

Alzheimer's Society Party Conference Briefing

Make Dementia a Priority

If you would be prepared to table written or oral parliamentary questions, write to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care to support our calls as outlined below, or take other actions to support our work, please get in touch at public.affairs@alzheimers.org.uk. Our team would be happy to help and provide any additional information you may need.

Dementia is the biggest health and social care challenge we face in this country. Alzheimer's Society are calling on decisionmakers to make dementia the priority it needs to be.

1. Key statistics on dementia

- **According to ONS classification, dementia is now the UK's biggest killer.**
- An estimated 900,000 people live with dementia in the UK currently, with this figure set to rise to 1.6 million by 2040 **and one in three people born today will develop dementia in their lifetime.**
- Dementia is costly both in financial terms and its devastating impact on individuals: **it costs the UK £34.7bn a year, rising to £94.1bn by 2040.**
- **Meanwhile, an individual with dementia spends an average of around £100,000 on care during their lifetime.**
- We already know that dementia is a whole system challenge, and with prevalence on the rise, the pressure dementia puts on health and social care services will only increase.
- **This is why dementia is a key barometer for the success of health and care reform, and why it must be made a political priority.**

Dementia is not yet the political priority it needs to be:

- **More than a third of people with dementia in England and Northern Ireland, and half of people with dementia in Wales do not have access to a diagnosis and the vital care and support it unlocks.**
- **Historically, we've seen low levels of investment and participation in research.** This means we are only now starting to see effective treatments for the early stages of Alzheimer's disease emerging.

2. Alzheimer's Society calls:

- We are calling on the Government to ensure that the **Major Conditions Strategy** is bold, ambitious, and deliverable for dementia, with **funding attached to ensure it meets its aims.** It must include commitments to:
 - **improve dementia diagnosis rates to the national ambition of 66.7% and further** through a funded plan;

- develop strategies to **support diagnosis methods and deliver access to breakthrough treatments** as soon as they become available;
- deliver an **improved pathway for people living with dementia navigating the health and care system.**
- **Government should invest in dementia diagnosis** to ensure everyone gets a **timely and accurate diagnosis inclusive of sub-type, and in social care to stabilise the system**, protect individuals from catastrophic care costs, and bring forward a workforce strategy.
- **Action must be taken to improve participation in dementia research**, and access to clinical trials for patients who want to be involved.