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**Dementia Care**

Your questions answered

# 5 Things you must know if you are providing dementia care to a loved one

Dementia describes a set of symptoms that may include memory loss and difficulties with thinking, problem-solving or language. A person with dementia may also experience mood or behavioural changes. These changes can be small initially but can affect daily life. Therefore, dementia care is a specialist form of care that takes time to understand. If you are providing dementia care to someone, here are five things that you need to know.

## How to help someone with dementia?

The most important thing you can do to help someone with dementia is always have their needs and best interests at the focus of every decision you make. Whether it be considering a care home or alternative care services, make sure you are supporting them with their best interests and choices at heart. The following sections also provide answers to questions on how to help someone with dementia.

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## Dementia Awareness

**WHAT IS DEMENTIA?**  
It's an umbrella term to describe a variety of brain disorders that get worse over time and trigger a loss in brain function.

**ALZHEIMER'S SOCIETY**  
The most common brain disorder of dementia is Alzheimer's Disease. Of those diagnosed, it affects between 50-75% .

**DEMENTIA IN THE UK**  
850,000 people in UK have dementia & it's thought this figure will increase to 1.6 million by 2040.

**DEMENTIA CARE**  
60% of people who receive home care services also live with dementia.

**Let Us Help**  
Visit [alinahomecare.com/dementia](https://alinahomecare.com/dementia)

Sources: <https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/about-us/news-and-media/facts-media> <https://www.dementiastatistics.org/statistics/care-services/>

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## **When should someone with dementia go into a care home?**

It is recommended that if an individual with dementia is not able to live safely and independently by themselves or the disease has progressed, then it could be time to look at care homes and alternative care arrangements. However, it is natural to have feelings of angst, worry and sadness during this time, as you look at other places to help your loved one. Providing their interests are always your primary focus, you will be making the right choice. Individuals could potentially be at risk if they do not receive the necessary specialist care.

If you are already looking for care services, always make sure your loved one receives an assessment from the care company so they can put together an appropriate care plan specifically tailored to them. There are many different types of care an individual can receive, however sometimes moving into a 24-hour care home with access to professional services is necessary, even if the individual thinks otherwise.

Who decides whether someone with dementia needs to receive professional care is another key aspect of the decision making process. Mostly, the individual who has dementia and may need extra assistance should be in charge of deciding for themselves. To make this decision, individuals will need to be provided with information and advice in a way that they understand, so that they can decide the most appropriate care for them.

However, in the instance when dementia is at the stage when making an appropriate decision about their care for themselves is impossible, the Alzheimer's Society refers to the person who decides as "the person's attorney under a health and welfare lasting power of attorney, or their personal welfare deputy if they have one."

This is to ensure that the individual with dementia is not being taken advantage of and has been legally assessed. For more information about this, visit the Alzheimer's Society website.

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## How to care for someone with dementia?

Firstly, if you are providing care for someone, you are also entitled to support. Even if you are a family member, friend, neighbour or guardian, you are still granted support. For more information and what financial means you might be entitled to, visit the [NHS Digital](#) website.

As a carer for someone with dementia, you will primarily be helping with their daily tasks:

- Supporting someone with their shopping, gardening, tidying, looking after pets and other tasks of a similar nature are all great skills to maintain.
- Assisting with eating and drinking. Every individual should be encouraged to eat healthy and nutritious foods to ensure vital vitamins and nutrients are being consumed. Dementia can mean that someone may not want set meals but rather foods to snack on. Additionally, making sure an individual is drinking enough is important. Ensure that an easily recognised cup or glass are used, as often individuals with dementia cannot identify whether they are thirsty, which can result in dehydration and other health complications.
- Aiding an individual using the toilet and any incontinence issues – making sure the individual has regular bowel movements and isn't developing a urinary tract infection.
- Help develop a hygiene routine with dignity for the person you are caring for. This can be an embarrassing moment for the individual, but by looking at some of the tips in the link below will help.
- Sleep patterns can alter when someone has dementia, due to changes in their body clock. Simple easy tips include making sure they have enough physical stimulation during daylight hours, reducing caffeine and alcohol and limiting sleep during the day – to name a few.
- As dementia symptoms deteriorate, individuals can become more introverted, however, it is important to keep up the social and interactive elements of relationships, to keep the mind actively stimulated and engaged.

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For more information on the above, visit the [NHS Digital](#) website.

## How to help someone with dementia remember?

Some methods of how to prompt an individual with dementia's memory include:

- Putting up photographs around the home of family members, friends and neighbours at special momentous occasions could potentially spark a reminder of an event.
- Organise a photo album in chronological order of events and include other relevant background information like the names of those pictured, the date, where and what the occasion was.
- Wear clothing or scents that the individual could attribute to you. Avoid patterns on clothing or around the home on furniture – as dementia can often make the mind misinterpret what the shapes are and could cause some distress.
- Make memory boxes with things that represent memories to help trigger past events and feelings of happiness – these can be around the home in different rooms.
- Connect with the person by doing activities and tasks you both enjoy, like watching a film, listening to music, being active and going for a walk, eating your favourite foods, reading and much more.

Whilst helping an individual with dementia, remember that it is important you correctly communicate with them and engage with them. Here are a few tips on communication:

- Speak in short and concise sentences.
- Try not to correct someone when they are talking or when they make a mistake. This can lead to tension and distress for the individual. Be gentle and patient.
- Be willing to be flexible with conversations, as they could change at any one moment.
- When having a conversation, make sure you can be seen by the person and that you are engaging with eye contact. Try not to startle anyone

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when you begin conversing.

- If an individual is having difficulty remembering who you are, introduce yourself with your name and role.

For more information about the mentioned tips, visit the [Dementia UK](#) website.

### **How to deal with dementia in a parent?**

When a parent is diagnosed with dementia, it can be very worrying and concerning. It is only natural to feel like this. There are many people you can speak to, as it is important to take care of yourself as well and check your mental wellbeing during this disconcerting time. [NHS Digital](#) has several different helplines you can contact to talk to someone.

The most important thing to remember whilst caring for a parent with dementia is that they are your loved one. Challenges may arise and be frustrating, however, try to separate the disease from your loved one and remember who they were before they were diagnosed. Always be patient, calm and respectful.

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# About Alina

Alina Homecare passionately believes care is best when you're at home.

We can help you, your mum, your dad, your neighbour to live independently in familiar surroundings and be part of the local community.

## **a** alina homecare *Care at Home*

Homecare gives elderly people options to stay in control of their lives and independence for as long as needed. We deliver high quality care that is safe, compassionate and personalised, including live-in care for reassurance night and day.

## **a** alina homecare *Disability Support*

We support people with a range of learning disabilities, including autism and mental health needs who live independently and in supporting living accommodation. Everyone we support receives the specialist care they need and deserve.

## **a** alina homecare *Complex Care*

Our complex health care teams support people with a wide range of health conditions. These may be physical or emotional and present a variety of needs which require specialist nurse led support.

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