

A guide for local councils

Why should you care?

There are currently 55,000 people living with dementia in Ireland. 30 people develop the disease every day and over 500,000 families have been affected. The majority of people with dementia (63%) live in the community. They want to continue to be active and included in their community, and empowered to use local services and supports. Local Councils play an essential role in creating an environment that is enabling and inclusive of the whole community. Do not underestimate the difference you can make by having an understanding of dementia and taking steps to be inclusive. People with dementia say that it is the personal interactions which make the biggest difference to their experience.

What are some of the symptoms of dementia?

Everyday challenges differ for people with dementia. Some common difficulties may include:



1. Remembering names or specific details, places

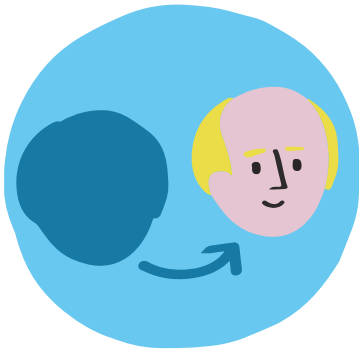


2. Finding words to express themselves



3. Navigating complex, confusing or noisy environments

What are things you can do to support a person?



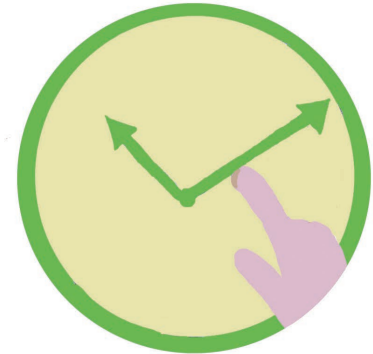
See the person, not the dementia

Ensure that all staff are dementia aware. Dementia does not define the person. Behind the dementia is an individual who may need a little support and understanding to stay involved and connected in their community.



Body language

Smile warmly, make eye contact and assure the person that you are there to help.



Take time

Listen to the experiences of people with dementia and their families and give the person with dementia time to express themselves. Hear their thoughts on what community life means to them and the things that can support them to continue to participate.



Provide information

Provide leaflets about dementia as this may enable people to get some practical tips about the supports and services available locally. Promote any inclusive services you may provide or are aware of in the community.



Inclusive services

Ensure that all community services and public spaces such as parks are dementia inclusive. Encourage retailers and community groups to learn more about dementia and to take actions to support a person with dementia and their family.



The environment

Undertake a dementia inclusive audit of the community. Identify if there are ways to improve the environment by ensuring you have appropriate signage, pathways and seating. Reduce unnecessary and distracting signs and noise.

Dementia Inclusive Communities

To find out more about the things you can do in your community, training and other resources visit the HSE's

www.understandtogether.ie/get-involved/

dementia

understand together

Everyone has a role to play in making our communities inclusive. Often it is the small things and acts of kindness that make the biggest difference in a person's life.