

# What is dementia?

**Dementia is a progressive condition caused by diseases of the brain such as Alzheimer's disease. These diseases cause nerve cells to die, damaging the structure and function of the brain.**

Dementia itself is not a disease but a set of symptoms which impact cognition. Symptoms vary depending on the area of the brain affected. People living with dementia can experience some of the following:

- **Memory loss**
- **Difficulty concentrating**
- **Finding it hard to complete familiar day-to-day tasks, such as handling money in shop.**
- **Confusion about time and place**
- **Changes in mood**

There are many diseases which cause dementia. While it is proposed up to 200 subtypes exist, the most common diseases causing the condition are:

- **Alzheimer's disease**
- **Vascular dementia**
- **Frontotemporal dementia**
- **Dementia with Lewy bodies**



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**Dementia is not a disease, but rather a term used to cover a broad range of progressive symptoms affecting the brain.**

# Key facts about dementia in the UK

- It is the biggest killer in the UK, accounting for 12.5% of all deaths in 2019. During the Covid-19 pandemic this increased to 27.5% of deaths between March and June 2020.
- 1 in 3 people born in the UK will develop dementia in their lifetime.
- There are currently over 850,000 people living with dementia in the UK and this is expected to rise to 1 million by 2025.
- Dementia is not a natural part of ageing and it doesn't just affect older people. Over 40,000 people under 65 in the UK have dementia. This is called early-onset or young-onset dementia.
- Dementia cost the UK economy £26bn in 2019.
- Research funding into dementia is severely underfunded. For every £1 invested in dementia research, £6 is invested into Cancer.



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# Why we do what we do

We believe people living with dementia should be entitled to live purposeful and dignified lives. The good news is that people can still live well with dementia. Through research and campaigning we look to empower people living with dementia and give them a voice.

Alzheimer's Society focuses on **three** key aspects so that one day we can live in a world without dementia while supporting people affected by dementia today.

## 1 Support people living with dementia

The Covid-19 pandemic has forced us to adapt our services away from face to face for the current time. Instead, we have acted decisively to move our support platforms to digital and phone services where possible. Since the pandemic began:

- Our Dementia Advisers have made 170,000 **Welfare Calls** to people affected by dementia. Checking in to make sure people have access to food, medication and support.
- We have received over 30,000 calls to the **Dementia Connect Support Line**. These are answered by our specially trained Dementia Advisers who support anyone affected by dementia through difficult times.



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Alzheimer's Society focuses on three key aspects

1. Support people living with dementia
2. Research into finding a cure
3. Campaign work

- Our website, blog and social media channels have been providing COVID-19 specific support content. They were accessed over 1.4 million times from 23 March – 31 August 2020. Talking Point, our online community saw a huge uplift in engagement with 2,500 new users joining the community since 23 March 2020.

## **2 Research into finding a cure**

Today we are supporting over £30million of dementia research across 78 biomedical grants and 70 care grants. We've committed to financially supporting the UK Dementia Research Institute for the next decade, an establishment we proudly co-founded. We support over 800 researchers working towards scientific discoveries and are the only UK dementia charity to fund research into care.

## **3 Campaign work**

We are campaigning nationally and locally to get dementia to the top of the agenda in government. Our flagship campaign 'fix dementia care' has forced the UK government to recognise the unfair and unsustainable social care system we have, and we won't stop until it's fixed.



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# Ways you can support Alzheimer's Society

- **Raise funds by hosting an event.** Whether it's a Cupcake day or sponsored walk, the Alzheimer's Society website provides you all the support you need to host your event.
- **Donate via the Alzheimer's Society website or sign up to give a gift each month.** Regular monthly gifts are vital to all charities to ensure they can accurately plan ahead.
- **Become a Dementia Friend.** It's an initiative to transform how the nation thinks, acts and talks about dementia. In 2019 over 500 people became Dementia Friends every day. Search Dementia Friends to find out more.
- **Sign online petitions to change the way dementia care and our social care system in the UK is run, making it accessible and fair for every person no matter their postcode.**



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**Game over Dementia is your chance to stand with us against dementia by raising funds for Alzheimer's Society. Select your game, pick your challenge, select a date and play your way.**