

Steps to Diagnosing Dementia

Early diagnosis of dementia is essential to provide access to information and treatment as well as practical support. This help can improve the quality of life of the person with dementia and their carers. Getting a rapid and reliable diagnosis gives people time to adjust to the implications and to plan ahead for future care.

However, there can be barriers to diagnosis and support. Sometimes the person affected is reluctant to seek help. This may be due to fear or stigma associated with dementia. Sometimes lack of support means that the person affected and their carer do not or cannot access help. And sometimes the signs are not even recognised by professionals, even when carers and the person with dementia know something is amiss.

In England, most people go to the GP when they are concerned about memory problems. The GP may carry out initial tests, including a short-term memory test called the Mini-Mental State Examination (MMSE). Where dementia is suspected people are then referred to a memory clinic or similar specialist service for a full assessment.

A complete assessment will include taking a thorough history of the patient, talking to the carer as well as the person with dementia. Another family member may be needed to give a clear picture of the situation. A brain scan will be done, blood tests taken and, in some cases, X-rays. Assessment for dementia always includes specific cognitive tests.

Once a diagnosis is made sources of help and support can be identified, which will enable people with dementia to live well and maintain their independence for as long as possible.

If you need any help or guidance, want to find out about other activities and services, or just need someone to talk to who understands your situation, Dementia Friendly Keighley is here for you.

You can call us on **07452 773788** between **10am and 2pm daily**, text (**SMS**) or **WhatsApp 'CALL BACK'** on the same number or leave a message outside of these hours and we will call back as soon as possible. Please note: Times and days of our activities and services are subject to change, so please call for up to date information.

