

## Dementia factsheet

This is one in a series of factsheets which aim to give some practical information and tips to support residents, friends and family affected by dementia.



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# An introduction to dementia

Housing 21 is committed to being a dementia-friendly organisation and we provide awareness raising and training to all our staff to understand the impact of dementia and the role which good quality housing can play. There is also lots of support in the community and health and social care sectors, some of which is contained in this factsheet.



When you've met one person with dementia,  
you've met one person with dementia.

Professor Tom Kitwood

Dementia manifests itself differently in every person. It is a condition that could be caused by several different diseases that affect the brain, such as Alzheimer's or Vascular Dementia. There are over 100 different types of dementia. The word 'dementia' describes a group

of symptoms that may include memory loss, difficulties with thinking, problem-solving or language, and often changes in mood, perception or behaviour. Dementia is a progressive condition .

According to the Alzheimer's society, dementia affects more around **850,000** people in the UK

## Our approach

Housing 21 is committed to supporting our residents who are either living with, or are affected by, dementia.

There are approximately 24% of residents in Extra Care and 11% in Retirement Housing with either a diagnosis or suspected dementia or cognitive impairment.

Good quality, appropriate housing can help people live as well as they can with dementia and so consideration of this and other conditions is embedded throughout our housing and care services. This includes:

- ✔ **Design of properties**
  - All of our new buildings incorporate dementia-friendly design and our retrofits and refurbishments contain as many dementia-friendly design elements as they can
- ✔ **Services**
  - Training of staff
  - Advanced training for Dementia Advocates to support other members of staff
- ✔ **Commitment to dementia related initiatives**
  - All staff are Dementia Friends
  - Contractors are required to undertake a Dementia Friends session before working on our properties
  - Potential and current suppliers are required to sign up to the Dementia Friends initiative.

The Dementia Friends initiative is a great way to provide a basic understanding of dementia and how it affects people and we remain committed to all staff becoming Dementia Friends. We also strongly encourage residents to take part in a session too.

### The five key messages which form the Dementia Friends initiative are:

1. Dementia is not a natural part of ageing
2. It is caused by diseases of the brain
3. It is not just about memory loss
4. It is possible to live well with dementia
5. There is more to the person than the dementia

Dementia may affect an individual's ability to remember and understand everyday facts such as names, dates and places. Some people may experience difficulties with thinking, problem-solving or have changes in their mood or behaviour. More than half of individuals with dementia have not received a formal diagnosis so some people may not be aware that they have dementia.

It is a very multi-faceted condition. Some of the symptoms of dementia are also symptoms of other conditions, disabilities and impairments. Supporting people with dementia can therefore also help you to support people with a range of conditions.

Please see our other factsheets to understand varying aspects of dementia and how you can support people affected by dementia.

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Whilst having a clear out I came across a picture of the Japanese art of Kintsugi. This is where a cracked piece of ceramic usually a bowl or a vase is broken open at the cracks and then held together with molten silver or precious metal. It's still broken but to some people it still looks very beautiful with the gold or silver poured through it. It occurred to me that this is a little bit like all the people who support people living with dementia. That they pour their love and care and concern into our broken bits and although they can't heal us they help us to function and to last a little bit longer than we would have without their care, it really is golden and that includes Dementia Diaries and the people that run it, thank you for helping.

Shelagh Robinson,  
Housing 21 resident, Dementia Diaries



Any feedback on this factsheet should be sent to  
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All people shown on this factsheet are residents of Housing 21.  
They do not necessarily have dementia nor are they connected  
with the contents of this factsheet.