

Dementia Resource Suite for schools

Creating a dementia-friendly generation

Ideas and tools for teachers of key stages 2, 3 and 4

Based on learning by students and teachers
in 22 pioneer schools across England, 2012-2013

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‘We worked with a class of 8-9 year olds initially at the school, who had never heard of dementia.

By the end, they too had caught the vision to educate others.’

Jacquie Coles, Headteacher
Curzon CE Combined School
Penn Street, Buckinghamshire

Foreword by Norman Lamb, MP

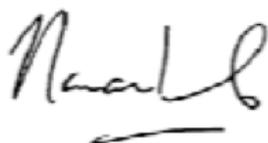
Minister of State for Care and Support

Dementia is one of the most important issues we face as our population ages. In 2015 there will be 850,000 people in the UK with dementia and numbers are expected to double in the next thirty years. With one in three people aged over 65 going on to develop dementia, it clearly is an issue that touches all of us.

In March 2012, the Prime Minister launched his Challenge on Dementia. A key part of the Prime Minister's Challenge is our work to create dementia-friendly communities across the country. In these communities people will be more aware of and understand more about dementia, people with dementia and their carers will be encouraged to seek help and support and people with dementia will feel included in their community, be more independent and have more choice and control over their lives.

Schools can play a vital role in the development of dementia-friendly communities. By educating children and young people about dementia, we can create a dementia-friendly generation – a generation that is more aware of dementia and more supportive of people with dementia in the community where they live. And just as importantly, if not more so, by talking to children and young people about dementia we can reassure them about their fears and misunderstandings and help them to relate to grandparents and other family members who may have dementia.

I do hope that you will find these resources useful and that you will go on to use them in your school.



Norman Lamb MP
Minister of State for Care and Support



Foreword by Angela Rippon, OBE

When the Prime Minister, David Cameron, set us the task of creating dementia-friendly communities I realised that in order to have a lasting impact – genuine sustainability – it was essential that we encouraged young people to become dementia aware.

That we needed to create not just dementia-friendly communities, but an entire dementia-friendly generation. Young people, who would become so familiar with the condition, that it would hold no fear or anxiety for them whenever and wherever they encountered it. They would recognise it in their grandparents, and know instinctively how to help them live well with dementia. Eventually they would take their understanding into maturity, into family life and the workplace.

So at the start of the autumn school term in 2012 we recruited 22 schools in 11 local authority areas, who were prepared to be our pioneers.

We gave each school a basic curriculum, but encouraged them to develop it in ways that inspired them. The results have been outstanding, and as you will see from this report, have produced innovative, creative projects that have given our ‘pioneers’ a level of understanding and involvement that has far outstripped anything I could have hoped for.

This evaluation of our ‘pioneers’ and the resulting study modules, are now the foundation on which we hope to build a nationwide response; encouraging every school in the country to include dementia awareness in the curriculum. Our young people hold the key to ensuring that future generations who are affected by dementia can live well with the condition.

They are the dementia-friendly generation that will make that happen.



Angela Rippon, OBE
Co-chair, Dementia Friendly Communities Champion Group



Chapter 1 Introduction

What is dementia?

By 2015 there will be 850,000 people living with dementia in the UK, with this figure predicted to reach 2 million by 2051 if no action is taken.

Although dementia mainly affects older people, it is not a natural part of ageing. Dementia describes a set of symptoms that may include memory loss and difficulties with thinking, problem-solving or language. Dementia is caused when the brain is damaged by diseases such as Alzheimer's disease or a series of strokes. It is progressive, which means that the symptoms will get worse over time.

The Dementia Resource Suite

The Dementia Resource Suite is based on tools and resources developed by students and teachers in 22 pioneer schools across England in 2012/13. The pioneer project was shaped by the work of Dr Karim Saad, a clinician who addressed dementia awareness in schools in the West Midlands region. Phase One of the project was evaluated by the Association for Dementia Studies at the University of Worcester. In 2013/14, Phase Two of the project built on the successes of Phase One with over 140 schools undertaking work.

The Dementia Resource Suite is intended for headteachers, and the subject leads at key stages 2, 3 and 4 with responsibilities across a range of subjects, including science, design and technology, and PSHE (personal, social, health and economic education) or PSHEEC (personal, social, health, economic education and citizenship).

The resource suite is currently being reviewed, if you would like to be kept up to date with the development of new resources visit alzheimers.org.uk/youngpeople or email youngpeople@alzheimers.org.uk

Why young people?

Alzheimer's Society believes that educating children and young people about dementia is essential to creating dementia-friendly communities. As the population ages and the number of people with dementia increases, more and more young people will come into contact with someone with dementia, whether this is a grandparent, parent, relative, neighbour or a member of their community. Increasing their understanding of dementia will increase their confidence when they do, helping to reduce stigma and social isolation.

As well as the positive impact on people living with dementia today, increasing young people's understanding will have long-term benefits as they approach adulthood, and become the employers, employees and carers of tomorrow. Their understanding will help people to live well with dementia.

In addition, teaching about dementia can help to educate young people about the importance of healthy lifestyle including diet, exercise and alcohol abuse. It can also be a way to teach about caring roles, ethical issues, issues of an ageing population and much more.

Dementia and the school curriculum

The Dementia Resource Suite is aimed at the providing learning opportunities as part of the non-statutory PSHE aspect of the national curriculum, but has wider opportunities for reaching into all subjects.

In key stages 3 and 4, the non-statutory programme of PSHEE brings together careers education, work-related learning, enterprise and financial capability. The curriculum should offer opportunities to:

- make real choices and decisions based on accurate information obtained through their own research using a range of sources, including the internet, other media sources and visits/visitors to and people from the wider community
- meet and work with people from the wider community both in school and through external visits
- use case studies, simulations, scenarios and drama to explore personal and social issues and have time to reflect on them in relation to their own lives and behaviour
- take part in individual and group discussion to consider personal, social and moral dilemmas and the choices and decisions relating to them; work as members of groups and teams, taking on different roles and responsibilities
- evaluate their own personal development and learning, set realistic targets and goals for future life choices and develop strategies for meeting them;
- identify sources of help and support and take responsibility for providing accurate information to others
- make links between personal well-being and work in other subjects and areas of the curriculum and out-of-school activities.

‘Deciding to include dementia as part of our PSE programme was one of the best decisions I have made.

It delivers a message on life styles that is more powerful than many other topics, because it was saying don’t smoke, don’t take drugs, don’t drink too much alcohol, don’t eat too many fatty foods, keep your mind active, take exercise, if you want to lessen your chances of dementia.

Douglas Smith
Teacher, Swanshurst School
Birmingham

There are a number of opportunities within this range for dementia to be taught as well as being a theme on which to base students' learning.

In key stage 2, the resource suite will help gain knowledge, skills and understanding in the following aspects of the [PSHE curriculum](#):

- Developing confidence and responsibility and making the most of their abilities
 - to talk and write about their opinions, and explain their views, on issues that affect themselves and society.
- Preparing to play an active role as citizens
 - to research, discuss and debate topical issues, problems and events
 - that there are different kinds of responsibilities, rights and duties at home, at school and in the community, and that these can sometimes conflict with each other
 - to reflect on spiritual, moral, social, and cultural issues, using imagination to understand other people's experiences
 - to recognise the role of voluntary, community and pressure groups.
- Developing a healthy, safer lifestyle
 - what makes a healthy lifestyle, including the benefits of exercise and healthy eating, what affects mental health, and how to make informed choices.
- Developing good relationships and respecting the differences between people
 - that their actions affect themselves and others, to care about other people's feelings and to try to see things from their points of view
 - to be aware of different types of relationship, including marriage and those between friends and families, and to develop the skills to be effective in relationships
 - to recognise and challenge stereotypes
 - where individuals, families and groups can get help and support.
- A breadth of opportunities
 - make real choices and decisions (for example, about issues affecting their health and well-being such as smoking; on the use of scarce resources; how to spend money, including pocket money and contributions to charities).
 - meet and talk with people (for example, people who contribute to society through pressure groups or aid organisations; people who work in the school and the neighbourhood, such as religious leaders, community police officers).
 - develop relationships through work and play (for example, taking part in activities with groups that have particular needs, such as children with special needs and the elderly; communicating with children in other countries by satellite, email or letters).
 - consider social and moral dilemmas that they come across in life (for example, encouraging respect and understanding between different races and dealing with harassment).
 - find information and advice (for example, through helplines; by understanding about welfare systems in society).

Chapter 2 A 10-step guide to getting started

It is important to think about the project before you start, and ensure that you have a planned approach to teaching about dementia. The following tips may help when planning your project.

1 Identify and appoint a lead teacher to run the project

We recommend either the PSHE lead or another teacher, for example science or design and technology. Where possible, time allocated to the project should be ring-fenced within the curriculum to avoid competition from other subjects and events.

When planning project timescales you should take known events into consideration to ensure opportunities for learning are taken and that planned activities are not cancelled.

Having a standing item on a full governing body meeting would be helpful if governors are involved, as well as the relevant sub-committees focusing on curriculum and community links.

2 Lead teachers should undertake a short information session on dementia such as Dementia Friends to understand more about dementia

In order to confidently teach about dementia, you need sufficient knowledge and understanding of dementia. [Dementia Friends](#) is an information session that lasts around 45 minutes, or can be accessed online. The session will give you more of an understanding of dementia – it may be worth encouraging all relevant teachers to become a Dementia Friend. For more information visit www.dementiafriends.org.uk

Dementia Friends can also be a great first lesson for young people to introduce them to dementia, and we have adapted many of the resources specifically for children – if you would like more information on delivering a Dementia Friends session in the classroom, email youngpeople@alzheimers.org.uk

At this stage, it may be helpful to have an item on the whole school staff meeting to introduce the local project and brief colleagues on your ideas and plans.

3 Teachers should be aware of those closely affected by the issue, such as young carers.

Some students may have first-hand experience of dementia or other caring responsibilities; if so signposting to a young carers support group may be appropriate, for example [YCN](#) which is part of Carers Trust www.carers.org If you need more support, Carers Trust has produced a [guide for supporting young carers in schools](#). If a student need more support and information about dementia, you may wish to signpost to the Alzheimer's Society helpline on 0300 222 1122.

4 Create a baseline for students' knowledge

Knowing where you're starting from will be essential for demonstrating progress during your local project. This will enable you to build on initial work by showing the added value learning about dementia has had. There is a starting point for evaluation in chapter 3 of this resource suite.

You may also want to think about evaluating aspects beyond students' knowledge of dementia, for example confidence in talking to new people, understanding of social issues etc. These could relate to the PSHE learning outcomes as outlined above.

5 Decide on the school focus

What kind of project are you planning – a one-off event, or a longer learning opportunity? A class-focused project, or a whole-school approach?

You may want to use dementia as a theme to explore other topics on the school curriculum (see the whole curriculum approach in chapter 9).

Students should be encouraged to take creative ownership of the project. Their ideas can add a new depth to your lesson plans and learning opportunities. Wherever possible, students should be given the opportunity to meet people living with dementia and their carers – the experience is invaluable in increasing understanding and confidence.

You should also consider whether your school would like to undertake fundraising activity to support the project, for example choosing Alzheimer's Society as charity of the year, or doing a one-off fundraising event. We've got some interesting [fundraising ideas](#) and lots of [local support](#) at alzheimers.org.uk/fundraise

6 Ask students to do internet or library research homework on dementia

Self-learning and discovery will enable students to gain an initial impression of dementia and how it is viewed in society. You should consider providing a brief for parents and carers to support children in their research, an example briefing is provided on the next page.

You may want to point them in a direction to begin with. The Alzheimer's Society website is a valuable source of information about dementia. For example this infographic provides some accessible statistics about dementia alzheimers.org.uk/infographic.

7 Gather the information children have collected to provide a springboard for further learning

It is likely that students will bring a wide array of information back to the classroom. Check [Alzheimer's Society's website](#) for the most up-to-date information, or schedule a [Dementia Friends](#) information session.

Reviewing their materials and stories may provide an opportunity for discussing different aspects of dementia, for example; how people are viewed in society, aspects of ageing, how people care for others, or what services are available for people.

8 Lead teachers should make links with key local community resources

Working in partnership with other organisations can help to ensure the sustainability of your project and utilise skills and expertise in the community. If your area has a local Dementia Action Alliance (www.dementiaaction.org.uk) this provides an excellent way to link up with other organisations, as alliances bring together organisations and individuals in the local area to improve understanding and services for people living with dementia and carers.

Other partners could include: Alzheimer's Society, local authorities, academic institutions, patient and carer groups, care homes, local industry, art and drama resources. These groups can help to support teachers, provide additional information about dementia services, and may be willing to visit class to talk to students.

9 Publicise your project

Use your school website, the local media and partner organisations to tell your community what you are doing. We would also like to know what you are doing so we can share your ideas with other schools – email youngpeople@alzheimers.org.uk

When you have completed your initial project, work with the schools in your partnership, collaboration, academy trust, or local authority area and see chapter 8 Publicising your work to find out more about sharing your learning and experience.

Secondary schools and colleges may want to consider working in partnership with feeder schools to support learning at a younger age and provide opportunities for older students to deliver teaching.

10 Evaluate your project

Use your initial baseline to check progress in learning and understanding following the project. This will provide evidence for running something the following year, or expanding the project to include others classes.

Ask students where else they can share their learning and how they may like to develop the project in future years.

‘My grandfather has dementia.

I felt very strange with him when I was told because he didn’t seem like my grandfather any more.

After these lessons I can understand what it is like for him and have been more able to talk with him and to see that he is still my grandfather.’

Aliyah, student
Swanshurst School
Birmingham

Example letter to parents and carers

Dear parents/carers

This term, Year [insert year / the whole school] will be learning about dementia as part of the [PSHE / insert other subject] curriculum.

By 2015 there will be 850,000 people living with dementia in the UK, if no action is taken it is predicted this will rise to 2 million by 2051.

We think this is a valuable opportunity to learn about issues that will affect our future generations, to increase understanding of dementia, to teach about health and well-being and to break down the stigma around dementia.

We are doing this as part of a national project run by Alzheimer's Society focusing on four themes:

- Understanding dementia
- Learning about carers
- Meeting someone with dementia
- Assistive technology

Students will be learning about the different types and causes of dementia, recognising the signs and symptoms and how people can live well with dementia through support and technology. Part of our local project will be to support young carers and students who have a family member with dementia.

If you have any concerns or comments, please let us know. Or you can visit alzheimers.org.uk/youngpeople for more information.

Yours sincerely

[Headteacher/Lead Teacher]

Chapter 3 Creating a baseline

Project planning

The Dementia Resource Suite and Alzheimer's Society provides lots of resources and signposting to support you and your school. However we believe that schools should shape their own local projects. Before you start, create your project plan to give direction and gain support for your work.

The school

- Do you already teach about dementia in the school?
- Do you have any natural links with local organisations involved with dementia?
- What will the benefits be to the school?

Teachers and staff

- What is your knowledge and experience of dementia?
- Do other staff have knowledge or experience of dementia?
- How will you manage the response to your project?

Students

- How many students are you working with?
- What will the benefits be to students?
- What are their experiences that will shape their participation in your project?
- How much do your students know already?

Your project

- Have you decided on your school focus?
- Who is leading on it?
- Where will the teacher get their support from?
- How many students are you planning to involve?
- How long will your project take?
- How will you report back and who to?
- What will be the added value of your project?
- Start and finish with a questionnaire to see what students and students have learnt during the project.

Initial questionnaire for students and student

How much do you know about dementia?		Marking
1 What is dementia? (Use your own words to describe dementia)		
2 Name as many types of dementia as you can		
1		
2		
3		
4		
3 You only get dementia if you are old. (Tick one answer)		
A True	<input type="checkbox"/>	
B False	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4 Dementia is curable. (Tick one answer)		
A True	<input type="checkbox"/>	
B False	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5 Which of these can reduce your risk of getting dementia? (Tick as many answers as you think are correct)		
A A healthy diet	<input type="checkbox"/>	
B Avoiding people with dementia	<input type="checkbox"/>	
C Exercising more	<input type="checkbox"/>	
D Drinking lots of alcohol	<input type="checkbox"/>	
6 It is possible to live well with dementia. (Tick one answer)		
A True	<input type="checkbox"/>	
B False	<input type="checkbox"/>	
7 Which of these are signs of dementia? (Tick as many answers as you think are correct)		
A Loss of memory	<input type="checkbox"/>	
B Mood changes	<input type="checkbox"/>	
C Communication problems	<input type="checkbox"/>	

How much do you know about dementia?		Marking
8 How many people have dementia in the UK? (Tick one answer)		
A 8,500	<input type="checkbox"/>	
B 85,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	
C 850,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	
D 8,500,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	
9 Most carers are paid by the government. (Tick one answer)		
A True	<input type="checkbox"/>	
B False	<input type="checkbox"/>	
10 Do you know anyone living with dementia? (there is no right or wrong answer, and your answer won't be shared with anyone)		

Model answers – information correct September 2014

The answers to the majority of these questions can be found on the Alzheimer's Society website alzheimers.org.uk The factsheet [What is dementia?](#) may be particularly helpful.

- Q1** The term 'dementia' describes a set of symptoms, which include loss of memory, mood changes, and problems with communication and reasoning
- Q2** The main types are Alzheimer's disease; vascular dementia; dementia with Lewy bodies; and fronto-temporal dementia (including Pick's disease). Other rarer forms of dementia account for around 3% of cases.
- Q3** **Answer B False:** There are around 40,000 people under 65 living with dementia in the UK. That means about one in 20 people with dementia are under 65.
- Q4** **Answer B False:** Most forms of dementia are progressive and cannot be cured, although research is continuing into drugs, vaccines and other treatments.
- Q5** **Answers A and C:** There are a number of factors that increase the risk of dementia, however the greatest risk factor is ageing. Eating a healthy diet and exercising regularly can reduce the risk of dementia. Drinking too much alcohol, smoking, and unhealthy diet and a lack of exercise all increase the risk of dementia. As dementia is not contagious avoiding people with dementia doesn't reduce your risk. Visit alzheimers.org.uk/riskfactors for more information.
- Q6** **Answer B False:** Whilst dementia is incurable people can and do live well with dementia. Many people continue to play an active part in their communities, particularly if they are supported to do so. They can enjoy social interaction with loved ones, and continue to enjoy many of the activities they did before dementia developed. Visit alzheimers.org.uk/livingwithdementia for more information.
- Q7** **Answers A, B and C:** All three are common symptoms of dementia, however just because someone demonstrates some of these symptoms doesn't mean that they have dementia. A GP will be able to undertake tests to confirm whether someone has dementia alzheimers.org.uk/diagnosis
- Q8** **Answer C 850,000:** alzheimers.org.uk/infographic
- Q9** **Answer B False:** Most carers are family members, usually spouses, who continue to look after their relative and often forsaking their own needs to do so. People living in nursing or residential homes may fund their care themselves, or receive funding through their local authority alzheimers.org.uk/caring
- Q10** This question may instigate wider debate but you may also become aware of students who might require further support or who are finding the lesson difficult. [Carers Trust](#) provides support and advice for schools to support young carers if required, and our helpline 0300 222 1122 can provide further information and support.

Chapter 4 Understanding dementia

Activities to develop an understanding of dementia

Aim: provide a basic understanding of dementia before engaging with people living with dementia, carers and professionals. Activities in this section are designed to enable students to gather information, sift and compare against known facts.

Activity 1: life history

Alzheimer's Society has a resource called [This is me](#) which lets health and social care professionals know about the needs, interests, preferences, likes and dislikes of someone with dementia. Use an adapted questionnaire to help students complete areas about an older relative or neighbour. The person may not have dementia, this activity will help to introduce the idea of ageing, and demonstrate that older people have individual interests and personalities.

Prompting questions:

- 1 Where were you born?
- 2 Where did you go to school?
- 3 What meals did you eat?
- 4 Where did you go on holiday?
- 5 What kind of house did you live in?
- 6 What did you like doing when not at school?

In the classroom ask students to compare their research and ask them:

- 1 How is the person's life different to yours?
- 2 What do you think it was like when they were your age?
- 3 In what ways might things be more difficult as we grow older?
Why might this be?
- 4 How do you think life will be different when you are their age?
- 5 How might that feel?

'It's good to learn about dementia because it will teach people not to be scared.'

Will, student
Christchurch Primary Church of England
School, Gloucestershire

Activity 2: about dementia

Ask students to do internet or library research on dementia and fill in a worksheet. A useful resource for students to explore is alzheimers.org.uk/infographic – this shows some facts about dementia in an engaging way.

- 1 What is dementia?
- 2 What causes dementia?
- 3 How many people get dementia in the UK?
- 4 Is dementia a natural part of ageing?
- 5 What help and support is out there for people living with dementia?

Activity 3: discussing dementia

Reflect back the information students have found.

- 1 Does the information conflict? Why might this be?
- 2 What are the local supports for dementia?
- 3 How do students think they could learn more?

Activity 4: Dementia Friends

Consider hosting a [Dementia Friends](http://www.dementiafriends.org.uk) session in your school. This could be for students only, or you may want to invite parents and other members of the school. This will help to ensure that everyone has the same understanding of dementia.

A Dementia Friends session is run by a volunteer called a Champion who is trained to deliver a 45 minute session to turn understanding into action. These sessions are very accessible, and there are adapted resources for young children.

Teachers could also consider becoming Dementia Friends Champions and delivering the sessions themselves. This is particularly effective if you want to run a number of sessions, or are likely to repeat the work in future years.

If you would like to request a Dementia Friends session please email youngpeople@alzheimers.org.uk
If you don't have the capacity to host a session, an online version is available at www.dementiafriends.org.uk

Activity 5: promoting awareness

Ask students to think of ways to tell others in the school about dementia, for example:

- write a short story, poem or song
- create a wall display which is visible to everyone walking down the hallway
- put on an assembly to other years/the whole school about the project.

Additional activities

Having dementia can lead to problems doing everyday activities which we take for granted. Asking students to do simple activities can help to demonstrate what this might feel like to try and cope with confusion, memory problems and difficulties with communication and word-finding.

Activity: doing an everyday task in a different way

- 1 Ask students to tie their shoe laces with the wrong hand
- 2 Draw a star on paper from its reflection in a mirror

Questions

- 1 What did students find difficult?
- 2 Why do they think it was more difficult than doing it normally?
- 3 Why is the brain getting confused?

Activity: what's missing?

Start with five objects on a table, cover them with a blanket, secretly remove one and ask students which one is missing. Gradually increase the number of objects and repeat.

Questions

- 1 Why is this activity difficult? What makes it harder?
- 2 How do you think people who have difficulty remembering things would cope with this activity?
- 3 What does our memory do? How does it help us in our lives?

Activity: make an oral shopping list

Start with one student and ask them to say 'I am going shopping to buy...', and add one item. Go around the room asking students to repeat the previous items and add one more of their own.

Questions

- 1 Why is it difficult to remember everything?
- 2 Are some items more difficult to remember than others?
- 3 Why is that?

Activity: getting the bus

You want to go shopping by bus. What are the steps you need to take to get there and back safely? Think about all steps: the time of the bus; where the stop is; how much the fare is; where do you need to get off; where are the shops; what time is the bus back; where do you catch it from; have you got your return ticket, etc.

Questions

- 1 Why is it difficult to remember everything?
- 2 Are some steps more difficult to remember than others?
- 3 What would happen if you missed out one or two steps?
- 4 How might you feel?

Activity: getting dressed

Your house is nice and warm, but you are going out on a cold day. What do you need to wear? What happens if you don't remember everything you need to put on? Do you know where you are going? How long will it take to get there?

Questions

- 1 Why is it difficult to remember everything?
- 2 What would happen if you missed out one or two pieces of clothing?
- 3 How might you feel?

Activity: the THAI game

Describe your home without using:

- The word 'the'
- Words beginning with 'H'
- The word 'and'
- Words beginning with 'I'

Do the same when describing an ice cube.

Can students think of another similar game that restricts language and communication.

Activity: feelings in a foreign country

You have been asked to go to a foreign country that you haven't been to before. You cannot speak the language and you have no idea where you are, what people are saying, how to get anywhere etc.

Questions

- 1 Why is this difficult?
- 2 How do you feel?
- 3 What would help you?

Activity: distraction and competing stimulation

Ask a student to read a book out loud, whilst wearing gloves, goggles and listening to loud music.

Questions

- 1 What was it like for the student reading?
- 2 What was it like for the students listening?

Getting people to talk about dementia more openly and helping to reduce stigma

- Ask students to find out what relatives know about dementia.
- Ask students and staff to write about dementia on luggage labels and hang them on artificial trees around the school.
- Discuss what people have written and why.

Understanding dementia resources

- Helpful information on dementia can be found at [alzheimers.org.uk](https://www.alzheimers.org.uk) including a variety of factsheets which explain different types of dementia.
- Dementia Friends provides an online information video, as well as face-to-face sessions, which help to turn understanding of dementia into action – www.dementiafriends.org.uk
- For additional information and support email youngpeople@alzheimers.org.uk

‘The children are now more confident and have a greater insight into a widespread issue affecting their lives and communities. It is so important to remove the stigma of dementia in society and achieve better community support and engagement for now and in the future, by educating children about the condition.’

Ruth Robinson, Teacher
Christchurch Primary School
Gloucestershire

Chapter 5 Learning about carers

Aim: Understand the role of carers and their importance for the health and well-being of people with dementia. Understand that carers have an equally important right to good health and support.

- Explore your own school community to identify staff or parents, who undertake a caring role and who would be prepared to discuss this with young people;
- Contact local Alzheimer's Society offices or services or your local DAA who may have links with carers who are willing to discuss their role with students. Local services and care homes may also be willing to share a professional view of caring, or provide information to assist with dementia lessons.

Activity: appreciate the difficulties of being a carer

Ask students to carry out their own research into how to look after a person living with dementia. This could be on the internet or library, or from leaflets that have been collected and brought in.

Questions

- 1 What is a carer?
- 2 What age are carers of people with dementia?
- 3 What are the main tasks a carer might face?
- 4 What might make a carer's life more difficult?
- 5 How does your life change when you become a carer?

'St John's Catholic Comprehensive School in Gravesend sent two sixth form girls to meet with us to record Mum's story. Mum had a lovely smile when relating these events... she seemed so much more animated.

As a carer, it helped me to re-engage with Mum as a person. It helped me realise that the person hadn't disappeared. The benefits of this project were immeasurable.'

Rock Sturt, carer
Gravesend, Kent

Activity: appreciate the support available for carers

Using students' research, identify themes of support (caring, financial, advice, equipment, etc.) and draw up a list of local and national supports for carers.

Questions

- 1 How could carers get hold of this support?
- 2 How do you think this support would help carers?
- 3 What difference would each type make?
- 4 What else might carers need to support themselves in supporting their relative or friend?

Activity: the work of charities

Get students to carry out their own research into any charities and agencies who support people living with dementia and their families. This could be on the internet or from leaflets that have been collected and brought in.

- 1 What fundraising activities could you and your community do?
- 2 What do you think would be helpful for carers?

Activity: How other people feel about dementia

For homework, get students to talk to or interview their parents or grandparents to find out what they know and think about dementia. Use a tool such as 'This is me' get people to think about what is important to them as an individual.

Activity: read a book about dementia, such as, It's me Grandma! It's me!

Questions

- 1 How does Vicky notice Grandma's getting forgetful?
- 2 How does Grandma's dementia affect the rest of the family?
- 3 How do they seek help?

Further information about carers

- Information about caring for someone with dementia can be found at alzheimers.org.uk/caring
- Carers Trust supports all carers, including young carers www.carers.org

Chapter 6 Meeting someone with dementia

Aim: Experience meeting someone with dementia to reinforce learning that it is possible to live well with dementia.

Several schools in the pioneer group made connections with local care homes or community and invited people into schools to talk to students. For many students it was the most exciting and interesting part of their local project. This part of the project enables students to understand that it is possible to live well with dementia.

If someone living with dementia visits your school, you should be aware of how the school environment could affect them. Think about the following:

- the time: is the school noisier at certain times of the day? Does the person have a preferred time to visit?
- reception: have people available to meet and greet them at reception
- location: identify a suitable room for meeting the students.

If the project involves producing something that will be shared with the person living with dementia, such as a life story book, arrange for extra copies to be available for other family members and always seek permission for using photographs even if the person themselves is not able to provide an answer.

Activity: invite people with dementia into school to talk to students

As part of a local history focus, ask people who have lived in the community for a long time to come in and talk about the local area when they were young and how it has changed. This could be as part of a lesson or part of an assembly.

Questions:

- 1 What was life like for the person when they were young?
- 2 What was easier? What was harder?
- 3 What has changed over time?

‘My favourite lesson was the last one where we had the chance of meeting Emerson and his wife Ruby who had dementia. She was such a nice lady and you could see how much Emerson loved her. She was a midwife and so was very intelligent and so it was very sad to see her now although you could see that she and Emerson were still happy. It was my favourite PSE lesson of the year.’

Coral, student
Swanshurst School
Birmingham

Activity: the power of music

Singing for the Brain is a service provided by Alzheimer's Society, which uses singing to bring people together in a friendly and stimulating social environment.

Singing is not only an enjoyable activity, it can also provide a way for people living with dementia, along with their carers, to express themselves and socialise with others in a fun and supportive group.

These sessions, designed around the principles of music therapy, build on preserved memory for song and music in the brain. Even when many memories are hard to retrieve, familiar melodies are more easily recalled.

For students, older songs will give an opportunity to experience aspects of life from before they were born.

Questions

- 1 What were the songs about?
- 2 Why do you think they are remembered by older people?
- 3 What songs do you think you will remember when you are older? Why?

Activity: life story books

A life story or life history book is a homemade book compiled to capture memories and stories about a person's life. Making a life history book can be an enjoyable and empowering activity for a person living with dementia, which may enable greater interaction and open up communication between someone living with dementia and their carer, family and friends. A life history book may be something that visitors can look through with a person, or it can be referred to by professionals to learn more about the person they are providing care for.

Ask students to make a life story book for an elderly relative or neighbour. Students should talk to or interview people from a different generation such as their parents or grandparents. Starting with a theme such as 'this is me' can help people to think about what is important to them as an individual and helps students to talk to older people in general.

Prompting questions:

- Where were you born?
- Where did you go to school?
- What meals did you eat?
- Where did you go on holiday?
- What kind of house did you live in?
- What did you like doing when not at school?

Include personal stories and photographs if possible.

Questions

- 1 What does the life story book say about the person?
- 2 What new things did you learn about the person, or people of the same age?
Is there anything surprising?
- 3 How would the life story book help the person? How could you use it?
- 4 How would you start a conversation and or reminiscence activity with people living with dementia?

Follow-up activity

Using the life story books create a memory board or memory box for the person.

- 1 What would go in it? Where would you get the items?
- 2 How would you use it?

Follow-up activity

Hold a tea party at school, in a care home, or local community centre to share life story books with people living with dementia. Be careful not to share confidential or sensitive information and check with the person or carer first.

Follow-up activity

Write a poem or short story about the person's life. Share the story with the class or school through assembly.

'I arranged for 30 people to come to school (10 people with dementia, 10 carers and 10 health professionals). Though this was difficult to organise it was so worthwhile, because of the impact of meeting someone with dementia.

Once set up it was the easiest lesson to deliver as the guests did the work. At the end of three lessons, I had a number of pupils telling me that it was the best lesson of the year.'

Douglas Smith, Teacher
Swanshurst School
Birmingham

Chapter 7 Assistive and digital technology

Aim: Understand how assistive technology supports people living with dementia in everyday tasks.

Assistive technology refers to any device or system, that allows an individual to perform a task that they would otherwise be unable to do, or increases the ease and safety with which the task can be performed

The advance of technology means that the internet and telecommunications can provide peace of mind for relatives, and enable people to continue living in their own home for longer. Often it's the simple piece of technology that enables independence. And what was once innovative, such as Skype, is now part of our everyday communications.

Assistive technology can:

- promote independence and autonomy, both for the person living with dementia and those around them
- help manage potential risks in and around the home
- reduce early entry into care homes and hospitals
- facilitate memory and recall
- reduce the stress on carers, improving their quality of life, and that of the person living with dementia.

Learning about assistive technology should have a kinaesthetic, 'hands on' element to enable students to experience the impact and benefit of assistive technology. Therefore, making contact with a local supplier or user of technology will be useful. Suppliers may have DVDs and demonstration equipment for schools to try out.

'We had some college students come and visit us and teach us about dementia. They showed us the different gadgets a person with dementia might have like a pill dispenser. I found this very useful and informative.'

'This project was an eye-opener for me, to realise that you don't have to be scared or nervous about dementia.'

Harriot, student
Newent Community School
Gloucestershire

Examples of assistive technology:

- 1 Reminder messages:** When a person enters or leaves their home, a personal voice recording prompts them to pick up their door keys, or lock the front door.
- 2 Clocks and calendars:** Automatic calendar clocks can be helpful for people who forget which day it is and what they should be doing.
- 3 Automatic pill dispensers:** When medication needs to be taken, the dispenser beeps and a small opening allows access to the particular pill at the right time.
- 4 Locator devices for inside the home:** Devices can be attached with a key ring or Velcro to items that are often mislaid. If a person wants to find a particular item, they press a colour-coded button on a radio transmitter and the device with the corresponding colour will beep until the item is picked up.
- 5 Reminiscence and leisure aids:** Multimedia software is available to evoke memories and stimulate conversation, by showing photographs or films, and playing music or videos that are familiar to the person. At the onset of dementia an individual box can be prepared by the person and carer to support their memory and reminiscence in the later stages.
- 6 Devices to enable safer walking:** Some people with dementia may wear or use devices that can be used to track their location if they are likely to wander and get lost.

Activity: what does assistive technology mean?

Ask students to list examples of assistive technology in their own homes or in their local community.

Questions

- 1 How do the individual examples help a person in their everyday life?
- 2 What kind of equipment and technology would help someone living with dementia?
- 3 How would it help their carer or family?

Activity: what assistive technology is available for people with dementia and their carers?

Ask students to research on the internet or in the library, examples for assistive technology designed specifically for people living with dementia.

Questions

- 1 What is available? What is each piece of equipment or technology aiming to do?
- 2 Why is this helpful?
- 3 Can you think of other equipment or technology that might be useful?
- 4 Is there a limit to the use of technology or equipment? Why?
- 5 Where would the equipment and technology come from? Who should pay for it?

Assistive and digital technology information

- Information on assistive technology can be found at [alzheimers.org.uk/assistivetechology](https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/assistivetechology)
- Alzheimer's Society have published a joint report with Tunstall Health into assistive technology for people with dementia [alzheimers.org.uk/technologycharter](https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/technologycharter)

Chapter 8 Publicising your work

The Dementia Resource Suite has been developed to encourage young people to engage with dementia, improving their understanding of health issues and reduce stigma to create a dementia-friendly generation. We encourage you to publicise your work, both inside and outside your school to help us to reach more young people.

This guide aims to help you get the most from going public about your local project. It provides some ideas and tips for letting your school and local people know what you are doing and gives practical advice on dealing with the media.

We recommend that you gain permission from people in any photos videos or other products.

Alzheimer's Society may be able to support you in publicising your work. If you would like to share a story, please email youngpeople@alzheimers.org.uk

Why share?

- 1 It spreads learning amongst students in the school.
- 2 It lets parents/ carers know what you have been doing.
- 3 It raises the school's profile and shows how it is engaging with the wider community.
- 4 It opens up the opportunity for collaboration with other schools in your partnership/academy trust/ local authority.

Tell your school

You will already have well-trodden ways of sharing work done by students across your school. These might include:

'Assemblies were an obvious and easy way of getting the message out to the whole school about the project. I put an article in our weekly bulletin to make sure that non-teaching staff were also aware.'

Amanda Martin, Teacher
Northfleet School for Girls
Gravesend, Kent

School assembly

- Put on an assembly for the whole school, and invite parents, teachers, governors, local councillors and senior managers in adult and children's services from the local council and key people involved in the project to attend.
- Record the activities you have been doing and share them in the assembly.
- Show off life story books or other products that students have made.

School newsletter

Tell parents and carers about your project via your school newsletter. Include photos and personal stories.

School website

Put information about your dementia project on your school website. Include a link to organisations such as Alzheimer's Society. Use video links to Vimeo or YouTube.

An open day

As part of open day opportunities use the learning gained through dementia teaching to demonstrate the effectiveness of your school.

Follow-up activities

Start activities such as an intergenerational choir, or tea dance to keep the connection between students and older adults. Work with your PTA, publicise the event and use it for fundraising.

Share with your school partnership, collaboration, academy trust, or local authority

Use peer-to-peer learning to share across age groups or feeder schools within your school partnership or collaboration. Write up how the project was set up and run, to inspire and motivate neighbouring schools

Connect with other local schools and organisations and do presentations on what you have learnt. This may provide an additional learning and development opportunity for students to undertake inter-school presentations.

Use social media

If your school has a twitter account or Facebook page share a story about the project on there. For social media, it is always good to include an image or link to show people what you are doing. Videos are also great on social media, and newspapers might use these too.

Tell the wider world: engaging the media

Alzheimer's Society may be able to support you in publicising your work. If you would like to share a story, please email youngpeople@alzheimers.org.uk

Radio, TV and written media welcome good news stories involving young people. Here are some tactics for getting press coverage:

- Write the news article and press release about a specific event (e.g. tea-dance, lesson where students met someone living with dementia) or a significant moment in time (e.g. start or end of project) and outline what the school is doing and why. Press releases should be about 400 words.
- Write the article for the newspaper and get good photographs to support the story. Put forward the headteacher, lead teacher or chair of governors from the school to be interviewed for a feature about the project; maybe offer an interview with some children or their parents.

- Invite a journalist to attend an assembly, or lesson so they can learn for themselves about the good work that's being done.
- Write a letter for the letters pages of the local newspaper.
- Always remember to get good photographs to support your story (remember to ask permissions).
- Be clear on the key messages that you want the media to include in the story about your school and the activities
- Be clear on who your message is aimed at – who will see, hear or read it?
- What is the context of the project the school has undertaken? Tell the story from the beginning.

Television interviews

- Take care with location: no distractions, appropriate background.
- Sit comfortably: don't lean back or forward or sit stiffly; try to relax.
- Appearance: avoid distracting jewellery, badges, half-mast ties etc.
- Use your hands but keep them low (and don't knock the microphone).
- For clips: use 'self-contained' answers that do not begin with 'yes/no'.
- Use a trigger phrase to highlight your main point e.g. 'The most important thing is...' or 'This matters because...'

Filming in schools

Before agreeing to filming or photography in the school, consider the following:

- parental permission for all students involved
- how much access you will allow, i.e. the whole school or selected classes
- who will be interviewed, i.e. lead figures, staff, students or parents
- the environment or background for any filming or interviews particularly anything you don't want in the photograph or film
- all school activities and anything out of the ordinary that may give a false impression of the school such as dress-down-day, music rehearsals or performances
- school capacity on particular days due to particular lesson structures or specialist input.

Suggested key messages:

- By 2015 there will be 850,000 people living with dementia in the UK, and this figure is predicted to rise to 2 million by 2051.
- Work is taking place in the school to raise awareness of dementia, as part of a national project run by Alzheimer's Society.
- Young people are likely to come into contact with people with dementia, whether this is parents, grandparents, neighbours or later themselves. An awareness of dementia will help to increase their confidence when this happens.
- By creating a dementia-friendly generation we can reduce stigma and improve quality of life for people with dementia.
- It is important that all age groups understand that you can live well with dementia, and understand how they can contribute to making this a reality.

Please let us know what you are doing, we may be able to help and signpost:

email youngpeople@alzheimers.org.uk

Model Press Release template

[DATE]

Contact: [Name / phone number / email]

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

[Name of school] in [village/ town/ city/ county] holds [name of event] to educate children about dementia

[Name of school] in [name of town] is holding a [name of event] to raise awareness of dementia amongst its students. The event marks the culmination of a project which has seen [enter number] of Year [enter year] children take part in [enter detail of lesson/activity].

The aim of the sessions have been to build children's confidence and insight into the condition, remove stigma and provide the opportunity for them to interact with people living with dementia.

[Enter details of the project – for example, what lessons have the sessions taken place in; what methods were used; what the outcome has been]

[Name of headteacher or other spokesperson], at [name of school] said:

“[Insert quote about the project and how much of a success it has been; why you embarked on the project; what future plans are.]”

Suggested quote:

‘With more and more people are developing dementia every day, it is likely children will experience the condition in their lifetime among their family and friends. Therefore it is imperative they become more aware of the condition.’

[Name of student or parent, year group of student], at [name of school] said:

‘[Insert quote about why they enjoyed the project and what they have learnt.]’

A number of similar projects are taking place at primary and secondary schools around the country, supported by Alzheimer's Society as part of the dementia-friendly communities programme. The programme aims to improve the lives of people with dementia and their carers through the changes everyone in the community makes from bus drivers, refuse collectors and shop owners to restaurants and big corporate companies.

By 2015 there will be 850,000 people living with dementia in the UK. This will rise to over 1 million people by 2021.

For more about the work to engage young people with dementia visit alzheimers.org.uk/youngpeople or email youngpeople@alzheimers.org.uk

For more about dementia-friendly communities, please visit alzheimers.org.uk/dementiafriendlycommunities or contact dementiafriendlycommunities@alzheimers.org.uk

– End –

Notes to editors:

[Insert contact details and information about the school]

[Insert name and contact number]

Chapter 9 Further information

Raising the bar – a whole school approach

Stoke Damerel Community College took an ambitious, whole school approach to teaching dementia in all subject areas with over 500 students from Year 7 through to Year 13. You can find out more on their website www.sdcc.net/dementia Here are some ideas for using dementia as a learning theme across the curriculum.

English

- run a creative writing competition based on life story books
- explore poem composition using dementia as a theme
- explore literature that features people living with dementia
- use the book, Elizabeth is missing by Emma Healey to explore the concept of an unreliable narrator and this technique in storytelling.

Mathematics

- design a memory card game
- use numbers about dementia to learn aspects of the maths curriculum – eg statistics using prevalence data
- think about demographics, ageing and increases in the numbers of people living with dementia.

Science

- explore the biological side of dementia, and the effects of diet and food plans
- understand how diet and exercise affect our behaviour and development
- explore how the brain works and what happens when it deteriorates
- explore issues around research, drugs, and ethical issues in science.

Information and communication technology

- create leaflets to raise awareness about dementia
- work with people in care homes to find out about reminiscence, then create ‘memory sticks’.

Physical education

- learn how exercise can help to reduce risk of illnesses such as dementia
- undertake activities with older people, such as bowling.

Geography

- use knowledge from local people about how the local community and environment has changed
- explore issues of an aging population and population demographics
- explore cultural variation looking responses to dementia in different countries.

History

- use key figures, who had dementia, to learn about the past
- use knowledge from local people about how the local community and environment has changed.

Music and drama

- hold a performance around mental health and well-being
- learn about how music can help with memory recollection
- hold a [Singing for the Brain](#) session
- form an intergenerational choir
- create and perform a play about the effects of dementia, or in which one of the key characters has dementia.

Art and design

- design an artwork indicating what the local community looked like 50–100 years ago
- design an artwork that conveys the theme of dementia
- design posters to advertise a dementia-friendly community
- explore art as a therapeutic activity for people with dementia
- create memory books or collages with people with dementia.

Design and technology

- create a short film about dementia
- design an app for carers of people living with dementia
- create an assistive technology device.

Humanities

- consider how people living with dementia may have been treated through the ages and design a modern dementia-friendly community
- look at the history of the development of services helping people living with dementia.

Modern foreign languages

- design a memory card game in different languages
- weave the theme of dementia into conversational practice, vocabulary learning and composition writing.

Citizenship

- hold a debate about dementia and the balance of choice, social freedom and state responsibility
- explore the state's responsibility in providing services verses the role of carers.

Religious education

- research and discuss how people living with dementia might be viewed by different faiths or in different cultures
- how different cultures view and support people with disability and illness generally as well as people with dementia.

Sex and relationships education

- use dementia as an example of a long-term condition, and explore how this might affect a relationship when one person gets dementia in their 40s, 50s or 60s.

Work-related learning

- explore volunteering in health and social care, or working in memory cafes
- understand the health and social care system, the pressures it faces and how it supports people living with dementia and carers
- develop fundraising activities to support people living with dementia and carers.

Thank you for your interest in delivering dementia awareness lessons in schools, helping to create a dementia-friendly generation. The ideas in this resource suite are just a starting point, and we know that there are many other fantastic activities happening across the country. If you would like more information, or to share your ideas with us please email youngpeople@alzheimers.org.uk