



After a diagnosis of Dementia is Given

If you or a relative has just been diagnosed with dementia, you may be feeling numb, scared and unable to take everything in. Give yourself a little time to adjust. If you can, talk to family and friends about your feelings around a dementia diagnosis.

Once the initial feelings have passed, it's time to try to move on and create an action plan for the future, while you're still able to make clear decisions for yourself. This page covers:

Get assessed

Your local authority has a duty to carry out a care and support needs assessment to establish which services you may need to arrange an assessment contact Social Services, your GP. Or Teesside Dementia Link Services.

Services and support

Find out what's available locally so that you're prepared and able to call on this support as and when you need it.

Services arranged by local authorities vary between areas but may include:

- home care services
- equipment and adaptations for your home
- Care visits to assist with tasks
- Day care
- Respite care

We at Teesside Dementia Link Services provide:

Carers support groups
Dementia Cafe's
Home support visits for carers

Make a will

It's a good idea to make a will, if you haven't already. This ensures that when you die, your money and possessions go to the people you choose.

A person with dementia can still make or change a will, provided you can show that you understand what you're doing and what the effects will be. Your solicitor can advise if this is the case.

Put your papers in order / make your wishes know

Make sure all your important papers can be found easily. These might include:

- bank and building society statements
- mortgage or rental documents
- insurance policies
- your will
- tax and pension details
- bills and guarantees

Consider setting up direct debits or standing orders for your regular bills. This means they'll be paid automatically from your bank account each month.

Make your wishes and personal preferences know,

Claim benefits

Make sure you're claiming all the benefits you're entitled to. In particular, check whether you are eligible for:

- personal independence payment (PIP)
- attendance allowance
- carers allowance
- income support
- housing benefit
- council tax relief
- pension credit.

Our home visits include checking if you are eligible for these benefits as well as assistance in completing the forms

Lasting power of attorney

You can appoint one or more people as "attorneys" to manage your affairs, including your finances, property and medical treatment, should it become necessary. You can choose anybody you trust to be your attorney – usually a close friend or family member – but they must be over 18.

Advance care planning

You may wish to make an advance care plan so you can have a say in your future medical care or where you would prefer to be cared for.

Making an advance decision enables you to refuse, in advance, a specific medical treatment or procedure should you become unable to decide for yourself.

It also takes a massive pressure from your family trying to guess what you would like then to do

Driving

A diagnosis of dementia doesn't necessarily mean you have to stop driving immediately, but you are **legally required to inform the DVLA and your car insurance company** promptly. Your insurance will be void if you do not inform them.

The DVLA will contact your hospital consultant or GP for further information on whether you can continue to drive safely.

Take care of your health

It's important to look after your physical and mental health when you have dementia

- depression is very common in dementia. Talk to your GP, as there are a range of treatments, including Dementia cafes, days out, support groups that can help.
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- eat a healthy diet.
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- exercise is very good this could be a daily walk, gardening or trying chair aerobics

- Ask your GP if you would benefit from flue vaccination and pneumonia vaccination
- Have regular dental, eyesight and hearing check-ups

See your GP if you feel unwell, as things like **chest or urine infections can make you feel very confused if not treated promptly.**

Create your life story

Memory books can be a helpful way of stimulating your memory and reconnecting you with your loved ones in the future.

Essentially, it's a "This Is Your Life" compilation of photographs, notes and keepsakes from your childhood through to the present day. It can be either a physical book or a digital version.

Music is very powerful so you may also want to create a digital or online "playlist" of your favourite musical soundtracks, pieces and songs that bring back good memories.

This is invaluable if your memory is getting really bad, it also allows people who do not know you well to chat and help you remember all the good times in your life. Many carers have said they wish they had done it.

Dementia books on prescription

Reading Well Books on Prescription for dementia offers information for people diagnosed with dementia, as well as their relatives and carers. GPs and other health professionals can recommend titles from a list of 25 books on dementia.

The books are available for anyone to borrow free of charge from their local library. The books are also available to people who may be worrying about dementia symptoms but don't have a formal diagnosis.

Do not read these in isolation, you will need to talk about the content of these books.

It is important to remember you are not alone in this journey people are out there who are willing to help

BOOKS YOU MAY FIND USEFUL

Grandma Jessica Shepherd

More and more children are encountering dementia and its effects on their families. This touching story, told in Oscar's own words, is a positive and practical tale about the experience. The factual page about dementia helps children talk about their feelings and find new ways to enjoy the changing relationship.

Coping with Memory Problems Sallie Baxendale

This book addresses all forms of memory loss, organic and non-organic; it explores how memory may be affected by stress, anxiety and depression, and suggests practical ways of coping, as well as what to do if you are really concerned.

Hearing the Person with Dementia: Person-Centred Approaches to Communication for Families and Caregivers Bernie McCarthy

This book clearly explains what happens to communication as dementia progresses. Advocating a person-centred approach to dementia care, the author describes methods of verbal and non-verbal communication, techniques for communicating with people who cannot speak or move easily, and strategies for communicating more effectively.

Dementia Positive John Killick

A thought-provoking and heart-warming book that challenges the assumptions that we are to remain helpless when concerned with dementia, incorporating interviews and opinions from those with the disease and their carers.

10 Helpful Hints for Carers: Practical Solutions for Carers Living with People with Dementia June Andrews, Professor Allan House

10 Helpful Hints for Carers is an easy-to-read guide for carers living with people with dementia. It provides simple, practical solutions to the everyday problem's family carers can face when looking after a person with dementia. Covering areas like how to cope with aggression, creating relaxing environments, 'wandering', sleeplessness and how to cope with dementia and depression, it is a mine of information and good advice.

Can I Tell You About Dementia? A Guide for Family, Friends and Carers Jude Welton, Jane Telford

Meet Jack – an older man with dementia. Jack invites readers to learn about dementia from his perspective, helping them to understand the challenges faced by someone with dementia and the changes it causes to memory, communication and behaviour.

Any picture book about where the person with Dementia lived, library's and local book shops have these.