

Dementia Information and Support Services

for people living with dementia,
their families and carers in Belfast



Foreword

As Interim Director of Adult, Community, Older Peoples Services and Allied Health Professionals at Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, I am delighted to have this opportunity to promote this vital dementia resource, which was co-produced between Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, Dementia NI, the Alzheimer's Society and those with the lived experience of dementia and carers.

A diagnosis of dementia can be overwhelming and have a significant impact on you and those close to you. It can take time to process the diagnosis and absorb all the information that has been given. Due to the progressive nature of the condition, the information you need to support your physical, psychological and social needs, may change over time. It is important that you understand what help is available and how to access that help.

This booklet was developed with people who have experience of dementia, for those living within the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust area to provide a one-stop-shop on core dementia related information such as how to live well with dementia, how to cope with changes and how to prepare for the future. It features practical tips, activities, and resources on dementia to support you and those close to you on your journey with dementia.

I hope that you will find this booklet useful in helping you to navigate options to access the best possible care, in the right place, at the right time to meet your needs.

Remember, you are not alone in this journey.



Colin McMullan

Interim Director of Adult Community,
Older People's Services and Allied Health Professionals

For more information go to Belfast Trust website

[Dementia Resources | Belfast Health & Social Care Trust website](#)



Acknowledgements

This booklet has been co-produced with the support and knowledge of Alzheimer's Society, Dementia NI, people living with dementia, carers and staff from Belfast Trust. This has ensured people's lived experience and knowledge has been foremost in the booklet. It includes their wishes regarding information to be included and their voice, tips and experience throughout. Thank you for your commitment and personal determination to both contribute to and support this work. We would also like to thank the Public Health Agency and Belfast City Council for their support.

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Introduction to dementia and diagnosis

What is dementia?

The word 'dementia' is a term used to describe a range of symptoms that, over time, can affect how a person is able to manage day-to-day tasks.

Dementia is progressive, which means symptoms may be relatively mild at first, but they get worse over time. Each person experiences dementia in their own individual way. Different types of dementia also tend to affect people differently, especially in the early stages.

Dementia is caused by different diseases that damage the brain. The symptoms that you see or experience get worse over time and can include:

- Memory loss
- Confusion
- Concentration difficulties, leading to needing help with daily tasks
- Problems with language and understanding
- Changes in behaviour
- Problems with the ability to recognise or understand sensory information (such as hot, cold, taste, smell).

Most common types of dementia - explained

Alzheimer's disease

Alzheimer's disease is the most common cause of dementia in the UK. Common early symptoms include problems with memory, thinking, language or perception.

Vascular dementia

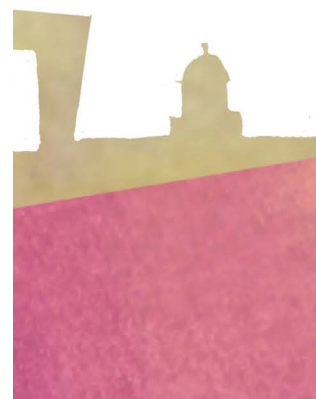
Vascular dementia is the second most common type of dementia. Common early signs include problems with planning and concentrating. This might include short periods of sudden confusion.

Dementia with Lewy bodies (DLB)

Lewy bodies dementia is a type of dementia caused by Lewy bodies, which are clumps of protein in the cells of the brain. People can experience a range of symptoms, such as memory and thinking difficulties and problems with smooth and co-ordinated movements. Their eyes can play tricks on them, and they can sometimes act out their dreams.

Frontotemporal dementia

Frontotemporal dementia is a less common type of dementia. Common early symptoms include changes to personality and behaviour and/or difficulties with language.



Mixed dementia

Mixed dementia is a condition in which a person has more than one type of dementia. The most common type of mixed dementia is Alzheimer's disease and vascular dementia. Other combinations of dementias are also possible, such as Alzheimer's disease with Lewy bodies dementia.

Young-onset dementia

When a person develops dementia before the age of 65, this is known as 'young-onset dementia'. Early symptoms are more likely to be changes in behaviour, language, vision or personality.

Rarer types of dementia

In the UK, about 1 in 20 people living with dementia have a rarer type. Rarer causes of dementia include:

- Atypical Alzheimer's disease
 - Frontal variant Alzheimer's disease (fvAD)
 - Posterior cortical atrophy (PCA)
- Cerebral Autosomal Dominant Arteriopathy with Subcortical Infarcts and Leukoencephalopathy (CADASIL)
- Corticobasal syndrome (CBS)
- Creutzfeldt–Jakob disease (CJD)
- HIV-associated neurocognitive disorder (HAND)
- Huntington's disease
- Progressive supranuclear palsy (PSP).

Mild cognitive impairment

Mild cognitive impairment (MCI) is a condition in which someone has some problems with cognition, such as memory or thinking. It is not a type of dementia, but a person with MCI is more likely to go on to develop dementia.

For additional information go to: alzheimers.org.uk

Or use the QR code below



Concerned you or a loved one may have dementia?

Know the warning signs

- Changes in personality or behaviour that are unusual for the individual
- Increased confusion or difficulty with familiar tasks
- Problems with communication or understanding
- Changes in sleep patterns or mood
- Loss of previously acquired skills
- Increased anxiety or agitation in familiar situations.

If you are noticing changes in yourself or a family member, it might be worth keeping a record of what you are noticing. eg. problems with memory, finding words or solving problems, changes in behaviour or personality or getting lost.



Signposting - See Top Tips pages 80-81 for more suggestions

Dementia Symptom Checker

If you have concerns but no diagnosis, the Dementia Symptom Checker might help.


To find out more go to

[Dementia symptoms checklist | Alzheimer's Society](#)

or ring the Alzheimer's Society support line

T: 0333 150 3456

My checklist for possible dementia symptoms



Together we are help & hope for everyone living with dementia

This checklist will help you have a conversation with a doctor or other health professional. Use it to note any difficulties you've had.

It is not intended to diagnose dementia or any other health condition. Everyone experiences dementia in their own way. This checklist includes common signs of dementia. But there can be other reasons for any changes you've noticed.

Talk to your doctor about any concerns that you've indicated on the checklist.

	Tick if affected by	Tick if impacting daily life	How long it's been happening
Memory and mental ability problems			
Memory loss – difficulty learning new information or forgetting recent events or people's names			
Struggling to find the right word			
Difficulty judging distances or mistaking reflections or patterns for other objects			
Struggling to make decisions, or making careless or risky decisions			
Losing track of time and dates			
Asking the same question over again, or repeating phrases			
Putting objects in unusual places			
Problems with daily living activities			
Struggling with tasks like paying bills, planning ahead, shopping			
Difficulty getting enough sleep			
Getting lost in familiar places			

For more information and support

For more information go to Belfast Trust website and search for dementia or go to [Dementia Resources | Belfast Health & Social Care Trust website](#)

Alzheimer's Society [Alzheimer's Society](#)

Dementia NI [People with Dementia Driving Positive Change - Dementia NI](#)

Benefits of knowing you have dementia

What people living with dementia said...

It was better knowing

Weight lifted off me

New lease of life knowing

Access to medication and support

Seek support early

- Don't wait - early intervention and support can make a significant difference
- Speak to your GP
- Healthcare settings have a legal duty to provide reasonable adjustments to support your healthcare experience – speak to your healthcare provider about what would help (ie. time / length of appointment, having someone with you)
- Include family and carers in your healthcare – they know you best and can support you in healthcare discussions
- If you have a learning disability - specialist learning disability services can provide tailored assessment and support.

Seeking a dementia diagnosis

If you are noticing changes in behaviour and think they might be related to dementia, then get help. Ask your GP for an assessment, and or a referral to Belfast Trust.

There are different referral pathways in Belfast Trust. Your GP will make the referral and decide which pathway to take. This decision depends on several factors which your GP will take into consideration and should discuss with you.

Preparing to see your GP

Bring someone with you who knows you well, who can support you and help explain about the changes you have both noticed.

Make a list of the changes you have noticed and bring it with you.

Helping you get the best from seeing your GP / healthcare professional

Ask Me Three

Using the 'Ask Me Three' guide could help you think about what you need to ask at appointments with your GP and other healthcare professionals.

Ask Me Three


UNDERSTANDING HEALTH INFORMATION



Health information can be difficult to understand at times.

Three good questions you can ask when you speak to a health professional, including pharmacist, nurse or doctor, are:

- 1 What is my main problem?
- 2 What do I need to do?
- 3 Why is it important for me to do this?



Write the answers from your health professional in the boxes below.

1. What is my main problem?

2. What do I need to do?

3. Why is it important for me to do this?

For further information contact Belfast Healthy Cities - www.belfasthealthycities.com

Hear Our Voice

Hear Our Voice, offers 10 top tips to help you think about the support you might need at appointments with your GP and other health professionals.

Hear Our Voice
10 Top Tips for Supporting People Living with Dementia in Health and Social Care Settings

HSC Health and Social Care
Personal and Public Involvement (PPI) **Involving you, improving care**
Dementia NI

Scan now to watch the "Hear Our Voice" documentary

- Treat us with common courtesy**
Treat us with respect, as valued, capable adults.
- Be aware of our details**
Don't make us repeat our story multiple times - repeating information can be exhausting.
- Maintain our confidentiality and dignity**
Privacy is important to us. Share information sensitively and consider our confidentiality.
- Use clear language**
Give us time when explaining any interventions or procedures, it helps us to participate.
- Give us time**
We need more time to process than you. Allow us to respond before moving on.
- Notes help us to remember**
Provide written information using jargon-free language to help us understand.
- Environment may affect us more than you**
Provide a calming environment and activities that meet our personal needs.
- Don't make assumptions about us**
Don't presume what we want, feel or need - speak with us directly.
- Don't make assumptions about our capacity**
We may not have capacity to make every decision, but there will be some decisions we can still make.
- Provide a support person**
Having a designated support person can make a huge difference to our healthcare experience.

For more information go to Dementia NI website

[People with Dementia Driving Positive Change - Dementia NI](#)

Email: info@dementiani.org

T: 028 9693 1555

Getting a diagnosis - Belfast Trust dementia assessment pathways and services

Access to a dementia assessment pathway is generally via your GP. This also includes private assessment and diagnosis. If you decide to get your assessment privately, please check with the Trust that any private diagnosis will be accepted by the Trust, to ensure the continuation of your care.

Pathway 1

If you have memory concerns or the onset of symptoms your GP might refer you to the Memory Clinic.

The Memory Clinic

The Memory Clinic is a specialist service where people with memory loss can go to be assessed and diagnosed. It is a consultant geriatrician-led service.

The specialist team will investigate the cause of the memory loss and other symptoms and give advice on treatment options and support available. One of the specialist team will ask questions about your medical history and your personal, social and work life. They will listen to your concerns to help them build up an accurate picture of what has been happening.

A series of cognitive assessments will be carried out, these will include memory, mental health and day-to-day activities.

Other investigations may include:

- Brain scans
- Blood tests
- ECG (tracing of the heart rhythm)
- Spinal fluid samples.

Other services provided are:

- Dementia research opportunities
- Brain Health Clinics
- Memory Rehabilitation Programme.

It is recommended that you bring someone who knows you well to the clinic appointment. Please also bring hearing aids and glasses with you.

The Memory Clinics are located at The Frailty Assessment Units:

- Musgrave Park Hospital
- Belfast City Hospital Outpatients Department, Wing E

How to access the service

Referral: GP only

How to contact this service: T: 028 9504 8231



Home-based Memory Rehabilitation

Home-based Memory Rehabilitation is a programme that is delivered by an occupational therapist advanced practitioner who works within the geriatrician-led memory clinic. It is a customised and individualised occupational therapy programme (four or more sessions delivered in your own home). It aims to support people with memory changes to identify and use 'self-management' strategies in daily routines to maximise independence.

The aim of the programme is to teach techniques and strategies to help compensate for everyday memory difficulties.

How to access this service

Only via memory clinic consultant or specialist nurse

Pathway 2

If your GP identifies more signs and symptoms of dementia, you might be referred to psychiatry of old age for further investigations and diagnosis.

Psychiatry of old age

This team offers a service from a range of different professions, providing a joined-up health and social care assessment. The team is made up of the following disciplines:

- Consultant psychiatrist
- Associate specialist
- Community psychiatric nurse (CPN)
- Social worker (SW)
- Psychologist
- Occupational therapist (OT)
- Support worker.

The service is also offered to carers (who live in Belfast Trust catchment area) of people with dementia or functional mental illness who require symptom-specific information, advice and support.

Old age psychiatrists are medically qualified doctors that look after older people with mental health problems and/or memory difficulties. You may see a doctor who is a permanent member of staff (consultant/ associate specialist/ specialty doctor) or a doctor in specialist training, however you will have a named consultant who will be responsible for your care overall.

Your first appointment will usually last about an hour. The doctor will take a history, which involves asking you questions about the problems you or your family have noticed. The doctor may perform a memory test. This is a set of questions that involves some reading and writing and helps to identify any problems that you may be having with your memory. The doctor will usually want to see you alone and then speak to a friend or relative separately with your agreement.

The psychiatrist may not be able to give you a diagnosis at your first appointment, but will be able to talk over the treatment possibilities with you. In some cases, the doctor may suggest further investigations as an outpatient. The doctor may refer you to the Community Mental Health Team

for Older People for more help or advice.

How to access this service

Referral: GP only

The Community Mental Health Team for Older People (CMHTOP)

The Community Mental Health Team for Older People (CMHTOP) is a multidisciplinary team. It is made up of different professionals, such as nurses, social workers, occupational therapists, community psychiatric nurses, designated adult protection officers, psychologists and support workers. The team is based in Graham House in Knockbracken Healthcare Park.

The purpose of the team is to provide a short-term assessment, intervention, education, advice and support to people over the age of 65 who are experiencing a mental illness. They can provide this intervention to other people (below 65 years) if a need is identified, and there are concerns about dementia and behaviours relating to dementia. They also provide specialist education advice and support for carer's, which can include a carers assessment.

How to access the service

Referral: adults under 65 years should contact their GP

Referral: adults over 65 years can self-refer or their GP / other professionals can refer T: 028 9504 0346 (Mon - Fri, 9am-5pm)

Crisis support

If the person you are caring for experiences a sudden decline in their dementia symptoms or their behaviour suddenly becomes more difficult to manage, including if they may harm themselves or others, please seek immediate support. Contact:

- 1 Their registered GP Practice (Mon - Fri within surgery opening hours)
- 2 GP Out of Hours (weekdays from 6pm and anytime bank holidays / weekends)
 - North and West Belfast: **T: 028 9074 4447**
 - South and East Belfast: **T: 028 9079 6220**
- 3 Community Mental Health Team Older People - Duty Officer (Mon - Fri, 9am - 5pm) **T: 028 9504 0346**



The Dementia Behaviour Outreach Service (DOS)

The Dementia Behaviour Outreach Service (DOS) is a specialist service that assesses and manages complex behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia. They work across inpatient services in Valencia Ward at Knockbracken Healthcare Park, and Carer Homes in the community. The team consists of consultant psychiatrist, specialist dementia nurse, specialist speech and language therapist, specialist occupational therapist and psychologist.

How to access the service

Referral: consultant to consultant only

Dementia outreach team - occupational therapy

The role of occupational therapy (OT) in dementia care is to enable individuals to maintain their routines, independence and identity by adapting activities and environments to match their strengths and needs. OTs are person-centred and focus on meaningful activities to improve quality of life and support carers. This applies across all stages of a person's dementia journey.

How to access the service

Referral: consultant to consultant only

The Trust also provides care in statutory residential care and supported housing accommodation across Belfast for people with dementia, for more details see information later in booklet (page 62-63).

Dementia and learning disabilities: understanding increased risk

People with learning disabilities face a significantly higher risk of developing dementia compared to the general population. People with Down's Syndrome face particularly elevated risk due to genetic factors, as well as living to an age where they are likely to develop and exhibit dementia-type behaviours.

Early detection

Traditional dementia screening tools may not be suitable and may make early detection challenging.

Communication barriers

People with learning disabilities may struggle to express concerns about memory or cognitive changes, requiring careful observation by those who know them well.

Baseline cognitive function

Changes may be subtle and require specialist assessment.

Healthcare access

May require reasonable adjustments to aid assessment.

A CARER'S STORY

Caring for my sister:

a journey through learning disability and dementia

My sister Kate (not her real name) was always a vibrant and independent woman. She has Down's Syndrome and a learning disability, but that never defined her. Kate worked as a cleaner, loved cycling, swimming and going out on trips.

I first started noticing changes when Kate was 57. She began forgetting where things were and forget what she was doing. The GP arranged blood tests and referred her to the Community Learning Disability Team. Over time Kate lost interest in previously enjoyed activities and struggled with sequencing tasks, mobility, communication, cognition, and her daily activities. Eventually Kate received a formal diagnosis of dementia from a learning disability consultant psychiatrist.

Soon afterwards, she moved to a nursing home for specialist care. I shared her communication passport - created with the speech and language therapist - and photos of her favourite activities, which helped the nursing home team connect with her and build routines that were meaningful. The nursing home has experience with young-onset dementia in people with learning disabilities. Knowing she is safe and well cared for has been a huge relief for our family. Even with all these changes, her personality still shines through - bubbly, curious, and full of love. This is who Kate has always been.

Caring for a loved one with both a learning disability and dementia is a complex journey, full of grief, love, learning, and resilience.

Resources to help explain dementia for children and young people

Changes in a loved one might be confusing for young children to understand and explaining dementia to children and young people can be challenging. These resources may help you explain the changes they may see and experience with a family member.



Alzheimer's Society's website has a list of books aimed at younger children (aged 4-10):

[Books that help younger children to understand dementia | Alzheimer's Society](#)

Alzheimer's Society's website has information about supporting children and young people when a person has dementia, and includes other useful organisations and videos/interactive content

[factsheet Children and Young People](#)



Dementia Connected (children and young peoples' website run by Alzheimer's Research UK) - Website aimed at children and younger people offering interactive age-appropriate information about dementia for young children, juniors and teens

<https://www.alzheimersresearchuk.org/kids/juniors/>

Alzheimer's Research UK have Dementia Explained for children and teens

<https://www.alzheimersresearchuk.org/kids/dementia-explained/>

'The Milk's in the Oven' a booklet about dementia for children and young people by Lizi Hahn Mental Health Foundation

[The Milk's In The Oven: A booklet about dementia for children and young people | Mental Health Foundation](#)



The Dementia Game - a free web based game designed to raise awareness about dementia for children

[The Dementia Game - Dementia NI](#)

Getting support

You may not know what you need or what is available to support you. Think about:

- Practical support (from family and friends, community and your Health Trust)
- Social support
- Financial support (benefits)
- Mediation support
- Contact details of people who may be able to help and support in the future
- Community, voluntary sector and charities.

In Belfast Trust, people over the age of 65 years who have concerns about memory loss or have a diagnosis of dementia can get support from a number of different professionals. They provide assessment, education, advice and support. These might include:

- Dementia navigator
- Carer support worker
- Social work support.

Dementia navigator service

The Belfast Trust dementia navigator is a useful first port of call if you have just received or are waiting for a diagnosis. They provide a single point of contact for people who have received a diagnosis of dementia and their carers/family.

Pre-diagnostic information such as emotional and practical support can also be given to those with an appointment for a memory assessment. Their role is to help people navigate the right services and support. They can provide information about dementia and signpost you to Belfast Trust and community support services.

How to access the service

Referral: self-refer, or your family, GP or other professional can make the referral

T: 028 9590 1407 Email: info@ccchub.co.uk



Health professionals and services who can support you

All these professionals and services are available in Belfast Trust and are free of charge. However, you may not need their input straight away. Their roles and when you might need them are described here.

District nurse

District nurses provide a nursing role in the community 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The service is available to adults who have an assessed healthcare need and are unable to leave their own home or have a nursing need which makes a home visit more appropriate. The service provides a range of treatments to support people with acute, chronic or complex conditions, including end of life care. District nurses work in partnership with patients, families, carers, GPs and other health and social care professionals.

Key worker role

When caring for people with dementia, they also have a key worker role. This means they coordinate your care with your GP and other services. This is to ensure you are getting the right care, from the right people at the right time.

How to access the service

Referral: self-refer, or your family, GP or a healthcare professional can make a referral

North and West Belfast call management centre T: 028 9615 8100

South and East Belfast call management centre T: 028 9615 8200

Continence service

This service provides assessment, treatment and support for people who have bladder or bowel problems. The service also provides support to carers and families.

How to access the service

Referral: self-refer, or your family, GP can make a referral.

North and West Belfast call management centre T: 028 9615 8100

South and East Belfast call management centre T: 028 9615 8200

Social worker

Social workers work alongside you and your family to support your wishes, build on your strengths and assess your need for care arrangements and support. The social worker will provide information and advice on various care options and assist you to make plans for your future care.

Community social work teams for older people will accept referrals where the person diagnosed with dementia is under 65 years of age. If you are already known to an older people's community social worker, you will remain with that team. They will continue to offer care and support and may involve other services if needed.

How to access the service

Referral: self-refer, or your family, GP or other professionals can make a referral.

North and West Belfast call management centre T: 028 9615 8100

South and East Belfast call management centre T: 028 9615 8200

Sensory support service

The sensory support service provides support to adults aged 18+ who:

- Have a hearing loss (D/deaf or hard of hearing)
- Have a sight loss (blind or partially sighted)
- Have both sight and hearing loss (Deafblind)
- Are affected by tinnitus and other sensory conditions.

Social workers and rehabilitation workers from this team will help you to find and to use equipment to maintain your independence.

The team can also offer advice and emotional and practical support to family carers, or help you to access other services and clinics, or information in alternative formats.

How to access the service

Referral: self-refer, or your family, GP, optician, audiologist or other healthcare professional, voluntary organisations or support workers.

Referrals can be made directly to the team

T: 028 9504 0200

SMS text, WhatsApp message or video call: T: 07738 883116

Email: sensorysupport@belfasttrust.hscni.net



Allied Health Professionals (AHPs) - their roles explained

Allied health professionals include a range of health professionals, who work in hospitals and the community, to support your healthcare needs.

For more information go to

<https://belfasttrust.hscni.net/service/allied-health-professions/>

Occupational therapy

Community occupational therapists assess a person's ability to carry out their normal occupations and activities, including personal care and household tasks, in their own environments. They enable people with permanent disabilities to be as independent and as safe as possible in their own home and to promote quality of life. This also supports carers to continue in their caring role.



How to access the service

Referral: self-refer, or your family, or GP can make a referral

North and West Belfast call management centre T: 028 9615 8100

South and East Belfast call management centre T: 028 9615 8200

Equipment returns

If you have equipment provided to you by the Trust which you no longer need and would like to return it, please contact **T: 028 9536 1414**

Physiotherapy

Physiotherapists help people improve their movement, function and wellbeing after illness, injury or due to a disability, so they can be as active and independent as possible through physical rehabilitation, injury prevention, health and fitness.



How to access the service

Referral: only GP, consultant or other healthcare professional

Musculoskeletal physiotherapy service

The musculoskeletal physiotherapy service provides assessment and treatment for muscle and joint strains, back and neck pain.



How to access the service

Referral: self-refer by using the online form on the Trust website

[Musculoskeletal \(MSK\) physiotherapy outpatients | Belfast Health & Social Care Trust website](#) or the MyCare app

Podiatry

Podiatrists assess, diagnose and treat people with problems that affect their feet, ankles and lower limbs. They manage foot-related problems for patients with the following conditions: diabetes, vascular disease, cancer, arthritis / joint pain, kidney disease and mechanical foot problems.



How to access the service

Referral: self-refer, or your family, or GP can refer you

North and West Belfast call management centre T: 028 9615 8100

South and East Belfast call management centre T: 028 9615 8200

Personal foot care

Belfast Trust podiatry does not provide personal foot care - please visit our website for more information. Search for: Your Feet Your Health on the Belfast Health & Social Care Trust website or [Your Feet Your Health | Search Results | Belfast Health & Social Care Trust website](#)

Speech and language therapy

Speech and language therapists help adults who have difficulties with speech, language and communication, eating, drinking or swallowing.



How to access the service

Referral: self-refer, or your family, or GP can refer you

North and West Belfast call management centre T: 028 9615 8100

South and East Belfast call management centre T: 028 9615 8200

Dietitian

Dietitians are specialists in nutrition for health and wellbeing. Clinical dietitians support people who, due to illness and/or long-term conditions, require specialist practical guidance on diet, nutritional health and lifestyle.

How to access the service

Referral: GPs, other healthcare professionals or hospital dietitians

Public health dietitians

The public health dietitians deliver education programmes to improve cooking skills, healthy eating and food labelling. Contact your local community group for more details of public health programmes in your area (see contact details throughout this booklet). There are free online information and recipe videos available (search public health dietitians on YouTube).

Other services in Belfast Trust

Community falls prevention and management service

This service aims to reduce the risk of falling for older adults living in the community.

People are seen by this service if they have fallen or have a fear of falling that restricts their everyday activities. The service provides assessments and interventions by healthcare professionals, for people who have been identified as being at risk of falling.



How to access the service

Referrals: only the Ambulance Service, GP or other health professional can refer you for a falls assessment

Exercise programme

The Community Falls Prevention and Management Service offers 12-week class-based group exercise programmes aimed at improving your strength and balance.

How to access the exercise programme

Referrals: self-refer by either

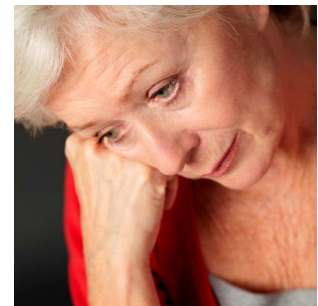
T: 028 9504 7656 or Email: FallsServices@belfasttrust.hscni.net



Adult safeguarding

Adult safeguarding means helping adults to be safe from abuse and neglect. Abuse is when someone does or says something to cause harm (eg. physically, financially, sexually or psychologically). Neglect is someone deliberately withholding, or failing to provide, the care and support needed by another adult. Abuse and neglect are always wrong. If someone has abused or neglected you, or someone you know, tell the Trust:

- We will listen to your concerns and take them seriously
- We will respond to your concerns without delay
- We will take steps to reduce harm.



If there is immediate danger, which requires a police response, T: 999

How to access the services

Contact: Adult Protection Gateway Team

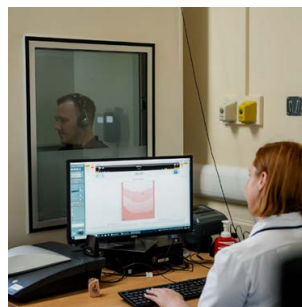
Monday to Friday 9am-5pm, excluding public holidays T: 028 9504 1744

Regional Emergency Social Work Service Evenings, weekends, and public holidays

T: 0800 197 9995

Audiology

Audiologists assess, diagnose and provide treatment and rehabilitation options for people with hearing loss. Visiting an audiologist will involve a physical examination of your ears, some questions about your health and lifestyle, and a hearing test. Solutions to help you hear better can be a combination of advice about communication, hearing technology and other assistive listening devices.



How to access the services

Referrals: You should first mention any concerns about your hearing to your GP. They can ensure your ears are healthy and you have no wax blocking your ears. The GP and other healthcare professionals can refer you to an NHS audiology service

Hearing loss

People who develop hearing problems during mid-life (aged 40–65) have an increased risk of developing dementia. To reduce the risk of dementia, it's important to get your hearing tested. There is some evidence that using hearing aids may reduce risk of some aspects of cognitive decline. Remember that hearing loss is only a risk factor and does not mean that a person with hearing loss will develop dementia.

For more information go to: [Hearing loss and the risk of dementia | Alzheimer's Society](#)



Signposting – Royal National Institute for Deaf People in Northern Ireland

Supporting people in Northern Ireland who are Deaf, have hearing loss or tinnitus.

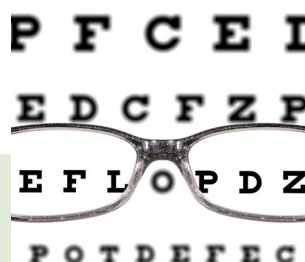
They work in communities across the country to provide information and support services. For more information go to: [RNID - National hearing loss charity](#)

Ophthalmology

Ophthalmology services include the assessment, diagnosis and treatment of a range of diseases that affect the eye.

How to access the services

Referral: can only be made by your optician or GP



Eye Casualty, located in the Royal Victoria Hospital, provides a service for patients who require emergency or urgent eye care.

How to access the services

Referral: GP or optician only



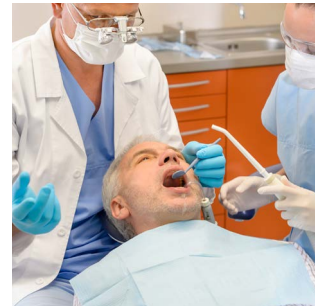
Signposting – Royal National Institute of Blind People in Northern Ireland

The Royal National Institute of Blind People in Northern Ireland support people affected by sight loss. For more information go to: [RNIB | Homepage of the Royal National Institute of Blind People](#)

Dental care

Belfast Trust provides dental care in Wellbeing and Treatment Centres for adults:

- With learning and physical disabilities
- With a serious medical condition
- With a mental health condition
- Who are housebound
- Who are in residential care.



How to access the services

Referral: can only be made by GP, your own dentist or other health professional

Frailty Assessment Unit (FAU)

The Frailty Assessment Unit is an outpatient unit based in Musgrave Park Hospital. The unit is a team of nurses, medical staff, physiotherapists and occupational therapists. The aim of FAU is to enable the older person to remain as independent as possible for as long as possible. FAU also offers a range of services including a falls and frailty assessment, along with other clinics including memory, geriatrician, neurology and psychiatry of old age as well as procedures such as lumbar punctures, blood transfusions and 24 hour blood pressure monitoring.



How to access the service

Referral: GPs only

Support in the community

Alzheimer's Society

Alzheimer's Society fund dementia research, support people living with dementia and campaign for change. For support and information, call the Northern Ireland team on



T: 028 9066 4100 or Alzheimer's Society **T: 0333 150 3456**

Email: nir@alzheimers.org.uk

Alzheimer's Society - dementia support

Local dementia advisers provide advice, support and practical guidance for the next steps as people navigate what it is like to live with dementia. Information and support can be provided by phone, email, post, online or through face-to-face visits for people with dementia, carers and families. For more information go to: belfast@alzheimers.org.uk or alzheimers.org.uk

Information about our Carer Information and Support Programme, Advocacy and Singing for the Brain, are included later in this booklet.

How to access the service

Referral: self-refer, or your family, or other professional can refer

T: 028 9066 4100

Email: belfast@alzheimers.org.uk

Alzheimer's Society - dementia support forum

This is an online community where anyone who is affected by dementia can receive valuable help through shared experience and peer support. It's free, open day or night, and is accessible online. On the dementia support forum, you can ask for advice, read other people's stories, offload your concerns about dementia and share helpful information. For more information go to: forum.alzheimers.org.uk

Email: DementiaSupportForum@alzheimers.org.uk

Alzheimer's Society - dementia support line

The Alzheimer's Society dementia support line team offers personalised information, support and advice for anyone affected by dementia. Support is available seven days a week and calls are charged at a local rate. For callers who do not have English as their language of choice, we can arrange a simultaneous language translation service.

How to access the service

Referral: self-refer T: 0333 150 3456

If you have speech or hearing difficulties and have a text phone or an adapted computer, you can use Text Relay to call our English-speaking dementia support line on **T: 18001 0300 222 1122**

Dementia NI

Dementia NI is a unique member-led charity, formed in 2015 by five individuals with a diagnosis of dementia. It is a local organisation dedicated to empowering people with a diagnosis to live well and drive positive change in dementia services and policy.



Dementia NI operates its network of empowerment groups across Northern Ireland, in all Health Trust areas. They provide a place for members, who all have a diagnosis of dementia, to come together, share experiences, and provide vital peer support to each other. People can either refer themselves or have a friend, family member or health professional refer on their behalf.

How to access the service

T: 028 9693 1555

Email: info@dementiani.org

W: www.dementiani.org

Dementia NI - In the same boat

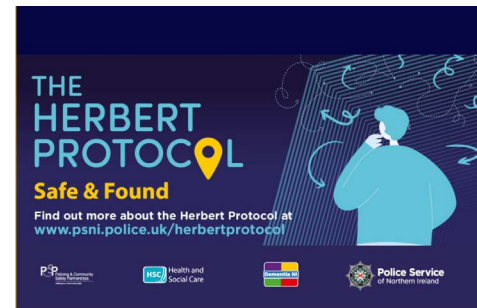
Provides support and advice to people who have recently received a dementia diagnosis. It is a service provided by Dementia NI members who have been through similar experiences and can share their knowledge with you. This is not an advice line, but it is an opportunity to speak with someone else who is living with dementia.

For more information go to: [In the Same Boat Service - Dementia NI](#)

Signposting - Herbert Protocol



The Herbert Protocol is a national scheme that encourages carers, family and friends to put together useful information, which can then be used in the event of a vulnerable person going missing. Once completed keep it safe and/or give a copy to a family member, friend and your local police station.



To get a copy go to <https://www.dementiani.org/campaigns/herbert-protocol> and search for Herbert Protocol or ask at your local police station.

Admiral nurse

Based in the UK working with Dementia UK, admiral nurses provide a telephone support service in Northern Ireland. The admiral nurses cover a wide range of topics, including:

- Concerns about memory (pre-diagnosis)
- Information, advice and support for family carers, on symptom management
- Social care information
- Support and advice
- Legal issues
- Finances and your rights

- End of life and grief support.

How to access the service

Open Monday - Friday, 9am - 9pm

Weekends and Bank Holidays 9am - 5pm

T: 0800 888 6678

Email: helpline@dementiauk.org

For more information go to - [How we can support you - Dementia UK](#) or search for The Royal British Legion Admiral Nurse service.

Age NI

Age NI is a charity dedicated to helping everyone make the most of later life. They provide companionship, advice and support for older people who need it most.



How to access the service

T: 028 9024 5729

Email: info@ageni.org

Age NI First Connect Service

The First Connect Service offers dedicated emotional and practical support at difficult times in an individual's life, situations which are often triggered by feeling the loss of independence or sudden unexpected changes in important relationships.

They tailor support for each individual's needs. The person might be isolated and need practical or emotional support. They support them to check they have the full benefits and pensions they are entitled to. They will also look at any support an individual might need with transport, safety and security.

How to access the service

Freephone T: 0808 808 7575

Privately funded support

You may decide to have privately funded support. Please check with the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) regarding standards of care. For more information go to [Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority - Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority – Health & Social Care Services Northern Ireland](#)

Support for carers

If you are regularly providing support and care for a family member or close friend who is unwell, frail, living with a disability or a mental health condition, you are a carer. This could be a child, adult or an older person.

If you identify yourself as a carer getting help to support you, might be beneficial.

Carers have said:

The carers group helps remind me that this is just one role in my life and not who I am

My chosen activities in the carers group help me relax and provide a distraction from worries about my loved one for a while

It is good to meet other people going through the same or similar thing. I feel less alone

Belfast Trust Carer Support Service

Belfast Trust Carer Support Service recognises and values what carers do. It provides support to adult carers, unpaid or family carers. Some of the ways we can support you:

- Meet other carers at our carer café support groups
- Find out about your right to a carers assessment
- Provide regular information when you join our carers register
- Signposting to relevant support
- Health, wellbeing and information courses
- Hello carers activity programme
- Carer counselling
- Complementary therapies
- Listening ear.



How to access the service

Referral: self-refer, GP or a Belfast Trust health professional can refer you

T: 028 9504 2126

Email: CarerSuppSvc@belfasttrust.hscni.net

Young carers

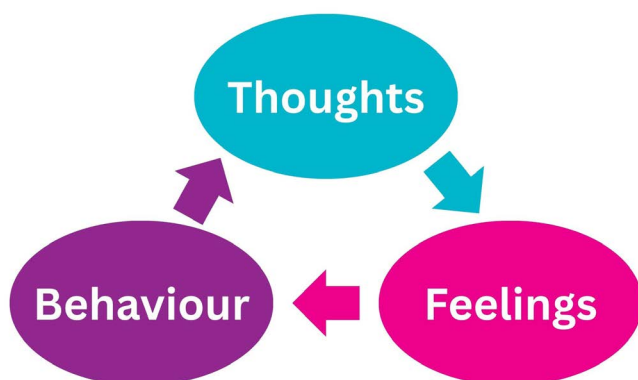
If you are a young carer (under 18) ask your keyworker for a Young Carers Assessment. If a key worker is not involved, the young carer can contact the Carer Service to make the referral.

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) for carers

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) is an evidence-based approach used to help people understand how their thoughts, feelings and behaviour are linked. Carers of people with dementia may experience feelings of stress from time to time. This support group is structured using CBT techniques to provide emotional and psychological support, helping you cope with the stress, anxiety and emotional challenges that can arise from caregiving. The group is for any adult caring for someone with a diagnosis of dementia.

What the group covers

- Managing negative thoughts and emotions
- Developing coping strategies
- Reducing caregiver burnout
- Enhancing problem-solving skills
- Improving self-care and wellbeing
- Improving mental resilience.



Providing a supportive space to share experiences, the CBT for carers group is an 8 week programme delivered in 2 hour weekly sessions by a BABCP accredited specialist memory nurse from the memory service. If interested in attending this carers group, register your interest.

T: 028 9504 8231 or 07522 215923

(you may need to leave your name and number for a call back)

Email: memoryservice@belfasttrust.hscni.net

Or, complete the online form by scanning QR Code below.



As a carer it is important you make sure you are looking after yourself.

What carers have said:

Sometimes the person who cares needs someone to care for them

Carers can do anything but not everything

You can't pour from an empty cup. Take care of yourself first

Online mental health support / guides

If you feel you need more support with your mental health and wellbeing the Belfast Trust has created accessible online guides which you might find helpful.

For more information scan the QR code below or go to:

<https://selfhelp.cntw.nhs.uk/organisation/belfast-health-and-social-care-trust>



Carer Information and Support Programme (CRiSP)

CRiSP is a programme delivered by Alzheimer's Society. It aims to improve the knowledge, skills and understanding of people caring for someone with dementia by providing support and up-to-date and relevant information. Delivered over 2 weeks, topics include: understanding dementia, providing support and care, legal and financial matters and coping day to day.

For more information go to: crispbelfast@alzheimers.org.uk

T: 028 9066 4100

tide ... together in dementia everyday

tide offer an online support service for carers / former carers, this includes:

- Carers coffee mornings
- Young onset dementia carers groups
- Former carers group
- Male carers group etc.
- Training.



For more information please go to their website: tide.uk.net

People refer themselves as they have to register to join the online groups.

Email: carers@tidecarers.org.uk

Carers NI (part of Carers UK)

Can provide information online regarding: financial advice, practical support, work and careers, health and wellbeing, helpful guides, tools and resources, technology and equipment.

T: 028 9043 9843

Email: info@carersni.org; advice@carersni.org

Online Carers UK / NI

Online Carers UK provide an online cuppa and chat for carers. For more information

T: 028 9043 9843

Email: info@carers.org

Counselling support services for carers

If you feel you would benefit from engaging with a counsellor, please contact your GP for further advice and support.

Belfast Trust Carer Support Service offers carers counselling and listening ear service.

British association of counsellors and psychotherapy

The British Association of Counsellors and Psychotherapy hold a registered list of counsellors.

For more information go to: [British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy](#)

Advocacy services

An advocate is someone who can help you to express your views and needs, ensuring that you are heard and treated fairly. This can be by:

- Making sure you understand things
- Having things explained to you in a way that makes sense
- Having your wishes heard.

Alzheimer's Society – advocacy service

Alzheimer's Society advocates use their expertise to empower people with dementia to make informed choices and decisions, understand their rights and express their views. They can represent and speak on behalf of someone with dementia if they can't do so themselves. For more information go to: advocacyni@alzheimers.org.uk

How to access the service

Referral: Self-referral or other professional can refer

T: 028 9066 4100

Email: advocacyni@alzheimers.org.uk

Patient and Client Council (PCC) in Northern Ireland

The Patient and Client Council (PCC) in Northern Ireland provides advocacy and support for individuals navigating health and social care services. They offer guidance, information and assistance to help people resolve issues and concerns related to their care. The PCC acts as an independent voice, working to ensure patient and client perspectives are heard and considered in the design and delivery of health and social care.

How to access the service

T: 0800 917 0222

Complete online contact form

Email: info@pcc-ni.net

Commissioner for older people - advocacy and legal support

If you are aged over 60 and living in Northern Ireland, the advocacy and legal support team may be able to help you. Some of the issues they can support you with are:

- Health and Social Care Trust unresolved complaint
- Public Authority unresolved complaint
- Safeguarding and protection ie. investigations into allegations of abuse
- Attend meetings with you or on your behalf
- Writing letters or making calls on your behalf.

For more information go to:

[Advocacy and legal | Commissioner for Older People for Northern Ireland](#)

T: 028 9089 0892

Healthy active ageing - promoting health and wellbeing

Staying active is important as we age, but especially if you have a dementia diagnosis and want to stay active and engaged for as long as possible. Healthy and active ageing involves maintaining physical, mental, and social wellbeing and focuses on the importance of lifestyle choices and preventive measures.

My name is Allison. I was diagnosed when I was 56. Following my diagnosis, I got a visit from the Dementia Navigator, they referred me to Dementia NI. At first, I genuinely thought my life was over but after attending my first Dementia NI group I was given hope and saw that I could still very much live and remain involved in things that mattered to me. Life wasn't over!

Meet Allison

My name is Anna. I was diagnosed with dementia when I was 65. Since my diagnosis I have continued to live almost the same life as before my diagnosis. I still travel independently, get involved in groups and go on holiday with friends and family. I found that having dementia doesn't mean you cannot still live a good life.

Meet Anna

Recognising stress and taking care of your own health

As someone living with dementia it is important that you continue to engage in all your usual daily activities, such as making meals, gardening, shopping and socialising. There are healthcare professionals within Belfast Trust who can help with signposting or advice, such as a dementia navigator, a social worker or occupational therapist (more information can be found within this booklet).



Five ways to help your health

Physical Health

Maintaining a healthy body is crucial for active ageing. This includes regular exercise, a balanced diet, and managing chronic conditions. Engaging in activities like walking, swimming, or yoga can enhance physical fitness and reduce the risk of chronic diseases.

Mental Wellbeing

Keeping the mind active is essential. Engaging in stimulating activities, learning new skills, and maintaining social connections can help prevent cognitive decline and promote mental health.

Social Engagement

Staying socially connected is vital for emotional wellbeing. Participating in community activities, volunteering, or simply spending time with family and friends can enhance quality of life and provide a sense of purpose.

Nutrition

A healthy diet plays a significant role in ageing well. Prioritising whole foods, such as fruits, vegetables, lean proteins and healthy fats, while limiting processed foods, can support overall health.

Preventive Care

Regular health check-ups, vaccinations and screenings are important for early detection and management of health issues. Staying proactive about health can lead to better outcomes as you age.



Take 5 is a Northern Ireland Public Health campaign that invites you to include small changes in your daily routine to improve your mood, strengthen your relationships and help you cope when life doesn't go to plan. For more information go to

<https://www.makinglifebettertogether.com/wellbeing-resilience/Ideas>

Step 1



Do something nice for a friend or stranger, thank someone, smile, volunteer your time or consider joining a community group.

Build a good routine – get support to do this if needed

Building a good routine can help keep you engaged in your wider community. Look outwards as well as inwards. Seeing yourself and your happiness linked to the wider community can be incredibly rewarding and will create connections with the people around you. Get support to do this if it will help you stay connected.

Step 2



Be active, go for a walk or run, cycle, play a game, garden or dance. Exercising makes you feel good. Most importantly, discover a physical activity that you enjoy; one that suits you and your level of mobility and fitness.

Physical health

Active ageing programmes available across Belfast

If you would like to take part in some physical activity sessions for older people, there are a range of programmes to choose from across the city. These are delivered in leisure centres, healthy living centres and community centres, in partnership with Active Belfast. These classes are a great way of increasing or maintaining physical fitness, developing independence, building confidence and socialising in a supportive environment. Please see the list below of centres that deliver programmes and contact details to find out more:

Belfast City Council Leisure Centres - Better (City wide)

T: 028 9521 9850

Email: customerservices@gll.org

Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council Leisure Centres - Vitality

T: 028 9267 2121

The Hanwood Centre (East Belfast)

Kinross Avenue, Belfast, BT5 7GE

T: 028 9041 1970

Email: info@hanwood.org

Maureen Sheehan Healthy Living Centre (West Belfast)

106 Albert Street, Belfast, BT12 4HL

T: 028 9031 0346

Email: heartproject@heartproject.com

Shaftesbury Healthy Living Centre, LORAG (South Belfast)

97 Balfour Avenue, Belfast, BT7 2EW

T: 028 9031 2377

Email: info@lorag.org

Keeping active, looking after your health and social connections will also support you on your dementia journey.

Remember to help you stay active

- Get your hearing checked
- Get your eyes tested
- Stay hydrated
- Eat a healthy diet
- Get enough sleep.

Other ideas to support your physical health

Good sleep routine

A healthy sleep routine can help the person with dementia to feel better, be less confused, be more co-ordinated and have more energy in the daytime. However, sleep problems tend to become more common and more severe as dementia progresses. They can happen daily, and last for long periods of time. The growing exhaustion can affect the person with dementia and their carer. Sleep problems can be caused by:

- Insomnia
- Excessive daytime sleepiness
- Sleep-disordered breathing
- Restless leg syndrome
- Periodic limb movement disorder
- Rapid eye movement behavioural sleep disorder.

It is important to seek medical help with dementia-related sleep issues. In tandem with medical support, people with dementia can be helped by:

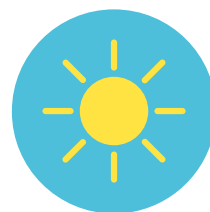
Keeping a routine

Having a routine during the day and at bedtime can help when a person's body clock doesn't work as well as it should. Do regular activities at the same time each day. Keeping to a routine for the hour or so before getting into bed should encourage feelings of sleepiness.



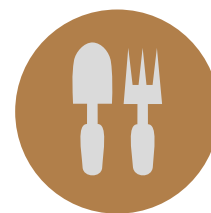
Natural daylight

Going outside in the daytime, ideally in the morning, can help to set the person's body clock. They are more likely to feel sleepy during the evening. During the late evening you can dim lighting to encourage sleep at bedtime (unless they are getting sleepy too early). If the person can't go outside in the daytime, you could use a lamp or lightbox that creates a bright indoor light. These devices have a similar effect to natural light on the person's body clock.



Fun and interesting activities

Doing enjoyable and interesting activities during the day helps to reduce daytime sleepiness. Being active can produce a satisfying feeling of tiredness that makes sleep easier at bedtime and may also reduce feelings of anxiety and restlessness. Physical activities, such as walking and gardening, are particularly good for improving the quality of sleep. If the person you support can do these activities for at least 20–30 minutes, during the day, several times each week, this can help. Too much activity in the evening can keep a person feeling awake.



Avoid caffeine

Caffeine is a stimulant that reduces feelings of sleepiness. It also makes a person need to go to the toilet more often. As the effects last for several hours, it's best for the person to switch to non-caffeinated drinks from lunchtime onwards. Caffeine and other stimulants in food and drink may have a greater effect in older people. For better sleep quality, offer non-caffeinated drinks, such as water, milk, natural juice, or caffeine-free tea or coffee.



Avoid being hungry, thirsty or too full

Eating a light meal several hours before going to sleep can stop a person being hungry in the night or feeling too full to fall asleep. The person should drink enough so they aren't thirsty, but not so much that they need to use the toilet several times during the night.



Make the bedroom sleep-friendly

The person's bedroom can make a big difference to their ability to sleep properly. It should be as quiet and as dark as possible. If the person is afraid of waking up in the dark, or worried about finding the toilet in the night, a nightlight may help. The temperature should be relatively cool (about 18°C), but not cold. A dementia-friendly clock that displays 'night or day' can help the person feel less disorientated if they wake up during the night.



Reduce screen time

The blue light from TVs, computers, smartphones, tablets, and other electronic devices can affect the body clock and make it harder to fall asleep. Screen devices can also be overstimulating at a time when the person needs to relax. The person with dementia should reduce the time spent looking at screens towards the end of the day. This may help them to fall asleep more easily.



Vaccinations

Routine vaccination schedule recommended by the NHS

Older adults in the UK (typically aged 65+) are offered free NHS vaccines to protect against severe winter illnesses, including annual flu and COVID-19 boosters. Attending for your regular vaccination will help prevent illness.

Your age - when to get a vaccination	What vaccinations are available
65 years old	Pneumococcal Polysaccharide vaccine (PPV) - one dose
65 years old and over	Influenza vaccina (flu jab) - one dose annually
65 years old and over	COVID -19 vaccine Seasonal booster - one dose
65 or 70 years old	Shingles vaccine two doses - 6 and 12 months apart
75 years old	RSV vaccine - one dose

Check the NHS website for more information

[NHS vaccinations and when to have them - NHS](#)

Step 3



Connect with the people around you: family, friends, colleagues and neighbours at home or in your local community. Think of these relationships as the cornerstones of your life and spend time developing them. Building these connections will support and enrich you every day.

Meeting other people and staying connected

Connected Community Care

The Connected Community Care (CCC) team works across greater Belfast to help connect individuals aged 18 and over to support services within their local area.

Wellbeing coordinators specialise in supporting those with, or at risk of, developing chronic conditions, isolation, and loneliness. If you need help finding support, groups/activities or accessing emotional/practical support they can help.



Referral: self-refer, your GP or other health professional

T: 028 9590 1407

Email: info@ccchub.co.uk

Dementia friendly communities and neighbourhoods in Belfast

A dementia friendly community helps to educate local businesses, organisations, and the public on how to support and engage with people living with dementia. It helps provide a supportive environment where people with dementia feel understood, respected, and connected. It supports people to remain active, engaged, and part of their community, reducing isolation and stigma.

In Belfast, there are Dementia Friendly Neighbourhood groups across the city, who come together to make local communities dementia friendly. The groups have representatives from local community groups, statutory and voluntary organisations and people with lived experience of dementia. The groups are supported by Belfast City Council's Age Friendly Belfast Plan.

For more details go to: [Age Friendly Belfast Plan 2022-2026](#)

These groups promote:

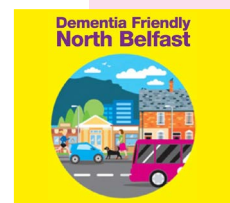
- Information about dementia in the local community, through sharing information about support at local events
- Organising Carers' Cafés for people who are caring for someone living with dementia.

For more details of dementia friendly neighbourhoods in Belfast, please contact:

Dementia Friendly North Belfast and Greater Shankill

Dementia Friendly North Belfast | Facebook

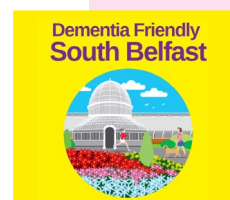
Email: dementiafriendlynorthbelfast@gmail.com



Dementia Friendly South Belfast, Community Health Capacity Worker

T: 07394 569154

Email: communityhealth@forwardsouth.org



Dementia Friendly East Belfast

T: 028 9073 5696

Email: dementiafriendlyeastbelfast@gmail.com



Dementia Friendly West Belfast

Email: dementiafriendlywestbelfast@gmail.com

Twitter/X.com: @Dementiawestbelfast

Resilient West Belfast App: <https://www.resilientwestbelfast.com>



The Grapevine Hub

The Grapevine Hub, at 2 Royal Avenue, provides a drop in every Tuesday between 11am-1pm for older people. 2 Royal Avenue is in Belfast (beside Primark). The Hub has volunteers there to offer you a cup of tea and a chat, and to share information about events.

For further information please contact:

The Age Friendly Coordinator

T: 07827 823998

Email: seniorsinfo@belfastcity.gov.uk

or the Community Projects Manager at Volunteer Now

T: 028 9023 2020

Email: info@volunteernow.co.uk



Alzheimer's Society - singing for the brain

Brings together people affected by dementia to sing a wide variety of songs in an informal setting, led by trained leaders. For more information about online and in-person programmes go to: singing@alzheimers.org.uk

T: 028 9066 4100

Local Councils also offer information about activities and groups



**Belfast
City Council**

Belfast City Council

For a full list of community centres and the classes and services they provide go to:

<https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/community>

T: 028 9032 0202

Email: generalenquiries@belfastcity.gov.uk



**Lisburn &
Castlereagh
City Council**

Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council

Active Ageing at Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council

For information on local community groups/activities for older people

T: 07388 955716 and ask for the Health and Wellbeing Coordinator

Email: lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk



Antrim and Newtownabbey Council

For information on local community groups/activities for older people, go to

<https://antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk/residents/community-initiatives/age-friendly>

Or contact the Age-Friendly Officer Antrim and Newtownabbey

T: 028 9034 0160

Email: envhealth@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk

Transport

Driving

A dementia diagnosis does not automatically mean someone must stop driving, but someone with dementia must be able to drive safely. Driving relies on skills like attention, judgement, problem-solving, memory, quick reactions, and visuospatial abilities. As dementia progresses, these skills decline and can affect driving ability.

For many people, driving is an important source of independence and enjoyment, so it is natural to worry that dementia will mean someone will have to stop driving.

When someone is diagnosed with dementia in Northern Ireland, they are legally required to inform the Driver and Vehicle Agency (DVA). It doesn't automatically mean they will have to give up driving straight away, although this is possible.

Contact details to notify the DVA of medical issues:

T: 0300 200 7861

Email: dva@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

Once the DVA has been informed, it might decide immediately or:

- Contact the person's doctor for more information
- Arrange for them to have a health check
- Ask them to take a driving assessment.

If you are no longer able to drive, don't let this stop you going to the activities you enjoy. Consider:

- Car share with others going to activities
- Local bus service
- Taxi
- Community transport.



Disability Action Transport Scheme (DATS)

This is a community scheme supporting people with additional needs with transport to activities across Belfast. To be able to use this service you will need to register with them. There is also a cost with each journey.

For more information go to: [Disability Action Transport Scheme | Disability Action Northern Ireland](#)

T: 028 9029 7880

Email: hq@disabilityaction.org



Signposting - JAM card

JAM stands for Just. A. Minute. The JAM card allows people with dementia or other communication needs to be able to ask for 'just a minute'. Giving them more time and people being more patient when they need it.



IAM Card is available from Dementia NI free of charge. The card is credit card size NI also provide a key fob option, so that you will always have the card on you.

A JAM app is also available for smartphone users.

For more information go to:

<https://www.dementiani.org/what-we-do/jam-card>

Remember - many supermarkets have quiet times especially to support people with extra needs. Ask at your local supermarket for details.

Step 4



Don't be afraid to try something new, rediscover an old hobby or sign up for a course. Take on a different responsibility, fix a bike, learn to play an instrument or how to cook your favourite food. Set a challenge you will enjoy. Learning new things will make you more confident, as well as being fun for you to do

Mental wellbeing: keep learning and thinking

Sign up for a local class, visit your local library or a museum exhibition. Many libraries across Belfast offer a range of facilities such as eBooks and online magazines, computer access and Wi-Fi, and a range of activities such as reading groups, craft groups, social groups.

For more information go to: [Libraries NI \(Northern Ireland\)](#)

Belfast Central Library **T: 028 9050 9150**

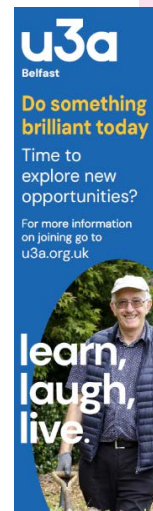
U3A - University of the 3rd Age

Joining your local U3A is a great way to find and develop new interests and make friends in a relaxed environment. It costs about £20 a year to join a U3A near where you live.

Reasons to join:

- Stay active, keep learning and have fun
- Online learning, training and resources to inspire you
- Meet other people with similar interests, learn new things and share your skills.

For information go to: [u3a - Join a u3a](#)



Belfast Recovery College

The Belfast Recovery College provides free mental health and wellbeing education and learning programmes. They have a range of courses open to service users, families, friends, carers, and anyone with an interest in mental health. Valuing the combined lived experience of mental health and professional knowledge, they co-produce and co-facilitate courses to improve the wellbeing of the people in Belfast.

For more information go to:

[Belfast Recovery College | Belfast Health & Social Care Trust website](#)



Step 5



Take notice - stop, pause, or take a moment to look around you. What can you see, feel, smell or even taste? Look for beautiful, new, unusual or extraordinary things in your everyday life and think about how that makes you feel.

Nutrition: take notice and try new foods

Diet and living with dementia

People with dementia may experience:

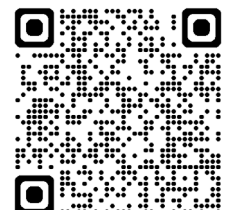
- Poor appetite or forgetting to eat and drink
- Taste and smell changes
- Difficulty recognising food or using utensils
- Chewing and swallowing problems
- Behaviour changes at mealtimes.

Helpful tips to encourage eating and drinking






- Offer small frequent meals and snacks; add more nutrition to these by adding cream, cheese, butter, jam or honey
- Consider half portions offered more frequently to prevent food going cold
- Use finger foods such as sandwiches, cheese cubes, fish fingers, chicken nuggets, sausages to support and restore independence
- Prioritise providing nourishing drinks such as milk, milkshakes and smoothies, and use brightly coloured cups to make drinks easier to recognise and keep fluids nearby
- Enhance appeal by offering a wide range of preferred drinks and fluids
- Try adding extra flavours such as herbs, spices, lemon or lime juice, vinegar, sugar, honey or jam to enhance the flavour and smells of food, and to make food easier to recognise and more appetising
- Create a calm dining atmosphere: keep the table free from clutter and avoid patterned tablecloths or napkins, reduce distracting noise, or try soothing music
- For chewing difficulties, offer softer foods like mashed potatoes, porridge, eggs or food in sauce to allow them to continue to enjoy eating and drinking.

Extra support

If concerned about weight loss, consider a referral to a dietitian for further support. Any person with swallowing difficulties should be referred to a speech and language therapist. [Eating and drinking difficulties in dementia - BDA](#)



Your Take 5 Plan

Take 5	My ideas	Tick them off as you go
 <p>Give</p>		
 <p>Be Active</p>		
 <p>Connect</p>		
 <p>Keep Learning</p>		
 <p>Take Notice</p>		
<p>Other</p>		

Living well with dementia

Maintaining your identity – your views and feelings matter

It is important throughout your dementia journey to maintain your identity, interests, and to do the things that are important to you, along with your day-to-day tasks. It may also be important to let other people know what these things are, so they can support you to maintain your activities. Here are some suggestions. You can use this form, or others listed below, to let people know what your interests are.

What Matters to me

<p>Music</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p>Radio station</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p>Spirituality</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>Likes</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	 <p>What I prefer to be called:</p>	<p>Dislikes</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>Hobbies</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p>TV Programmes</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p>Favourite foods</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

My story

This is a form used across hospitals and other healthcare setting in Northern Ireland with people who are living with dementia. It supports you and your family tell people important things about you, helping with communication and care. Ask your healthcare professionals for a copy.

I like to be called:	The person/people who are important to me are:
How I prefer to communicate:	What makes me anxious or distressed:
How will you know I am in pain:	What helps me relax:
My eyesight/hearing:	My mobility:
My personal care preferences/ toileting needs:	My sleeping pattern/preferences:
My living arrangements are:	My eating and drinking likes/ dislikes/needs:
My life story:	

This is me

'This is me', created by Alzheimer's Society can be used by you and your family if you are living with dementia or experiencing delirium, and receiving healthcare. It helps people better understand who the person really is and deliver more tailored care. This can help reduce distress for everyone. 'This is me' can be used to record details such as:

- A person's cultural and family background
- Important events, people and places from their life
- Their preferences and routines.

The leaflet can be used in any setting - at home, in hospital, in respite care or in a care home.

For more information go to: [This is me | Alzheimer's Society](#)

Getting help and support

Phone call support

Staying connected to others is important throughout your dementia journey. These are some organisations in Belfast who might be able to support you.

Good morning west Belfast (Ardcomm elderly service)

Provide daily phone call support

Referral: self-referral, family, GP, statutory agencies, community sector

T: 028 9024 5943

Email: goodmorningwestbelfast@outlook.com

Good morning north Belfast

Provide daily phone call support

T: 028 9071 9200

Email: goodmorningnorthbelfast@outlook.com

CLARE (in north Belfast)

Providing social support for older people in North Belfast. Services at home (befriending), in the community and sign posting to other support in the local area. Please contact for information.

T: 028 9077 4185

Referral: Self-referral go to www.clare-cic.org

Alzheimer's Society - companionship service

The companionship service provides one-to-one companion calls, online chats or a combination of both, and offers friendly social chat by phone made by a volunteer to someone affected by dementia.

<https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/get-support/companionship>

Engage with age - telephone befriending support

Engage with age provide a telephone befriending service for those experiencing isolation and loneliness. Please contact for further information.

T: 028 9073 5696 or 07423 702721

Email: palproject@engagewithage.org.uk

Age NI - check in and chat - telephone befriending

A telephone service for over 65s who feel lonely or isolated offering reassurance, connection and links to support. For more information

T: 0808 808 7575

Email: info@ageni.org

Belfast Central Mission - befriending scheme

For information T: 028 9024 1917

Referral: Social services, GPs and community agencies

Volunteer Now - befriending scheme

Referral: Social workers and social care coordinators within the Belfast Trust

For information go to www.volunteernow.co.uk

T: 028 9023 2020

Email: info@volunteernow.co.uk

Support and advice with finances and benefits

There are many sources of practical help and advice with benefits, filling in forms, paying bills and managing finances and housing. See below for details:

Make the Call

Contact Make the Call service to check if you are getting all the benefits, services and supports you are entitled to.

T: 0800 232 1271 (network charges may apply)

Advice NI

Provides independent advice to help you improve the quality of your life. They offer information, advice, advocacy and representation on a number of issues:

- Benefits
- Debt
- Tax Credits & HMRC Services
- EU Settlement Scheme.



T: 0800 915 4604 (free) or Text ACTION to 81025

Advice space

Provides free and confidential advice on a range of topics such as employment, benefits, the law, helping people understand their rights and supporting them. **T: 0300 1233 233**

Age NI advice line

Provide free information and advice on a range of topics.

- Money matters
- Care and support
- Working and learning
- Volunteering.



Call Freephone T: 0808 808 7575

For information go to [Information and advice for older people and their loved ones | Age UK](#)

Engage with age

Engage with age address loneliness and isolation, promote health and wellbeing, support groups and forums, and empower older people to influence decisions that affect their lives. Programmes include: The PAL Project (People Addressing Loneliness), capacity building for groups, workshops on health and wellbeing.

If you are interested in joining a seniors' group please contact:

Engage with Age, 55 Templemore Avenue, Belfast, BT5 4FP

T: 028 9073 5696

For more information go to <http://engagewithage.org.uk/>



Advice centres in Belfast

These are centres across Belfast who offer support and information about benefits, debt, housing and employment. See below for details:

<p>North Belfast</p> <p>Advice Space: North Belfast</p> <p>Ardoyne Association</p> <p>Ligoniel Improvement Association</p> <p>The Vine Centre</p> <p>Ballysillan Community Forum</p> <p>Tar Isteach</p>	<p>T: 0300 123 3233</p> <p>T: 028 9071 5165</p> <p>T: 028 9039 1225</p> <p>T: 028 9035 1020</p> <p>T: 028 9039 1272</p> <p>T: 028 9074 6665</p>
<p>South Belfast</p> <p>Ballynafeigh Community Development Association</p> <p>Advice NI</p>	<p>T: 028 9049 1161</p> <p>T: 0800 915 4604</p>
<p>East Belfast H&SC Trust</p> <p>Advice Space: East Belfast</p> <p>East Belfast Independent Advice Centre</p>	<p>T: 0300 123 3233</p> <p>T: 028 9073 5690</p>
<p>West Belfast</p> <p>Advice Space: Shankill, Suffolk, Andersonstown, Falls</p> <p>Falls Community Council</p> <p>Neighbourhood Development Association</p> <p>Crescent Vitality / Springfield Charitable Association</p> <p>Upper Springfield Advice Service</p>	<p>T: 0300 123 3233</p> <p>T: 028 9020 2030</p> <p>T: 028 9058 4848</p> <p>T: 028 9032 9085</p> <p>T: 028 9024 0653</p>
<p>Central Belfast</p> <p>Advice Space: Belfast Central (formerly Citizen's Advice)</p>	<p>T: 0300 123 3233</p>
<p>Newtownabbey</p> <p>Community Advice Antrim & Newtownabbey (formerly Citizen's Advice)</p>	<p>T: 028 9590 6505</p>
<p>Castlereagh</p> <p>Community Advice Lisburn & Castlereagh</p>	<p>T: 028 9266 2251</p>

If you are not sure which council you are under, search 'find your local council' on www.gov.uk and put in your postcode.

Environments for ageing and dementia at home

Occupational therapists can help you remain more independent and safer in your own home. They provide assessments and give advice.

Familiar surroundings at home can help support a person with dementia, as memory loss, confusion and difficulty learning new things means that someone with dementia may forget where they are, where things are and how things work. For this reason, you shouldn't make big changes to the home environment too quickly. There are some simple things you can do which may help someone with dementia to continue living independently at home.

Maintaining independence

As dementia progresses a person will find their home environment increasingly challenging. It will be important to support daily tasks with aids to find the way around the home and maintain safety.

Finding your way around

Finding your way around at home can get increasingly difficult as dementia progresses. Contrasting colours on walls, floors and furniture can help people with dementia tell the difference between rooms and furniture. Labels and signs can also help someone find the right room. For example:

- Signage on doors helps people identify the use of a room (bedroom, toilet)
- Labels on kitchen cupboards help tell people where to find things (plates, cups)
- Alternatively, see-through cupboard doors can be a great help, as they can then see what's inside.



Reduce falls

Consider better lighting to avoid shadows, don't have rugs and shiny, reflective floors and use supportive footwear.

Support communication

By reducing excess background noise, ie. TV, radio. Also, it is important to have regular hearing checks, even if the person with dementia has hearing aids fitted.

Day to day activities

Use contrasting toilet seats, handrails, crockery. Think about using orientation clocks, and telephones and remote controls with limited buttons.

Independent living equipment and mobility aids

If you think you need equipment to support you in your day-to-day activities you can ask for an assessment from an occupational therapist or a physiotherapist.

Assistive technology

Assistive technology can offer additional support. There are lots of assistive technologies that might be helpful for both the person living with dementia and carers. Below are some ideas to consider. All equipment in this section is widely available from a variety of suppliers.

Door alarms

This is equipment installed on a door that will indicate to a third party when the door has been opened via an alarm pager alert or App. Useful to support a person who might wander from the house and become confused.

Heat detectors

Heat detectors activate when they sense a rise in temperature, typically triggered at a pre-set temperature point or when a rapid temperature increase occurs. Heat sensors can be used to detect increasing heat (rather than fire).

Water and flood sensors

Water sensors can be placed near commonly used water supplies such as a washing machine, sink and bath, to detect floods.

For more information go to [How to obtain assistive technology | Alzheimer's Society](#)

There are several websites that sell daily living aids, such as:

[Alzheimer's Society online shop](#)

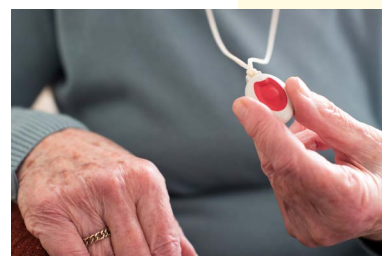
Telecare

Telecare is a form of technology used to support you at home. In its simplest form it is either worn on the person or there are sensors and sometimes cameras installed in the home. Telecare can be used to help if someone is falling, unwell or wandering. Telecare can monitor the person at home and be used to call for help if needed.

Belfast Trust does provide some telecare systems (an assessment from a social worker is required).

Personal alarms systems

This requires the person to wear a pendant or bracelet. There will also be a base unit in your house, linked to the main office (open 24/7). If triggered, the office will contact the person wearing the personal alarm to work out what help is needed. You need to have a landline telephone line in your home and to be able to nominate



2 people who can respond and come to your home if required. There are a variety of private providers in Northern Ireland. You can ask for a consultation with no obligation to buy. For more details contact your healthcare professional or have a look online.

Digital reminders

Digital reminders are often used through smartphones, apps, or smart devices. They prompt you to perform a task or remember an event at a specific time or location. These reminders can be set to go off at a time, day or on a specific date. For example: take your medication at 10am, lock the front door at 6pm, have something to eat at 8am.

For more information go to: www.alzheimers.org.uk

Outdoors wearable technology

Some people with dementia may find wearable technology - such as GPS (Global Positioning System) trackers and QR (Quick Response) code bracelets - useful to help maintain independence. They may help with locating someone if they are lost and can provide peace of mind for carers and families. There are a number of questions to ask if considering wearable technology for a person with dementia.

For some, these devices may provide reassurance and safety; for others, they could increase risk or cause distress. If you are considering wearable technology, it is important to involve the person with dementia wherever possible and carefully consider their individual needs, preferences, and circumstances. Research devices to ensure they provide safe storage of personal information.

Wheelchair short-term loans

Redcross and Shopmobility can support with short term loans of wheelchairs.

Shopmobility

Email: info@shopmobilityni.org

T: 0300 10 20 150

Redcross

Website: [British Red Cross Mobility Aids Service \(Belfast\) –Directory Listing](#)

T: 0300 456 1914



Belfast Trust day care opportunities / day centres

Belfast Trust provides access to day centres for social support for people living with dementia. Day centres aim to provide a varied and structured programme for a wide range of people with disabilities and long-term conditions who are vulnerable and at risk of isolation, and to provide respite for family carers. Contact your social worker for more information.

North Carlisle Day Centre	2 Carlisle Terrace, Antrim Road, Belfast, BT15 2PR
South City Way Day Centre	2a Boyne Court, Belfast, BT12 5BL
East Edgcumbe Assessment & Therapy Centre	8-10 Edgcumbe Gardens Holywood Road, Belfast, BT4 2EG

Short breaks for carers

There are a range of services available to give you a break from caring. Some of these will be provided to the person you are caring for, and others provided directly to you as the carer. Speak to your social worker about these services.

Daytime and evening sitting

Someone can sit with the person you care for so you can go out during the day or in the evening. This gives you some important time to yourself.

Short stays in residential care

Short stays in a residential care service or a dedicated respite service for the person you care for can be arranged to support your caring role. These breaks can range from one night to several weeks depending on your needs.

Shared Lives

Shared lives is a service provided by Age NI to support people aged 65 and over who may be lonely and isolated. It offers older people a safe, welcoming, family environment supported by Shared Lives carers. Shared Lives services support people to:

- Stay within their local communities
- Live independently for longer
- Develop new friendships
- Give families and carers a break.



For more information go to: [Shared Lives services for Northern Ireland | nidirect](#)

How to access this service: speak to your social worker

Self-directed support

Self-directed support offers more choice, control and flexibility to individuals and families. It is available to people who have been assessed to be in need of social care support. If you take up self-directed support you will have an informed choice about how your support is provided and control your personal budget. This may allow you and your family to design a package of support that better suits your lifestyle.



If you do not already have social care support, you will need to ask for an assessment from a social worker.

You can get more information about Self-Directed Support from [Belfast Trust website Self-Directed Support | Search Results | Belfast Health & Social Care Trust website](#)

Or go to the Independent Living Centre website <https://cilni.org/self-directed-support/>

Maintaining relationships

It is important to keep up your hobbies, interests and relationships. Don't give up on the things that give you joy.

My name is Edward. I have dementia, but I am also a soloist in a band, playing the euphonium. Playing and reading music has been part of my life since the age of 5 years old, and at the age of 70 I am still playing with Newtownards Silver Band.

The band meets weekly, and we play in a variety of concerts across Belfast. I practice at home to ensure that I am able to maintain my position as a soloist and top of my section. This helps with my dementia, because I get a lot of joy from playing with the band and enjoy the company of others who enjoy music. I also take part in the 'Singing for the Brain' choir which also gives me social links with others.

Meet Edward

There are lots of activities to do that support people with dementia. Some of the available activities include:

Dementia café... singing for the brain... carers café... libraries... leisure centres... walking groups... sports clubs... line dancing... men's sheds... community centres... U3A... knit and natter... newspaper groups... coffee mornings... lunch clubs...

For more details contact:

- Dementia Navigator
- Alzheimer's Society
- Belfast Trust Carer Service
- Dementia NI
- Dementia Friendly Communities in Belfast
- Belfast City Council
- Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council
- Antrim / Newtownabbey Council.

Spiritual needs

The Belfast Trust chaplains are available to offer support to families, carers, patients of all faiths and beliefs and none, in the hospital setting. They can also make referrals and links to local faith and belief groups. They can only offer limited support outside hospital and encourage carers to notify their own faith and belief representatives, for support at home or in the community.

Faith and spirituality play a vital role in many people's lives, helping them find meaning and purpose while offering comfort and hope. Supporting a person with dementia or supporting a carer to continue their spiritual practices can provide a sense of meaning, offer connection within a faith community, and bring peace and acceptance.

When considering spiritual needs for people affected by dementia, it is important to consider the following:

- **Listen with empathy:** this demonstrates understanding and validates their experiences
- **Involve faith leaders or chaplains:** chaplains can provide valuable support for both religious and non-religious spiritual needs. They can help open discussions about spiritual care and offer guidance on how to address those needs effectively. Humanist and non-religious pastoral support representatives are available on request
- **Respect individual beliefs:** it is essential to respect the person's unique spiritual beliefs and practices that make up their daily routine
- **Collaborate across disciplines:** discussions with your healthcare professionals, social workers, and other support services ensures the person's spiritual needs are met alongside their physical and emotional wellbeing.

Information and resources

Belfast Trust Chaplaincy Service: <https://belfasttrust.hscni.net/hospitals/general-information/chaplaincy-service/>

How chaplains can offer support:

<https://www.compassionatecommunitiesni.com/resources/chaplain>

<https://www.faithinolderpeople.org.uk/spiritual-care-and-dementia/>



Coping with dementia related change

As dementia progresses, you may notice changes in different areas of your life and how you manage things day-to-day. For example:

- Becoming more forgetful or asking the same question over again
- Periods of increasing confusion
- Poor decision making or poor judgement
- Difficulty finding words
- Difficulty understanding and expressing thoughts
- Difficulty reading and writing
- Changes in personality or behaviour
- Difficulties with movement, balance, co-ordination and increased falls
- Changes in appearance such as unkempt appearance, incontinence, and restlessness.

These changes might be worth talking about with your GP or the Community Mental Health Team for Older People (over 65 years). They may mean your dementia is progressing and a review by the medical team might be needed.

Supporting you to remain at home - promoting safety and security

All the professions listed below can support you at home, to maintain your functional abilities. All are available from Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (see throughout this booklet for details).

- Occupational therapy
- Physiotherapy
- Podiatry
- Speech and language therapist
- Social services / social worker
- District nursing
- Dietitian
- Falls team.

My life my choice (dementia home support service)

My Life My Choice offers recreational respite and social inclusion support services to support those with dementia to remain in their own home environment for as long as possible. All clients requiring this service must be referred through the Belfast Health and Social Care Community Mental Health Team for Older People (CMHTOP).

To discuss a referral please contact the CMHTOP on **T: 028 9504 0346**

Belfast Trust supported living

If you are thinking about exploring more supportive care options rather than living at home, Belfast Trust has a range of supported housing schemes for people with dementia, probable dementia and/or frailty who are over the age of 65. Supported living provides you with your own apartment, with staff available for additional support and safety.

If you want to find out more, contact your social worker or have a look on the Belfast Trust website [Supported Housing for Older People | Belfast Health & Social Care Trust website](#)



Sydenham Court
48a Sydenham Gardens
Belfast, BT4 1PP
T: 028 9504 2713



Cullingtree Meadows
120 Cullingtree Road
Belfast, BT12 4BA
T: 028 9504 1331 or Clanmil Housing on
T: 028 9087 6000



Hemsworth Court
29 Malvern Way
Belfast, BT13 1DZ
T: 028 9504 2694



Fairholme
29 Annadale Avenue
Belfast, BT7 3JJ
T: 028 9504 3005

Belfast Trust residential care

Belfast Trust also has residential care, which offers you your own room and meals alongside care and support provided by care home staff.

For more information contact the social work team on **T: 028 9504 2713**



Killynure House

6 Church Road, Carryduff

Belfast, BT8 8DT

T: 028 9504 2960



Brae Valley

2 Breda Terrace

Belfast, BT8 7BY

T: 028 9504 2940



Orchardville House

10 Orchardville Avenue

Belfast, BT10 0JH

T: 028 9504 3150



Bruce House

6a Duncairn Ave,

Belfast BT14 6BP

T: 028 9504 0570

Visiting hospitals for appointments - support available

There is help available if visiting hospital is becoming difficult due to mobility or trouble finding your way around. Planning your visits might make things easier once you are there. Consider support from:

AccessAble at Royal Victoria Hospital

AccessAble is an online guide you can use to support your visit to the hospital.

For more information go to: [AccessAble - Your Accessibility Guide](#)

Shopmobility at Royal Victoria Hospital

Shopmobility Belfast, helps patients and visitors with restricted mobility. It provides wheelchairs and electric scooters to help people get around the Royal Hospitals site. It is located near the parking spaces for blue badge holders on the ground level of the main visitors' car park. Staff will meet and greet patients and visitors who require the service.

- Free service
- Available from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday
- Please try to book in advance.

For more information

T: 07385 941991

Email: info@shopmobilitybelfast.co.uk

You need to be a member to use this service. To become a member - register on your first visit to any of their indoor locations. Please see the [Shopmobility Belfast website](#) for full details on how to register.

For other hospitals sites - please request porter assistance at reception if needed.

Volunteers

Belfast Trust, meet and greet volunteers, are present at the Royal Victoria Hospital, Cancer Centre at Belfast City Hospital and the Mater Hospital. These volunteers help to improve the experience of patients, service users, carers and visitors by providing signposting, accompanying to required areas, contacting portering and other support as required.

They can be identified by purple volunteer tabards and if available on the day, are present at main entrance doors. They are always happy to help and assist in making your visit to the hospitals a smoother experience.



Hospital admission

Hospital visits

Each hospital and ward has set visiting times. However, if you are caring for someone with dementia then you may wish to talk to staff about extending visiting times, staying for longer periods or more inclusive ways of providing support.

John's campaign

John's campaign supports the rights of a carer to stay in hospital with people with dementia and the right of the person with dementia to have their carer stay with them. Tell staff if you wish for this to be implemented.

For more information go to: [John's Campaign](#)

Being admitted to hospital

If a patient with dementia is admitted to hospital staff will complete a person-centred document called 'What Matters to Me' or 'My Story'. This is to ensure care can be tailored to individual needs. They also work to involve the family member, carer and encourage you to stay with your loved one if you wish to do so.

It is important for staff to think about providing activities for patients with cognitive impairment to help promote recovery and stimulation. They work closely with Arts Care artists and musicians to provide therapeutic art and music sessions for inpatients. The dementia companion service is part of this team.

Dementia companions

Belfast Trust now has a dementia companion service. This is a trained member of staff who can provide additional support to a person with dementia during their hospital admission. The role of the dementia companion is to support and assist patients with their daily activities (such as washing, dressing, eating) with guidance from family and nursing staff. The companions help to maintain a safe environment for the patient as well as spend time befriending and chatting to them to offer reassurance. They also help promote meaningful activities to offer stimulation.

The dementia companion will also help and support family members, carers with signposting onto dementia support services. The overall purpose of the dementia companion role is to enhance the safety and experience for patients living with dementia who are admitted to an acute ward by creating a ward environment that is both person-centred and dementia friendly. Ask staff for more information.

Cognitive champions

Cognitive champions are staff, who are based in the Trust's hospitals who have been given additional training and support in dementia and delirium care and have an interest in improving care for people with cognitive impairment.

Most wards have one or two cognitive champions. Ask staff for more information.

Delirium

Delirium is an acute change in a person's mental state and usually develops over 1-2 days. It is usually temporary and has a physical cause. Many people make a full recovery, however the timeframe for recovery can vary and it can sometimes persist past 1 month. Some people may have long-term changes to their memory following an episode of delirium.



Symptoms of delirium may be:

- Confusion
- Difficulties with understanding and memory
- Changes in energy and activity levels
- Strange ideas, hallucinations and paranoia.

For more information go to the Public Health Agency website:

[Delirium - Information for patients and relatives | HSC Public Health Agency](#)

Specialist dementia inpatient ward

Valencia ward

The Valencia ward is based in Knockbracken Healthcare Park. The ward is an acute admissions ward for patients experiencing significant behavioural and psychological disturbances which are associated with symptoms of dementia. This facility is not a nursing home. It is linked with the wider mental health services within Belfast Trust. It is not a discharge pathway for inpatients in an acute mental health inpatient ward.

How to access this service: consultant to consultant

Capacity and making decisions

There may come a time when your loved one will not be able to make decisions for themselves. This means they lack capacity. Family will need to plan ahead, and make preparations to ensure they have all the legal arrangements in place.

The Mental Capacity Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 provides a statutory framework for people who lack capacity to make decisions for themselves. The framework also provides a legal framework for those who have capacity but wish to make preparations, for a time in the future, when they may lack capacity.

For more information: <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/topics/mental-capacity-act>

Mental Capacity Act (Northern Ireland) 2016

An Act to make new provision relating to persons who lack capacity; to make provision about the powers of criminal courts in respect of persons with disorder; to disapply Part 2 of the Mental Health (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 in relation to persons aged 16 or over and make other amendments of that Order; to make provision in connection with the Convention on the International Protection of Adults signed at the Hague on 13th January 2000; and for connected purposes.

[9th May 2016]

The Mental Capacity Act Service

The Mental Capacity Act Service in Belfast Trust undertakes Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS). This is on behalf of service users who do not have capacity to make their own decisions about care arrangements they may need. DoLS are regularly reviewed and removed when no longer required

This is legislated by the Mental Capacity Act (Northern Ireland) 2016. DoLS ensure that full consideration is given to the service user's human rights and may be considered across several settings including care homes, supported living, day centres and even in a person's own home. For further information about DoLS, please visit: <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/topics/mental-capacity-act>

How to access this service: Referral: professional to professional

Power of Attorney (POA)

A Power of Attorney is a legal document that allows one person to make decisions or act on behalf of another, in Northern Ireland this relates to financial matters.

Power of Attorney can be put in place for anyone who has capacity to make this decision and nominate a person to act on their behalf. Having POA will support access to finances, as dementia progresses. The Attorney will be able to use your finances in your best interest (ie. to pay bills, buy food, clothing, a trip out).

Office of Care and Protection - controllership

The Office of Care and Protection (OCP), comes under the Family Division of the High Court. It has several functions:

- To process the appointment of controllers also known as controllership on behalf of the court. This is the person who is put in place to action court instructions in relation to the property and affairs of the patient. - if the court is later satisfied that the patient has become capable of managing their property and affairs, the controller will be discharged by the court
- To supervise individuals who have been appointed to manage the financial and property affairs of adults who lack the capacity to do so for themselves
- To investigate circumstances where the property or finances belonging to an incapable adult appear to be at risk.

For more details T: 0300 200 7812

Email: epa@courtsni.gov.uk

Specialist solicitors

Specialist solicitors are solicitors who specialise in legal affairs associated with dementia. For more details contact:

Solicitors for the elderly: [Home | Lifetime Lawyers](#)

Alzheimer's Research UK: [Find a specialist solicitor near you - Alzheimer's Research UK](#)

For more information about financial and legal tips for people living with dementia in Northern Ireland go to: <https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/get-support/legal-financial/northern-ireland-financial-legal-tips-dementia>

Planning for end of life

Communicating your wishes now and in the future

Palliative and end of life care

Palliative and end of life care is the active, holistic care of patients with advanced progressive and incurable illness. The focus is on the person rather than the disease. The aim is to ensure quality of life for those living with an advanced non-curative condition.

At this stage a person will have to make a lot of decisions about what happens to them in the future. This includes decisions on:

- What treatments might or might not benefit them
- What treatments they would not want
- How and where they would like to be cared for
- Where they would prefer to die.

Advance care planning

Advance care planning means that the person can choose what's important to them. If they then become unable to make or express their decisions, the people around them know what they'd prefer and can respect their wishes.

Advance care planning ensures that everyone identified as likely to benefit from a palliative care approach has the opportunity to discuss and document their advance care planning summary, which will facilitate the sharing of their preferences for care across settings.

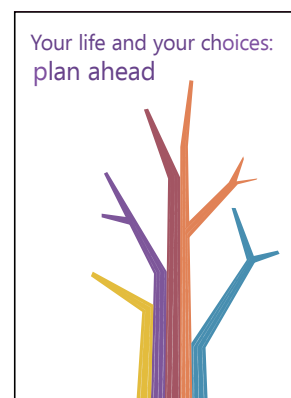
Ask your healthcare provider for more information and support.

Helping you plan ahead

Your life and your choices: plan ahead

This booklet published by the Public Health Agency, explains how you can plan ahead for your future care in Northern Ireland. It discusses:

- Creating a Power of Attorney
- Preferred priorities for care
- Advance decisions to refuse treatment
- Making a will
- Organ and tissue donation
- Funeral planning.



For a copy go to: [mac14376-your-life-and-your-choices-ni-e03](#)

Or go to Compassionate Communities NI website: [Your Life, Your Choices | CC Northern Ireland](#)

For more information go to: [Advance Care Planning: For Now and For the Future | Department of Health](#)

Planning ahead [Planning ahead when you're living with dementia in Northern Ireland | Alzheimer's Society](#)

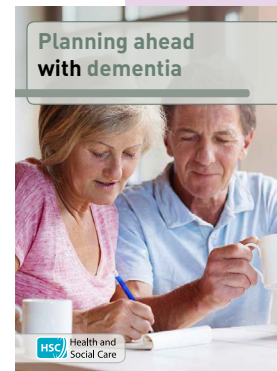
Other resources helping you and your family plan what happens before and after your death can be found on the Hospice UK website at [Dying Matters Resources | Hospice UK](#)

Planning ahead with dementia

This booklet produced by the Public Health Agency provides guidance. It includes information on:

- Treatment in the future
- Financial and legal planning
- Advanced care planning
- Best interest discussion
- Making a will
- Planning your funeral
- Useful contacts.

For more information and a copy of this booklet visit the Public health Agency website: [Planning ahead with dementia | HSC Public Health Agency](#)



Palliative care - the options



Palliative care hub

The Belfast community palliative care hub is a collaboration between Belfast Trust, NI Hospice and Marie Curie Hospice, providing co-ordinated community palliative care for adults registered with a GP in the Belfast area. The hub team work closely with the patient's GP and district nurse. The service aims to ensure, as much as possible, that anyone receiving palliative and end of life care at home can receive that care without delay and are supported to remain in their preferred place of care in their final days of life.

This is a single point of access for healthcare professionals and an advice and support service for patients and carers.

The hub location is ground floor, Crumlin Road Health Centre and the service is operational Monday - Friday, 9 - 5pm.

T: 028 9615 3555

Palliative care at home

Palliative care may take place at home, in a care home or in a hospital. It might be helpful to agree a nominated person or several people from the family, who can be contacted throughout this care.

Palliative care in a hospice

Marie Curie and NI Hospice, provide a range of services to support a person during their palliative and end of life care. People can go for short stays to support with condition management, pain management, nutrition etc. They also support families. They provide:

- In-patient care
- Pain management
- Outpatient day care
- Care at home
- Urgent hospice care at home
- Support for families
- Bereavement support
- Support with fatigue, anxiety and breathlessness.

Marie Curie: [Our services in Northern Ireland | Marie Curie](#)

T: 028 9433 1868

NI Hospice: [NI Hospice | Community Hospice Services](#)

How to access this service

Referrals: GP, district nurse or hospital

Hospital specialist palliative care team

This is a team of hospital consultants, clinical nurse specialists and pharmacists who specialise in palliative care. They offer advice on complex symptoms such as pain and nausea, to support with end-of-life care. They work alongside staff on the wards from Monday-Friday 9am-5pm.

What to expect in the last days and hours of life

This booklet is designed to support families and caregivers when someone is in the last days or hours of life. The booklet provides clear and compassionate information about what to expect, helping families feel more prepared and supported at a difficult time. It also aims to assist all staff in having sensitive, timely conversations with those close to a person who is dying.

For a copy, please ask your healthcare professional in the Trust.



District nurse

District nurses are your key worker throughout your palliative care. They will talk to other services and ensure you are provided with the right care from the right people at the right time. They work very closely with GPs to coordinate care.

Write your district nurse contact details here

Name _____

Contact Number _____

Navigating bereavement, grief and loss

Grief is a natural and deeply personal response to losing someone you love. It can feel overwhelming, confusing, and isolating. You may experience a wide range of emotions such as sadness, anger, guilt, numbness or even moments of peace. All of these are valid. There is no right or wrong way to grieve, and no set timeline for healing.

During this time, you may find yourself needing support, emotionally, practically, spiritually, or even financially. Reaching out for help is not a sign of weakness, but a step toward finding comfort and connection.

There are several charities in Northern Ireland who can support you through bereavement.

Bereaved NI

If you or someone close to you is struggling, Bereaved NI is a compassionate and trusted resource. The website offers guidance, information, and support for anyone affected by bereavement, whether you're grieving yourself or supporting someone else.

For more information go to: <https://bereaved.hscni.net/>

Other sources of information and support

Cruse Bereavement Support.

T: 028 9043 4600

For more information go to: [Home - Cruse Bereavement Support](#)

Hope Again

For more information go to: [Hope Again](#)

Samaritans

T: 116 123 free from any phone

T: 0330 094 5717 local call charges may apply

For more information go to: [Belfast Samaritans](#)

Bereavement Advice Centre

For more information go to: [Bereavement Advice Centre | Free Helpline](#)

UK Commission on Bereavement

T: 0800 090 2309

For more information go to: [UK Bereavement Commission | Marie Curie](#)

Grief support for a person with dementia

Supporting you with grief and loss when a person has dementia: [Grief, loss and bereavement when a person has dementia | Alzheimer's Society](#)

Supporting a person with dementia who is experiencing grief or loss: [Supporting a person with dementia during a bereavement | Alzheimer's Society](#)

Financial support for funeral costs

If you are on a low income and need help to pay for a funeral which you are arranging, you may be able to get a Funeral Expenses Payment from the Social Fund. You might have to repay some or all of it from the deceased person's estate.

For more information go to: [Funeral Expenses Payments | nidirect](#)

Stopping benefits

When a person dies, you may need to contact the appropriate office to stop payments of any benefits or state pension. You will need the person's National Insurance Number for this.

To stop benefits **T: 0800 085 2463**

For more information about state pensions go to:

[Northern Ireland Pension Centre | nidirect](#)

It can also be reported to the Bereavement Service who will notify the Department for Communities, Social Security on your behalf.

Go to: [Bereavement Service - reporting a death | nidirect](#)

General information

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (BHSCT)

Seeking medical assistance

GP out of hours - for people who live in Belfast Trust area

If you or a person you care for need medical assistance outside of your GP's working hours you should ring the GP out of hours service.

Belfast Trust GP out of hours service is a primary urgent care service and is open when your GP is closed. The service is there for people who have an illness or injury that requires urgent attention but is not life threatening.

The GP out of hours service is a telephone triage service and not a walk-in service. You need to phone before you go to the GP out of hours service. It is based across two sites

For GP out of hours service please ring:

T: 028 9074 4447 or T: 028 9079 6220

Medical emergency / threat to life

FOR EMERGENCIES - 999

Including: stroke, heart attack, loss of consciousness,
breathing difficulties, severe bleeding or major trauma

ALWAYS CALL 999 IMMEDIATELY

NI Direct can give you ED waiting times, go to:

[Emergency department average waiting times | nidirect](#)

If you have a minor injury and need to attend the Adult Emergency Department (ED) at the Royal Victoria Hospital or Mater Hospital please

PHONE FIRST

028 9615 9444

Open 8am to 6pm

Monday to Friday

NOT on bank holidays

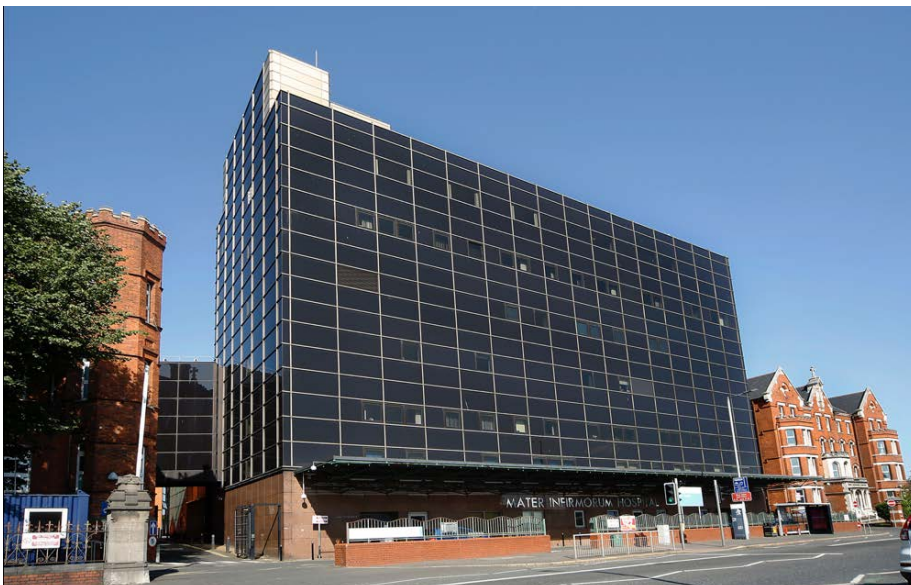


Get directed to the right care, first time

Royal Victoria Hospital



Mater Hospital



Belfast Trust call management telephone numbers

This is the central referral telephone number used by the Trust, where all referrals are logged and then sent on to the required service. Please see each service description for referral details. If you are making a referral, you will need to provide:

- Your date of birth, home address and contact details
- The name of your GP surgery.

If you are making a referral for someone else, you will also need their permission.

North and West Belfast call management centre	028 9615 8100
South and East Belfast call management centre	028 9615 8200

Belfast Trust switchboard T: 028 9056 5656

If you receive Belfast Health and Social Care Trust services, please let the Trust know if you change your telephone number and address.

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust - useful contacts

Hospital Contact Details	
Belfast City Hospital	T: 028 9032 9241
Mater Hospital	T: 028 9074 1211
Royal Victoria Hospital	T: 028 9024 0503
Musgrave Park Hospital	T: 028 9090 2000

Belfast Trust wellbeing and treatment centres

These are centres across Belfast run by the Belfast Trust where you will find several services such as GP, social workers, district nurses, occupational therapists, physiotherapists and weekly clinics. Please contact reception at the numbers below and ask to be connected to the service you are looking for.

Arches Wellbeing and Treatment Centre	T: 028 9504 7800
Beech Hall Wellbeing and Treatment Centre	T: 028 9504 0044
Bradbury Wellbeing and Treatment Centre	T: 028 9504 7770
Carlisle Wellbeing and Treatment Centre	T: 028 9504 2500
Grove Wellbeing and Treatment Centre	T: 028 9504 3400
Knockbreda Wellbeing and Treatment Centre	T: 028 9504 4450
Shankill Wellbeing and Treatment Centre	T: 028 9504 0043

My Care App



My Care gives you greater control of your healthcare by providing you with personalised and secure online access to specific parts of your medical records.

Through My Care you can access information like your medications, appointment letter and some test results. It is free to use, and it is optional. The Trust will still send out appointment letters and provide phone calls when required.

For more information go to: [Belfast Health & Social Care Trust website](#)

Compliments and complaints

Belfast Trust wants you to experience the best possible health and social care. Telling us what you think of the services you have received is important as it can help confirm what we are doing well and identify areas that need improvement.

You can:

- Give a compliment about the service you have used
- Make a comment or suggestion for improvement
- Make a complaint.

We value your opinions and will act on them whenever possible.

How to contact us:

Complaints Department

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

7th Floor, McKinney House

Musgrave Park Hospital

Stockman's Lane, Belfast, BT9 7JB.

Email: complaints@belfasttrust.hscni.net

T: 028 9504 8000 (10am to 12pm & 2pm to 4pm) Monday to Friday excluding bank holidays.

For further details go to the Trust website

[Compliments and complaints | Belfast Health & Social Care Trust website](#)

Care opinion

Care opinion is a place where you can share your experience of health or care services and help make them better for everyone. Care opinion makes it safe and simple to share your story online and see other people's stories too. You can see how stories are leading to change.

Using care opinion means that by sharing honest experiences of care, we learn to see the world differently. Working together, we can all help make care better.

Share your own story on care opinion

You can share your own story on care opinion. Say what was good and what could have been better. When your story is published on the site, your name or personal opinions will not be shared.

[Care Opinion | Belfast Health & Social Care Trust website](#)



Top Tips - from people living with dementia and carers

- Treat people with dementia with respect
- Listen to what people with dementia say so they don't have to repeat themselves
- Join a walking group, or a singing group - singing is great for the body and soul
- Give a person with dementia a bit more time to process what has been said and to respond
- Speak directly to us (not people with us) we can speak for ourselves
- Don't make decisions for people with dementia if they are still able to make them themselves
- Keep a diary of changes in memory, behaviour, routine, disorientation, confusion, change in concentration, change in vision, mood, behaviour, repeating questions, going out less, have you spoken to someone today,
- Use an orientation clock in bedroom and living room
- Use a white board to help remember appointments
- Remember everyone is different and what suits one person may not suit another
- Ask one question at a time and wait for the answer each time
- Find out what interests the person - this will help stimulate conversation
- Try to accept your diagnosis
- Tell family and friends as soon as you can - this will help you along your journey
- Join in activities / get involved
- Meet up with your family, this can give you joy and laughter
- Consider a person's dignity and privacy
- Use clear language
- If you are religious, your faith will be important



- Keep a note pad and pen handy at all times – write down things that come into your head
- Keep in contact with friends and family, they are an important part of your life and memories
- Reminders / notes on wall or notice board are useful ways to remember things
- Quiet spaces can be useful to reset and calm down
- Ask family and friends to support you / tell them how you are feeling
- Put sticky notes on mirror in bedroom to remind you to do things
- Contact GP to get a baseline health check
- Use calendar or your phone to save appointments
- Sticky labels
- Use a record sheet for medication
- Use a daily planner to keep you organised and help you remember
- Have a routine
- Don't be afraid to talk to others close to you about your diagnosis
- Ask what time works best if setting up an appointment
- Don't rush - give time to help the person stay calm
- A person with dementia is still the same person so treat them as you did before
- Carry on with your life as you always have, don't let your diagnosis stop you
- Join a group like Dementia NI – you will be among other people with a diagnosis who will understand you
- Listen to music, it's a brilliant way of bringing back your memories

The involvement of service users, carers and the wider public can lead to positive impacts on service delivery. Effective involvement is central to the delivery of high quality, effective and equitable care provision and can lead to improvements in the experience of those using services.

Belfast Trust is committed to improving the quality and effectiveness of personal and public involvement to:

- Improve service delivery
- Improve the experiences of services users and carers when they access health and social care in Belfast Trust
- Reduce inequalities in health
- Promote health and social wellbeing.

For more information go to: [Involving you | Belfast Health & Social Care Trust website](#)

Please tell about your experience of using this information booklet. This will support the booklet to improve and develop. Thank you.

Please use the QR code to leave your feedback.



Supporting research in dementia

Join Dementia Research

Join Dementia Research is run by the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) in partnership with Alzheimer Scotland, Alzheimer's Research UK and Alzheimer's Society. The service enables people to register their interest in participating in dementia research and be matched to suitable studies.

Through Join Dementia Research, people can see what dementia research is taking place, locally and across the UK. The service connects researchers with people who want to participate in studies. You will receive a notification and can choose whether or not to proceed. There is no obligation to take part in any of the studies you are matched to.

Taking part in a research study can take many forms. Examples include studies looking at prevention or new ways to diagnose the condition; drug studies trialling new treatments; and surveys aiming to improve the quality of life for people with dementia and/or their carers.

To register or find out more information, please visit joindementiaresearch.nihr.ac.uk

Time for Dementia

The Time for Dementia programme, delivered by Alzheimer's Society in collaboration with Ulster University, pairs families affected by dementia with undergraduate healthcare students, helping to better educate them about life with dementia and the challenges that come with it.

Local families affected by dementia from across Northern Ireland are being invited to take part in this award-winning programme, to help train the healthcare professionals of tomorrow and improve dementia care.

Time for Dementia is a fantastic way for the next generation of healthcare professionals to gain first-hand knowledge of what it's like to live with dementia.

If you would like to know more about the programme, or you know someone with dementia and a family carer who would like to take part, please get in touch

Email: timefordementia@alzheimers.org.uk

T: 028 9066 4100



Alzheimer's Society campaigns

Taking part in Alzheimer's Society campaigning means helping to influence the people who make decisions in Northern Ireland and across the UK, including local MLAs and MPs. Campaigning could mean signing and sharing petitions, writing to your MP or local council, attending parliamentary events, or helping amplify the voices of people affected by dementia.

Whether you have a personal connection to dementia or want to stand with the millions impacted, your voice can make a real difference. By becoming a campaigner, you'll help demand ambitious action from decision-makers and ensure dementia is recognised as the urgent healthcare priority it is.

For more information, please visit alzheimers.org.uk/get-involved/our-campaigns



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