

BECOMING A

# Dementia *friendly* church

RESOURCE PACK



# Introduction to the Resource Pack

This Resource Pack contains a variety of tools and information to help churches become more dementia friendly.

Churches Together in Greater Bristol (CTGB) are committed to supporting a regional, strategic approach to developing dementia friendly churches in the Bristol area. This pack has been compiled by a steering group working under the CTGB umbrella whose aim is to ensure that every denomination will have its own dementia champion within their own churches and to facilitate learning from each other's experience.

This steering group is aware that there are numerous local examples from churches of innovative and compassionate approaches to including and supporting people living with dementia. Although there are reasons for churches taking different approaches to supporting people living with dementia, there are also some common key steps to becoming more dementia friendly and CTGB has committed itself to promoting and supporting the implementation of these. The group has also researched resources that are publicly available and made contacts with other regions to see what is happening nationally.

Four key areas in the life of the church have been identified as offering potential in making for developing a dementia-friendly church: -

- our pastoral care
- our church buildings
- our services and activities
- our community networks.

The importance of family and friends of those living with dementia was also acknowledged and it is vital that our church communities are active in their support of carers as well as those living with dementia.

The pack contains.

- A self-review toolkit designed to help churches reflect on how dementia-friendly they are and areas for improvement.
- Top tips for communicating with people living with dementia.
- A list of both regional and national contacts of organisations and resources
- Details of the Bristol Dementia Action Alliance dementia aware awards scheme and the Diocese of Bristol (Church of England) dementia friendly churches certification process

## Dementia: What to look for and how to respond

Sign	How to Respond
Staring or “Daydreaming”	Observe and gently offer help if appropriate
Memory problems Not knowing what to do Forgetfulness.	Observe and gently offer help if appropriate
Looking confused Not focussed	Gentle reassurance and offer of help
Spatial awareness Bumping into things Lack of confidence	Observe. Offer guidance and a friendly arm
Stammering Stuttering	Be patient. Sometimes taking the person to what you think they are talking about can be a great help.
Speech Repetitiveness Clock watching e.g., asking “What’s the time” repeatedly.	Patience and a helping hand. Let them say the same thing again, it will help them if you don’t cut them off mid- sentence
Poor Money Handling at e, g, Checkouts/Tills/Payment (May be useful in a church café)	Be patient and understanding. Without being intrusive, offer to help them count their money out. Don’t hurry them, raise eyebrows or “tut”.
Writing repeat cheques	Accept one cheque, then give gentle reassurance
Over-ordering products (OCD) Compulsive buying	Check that they really do want that amount of the same product
You have concerns about the individual.	Discuss with Church Safeguarding Officer

## Top Tips for communicating:



- Smile
- Approach the person in a friendly manner
- Offer encouragement both verbally and non-verbally.
- Establish and maintain eye contact.
- Talk slowly and clearly and use short sentences.
- Give time for a response - you may have to repeat what you say several times.
- Don't hurry them, be patient.
- Don't get involved in an argument.
- Be gentle and kind, avoid speaking sharply or raising your voice.
- Treat the person with Dementia as a member of your own family.

## Self Review Toolkit

This Self Review Toolkit will enable you to reflect on what dementia friendly actions your church is already taking and identify some ways you would like to develop your church to become dementia friendly and to develop an action plan. Once you have an action plan you can apply to The Bristol Dementia Action Alliance to be accredited as 'working towards being dementia friendly' or if you are a Church of England church the Bristol Diocese Dementia Friendly church certificate.

This resource consists of four review exercises covering four key aspects of church life: Buildings, Worship, Pastoral Care and Community. Choose one area at a time to review. Each review exercise consists of four steps:

**STEP  
1**

**REFLECT:**  
On how people living with dementia experience this aspect of your church

**STEP  
2**

**REVIEW:**  
What you are doing in this area using the questions posed

**STEP  
3**

**REFLECT:**  
Suggested ideas for developing this area.

**STEP  
4**

**DEVELOP:**  
Identify some actions you can take.

You might also like to begin by considering the following questions:

- What do you hope to achieve by becoming more dementia friendly?
- What is your current vision?
- What has encouraged you in becoming dementia friendly so far?

# Dementia Friendly Church Focus: Buildings

## Reflect:

What conversations have you had with those living with dementia and their carers about how welcoming and safe they find your church buildings and any changes that would help them?

In what ways do your buildings offer a welcoming environment to people living with dementia?

In what ways have you found your buildings challenging in providing a welcoming place for people living with dementia?

## Review:

Briefly discuss each of the questions below and circle yes/no/maybe. For each question you have answered 'No' or 'Maybe' to you might like to ask the question: Would we like to address this in some way?

Is our signage clear? Is the font simple and of good contrast with some symbols/ pictures? Signs for toilets and exits are particularly important.	Yes/ No/ Maybe
Are signs affixed to the doors they relate to, not next to them? At eye level and well lit. Are there signs at key decision points in the building?	Yes/ No/ Maybe
Are entrances well lit and do they make as much use as possible of natural light? Are pools of bright light and deep shadow avoided?	Yes/ No/ Maybe
Are floor surfaces flat, have a matt finish and not slippery? Are changes in level clearly marked?	Yes/ No/ Maybe
Do we have a quiet, safe space for people who need to withdraw from the main church?	Yes/ No/ Maybe
Are our toilets accessible and well signed? Is sanitary ware of contrasting colour to the walls?	Yes/ No/ Maybe
Are there familiar features which identify the space as a church – for example a cross?	Yes/ No/ Maybe
Do we have suitable seating for people with mobility challenges including some comfortable chairs?	Yes/ No/ Maybe
Has a full accessibility audit been completed?	Yes/ No/ Maybe

## Explore:

Briefly discuss the suggested ideas for action below. These ideas are drawn from good practice in dementia friendly churches. Consider whether there are any other ideas for action you might want to explore.

Could we have an event to consult people living with dementia and their carers to gather their suggestions for changes to the building?	Yes/ No/ Maybe
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Could we improve the signage in our building? Possibly adding or moving signs and adding symbols or pictures.	Yes/ No/ Maybe
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Could we create some landmarks such as pictures or plants to help people navigate around our building?	Yes/ No/ Maybe
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Are there trip hazards or uneven surfaces we can improve or if not make more visible?	Yes/ No/ Maybe
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Could we create a quiet withdrawing space within our church?	Yes/ No/ Maybe
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Could we improve our seating through adding some comfortable chairs, chairs with arms, cushions?	Yes/ No/ Maybe
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Can we make our toilets easier to use with contrasting colours, pictorial signs on doors to show how to lock/unlock, alarms.	Yes/ No/ Maybe
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Are there ways we could make the entrance and inside of our building more obviously recognisable as a church?	Yes/ No/ Maybe
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## Develop:

Having reflected, reviewed, and explored some possible ideas now identify some actions that you will take to make your church more dementia friendly. These could be actions to address the questions on the first page or suggestions from the second page or other actions you have identified in the process.

Action, we have decided to take	Who will do this action?	When will we do it?

# Dementia Friendly Church Focus: Pastoral Care

## Reflect:

What conversations have you had with those living with dementia and their families about how their experiences of pastoral care in your church?

What pastoral care initiatives if any are you offering people living with dementia and their families?

In what ways have you found it challenging to provide pastoral care for those living with dementia?

## Review:

Briefly discuss each of the questions below and circle yes/no/maybe. For each question you have answered 'No' or 'Maybe' to you might like to ask the question: Would we like to address this in some way?

Do we have safeguarding guidelines in place for home visits to those living with dementia?	Yes/ No/ Maybe
Have those who provide pastoral care received dementia awareness training?	Yes/ No/ Maybe
Do we provide any support to carers of people living with dementia?	Yes/ No/ Maybe
Do we provide any ministry to local residential homes?	Yes/ No/ Maybe
Do we know where to signpost and/or refer people for additional and expert information and support?	Yes/ No/ Maybe
Are our church premises used to host events for those living with dementia and their carers?	Yes/ No/ Maybe
Have we identified "champions" for appropriate church services with a particular responsibility to ensure a good welcome for people living with dementia and their carers?	Yes/ No/ Maybe



## Explore:

Briefly discuss the suggested ideas for action below. These ideas are drawn from good practice in dementia friendly churches. Consider whether there are any other ideas for action you might want to explore.

Could we appoint a dementia coordinator for our church?	Yes/ No/ Maybe
Could we set up a pastoral care team if we don't have one?	Yes/ No/ Maybe
Could we run a Dementia Friends awareness session for our pastoral care and welcome teams?	Yes/ No/ Maybe
Could we run safeguarding training course for our pastoral care team?	Yes/ No/ Maybe
Could we make a collection of memory boxes, activity quilts and sensory bands to have in church and to give to people?	Yes/ No/ Maybe
Could we run an event such as a memory café or film evening for people living with dementia and their carers?	Yes/ No/ Maybe
Could we develop a ministry outreach to a local care home?	Yes/ No/ Maybe
Could we offer lifts to church for people living with dementia?	Yes/ No/ Maybe

## Develop:

Having reflected, reviewed, and explored some possible ideas now identify some actions that you will take to improve your church's pastoral care for people living with dementia and their carers. These could be actions to address the questions on the first page or suggestions from the second page or other actions you have identified in the process.

Action, we have decided to take	Who will do this action?	When will we do it?

# Dementia Friendly Church Focus: Church Services

## Reflect:

What conversations have you had with those living with dementia and their families about how their experiences of your church services?

Are you aware of how many of your congregation are affected by dementia?

What areas have you found challenging in making your church services more dementia friendly?

## Review:

Briefly discuss each of the questions below and circle yes/no/maybe. For each question you have answered 'No' or 'Maybe' to you might like to ask the question: Would we like to address this in some way?

Are our welcomers aware of how they can best support people living with dementia and their carers, when welcoming them to a church service or event?	Yes/ No/ Maybe
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Have we considered how people with dementia will understand and access our services and special events?	Yes/ No/ Maybe
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Are leaders dressed in the "expected" manner for our denomination?	Yes/ No/ Maybe
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Will the contents of our services: their music, language, and action, be familiar to those who have attended church at some time in their lives?	Yes/ No/ Maybe
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Do our Service Sheets and Notice Sheets have illustrations that can provide a visual focus for someone with dementia?	Yes/ No/ Maybe
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Do our intercessions sometimes included prayers for those with dementia, their carers and family members?	Yes/ No/ Maybe
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Is there sufficient flexibility so that those with dementia can express their spirituality in the way that suits them best, whether it be Parish Eucharist, praise service or solitude in church?	Yes/ No/ Maybe
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Do we offer any specific dementia friendly services?	Yes/ No/ Maybe
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## Explore:

Briefly discuss the suggested ideas for action below.

These ideas are drawn from good practice in dementia friendly churches.

Consider whether there are any other ideas for action you might want to explore

Could we hold a designated dementia friendly service on a regular or occasional basis? For example, a dementia-focussed Songs of Praise.	Yes/ No/ Maybe
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Could we hold a review of the dementia friendliness of our services?	Yes/ No/ Maybe
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Could we explore how we adapt our service sheets to make them more user friendly?	Yes/ No/ Maybe
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Could we create a Welcome Card (or equivalent) for newcomers and visitors giving general information about the church, with signposting for any group-specific information?	Yes/ No/ Maybe
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Could we improve the signposting of our services such as announcing the first line of hymns and when to stand/sit.	Yes/ No/ Maybe
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Could we explore ways of making coffee after services more inclusive for people with dementia?	Yes/ No/ Maybe
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Could we create opportunities to hear the testimonies of older people in our services?	Yes/ No/ Maybe
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## Develop:

Having reflected, reviewed, and explored some possible ideas now identify some actions that you will take to make your church services more dementia friendly. These could be actions to address the questions on the first page or suggestions from the second page or other actions you have identified in the process.

Action, we have decided to take	Who will do this action?	When will we do it?

# Dementia Friendly Church Focus: Community

## Reflect:

How aware are our church leaders and members of the needs of those living with dementia?

How aware are church members and leaders on the plans we are developing around dementia?

What relationship does our church have with local dementia resources and activities?

## Review:

Briefly discuss each of the questions below and circle yes/no/maybe. For each question you have answered 'No' or 'Maybe' to you might like to ask the question: Would we like to address this in some way?

Do we know who our local community contacts on dementia are?	Yes/ No/ Maybe
Do we share information about community dementia resources with our membership through noticeboards etc.	Yes/ No/ Maybe
Do we have a dementia advocate who acts as a point of contact within our church?	Yes/ No/ Maybe
Do we include any dementia charities in our charitable giving?	Yes/ No/ Maybe
Have we run a Dementia Friends/awareness session in our church?	Yes/ No/ Maybe
Is anyone in our church linked to a local dementia charity and/or other local groups for people living with dementia?	Yes/ No/ Maybe
Is our church used for any dementia-related events such as 'singing for the brain'?	Yes/ No/ Maybe
Have other users of our church buildings had any dementia awareness training?	Yes/ No/ Maybe
Do we invite people don't live with dementia to our dementia friendly events?	Yes/ No/ Maybe

## Explore:

Briefly discuss the suggested ideas for action below. These ideas are drawn from good practice in dementia friendly churches. Consider whether there are any other ideas for action you might want to explore.

Could a member of the church be trained as a Dementia Champion so that they can deliver Dementia Friends awareness sessions?	Yes/ No/ Maybe
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Could we hold a multi-generational event for people living with dementia, their carers, families, and friends including children to make connections across the generations.	Yes/ No/ Maybe
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Could we run a Dementia Friends/awareness session in a Sunday service?	Yes/ No/ Maybe
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Could we create a booklist of books around dementia and see which ones of them are available in our local library?	Yes/ No/ Maybe
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Could we use National Dementia Awareness week each May to run events special events or services?	Yes/ No/ Maybe
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Could we send up an information zone/board in our church with local information about dementia?	Yes/ No/ Maybe
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could we invite all the users of our church buildings to participate in a dementia awareness session?	Yes/ No/ Maybe
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## Develop:

Having reflected, reviewed, and explored some possible ideas now identify some actions that you will take to develop community awareness around dementia. These could be actions to address the questions on the first page or suggestions from the second page or other actions you have identified in the process.

Action, we have decided to take	Who will do this action?	When will we do it?

## Action Summary Sheet

Use this table to summarise the key actions from your Self Review that you wish to prioritise. For each action identify when you want the action to be completed by and who will have responsibility for making sure it happens.

Action		Date for Completion	Responsibility
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			

# Resources

## Groups and Organisations in Bristol

Organisation and contacts	Purpose
<p>Age UK (Bristol)  <a href="http://www.ageukbristol.org.uk">www.ageukbristol.org.uk</a>                      Canningford House                      38 Victoria Street, Bristol. BS1 6BY</p> <p>0117 929 7537 – Support Hub helpline  <a href="mailto:admin@ageukbristol.org.uk">admin@ageukbristol.org.uk</a></p>	<p>Information and advice for over 55s. A range of publications are available.</p> <p>The <b>Support Hub</b> provides a range of different support for older people via a helpline, including <a href="#">Practical Support</a>, <a href="#">Emotional Support</a> and <a href="#">Social Support</a></p>
<p>Alive Activities  <a href="http://www.aliveactivities.org">www.aliveactivities.org</a>                      0117 377 4756 <a href="mailto:info@aliveactivites.org">info@aliveactivites.org</a></p>	<p>Activities for older people and training in running successful programmes and events.</p> <p>The Alive <b>Dementia Meeting Centres</b> offer support for people with a recent diagnosis of a dementia, and people living with a mild to moderate dementia and their carers.</p>
<p>Bristol Dementia Action Alliance                      07741 142701  <a href="http://www.bristoldaa.co.uk">www.bristoldaa.co.uk</a>                      office@bdaa.org.uk</p>	<p>Working to raise awareness amongst retail, business, schools... across Bristol to create a Dementia Friendly city.</p>
<p>Dementia Wellbeing Service                      Access point 0117 9045151    <a href="http://www.bristoldementiawellbeing.org">www.bristoldementiawellbeing.org</a></p>	<p>A partnership between the NHS and Alzheimer's Society supporting people from diagnosis to the end of life.</p>
<p>University of the Third Age  <a href="http://www.bristolu3a.org.uk">www.bristolu3a.org.uk</a></p>	<p>Offer a variety of learning programmes and visits across Bristol.</p>

## Groups and organisations in South Gloucestershire

Organisation Contact	Purpose
<p>Age UK (South Gloucestershire)  <a href="http://www.ageuksouthglos.org.uk">www.ageuksouthglos.org.uk</a>                      67 High Street Thornbury BS35 2AW                      01454 411707 <a href="mailto:info@ageuksouthglos.org.uk">info@ageuksouthglos.org.uk</a></p>	<p>Information and advice for over 55s. A range of publications are available.</p>
<p>South Gloucestershire BDAA                      Email – <a href="mailto:dementia@southernbrooks.org.uk">dementia@southernbrooks.org.uk</a></p>	<p>Being re launched 2023</p>
<p>University of the Third Age  <a href="http://www.thornburyu3a.org.uk">www.thornburyu3a.org.uk</a></p>	<p>Offer a variety of learning programmes and visits across South Gloucestershire.</p>

## National Organisations

Organisation and contacts	Purpose
<p>Alzheimers Society  <a href="http://www.alzheimers.org.uk">www.alzheimers.org.uk</a>                      0300 222 11 22</p>	<p>To lead the fight against dementia. Advice, support, and resources are available to anybody affected by dementia</p>

Dementia Action Alliance <a href="http://www.dementiaaction.org.uk">www.dementiaaction.org.uk</a>	A network of Alliances across the country designed to support those living with dementia and their carers and promote awareness in local communities.
Dementia connect Support line 0330 1503456 <a href="http://www.alzheimers.org.uk/about-us/contact-us">www.alzheimers.org.uk/about-us/contact-us</a>	A geographical service directory for people affected by dementia.
Dementia Friends UK <a href="http://www.dementiafriends.org.uk">www.dementiafriends.org.uk</a> 0300 222 5855	An initiative to change people's perception about dementia. Find out more about the Dementia Friends programme and volunteering opportunities.
Admiral nurses  Call our Helpline for free on 0800 888 6678, send an email to <a href="mailto:helpline@dementiauk.org">helpline@dementiauk.org</a>	Admiral Nurses are specialist dementia nurses. Continually supported and developed by Dementia UK, they provide life-changing support for families affected by all forms of dementia – including Alzheimer's disease.

### Christian Organisations

Organisation and contact	Purpose
Christians on Ageing <a href="http://www.christiansonageing.org.uk">www.christiansonageing.org.uk</a>	An organisation with concern for the spiritual and pastoral care of people living with dementia.
Glorious Opportunity <a href="http://www.gloriousopportunity.org.uk">www.gloriousopportunity.org.uk</a>	A website and Facebook page designed by Christian GP, Jennifer Bute now living with dementia
Gift of Years (Bible Reading Fellowship) <a href="http://www.thegiftofyears.org.uk">www.thegiftofyears.org.uk</a>	Providing a variety of resources to enhance the spiritual journey of older people, including those living with dementia.
Livability <a href="http://www.livability.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Travelling-Together_webFINAL.pdf">www.livability.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Travelling-Together_webFINAL.pdf</a>	Livability offers audits, resources and training to Christians and churches to help develop dementia friendly practice.
Methodist Homes <a href="http://www.mha.org.uk">www.mha.org.uk</a> 01332 296 200	Bringing quality to later life. MHA is one of the pioneers of person-centred specialist dementia care.

More information on how your church can receive a Dementia aware award if you are in Bristol.

[Dementia Aware Awards - Bristol Dementia Action Alliance \(bdaa.org.uk\)](http://www.bdaa.org.uk)

[www.bdaa.org.uk/get-involved/dementia-aware-awards/](http://www.bdaa.org.uk/get-involved/dementia-aware-awards/)

Information of how your church can sign up to the Diocese of Bristol Dementia Friendly churches award if you are a Church of England Church.

[www.bristol.anglican.org/dementia](http://www.bristol.anglican.org/dementia)



## Publications

- Bute, Jennifer *Dementia from the Inside : A Doctor's Personal Journey of Hope* (SPCK, 2018)
- Coghlan, Patrick *Creating 'Church' At Home: for older people living with dementia* (Kevin Mayhew, 2016)
- Collicutt, Joanna *Thinking of You: a resource for the spiritual care of people with dementia* (Bible Reading Fellowship, 2016)
- Morris, Steven *Memory café : how to engage with memory loss and build community* (Grove Publications, 2017)
- Nash, Wanda *Come, let us age!* (Bible Reading Fellowship, 2017)
- Norman, Kate & Phipps, Jill *Messy Vintage : 52 sessions to share Christ-centred fun and fellowship with the older generation* (Bible Reading Fellowship, 2021)
- O'Keeffe, Siobhan *Petals of Prayer* (Kevin Mayhew Press, 2011)
- Pelloquin, Lindsay & Jaye Knightley *Celebrating the Seasons in Residential Care Homes : A service for every week of the year, 2022*
- Salisbury, Matthew (ed) *God In Fragments : worshipping with those living with dementia* (Church House Publishing, 2020)
- Sampson, Fay *Prayers for Dementia* (Darton, Longman and Todd, 2017)
- Swinton, John *Dementia: Living in the Memories of God* (SCM Press, 2017)
- Treloar, Dr. Adrian *Dementia: hope on a difficult journey* (Redemptorist Publications, 2016)
- Williams, Tricia *God's Not Forgotten Me : Experiencing Faith in Dementia* (Cascade Books, 2022)
- Zoutwelle-Morris, Sarah *Chocolate Rain : 100 Ideas for a Creative Approach to Activities in Dementia Care* (Hawker Publications, 2011)