

Making our  
communities  
dementia-friendly

# Dementia awareness raising options for staff.



Briefing note for  
businesses

April 2012

# Making our communities dementia friendly

## Awareness raising resources

People living with dementia will encounter a range of people on a day to day basis as they go about their business.

They may experience a range of problems associated with dementia that have the potential to impact on their ability to interact with those they encounter. Similarly those they encounter may be unsure how and whether to help people who appear to be experiencing difficulties.

People with dementia all differ in the way they experience their dementia, but generally speaking in public situations people with dementia may have a range of difficulties, including:

- Have problems remembering what they are doing
- Have difficulties in communicating clearly
- Have problems handling money
- Have problems navigating in complex or confusing environments

How staff respond to people who may be experiencing these kinds of problem can make a real difference. People with dementia tell us repeatedly that it is the attitude of those they encounter in their communities which has the biggest impact on their lives in their community.

### **What do staff need to know?**

Our work has shown that those with good "people skills" or within organisations with a strong focus on customer care may already have many of the attributes or skills they need to be able to support people with dementia as customers.

However, a basic understanding of the impact of dementia and how to support people can make a huge difference both to the experience of the customer, and to that of the staff involved.

The amount of training staff will need will depend upon their role.

This paper is aimed squarely at staff whose role is not specifically to support people with dementia, but who may encounter people with dementia as customers on a day to day basis.

There will be some variation in the kind of knowledge that people will need, as they encounter people with dementia in different situations, the needs of people with

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dementia will differ from one encounter to the next, and the role of staff in respect to the person with dementia will differ according to the situation.

For example, the role of a police officer in this regard is going to be very different from that of a shop assistant.

It is important therefore to recognise that training and awareness raising is at its best when it is designed for the audience in mind.

However, there are likely to be some similar themes and needs across all public-facing situations:

- Why it matters
- How to recognise that people may be having problems.
- How to respond to people who may be having problems
- How to communicate more effectively with people with memory problems
- What to do if someone needs help

There are a range of existing training and awareness- raising options available to businesses and organisations that want to improve their customer service to people with dementia. Some of these are outlined below.

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### Existing awareness raising and training resources

The options presented represent the best readily available training options ranging from full Alzheimer's Society dementia training or formal awareness raising via the local Alzheimer's Society, through online self-training, to printed materials. These options are not mutually exclusive.

1. Face to face training from the national Alzheimer's Society
2. Online training –via the SCIE e-learning Open Dementia Programme
3. Printed materials – e.g. booklets from Alzheimer's Society.
4. Help pack for customer-facing staff.

#### **1. Face to face dementia awareness training from the national Alzheimer's Society**

##### **Brief description**

Offers an insight into the everyday experience of the person with dementia and looks at how the person may be affected physically by dementia, as well as the signs, symptoms, impact of and treatment of the disease.

##### **Suitable for:**

- staff who may come into regular or sustained contact with people with dementia.
- organisations with a number of staff who can attend training at the same time.

**Cost** - one day course £1250 +VAT

**Advantages** : comprehensive , delivered by accredited facilitator

##### **Disadvantages:**

- cost
- time commitment
- not targeted to workforce.

[https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/site/scripts/documents\\_info.php?documentID=1376](https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/site/scripts/documents_info.php?documentID=1376)

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### 2. Online training - SCIE e-learning Open Dementia Programme

#### Brief description

The Open Dementia e-learning Programme is aimed at anyone who comes into contact with someone with dementia and provides a general introduction to the disease and the experience of living with dementia. This programme is designed to be accessible to a wide audience and to make learning as enjoyable as possible and so allows users to fully interact with the content and includes video, audio and graphics to make the content come alive.

#### Suitable for:

- staff who may come into contact with people with dementia.
- staff / organisations with internet access
- organisations with limited resources

**Cost :** Free

#### Time commitment:

The whole course can be completed in between 2.5 and 3.5 hours and provides a very good grounding for people who want to know about dementia and how to support people who might be having problems.

However, there are some modules which might not be relevant for staff who only need to know the signs of dementia, and how to help.

For customer-facing staff who do not have a specific role in supporting people with dementia therefore, we would particularly recommend:

Module 1 – what it is and what it isn't (20 mins)  
Module 5 – common difficulties and how to help (30-40 mins)  
Module 7 – positive communication (20-30 mins)

**Advantages:** Free and flexible.

#### Disadvantages:

- requires internet access (though is also available with reduced functionality on CDROM)
- staff need to be motivated to follow course alone.

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- not targeted to workforce.

More information:

<http://www.scie.org.uk/publications/elearning/dementia/index.asp>

### 2. Printed materials –from Alzheimer’s Society

#### Brief description

A range of free information, including:

- “Remember the person” leaflet produced for Awareness Week 2011. This is an awareness raising leaflet that encourage people to think about dementia.
- Ongoing information about dementia and what’s going in locally via national and local newsletters and factsheets.

#### Suitable for:

- Staff who may come into contact with people with dementia.
- Staff and organisations with little time or money.

**Cost:** Free to download

**Advantages:** Low cost in terms of staff time.

**Disadvantages:**

- Difficult to know if staff are using / reading information.
- Limited information.
- Not targeted to workforce.

More information

[http://www.alzheimers.org.uk/site/scripts/download\\_info.php?downloadID=41](http://www.alzheimers.org.uk/site/scripts/download_info.php?downloadID=41)

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### 3. Help pack for customer facing staff

This brief guide has been written specifically for customer-facing staff. It covers:

- How to identify people who may have dementia
- How to respond to people who may be having problems.

#### **Suitable for:**

- customer-facing staff who come into contact with people with dementia
- organisations with limited resources

**Cost:** free

#### **Advantages:**

- Low cost in terms of staff time
- Targetted to workforce

#### **Disadvantages:**

- Limited in scope
- Not interactive
- Difficult to know if staff are using / reading information.