



For carers, By carers

Working with professionals and services

Post diagnosis you will come into contact with a core group of professionals and services including GPs, Consultants, Community Psychiatric Nurses, Occupational Therapists, Social Workers and Alzheimer Scotland Dementia Advisors. As things progress you may also need the services of a number of professionals from the list below.



What carers would like to share with you

- Work as a team with the person who has dementia when dealing with professionals and services, as long as the person with dementia agrees. When you have a Power of Attorney activated you have that right, although you still need to consider the feelings and views of the person with dementia.
- Develop a good relationship with the GP, surgery staff, Community Psychiatric Nurse, Occupational Therapists and any other agencies you are dealing with.
- Don't be afraid to ask for help and guidance. The professionals want to help you too.
- Alzheimer Scotland Dementia Advisors and other carers can be very supportive and informative.
- Try to plan ahead by being aware of support you may need as dementia advances, post diagnosis link workers, Social Workers and Community Psychiatric Nurses can be of help here.

Did you know?

The following list of professionals might be able to support you –

- **Audiologist** – diagnosing, managing and treating hearing, balance and ear problems.
- **Dietician** – with eating, nutrition and hydration.
- **District nurse** – with physical health conditions such as bowel and bladder function, skin integrity. Vaccinations for the housebound.
- **Occupational Therapist** – to adapt strategies and techniques to continue with daily activities, with home-based rehabilitation, household modifications, adaptations and equipment.
- **Pharmacist** – advice on how to store and take medications.
- **Physiotherapist** – to stay strong, active and mobile.
- **Podiatrist** – to stay active by preventing, managing and correcting foot and lower limb problems.
- **Professional carers** – help with dressing, washing etc.
- **Speech therapist** – with everyday conversations and any difficulties with swallowing food and fluids.
- Some dentists, opticians, podiatrists and occupational therapists will visit the housebound.
- Find out more about Allied Health Professionals at www.alzscot.org/ahpresources.

"I was pleasantly surprised by how skilful the optician was when he tested my mother's eyesight, even though her dementia was quite advanced"

"Seeing the Occupational Therapist really helped my wife. The home-based memory rehabilitation intervention offered different strategies that helped her confidence and put the focus back on what she could do."

Top Tips for Carers

- Put in place as soon as possible a Power of Attorney and Advance Statement that truly reflects the wishes of the person with dementia – it's key for future proofing.
- As a carer you have rights protected by legislation.
- If you provide regular care you are entitled to a Carer's Assessment which will enable Social Services to offer you advice and support.
- Don't become isolated. Engage with family, friends and neighbours. Explain the situation to help them understand your feelings.
- Keep handy a list of important phone numbers such as for the GP, Social Work and, of course, Alzheimer Scotland.
- Keep a diary of appointments where you record all the support and advice available, and any action taken.
- Technology and apps can help people with dementia to live well and safely and can provide peace of mind for carers.
- Remember that before you were a carer you were the person's family, friend, partner or neighbour – that will never change, even as your caring responsibilities increase.
- Your own health and wellbeing are VITAL. Try to make time for yourself. Continue with your hobbies and sports. Accept help.

Contact Alzheimer Scotland for more help and information

Further information

This is one of a series of 'For Carers, By Carers' leaflets:

- Going for a diagnosis
- Helping someone with dementia to live well
- Working with professionals and services
- Going into hospital
- Moving into a care home
- Looking after yourself
- When problems arise
- Grief and loss

Email activevoice@alzscot.org or

Visit www.alzscot.org/ndcan for copies.

Useful contacts

Alzheimer Scotland's
National Dementia
Advisor Service
0300 373 5774

Alzheimer Scotland's
24 hour Freephone
Dementia Helpline
0808 808 3000

www.alzscot.org



About NDCAN

We are a national, member led campaigning and awareness raising group of current and former dementia carers in Scotland. Formed in 2011, we exist to make the voices of dementia carers heard and to raise awareness of the issues impacting on carers. Find out more about NDCAN and how to join us at **www.alzscot.org/ndcan**

'For Carers, By Carers' were first created in 2016 by NDCAN members, with funding from The Life Changes Trust, to share their knowledge to help other carers. In 2024 members reviewed and updated them.

NDCAN would like to thank the previous members who helped produce the original leaflets – Bernard O'Hagan, Myra Lamont, Maggie Muir, Lorna Walker and Janette Kean, and the current members who reviewed them – Joanna Boddy, Maureen Huggins, Thea Laurie and Ian Tomney.