

Chorlton & Whalley Range  
Dementia Action Group



# Dementia and Behaviour Change

For family, friends  
and neighbours



**When someone you know is looking after a person with dementia, it can be difficult to know what to do and how to cope with the change in your relationship with the person and their carer.**

This leaflet offers some suggestions on what you could do.

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*It would be good if more people understood about behaviour change – some friends cope, others don't. They just abandon you.”*





## Family, friends and neighbours

**When someone develops dementia, it can have a big impact on everyone around them.**

Some people know how to help. Often, they've had previous experience of caring for someone with dementia. It can seem very different from caring for someone with a condition that doesn't affect the brain.

Some people are worried that they won't know what to do or what to say, or that they'll get overwhelmed or dragged into something that they can't cope with.

Others find it too hard to see the ongoing changes, to witness the person they knew disappearing bit by bit, and don't know how to deal with the "new" person.

Some think that it's best if they leave things well alone, as it's a private matter.

Others are scared that they may one day have dementia or will have to look after someone with dementia, and don't want to have to think about it.

## Caring

Every person with dementia has a different experience and the same is true for the people who are caring for them, but there are lots of shared experiences.

**Carers can become isolated and lonely.  
Their world shrinks.**

They may have to give up work or hobbies, so lose contact with work colleagues and friends.

They can get tired, and not have the energy to chat or socialise as they used to.

They become isolated because friends, family and neighbours back away or fail to contact them.

Services for people with dementia are insufficient and carers often have to fight to get the services they need.

Caring can put a strain on family relationships.



## What you can do

- Reach out to the person with dementia, and the people who care for them. Be understanding but also be persistent in offering help.
- Be understanding of the stresses and strains that come from living with and caring for someone with dementia.
- Ask the carer how you can help and support them – every situation is different. Some people may welcome support with daily chores, others might want help with form filling or phone calls.
- Full time caring is very tiring, and people need time to themselves. Offer to look after the person with dementia. Even a couple of hours makes a big difference.
- Listen carefully to the person who is caring about what works and what doesn't.
- When you speak to someone with dementia, don't contradict what they are telling you. Join in the story and enjoy the conversation.
- People with dementia will pick up on your emotions. If you are warm and encouraging, they will feel better.
- Find out more about dementia (there are lots of books and pamphlets) and attend a Dementia Friends course run by the Alzheimer's Society. They are free, fun and informative.

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**If you see someone struggling in a shop, in a café, or on the street, be patient and see if there is anything you can do to help.**

# Information and support

**Manchester City Council** carry out a carers assessment which may lead to additional support.

**Tel:** 0161 234 5001

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**Carers Manchester** is a first point of contact for carers who require support and advice.

**Tel:** 0161 543 8000

[www.carersmanchester.org.uk](http://www.carersmanchester.org.uk)

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**Together Dementia Support** is an expert local support organisation for people living with dementia and their families and carers. It maintains a directory of local services.

**Tel:** 0161 226 7186

[www.togetherdementiasupport.org](http://www.togetherdementiasupport.org)

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**Dementia UK** have a free and confidential advice line where you can speak to a specialist Admiral Nurse who can help with all different kinds of dementia.

**Tel:** 0800 888 6678

[www.dementiauk.org](http://www.dementiauk.org)

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## **Chorlton and Whalley Range Dementia Action Group**

**Email:** [ChWrDementiaActionGroup@gmail.com](mailto:ChWrDementiaActionGroup@gmail.com)

**Facebook:** Chorlton and Whalley Range Dementia Action Group

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**More help on what you can do can be accessed here:**

[www.caregiver.org/resource/caregivers-guide-understanding-dementia-behaviors/](http://www.caregiver.org/resource/caregivers-guide-understanding-dementia-behaviors/)

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