



# A guide for MPs and councillors to create dementia-friendly communities in England

# Dementia is one of the biggest challenges of the 21st century.



With 670,000 people with dementia across England, and even more friends and family affected by it, you will have thousands of people in your constituency living with dementia.

This leaflet explains how you can help to support them by building a dementia-friendly community.

- Spending on dementia research is also pitifully low compared to other areas.

Quality of life for people with dementia has improved but there is a mountain still to climb.

Meeting the dementia challenge isn't just for national government and the NHS – it is **local action that will make the biggest change.**

- Today far too few people get a diagnosis – just 44% of people with dementia in England have a diagnosis.
- Post-diagnosis care is patchy. It is vital people receive high-quality information, care and support to maintain a good quality of life.
- Dementia costs the economy more than cancer, stroke and heart disease combined.

Two thirds of people with dementia live in their community, but many tell us that they feel lonely and isolated. We need to **make our communities dementia friendly** so people with dementia can lead the lives they want to and play a full role in our society.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeremy Hughes". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

**Jeremy Hughes**  
Chief Executive, Alzheimer's Society

# What do people with dementia want from their community?

People with dementia say they want to remain independent and take an active role in their local area. But for too many this is not an option.

Understanding and support from Members of Parliament and councillors, and the influence you have in your constituency, can help make your local community dementia friendly.

Having dementia does not mean someone has to stop carrying out everyday tasks or enjoying activities. However, two thirds of people with dementia said that the main reason they were unable to continue doing so was a lack of confidence.

Alzheimer's Society found the following activities were important to people with dementia, and that they need to be achievable either independently or with a carer:

- being able to travel
- going to shops
- running errands
- visiting places of worship
- managing day-to-day tasks.


Many businesses and organisations related to these activities can play a part in enabling people with dementia to live well. This might be making the bus into town or the library more accessible, or thinking about the support needed to go shopping. A little understanding about dementia and its effects is the only way to create dementia-friendly communities.

For more information about Alzheimer's Society's work to create dementia-friendly communities, see [alzheimers.org.uk/dementiafriendlycommunities](http://alzheimers.org.uk/dementiafriendlycommunities)

# Steps towards creating a dementia-friendly community

- Write to your local Clinical Commissioning Group about diagnosis rates in your constituency. You can see local diagnosis rates at [www.dementiaprevalencecalculator.org.uk](http://www.dementiaprevalencecalculator.org.uk)
- Write to your local police force and fire services about their plans to become dementia aware.
- Ask your local Chamber of Commerce or other business membership organisation to distribute information on becoming dementia friendly.
- Keep the Alzheimer's Society's **National Dementia Helpline** number in your constituency office – **0300 222 1122**.
- Write to your local Clinical Commissioning Group to make them aware of The dementia guide – a booklet of information for people recently diagnosed. See [alzheimers.org.uk/dementiaguide](http://alzheimers.org.uk/dementiaguide)
- Bring together key stakeholders in your area, such as the police, taxi firms, and high street businesses, to convene a local Dementia Action Alliance. Alzheimer's Society can help you do this. See [www.dementiaaction.org.uk/local\\_alliances](http://www.dementiaaction.org.uk/local_alliances)
- Ask your local authority and other organisations in your area to promote volunteering to become a Dementia Friend Champion.
- Write to your local hospitals to ensure there is a clinical lead for dementia in place, and ask what steps they are taking to become a dementia-friendly hospital.
- Attend your local Memory Walk to help raise awareness and support for people with dementia. See [memorywalk.org.uk](http://memorywalk.org.uk)
- Work with Alzheimer's Society to promote Dementia Awareness Week in May 2014.

Alzheimer's Society's Public Affairs and Campaigns team are here to support you in taking these steps. Please contact us on **020 7423 3500** or [paevents@alzheimers.org.uk](mailto:paevents@alzheimers.org.uk)

A close-up photograph of a person's hand holding a green watering can, pouring water onto a lush green plant. The person is wearing a blue sweater. The background is softly blurred, showing more greenery and a hint of a wooden planter box.

**Read about the work three MPs are doing and the commitments they have made to create dementia-friendly communities in their constituencies.**

# Hazel Blears MP

Salford and Eccles

A dementia-friendly community is where organisations work together to make their services accessible, and go that extra mile in helping people to feel happy in their daily lives. MPs can be an important link in this chain.



Photo courtesy of Dods

Of course, we cannot do everything and we might not have professional expertise, but we do have contacts and connections. We can help to link Alzheimer's Society and other local services for people with dementia to local businesses, public sector leaders, charities and social enterprise.

Some of us can also draw on our national political experience. I am a vice-chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Dementia, and I help to keep all the partners involved in forging a dementia-friendly community up to speed on latest national initiatives.

I work hard to raise awareness of the fantastic work done by local organisations seeking to make a difference for people with dementia. Through these links, I have encouraged organisations to do everything they can to help people in Salford to live well with dementia.

One in four people will know someone who has dementia, so some of us will be able to draw on very personal experience in suggesting how we can make life easier for people with dementia. My mum Dorothy was diagnosed with dementia six years ago.

We are creating a local Dementia Action Alliance. I have worked to put the Salford Alliance in touch with new business partners like the Co-Op. I have urged the Mayor of Salford to involve Salford Council. Through my role on the All Party Parliamentary Group on Dementia, I highlighted the need to raise awareness of dementia among ethnic minority communities, where it often remains a taboo subject.

Separately I have written to the Secretary of State for Health, Jeremy Hunt, to ask him to consider giving carers of people with dementia and other serious illnesses fast-track hospital treatment when they themselves are ill. I have been told this proposal is now being considered.



## Mark Menzies MP

Fylde

Fylde has a great reputation for being a friendly and welcoming place to live so I am currently working towards bringing together all the services on offer in Fylde to ensure the constituency goes on the map

as a truly dementia-friendly community.

The effects of dementia can be life-changing, not just for the people who are affected but tragically for their families and loved ones.

The Prime Minister's Challenge on Dementia sends out a clear message to communities to provide a world-class standard of support

for those people, whether through official health channels or voluntary and charitable sectors.

People whose jobs see them interact with the public should also be aware of the signs of dementia and think about how they can help people live as well as possible.



## Stephen Lloyd MP

Eastbourne

Dementia is a profound health and social care challenge and stepping up to the challenge needs to be a priority for society and for the Coalition government.

I will continue to do all I can to help create dementia-friendly communities in Eastbourne and around the country to help people living with the condition and their families live as well as possible.

MPs can play a vital role in creating dementia-friendly communities. The effects of dementia are being felt across the country and the government has announced its commitment to improve dementia care through the Prime Minister's challenge on dementia. However, the struggle to improve treatment can be helped tremendously by an active MP at a local level. We can be an important link between the

Department of Health, local councils, the NHS and local communities. We can promote initiatives within the constituency, provide feedback, and lobby government for improvement.

I have long been a campaigner for better dementia care, through my involvement in the All Party Parliamentary Group, and more specifically lobbying for better treatment within disadvantaged communities. I was also very active locally for Dementia Awareness Week, attending a number of events and raising the profile of dementia generally.

**Alzheimer's Society is the UK's leading support and research charity for people with dementia, their families and carers. We provide information and support to people with any form of dementia and their carers through our publications, National Dementia Helpline, website, and more than 2,000 local services. We campaign for better quality of life for people with dementia and greater understanding of dementia. We also fund an innovative programme of medical and social research into the cause, cure and prevention of dementia and the care people receive.**

To find out more about Alzheimer's disease or any other form of dementia, visit [alzheimers.org.uk](http://alzheimers.org.uk) or call the **Alzheimer's Society National Dementia Helpline** on **0300 222 1122**.

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