

Supplementary Information Sheet 3

Provide appropriate support for people affected by Dementia

People living with dementia (diagnosed or not) are not just your customers or people who join in your community events. They may be your staff, your volunteers or they may be a carer of someone with dementia.

Staff and Volunteers as Carers

It is likely even in quite a small organisation that some staff will be carers or have close family members who have dementia. This puts additional stress and pressure on them. This may include needing to attend appointments, dealing with the worries about a loved one's ability to cope and feelings of loss and guilt. These difficulties are common as the carer adjusts to their changing relationship with the family member.

It is important to review your employment policies and make sure that staff are aware of arrangements and procedures if they need to take leave in a family emergency. It is also important that your policies meet current legislative requirement in this regard.

Staff and Volunteers with memory problems

Dementia is more common in older people but it can also affect those of working age. Larger organisations employing a lot of people are likely to come across employees who have developed the early signs of dementia. It is important that there is awareness of how this is likely to affect those employees and their peers/colleagues.

There are many reasons why people get memory problems that can impact on their work. Stress, infections and depression are all more common causes of these symptoms than dementia in people pre-retirement. However, in some cases it is problems at work that first highlight a developing illness.

Whatever the reason it is important that people see a doctor. If it is dementia with the right support and treatment people can live well with the condition and often continue working for some time.

Dementia is considered a disability under the Equalities Act 2010, and so disability discrimination legislation needs to be considered if an employee tells you about having a diagnosis.

Where possible, reasonable adjustments need to be made. You might need to seek legal advice about this.

'Access to Work' via the Job Centre might be able to help with an assessment. See www.gov.uk/access-to-work for more details.

Accessibility and Encouraging new customers/members

Providing a dementia friendly environment and informed staff/volunteers that are aware of the difficulty living with dementia is important.

It is good for your organisation as well as for the community; it is also a legal obligation (Equality Act 2010) to make reasonable adjustments to make organisations accessible.

Many of the changes will make your organisation more accessible for the wider community too.

As well as removing barriers, there may be positive actions that will encourage and promote your accessible organisation to people living with dementia (those diagnosed and carers, and those with problems who have not yet sought help).

If you want to take part you can apply for recognition and use the dementia friendly logo. This logo can be used as a sign to show that you are aware of and are seeking to support people with dementia and memory problems.

In addition to this you might like to hold your own events or do your own publicity about the work you are doing. Ask DFK to get involved with press releases and supply awareness raising information for events. This lets people living with dementia and everyone else know you are keen to help.

There may be other things that can be done too.

Community groups

- Might put a line or two in the group's leaflet, and on their website; welcoming people living with dementia to all their activities and offering to provide extra support when possible.
- Might consider doing some general awareness raising - such as an article in your newsletter?
- Or run a group particularly suitable for people with memory problems, or support for carers?
- Or putting up some posters or information to raise awareness and understanding about dementia?
- Inform others about the work that the organisation is doing.

Businesses

- Might feel it helpful to produce information about how they can help.
- Develop services that will help people with memory problems.
- Or a memory prompt list appropriate to your organisation (i.e. a shopping tick list?).
- Or run some sort of event.
- May decide to put up signs or logos, to let the public know, that you are there to help people living with dementia and have this information on your website.

We know there will be creative new ideas too, let us know what you come up with, and we will see if we can help.