



Powys County Council

A dementia friendly council



Foreword



An ageing population and the social and economic effects of dementia are key challenges for local authorities and their partners.

In 2012, the Prime Minister promised to tackle the escalating dementia crisis and see the UK become a world leader in the field. The Prime Minister's challenge on dementia included an ambition to create communities that are working to help people live independent and well with dementia.

The Alzheimer's Society Dementia Friendly Communities programme focusses on improving inclusion and quality of life for people living with dementia. The strategy includes an ambition to work with people affected by dementia and key partners to define and develop dementia friendly communities.

Three years on since the Prime Ministers original challenge to tackle dementia, through a programme of action to deliver improvements in health and social care, the creation of dementia friendly communities and investment in dementia research, it is clear everyone has a part to play. There are now over one million people across the UK trained to be Dementia Friends in order to raise awareness in local communities and the workplace.

As a council delivering public services, we are also committed to rising to the challenge. Our aim is that Powys County Council through the services it delivers, becomes a council that supports and enables people living with dementia, their carers and families to live well.

We recognise the role we can play by helping our citizens live independent and well within their communities for longer.

We need to be clear what becoming dementia friendly means for us and our citizens. We need to understand not only what initiatives will work but also what changes need to be made and what the benefits will be for our citizens. We need to ensure any changes we make are the right ones and will have a positive impact for people living with dementia.

We want to be a dementia friendly council.

Councillor Dawn Bailey
Dementia Champion, Powys County Council



A dementia friendly Powys

Introduction

In October 2014, Powys County Council pledged to help make Powys a dementia friendly county, a status officially recognised by the Alzheimer's Society through its Dementia Friendly Communities programme.

The definition of a dementia friendly community is one in which people with dementia are empowered to have high aspirations and feel confident, knowing they can contribute and participate in activities that are meaningful to them.

A dementia friendly community should be a place where there is increased awareness that dementia touches the lives of many and so requires a community based touch.

At its meeting in 2014, Powys County Council pledged to take the following action:

- Appoint an elected Member to champion the dementia friendly cause and to appoint a lead officer for dementia services
- To work with communities across Powys to help them gain 'working to become dementia friendly' status with a view to making Powys the first dementia friendly county in Wales
- Work in partnership with dementia friendly community groups in Powys and Powys Teaching Health Board to develop and improve services for people with dementia
- Encourage Councillors, staff and our partners to become Dementia Friends through the Alzheimer's Society Dementia Friends initiative
- Participate in awareness raising activities during National Dementia Awareness Week

By promoting awareness and understanding of how our actions will help us achieve the principles of being a dementia friendly council, we can make a huge difference to those living with dementia.



Powys County Council:

A dementia friendly council

To achieve our vision of making a difference to people living with dementia in Powys, we should first focus our attention on becoming a dementia friendly council. We can then use and share our experience with partners and communities to achieve our county-wide vision for Powys.

In order to understand the challenge we have set ourselves, the following questions need to be answered:

- What is dementia
- What does a dementia friendly council look like
- What is the scale of the challenge for Powys County Council to become a dementia friendly council
- What do dementia friendly services look like
- What needs to change to become a dementia friendly council
- How do we achieve our county-wide vision of making a difference to people living with dementia in Powys

The answers to these questions will help shape the way our council rises to the challenge of becoming dementia friendly and use that information to help us with the challenge of becoming a dementia friendly county.

What is dementia

The word dementia describes a set of symptoms that may include memory loss and difficulties with thinking, problem-solving, perception, everyday tasks, communication and language.

Dementia is caused when the brain is damaged by diseases such as Alzheimer's disease or following a series of strokes. When you have dementia you tend to lose your most recent memories.

Dementia is a progressive condition, this means the structure and chemistry of the brain becomes increasingly damaged over time. Symptoms gradually get worse as the condition progresses.



Dementia affects each individual differently. No two people are the same, each individual presents with different changes in ability and behaviour patterns.

Dementia has an impact on the person living with the condition, their families and carers, on communities and public services.

There is a lack of awareness of dementia within society in general and often a stigma is attached to it.

People living with dementia describe the need to feel valued and supported with services which respond to their individual needs.

Powys context

In Wales it is estimated more than 45,000 people are living with dementia with almost half of this number believed to be undiagnosed. In Powys that figure is approximately 2,400 people living with dementia. People who along with their carer's, family members and friends depend on a wide range of services that our council provides. Appropriate support must be given in the early stages to help prevent crisis situations.

Dementia is an age prevalent condition and with an ageing population the consequences will be an increasing number of people living with dementia in Powys.

Often people with dementia say they stop going out and doing things within their communities as their dementia progresses. That they feel unable to cope with everyday pressures and situations, feel isolated and lonely particularly in a rural area such as Powys.

People with dementia say they want to be supported to live independent and well at home.

Given the numbers of people living with dementia projected to increase, it makes sense to understand what being dementia friendly entails and what changes need to be taken to ensure services we provide are sensitive to and able to respond to individual need.

Often this is more about providing good customer care and service to all of our citizens, particularly for those who are more vulnerable, rather than developing a range of new services.



What can Powys County Council do to make a positive difference to the experiences of people living with dementia

We can enable people to live positive, fulfilled lives and instill in everyone a confidence they too can make a difference to an individual's experience of dementia.

We can all play an important part in helping achieve environments that foster independence and quality of life enabling someone living with dementia remain able to contribute to everyday life and feel part of their community.

Innovative approaches to health and social care pathways, to the design of dementia friendly buildings, high streets and communities that are planned and designed to be both dementia and age friendly and access to transport. All essential components that actively support dementia and age friendly communities. Where those who are living with the condition and their carers can live with dignity, meaning and purpose.

Key Facts:

- There are currently around 850,000 people in the UK living with dementia
- In Wales there are around 45,000 people living with dementia, many of them undiagnosed. In Powys that figure is approximately 2,400 people living with dementia
- It is estimated by 2021 numbers of people living with dementia will have increased by 31% with some rural areas seeing increases by as much as 44%
- With the UK statutory retirement age rising and the number of people with dementia expected to increase to one million by 2025, many more people will develop dementia whilst still in employment
- One in three people over 65 will develop dementia
- There are 40,000 younger people with dementia in the UK
- Two thirds of people with dementia are women



- Many people with dementia say they do not feel supported and part of their local community. Many are not confident to get out and engage in the community despite there being significant goodwill in the community to help them live well
- Two thirds of people with dementia live in the community whilst one third live in a care home
- People with dementia often face barriers however it is possible to make changes that can make their day to day lives much better
- The Alzheimer's Society works to improve the quality of life for people affected by dementia and their website also provides in depth information including factsheets and guidance
- The Alzheimer's Society provides a National Dementia Helpline, the number is **0300 222 11 22** or visit **alzheimers.org.uk**
- Alzheimer's Research UK Infoline **0300 111 5 111**

*above statistical information sourced from Alzheimer's Society



What are the implications for Powys County Council to become a dementia friendly council and what do we do next

In an organisation as large as Powys County Council it will take time to become a dementia friendly council. We will implement practical measures wherever this is feasible as quickly as possible however longer term we must ensure changes will support and improve the services we currently provide within the councils wider change programme.

The challenges to becoming dementia friendly

We will raise awareness of Alzheimer's Society Dementia Friends initiative amongst elected Members and staff so that everyone can have an understanding of what it is like to live with dementia and how to turn that understanding into action.

We will ensure a programme of Dementia Friends awareness is set up using a variety of different methods appropriate to the individual needs. We will identify Dementia Friends Champions within key service areas.

We will ensure a dedicated dementia webpage is created for elected Members and staff which provides them with basic information about how to support and signpost people living with dementia to relevant services.

We will improve information and advice services to people living with dementia within Powys.

We will involve people living with dementia in assessing what needs to be done to be dementia friendly. Changes made need to reflect positive outcomes.

We will put into practice simple measures designed to help improve the lives of those living with dementia when using council services. For example, ensure public spaces within council buildings and offices are dementia friendly with staff who can recognise when a person needs extra help and assistance.

Consideration will be given at all times to measures that are not just specific to being dementia friendly but that are 'age friendly' and can benefit other Powys citizens. Measures will be aligned with local and national policy.

We will build partnerships with other agencies, organisations and local communities with a shared vision for Powys to become a dementia friendly county.





