

Building a Dementia Friendly Community

People with dementia may visit your shop, business or workplace. Sometimes they will need extra assistance to help them to use your services. Here are some simple tips that may help you to make your business a dementia friendly environment:



1

Speak clearly

Speak clearly, calmly and slowly to allow the person time to understand information. Use simple short sentences and avoid direct questions. Keep choices to a minimum and don't raise your voice. Where possible talk in a noise free, non distracting place or find a quiet corner. If the person is having difficulties finding a word, you could suggest one but be careful not to interrupt or finish the sentence for them.

2

Body language

People with dementia may find it difficult to understand the spoken word, but be quick to interpret facial expressions and body language. Smile warmly, make eye contact, make sure you are at the person's level, use a friendly tone and respect personal space.

3

Listen

Listen carefully to what the person has to say, give plenty of encouragement, and look out for other clues of what they might be trying to communicate.

4

Show respect and patience

Adapt what you are saying if the person with dementia does not understand it. Allow them time to find the words to tell you what they want. Don't rush them, go at their pace.

5

Noise

A person with dementia may have difficulty listening if there are a lot of different noises around them. Reduce unnecessary noise or move to a quieter area.

6

Lighting

Make sure the lighting is sufficient so the person with dementia can see you and everything around them clearly. Turn up the lights or move to a well-lit area.

7

Help with handling money

Counting money, calculating and handling change, recognising coins and banknotes and knowing the value of money can all be very difficult for someone with dementia. Offer to help by counting out money and giving a receipt.

- 8 Finding the way**
People with dementia may have forgotten where things are or they may not recognise everyday objects. They may need you to help them find their way around. They may not be able to follow simple directions and need you to guide them to where they want to go.
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- 9 Feeling lost**
Sometimes people with dementia may feel lost in familiar places or forget where they live. If someone is lost and distressed, offer to help by asking if their address is on something they might have in their pocket or bag. If necessary, the police can help.
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- 10 Recognising and finding things**
People with dementia may have forgotten what they came into the shop for, or they may have a list, but have problems finding the things they want. Offer to help with finding things on the list if they have one. Help them to choose the right amount of things, particularly if they seem to be buying an unusually large amount of something.
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- 11 Making choices**
While choice is good, for someone with dementia too much choice can be confusing. Ask what the person would like, e.g., a coffee, and then suggest two or three likely options. You could describe these options and remember to give a pause in between each option to allow them time to think and make a decision.
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- 12 Whose reality?**
The person may be confused and say something that does not make sense to you. Avoid making the person feel embarrassed or foolish by contradicting them. Try to find a way around the situation.
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- 13 Being predictable**
The person with dementia may be confused if things have been rearranged or by new people they meet. Try to keep things the same or offer additional assistance if things have changed. If possible, arrange for the same member of staff to support the person each time they visit your business – but bear in mind they might not remember you or what you talked about the last time you met.
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- 14 Every day can be different**
For some people living with dementia, what they are able to do fluctuates from day to day. That means how you help them may also need to change each time they visit. Look out for signs and offer help when needed.



For more information, visit our website at www.alzscot.org or call the 24 hour Freephone Dementia Helpline on **0808 808 3000**.