

COVID-19 and Dementia

There are many daily challenges for people living with or affected by dementia, COVID-19 has bought new additional challenges.

As a dementia-friendly organisation, we want to support everyone affected by dementia and other conditions. This includes reinforcing advice given on social distancing as well as signposting people towards helplines and other resources to help slow down any cognitive decline which may be as a result of the current circumstances.

A person living with dementia, depending on what stage they are at, may impact on their ability to understand advice around protecting themselves and self-isolating.

Stopping the spread of the virus is key. We can do this by:

- Staying six feet away from other people, this may need to be reinforced on a regular basis
- Staying at home apart from essential trips out
- Washing our hands for 20 seconds and not touching our face

Court Managers and carers know their residents better than anyone and will understand what stage of dementia people are at or the particular challenges faced by individuals. It may be necessary to take additional measures to protect people living with dementia and other residents.

Some people living with dementia may find it harder to understand what is happening with COVID-19 and what they are being asked to do to help combat it such as staying at home or washing hands more regularly. Take extra time to explain it to them.

If a resident is walking with purpose, it would be useful to get information from friends or family to complete the Herbert Protocol which provides vital information if people go missing.

It is available on Wilma or here www.met.police.uk/notices/af/herbert-protocol/

Mental Capacity Act 2005 and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards

Guidance has been issued (9 April 2020) which is only relevant during the current COVID-19 pandemic.

If there are concerns about an individual who lacks capacity and who is not social distancing and may have suspected or confirmed symptoms, this is a Public Health Team concern. The Coronavirus Act 2020 gives Public Health Officers power to impose a proportionate response, including screening and isolation.

Registered care services - if you are struggling to get support from the above you should contact your CQC inspector.

If the reasons for the isolation are purely to prevent harm to others or the maintenance of public health, then public health powers should be used. You should contact your local Public Health Protection team. Your local Public Health Officer can be contacted via phone. A list of all areas, Public Health Team Numbers can be found on the following link:

www.gov.uk/guidance/contacts-phe-health-protection-teams

For Retirement Housing, if there are concerns surrounding capacity you need to contact social services and Public Health Protection Team.

Recording & Documentation

1. All self-isolation cases must be recorded on ERICA, initially under health – category COVID-19 Self Isolation.
2. If you notify public health as the resident is posing a risk to others and either have care needs, it needs to be recorded on ERICA under safeguarding – Category RISK TO SELF.

3. These cases need to be escalated to your line manager, Alicia Wheeler (health and safety) and Emily Russell (Safeguarding Lead)

4. For all cases - You must record the date symptoms started, date of hospital admittance and date of confirmed case.

If someone does not lack the capacity but is posing a risk to other residents and have symptoms of COVID-19, it is recommended that we provide them with information on how to self-isolate and socially distance prior to calling The Public Health Team for advice.

Scams

In the current pandemic there has been a significant increase in scams. Please be extra vigilant at these times.

Action on Elder Abuse

This helpline not only provides direct advice and help to people who may be in danger of experiencing abuse but they also provide unique information on the nature, circumstances and dynamics of elder abuse. Call their helpline (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm) on **0808 808 8141**

Resources

It may be useful to signpost residents and / or their families to the following resources. There are also links to these on Wilma and our website www.housing21.org.uk

Alzheimer's Society

Their webpage is dedicated to resources to help support a person living with dementia during this pandemic. It includes how to support a person with dementia living alone, how to support from a distance, activities and other useful organisations.

www.alzheimers.org.uk/get-support/coronavirus-covid-19

The Dementia Connect helpline number is

0333 150 3456

www.alzheimers.org.uk/get-support/dementia-connect-support-line

Dementia UK

Includes factsheets such as dealing with restlessness in a person living with dementia, looking after the needs of informal carers, film and reading suggestions.

They run a helpline, staffed by nurses who can help answer any questions:

helpline@dementiauk.org or **0800 888 6678**

www.dementiauk.org/get-support/coronavirus-covid-19/

Housing LIN

This site includes information specifically for older people's housing providers and more details as to how to support someone living with dementia.

www.housinglin.org.uk/Topics/type/Coronavirus-COVID-19-Tips-for-the-housing-sector-on-supporting-someone-affected-by-dementia/

Age UK

Their advice Line is open from 8am –7pm, 7 days a week on **0800 678 1174** or contact@ageuk.uk

www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/coronavirus/

The Silver Line

The Silver Line is the only free confidential helpline providing information, friendship and advice to older people, open 24 hours a day, every day of the year. Call them on **0800 470 8090**

www.thesilverline.org.uk/latest-news-2/coronavirus/

How is Covid 19 affecting people affected by dementia?

The Alzheimer's Society carried out some research on how people living with dementia are being affected by the Covid 19 pandemic.

Themes of the responses are captured below:

- Loneliness and isolation, not having visitors like usually would do
- 'Being in the house all the time is really challenging'
- Worries about losing abilities – speech, using public transport, other skills: "It's like a bereavement because it happened so quickly and there are no alternatives. People are feeling hopeless and helpless. People have said the thing that kept my dementia at bay was doing things - prepping for them and then doing them. WM says she feels her dementia increasing already. Man near us has stopped talking now because of the changes and will lose ability to get bus on his own"
- Carers worried that loved one who live alone are leaving the house and not understanding or remembering the situation
- Difficulties getting medicine and food supplies
- Media/news can be addictive and cause anxiety, scaremongering
- Not knowing where to go for information or too much information
- Vulnerability from scammers