

Alzheimer's Society: our work

Alzheimer's Society is the UK's leading dementia charity, working across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. We campaign for change, fund research to find treatments and a cure, and support people living with dementia through a variety of local and national services:

- **Dementia Connect** (0333 150 3456) is our national support line. Anyone affected by dementia can use this number to access expert information and support.
- **Talking Point** is an online community providing users with support 24 hours a day.
- **Local 1-2-1 support and group services** are commissioned by local agencies, usually the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and/or local Adult Social Care services. Group services include Singing for the Brain sessions, post-diagnostic support for individuals and families, and peer support groups.

More information: www.alzheimers.org.uk/find-support-near-you

Key facts about dementia:

Dementia is the UK's biggest killer. Someone develops dementia every three minutes and there is currently no cure. Four key points to know about dementia:

1. **Dementia is not a natural part of ageing.** It is a progressive, long-term health condition that affects the brain. Memory problems are one of a number of symptoms that people with dementia may experience. Others include difficulties with planning, thinking things through, struggling to keep up with a conversation, and sometimes changes in mood or behaviour. Dementia can affect people of all ages, even children.
2. **Dementia is caused by diseases of the brain.** Dementia is an umbrella term for diseases that affect the brain, and no two types of dementia are the same. Over 120 different types of dementia diseases have currently been identified. Alzheimer's disease accounts for almost 50% of diagnosis; it causes nerve cells to die, damaging the structure and chemistry of the brain. Everyone experiences dementia in their own way. A person's attitude to their diagnosis and their physical health can have a huge impact, as well as the treatment they receive, the support from friends and family, and their surroundings.
3. **Dementia is not just about losing your memory.** Dementia can also affect the way people think, speak, perceive things, feel and behave. Symptoms of dementia gradually get worse over time. How quickly this happens varies from person to person, with some people staying independent for years.
4. **People can live well with dementia.** Until we are able to find a cure, support and treatments are available to help with symptoms and managing daily life, including cognitive stimulation and keeping active. As dementia is progressive, it is important that people receive an early diagnosis to ensure they receive the right support from local health and social care agencies.

More information: www.alzheimers.org.uk/about-dementia

Key statistics relating to dementia:

- There are an estimated 850,000 people living with dementia in the UK, which is set to rise to nearly 1.6 million by 2040.
- Over 40,000 people under the age of 65 in the UK have dementia.

- It is estimated that 70% of care home residents and over 60% of home care recipients are people with dementia.
- People with dementia have been worst-hit by the pandemic, accounting for over a quarter of all Covid-19 deaths.

Supporting your constituents affected by dementia:

As a councillor, you are in a unique position to advocate on behalf of your constituents. We continually engage with people living with dementia and those around them, and the same themes arise:

- Inconsistent access to social care services and support.
- Lack of joined-up care between health and adult social care services.
- Confusion navigating the dementia pathway.

To deliver the change people with dementia really need, it is important for a local council to have a **dementia strategy or action plan**. We would like **personalised care to be at the heart of these plans** to give the individual greater control and encourage a whole-person, consistent approach to their care.

It is also important for **post-pandemic recovery plans to prioritise people affected by dementia**. This group of people were worst hit by social isolation rules and it is important that health, community, diagnostic and welfare services are re-introduced as soon as possible to slow down future dementia symptoms.

We would be grateful if you could support your constituents by raising these issues with your **Lead Member for Adult Social Care**, or the **Health and Wellbeing Board Chair**.

More information: www.alzheimers.org.uk/get-involved/our-campaigns

Creating dementia friendly communities:

Isolation is one of the biggest challenges for people living with dementia. There are many ways to get involved and help ensure your constituency is dementia friendly:

- Become a Dementia Friend or Dementia Champion
- Join your local Dementia Friendly Community
- Hold a listening event with people affected by dementia to hear about the issues.
- Challenge your Council Leader to create a Dementia Friendly Council.

More information:

www.alzheimers.org.uk/get-involved/dementia-friendly-communities
www.dementiafriends.org.uk

Please email us at local@alzheimers.org.uk if you would like further information about dementia in your local area, and how we can support you to engage with people affected by dementia in your constituency.