

Councillor Briefing 2026

About Alzheimer's Society

Alzheimer's Society is the UK's leading dementia charity, working across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. We are working towards a world where dementia no longer devastates lives. We do this by campaigning for and influencing change, funding research to find treatments and a cure, and supporting people living with dementia through a variety of local and national services.

[Find services near you | Alzheimer's Society \(alzheimers.org.uk\)](https://www.alzheimers.org.uk)

About dementia

Dementia is an increasingly prevalent condition in the UK, with almost one million people currently living with the chronic condition. However, only a third of those affected will receive a diagnosis, leaving too many people unable to access the help and support they require. As well as devastating lives, dementia represents a significant portion of local healthcare expenditure and social care support¹. By working together, we can help people to receive the support they need to live longer, independent lives.

¹ The economic burden of dementia (2024), Carnall Farrar, <https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/about-us/policy-and-influencing/dementia-scale-impact-numbers>

Four key facts:

1. **People can live well with dementia.** Everyone experiences dementia in their own way. Until we find a cure, support and treatments are available to help manage symptoms and manage daily life. This includes cognitive stimulation therapies and keeping active. As dementia is progressive, it is important that people receive an early diagnosis to ensure they receive the right person-centred support from local health and social care agencies at the right time.
2. **Dementia is not a natural part of ageing.** It is a progressive, long-term health condition that affects the brain. There are over 70,000 people living with young onset dementia, which is where symptoms developed before the age of 65².
3. **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 200 different types of dementia diseases have currently been identified with Alzheimer's disease accounting for almost 50% of diagnosis.
4. **Dementia is not just about losing your memory.** Dementia affects everyone differently and each type of dementia has different key symptoms. These include affecting the way people think, speak, perceive things, feel, and behave.

Supporting residents living with dementia

Despite its prevalence, **only 4 in 10 people** living with dementia feel that social care considers dementia a priority³. Here's how you can prioritise dementia for residents in your locality:

- Challenge your system to set an ambitious dementia diagnosis rate target. Doing so is vital for access to new innovative treatments that are on the horizon and quality personalised care which enables independent living.
- Make dementia a priority by ensuring your council is covered by a dedicated dementia strategy and action plan that has been co-produced with local people living with dementia.

² <https://www.dementiauk.org/news/new-figures-show-70800-uk-adults-are-affected-by-young-onset-dementia/>

³ <https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/sites/default/files/2024-10/personal-experiences-dementia-journey-true-picture-report.pdf>

- Work closely with your local Integrated Care System to ensure a well-integrated and resourced system which is prepared to offer quality care and new treatments.
- Challenge and work with your system to set targets to ensure that every health and social care worker supporting with a person with dementia in your area has appropriate dementia specific training, including social care services commissioned by the council⁴.
- Work with cabinet members to ensure that people living with dementia are considered when planning and developing the local area. Dementia affects every aspect of a person's life. The impact of poor transport and housing isolates and excludes people living with dementia from their communities. Every elected representative has a part to play to remove barriers which prevents the local area from being fully inclusive and accessible.
- Improve provision and availability of post-diagnostic support. There is currently huge variation in dementia care, and insufficient support for people living with dementia increases their vulnerability to crises.
- Addressing unpaid care. Carers shoulder immense mental and financial burdens, and many struggle without adequate support. Alarming, between a quarter and half of carers in the UK report experiencing symptoms of poor mental health. Carers need local authorities to exercise their responsibility to carry out carer's needs assessments so they can access the support they require including respite care. We have new data on the economic costs of this that we could be happy to share with you.

⁴ <https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/what-we-do/policy-and-influencing/dementia-training-for-care-workers-how-to-deliver-it>

Update on New Reports

In April 2026, Alzheimer's Society added to its collection of reports focusing on dementia training for social care staff across England, Wales, and Northern Ireland. 'The training gap: a hidden injustice in dementia care and how to fix it' builds on the 2024 report 'Because we're human too: why dementia training for care workers matters and how to deliver it.'

Find out more about the new report on [dementia workforce training](#).

In May 2026, Alzheimer's Society launched the 'Unlocking the door' reports to show what needs to be done to 'unlock' these dementia issues. Find out more about the new reports on [dementia diagnosis and access to treatments](#).

Join our Councillor Network

As a Councillor, you play a crucial role in improving the lives of people living with dementia. Our Councillor Network is a fantastic way to learn more about dementia, how it affects people in your area and what you can do as an elected representative to create positive change in your Council.

The Councillor Network provides access to bespoke webinars, briefings and newsletters which will keep you up to date with the latest data and evidence, policy developments, actions you can take, and support we can offer.

As a member, you will receive regular updates useful to your role as a local Councillor and our dedicated Local Systems Influencing Officers will support you in your work to make dementia a priority.

[Join Alzheimer's Society's Councillor Network | Alzheimer's Society \(alzheimers.org.uk\)](#)

How we can support you to help your residents

The Local Systems Influencing Team at Alzheimer's Society can help you in a variety of ways:

- We can share our expertise to input into the development of dementia strategies and action plans that serve the needs of the community based on our evidence-based Local Dementia Strategy Toolkit recommendations.

- We provide resources, expert advice, and local intelligence, translating national policy recommendations into locally relevant actions.
- We can share data, reports, briefings, and information on dementia to you and your team, and are happy to present recommendations tailored to your local authority area.
- We can provide a range of dementia statistics for your local authority area.
- We can work with you to write council motions or conduct scrutiny reviews.
- We can deliver informative presentations or Dementia Friends sessions for Councillors.
- We can share examples of best practice as suggestions for improvement.
- We can connect you with local people living with dementia and help facilitate the involvement of these experts by experience in co-production and co-design through our Dementia Voice network.

Get in contact:

If you would like relevant data and statistics for your area, further information about dementia and to discuss how we can support you in your work please email local@alzheimers.org.uk