/ForResearchers

Alzheimer's Society is the UK's leading dementia charity. We provide information and support, improve care, fund research, and create lasting change for people affected by dementia.

Call us **020 7423 3678**

Email us enquiries@alzheimers.org.uk

Visit us alzheimers.org.uk

Tweet us [@alzheimerssoc](https://twitter.com/alzheimerssoc)

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

Registered charity no. 296645.

