

Guidance for faith organisations

This guidance note states how churches and other faith-based organisations can improve the lives of people with dementia by signing up to the Dementia Action Alliance, and help make more dementia-friendly communities.

Why is dementia important to you?

- Dementia is a disease of the brain which can affect memory, everyday tasks, communication and perception. It is not a result of the normal ageing process.
- There are over 800,000 people living with dementia in the UK and this figure is set to rise.
- 82% of the public believe people with dementia and their carers need more help and support.
- Churches and faith-based organisations have an important role to play in ensuring people living with dementia can continue to live their lives and be an active part of their communities for as long as possible.
- Some of your worshippers may develop dementia or be caring for someone who does. By being more dementia friendly, you can help and support them to continue practicing their faith.
- You can ensure your staff and worshippers are more aware of dementia, helping to reduce stigma and encourage them to access support services or receive a diagnosis.

What can you do?

Dementia friendly churches initiative

Livability, a Christian disability charity, have developed resources to support churches to become more accessible and inclusive for people with dementia and their carers. These include top tips, a charter, and training courses.

<http://www.livability.org.uk/church/dementia-friendly-churches/>

Dementia friendly gurudwaras

Developed by a group of Sikhs in Bradford, this aims to make practical changes to their local gurudwara and share best practice with others.

<http://dementiafriendlygurudwaras.com/about/>

Dementia Friends

Dementia Friends is a free initiative run by Alzheimer's Society where people can become Dementia Friends Champions and pass on short awareness sessions to their friends, family, colleagues and members of the community. Various faith groups have used this to increase understanding of dementia among members.

<http://www.dementiafriends.org.uk/session/trainingcourses>

Checklist for dementia friendly environments

You can use a range of checklists to ensure the physical environment of your place of worship is as dementia friendly as possible. It includes practical advice, for instance around signage or lighting.

<http://www.dementiaaction.org.uk/resources/environments>

Further reading

- *Religious practice and people with dementia: a resource for carers*, Christian Council on Ageing (2002)
- *In a strange land, people with dementia and their local church*, Malcolm Goldsmith (2004)

Join the Dementia Action Alliance

Organisations join the Dementia Action Alliance by writing a short Action Plan, outlining the actions they will undertake to improve the lives of people with dementia.

Existing action plans

Search for existing action plans here: http://www.dementiaaction.org.uk/members_and_action_plans

Example members:

- [Diocese of Lichfield](#)
- [Diocese of Bradford](#)
- [Rotherham & Dearne Valley Circuit of the Methodist Church](#)
- [Trinity Community Church, Manchester](#)
- [Sprotborough Churches Together](#)

Local Dementia Action Alliances

Once you have joined the DAA, you can take part in your Local Dementia Action Alliance. These are groups of organisations working together to make their community more dementia friendly.

To find your local alliance, contact us or visit: http://www.dementiaaction.org.uk/local_alliances

Contact details

Contact us for help or guidance when writing your action plan, or to get involved with your Local Dementia Action Alliance.

National team: dementiaactionalliance@alzheimers.org.uk

Regional leads: http://www.dementiaaction.org.uk/contact/regional_leads

Action plan guidance

The following three questions make up an action plan. By completing an action plan, your organisation will become a member of the Dementia Action Alliance.

- Complete the online form here: <http://www.dementiaaction.org.uk/join>
- Alternatively, you can request a document and send to us

1. How would you describe your organisation's role in delivering better outcomes for people with dementia and their carers?

Here you should describe your organisation, the role it plays in the community, and how therefore it may interact with people with dementia and their carers.

2. What are the challenges to delivering these outcomes from the perspective of your organisation?

Here you may mention lack of existing knowledge among members, an old building, limited budget, etc.

3. What are your plans as an organisation to respond to these challenges?

Think about anything your organisation could do – no action is too small. You can look back at the earlier suggestions and existing action plans.

Here are some example actions:

Example actions

- We will encourage our members, staff and volunteers to become Dementia Friends
- We will hold an awareness session about dementia for our members
- We will review the environment and signage of our public spaces using a dementia friendly checklist to ensure they are as accessible as possible
- We will take part in Livability's dementia friendly churches initiative
- We will work with the local Alzheimer's Society to set up a support group for people with dementia and their carers if the demand is there
- We will signpost to relevant local support services
- We will include dementia information at our community events
- We will take part in our Local Dementia Action Alliance and attend meetings where possible
- We will advertise our commitments in our newsletter and website
- The Diocese will set up a task group to be the main point of contact about dementia