

Dementia Friendly Barnet Progress Report 2022-23

Figure 1 – Dementia Friendly Communities



Introduction

It is estimated that 4,387 people are living with dementia in Barnet and this figure is expected to increase to 6,402 by 2035¹. The Dementia Friendly Barnet Partnership was established in 2019 by Public Health to respond to this challenge by working collaboratively to adapt environments and enable people living with dementia (PLWD) to live as independent and enjoyable a life as possible.

¹ [Dementia Strategy 2023-2028.pdf \(barnet.gov.uk\)](#)

Too many people affected by dementia feel society does not understand the condition they live with. This is why people with dementia sometimes feel they need to withdraw from their community as their condition progresses.

Alzheimer's Society defines a dementia-friendly community as a city, town or village where people with dementia are understood, respected and supported². We have adopted Alzheimer's Society's evidence-based framework for Dementia Friendly Communities (see Figure 1) and started to shape the action plan to guide the work towards becoming a dementia friendly borough where people living with dementia are understood, respected, and supported.

The views and experiences of people living with dementia are at the heart of Barnet's Dementia Friendly movement. We have used appreciative enquiry techniques to get the views of PLWD and their carers to create an action plan. Over 200 people affected by dementia from a diverse group of community venues and activities were engaged. This allowed us to understand the needs of those living with dementia, what they wanted, and where they felt the greatest areas of improvement are required in Barnet. The Partnership also includes significant carer representation. In addition, a person living with dementia as a core member provides regular input into the work of the partnership.

Last year we agreed to three key action areas. These are:

1. **Dementia Friendly Venues**
2. **Dementia Friendly Faith Communities**
3. **Dementia Friendly High Streets**

This report will provide an update on the recent strategic developments linked to Dementia Friendly, progress on key action areas, updates on activities to communicate the Dementia Friendly messages across the borough, training and examples of future action.

1. Strategic Developments

Recently, there have been several strategic developments to improve the lives of PLWD and their carers. These include:

- **Chief Medical Officer's Annual Report 2023**
The CMO's annual report³ recommends two complementary approaches to improve the quality of life for older adults. The first is to reduce disease, including degenerative disease, to prevent, delay or minimise disability and frailty. The second is to change the environment so that, for a given level of disability, people can maintain their independence longer. Dementia Friendly Barnet contributes to this by not only promoting risk reduction and

² [What is a dementia-friendly community? | Alzheimer's Society \(alzheimers.org.uk\)](https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/what-is-a-dementia-friendly-community/)

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/chief-medical-officers-annual-report-2023-health-in-an-ageing-society>

prevention messages and healthier lifestyle choices, but also by addressing the environment by promoting Dementia Friendly Venues.

- **Ageing Well Workstream**

The North Central London (NCL) Integrated Care Board (ICB) has launched the Ageing Well workstream to provide anticipatory care for residents 65yrs+ living in the Borough of Barnet at risk of becoming frail, losing their independence, living with dementia, or requiring support to remain in their own home. Dementia Friendly Barnet is an essential part of this workstream.

- **Dementia Strategy**

Barnet has launched its first Dementia Strategy as it prepares for a large increase in the number of residents living with the condition. The strategy is designed to help the Council and its partners in the health and voluntary sectors provide more proactive support, maximising people's independence, health, and wellbeing. Dementia Friendly is an integral part of the new strategy.

- **Age-Friendly Barnet**

Age UK Barnet has launched Age-Friendly Barnet to address the structural and social barriers to ageing well in Barnet by using the World Health Organization's framework for Age-Friendly Communities. There are significant overlaps between the dementia and age-friendly work. We are in the process of aligning action plans to strengthen action and avoid duplication.

- **End of Alzheimer's Society's Dementia Friendly Communities**

Sadly, the Alzheimer's Society's Dementia Friendly Communities recognition scheme will come to an end on 31 December 2023. Whilst we are looking into creating an alternative accreditation scheme, we will continue to promote London Mayor's Dementia Friendly Venues.

- **NCL ICB Dementia Friendly Accreditation**

The NCL ICB has invited dementia friendly leads from all five NCL boroughs to improve collaboration and strengthen dementia friendly initiatives. Creating an NCL-wide Dementia Friendly Accreditation scheme was agreed and will be launched in April 2024.

2. Dementia Friendly Venues (arts, culture and leisure)

The Mayor's Dementia Friendly Venues Charter provides support for arts, culture, and leisure venues to become dementia friendly, and then awards them with an official accreditation. One of the borough's priorities is supporting as many venues as possible to sign on to the scheme.

We have established a Working Group in order to provide peer support to those arts, culture venues, leisure centres and libraries interested in joining the scheme.

The members of the group were also responsible for engaging with residents with lived experience and incorporating their views on cultural spaces, i.e., inviting a carer to do a venue walk-through. These meetings were highly valued by the members, as a support system and check-in points for progress.

The RAF Museum was the first accredited venue in Barnet. They have been instrumental in supporting other venues and providing valuable advice for the application process during working group meetings.

This year has seen 21 venues sign up for the Dementia Friendly Venues scheme. There are also several venues with significant interest in completing their accreditation in the new year. (See Appendix 1 for the list of accredited venues in Barnet).

3. Dementia Friendly Faith Communities

Faith can play a vital role in the lives and wellbeing of people affected by dementia. As we didn't have a blueprint of what Dementia Friendly Faith entails we worked with Faith Action (National Faith Charity), local faith leaders, residents with lived experience, and the Barnet Multi Faith Forum to develop the Dementia Friendly Faith Communities self-assessment framework.

The framework includes a series of actions that are specific to faith communities and respect the diversity of religious and spiritual practices.

So far, we have two faith communities that have been accredited via the Mayor's scheme. (See Appendix 1 for the list of accredited venues in Barnet).

4. Dementia Friendly High Streets

As part of the Healthier High Street Programme, local businesses were invited to help support people with dementia to remain independent for as long as possible. So far, four businesses have signed up to become dementia friendly.

Some businesses have raised concerns about crime and vandalism and expressed that becoming dementia friendly therefore is not their priority. One option to go forward is to take a more targeted approach and prioritise the areas with an ageing population where this scheme may be more relevant.

Greater collaboration with the Town Centres team and utilisation of their network would also likely be beneficial.

5. Dementia Training

Adapting the environment, changing the perceptions, challenging stigma and improving awareness and understanding of what it means to live with dementia take time and also require training.

We therefore promote Alzheimer’s Society’s “*Dementia Friends*” scheme. A Dementia Friend is somebody who learns about dementia so they can help their community. We encourage residents, businesses, and local organisations to become Dementia Friends by watching a short video on the Alzheimer’s Society’s website. In September 2023, there were 15,808 Dementia Friends in the borough.

In addition, the DCUK’s “*Understanding Dementia*” training has been commissioned by Public Health and sessions have been successfully delivered throughout the year. This training provides information on reducing the risks of dementia, understanding the effects it has on people and families, and how we can all be more dementia friendly. The training provides individuals with a CPD qualification and accredits businesses and other organisations as working toward being dementia friendly. Up to November end of 2023, 1,400 people have undergone the training. This has included councillors, a growing number of whom are now Dementia Friends.

Furthermore, the MECC Factsheet for Dementia has also been produced and regularly circulated, providing information on dementia and support services for frontline health and care professionals.

6. Raising awareness of dementia and dementia support in Barnet

We have a three-pronged approach to our comms plans. They are:

1. Communicating risk reduction messages:

Dementia is not an inevitable part of ageing, there is often an assumption that dementia is part of being old, for example, around nine out of ten 80- to 84-year-olds do not have dementia; in those aged 90 to 94 years, around seven out of ten will not have dementia⁴. It is possible to reduce the risk and delay the onset of dementia partially.

Around 40% of dementia cases might be attributable to potentially modifiable risk factors. The NICE guidance⁵ recommends reducing the risk of or delaying the onset of disability, dementia, and frailty by helping people stop smoking, be more active, drink alcohol in moderation and maintain a healthy weight^{6,7}.

⁴ Prince M, Knapp M, Guerchet M, McCrone P, Prina M, Comas-Herrera A, Wittenberg R, Adelaja B, Hu B, King D, Rehill A and Salimkumar D. [Dementia UK: Update, Second edition](https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/about-us/policy-and-influencing/dementia-uk-report) [Internet] (November 2014) Available from: <https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/about-us/policy-and-influencing/dementia-uk-report> (Accessed 25/10/2023).

⁵ [Overview | Dementia, disability and frailty in later life – mid-life approaches to delay or prevent onset | Guidance | NICE](#)

⁶ [Health matters: midlife approaches to reduce dementia risk - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

⁷ [Dementia prevention, intervention, and care: 2020 report of the Lancet Commission - The Lancet](#)

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In collaboration with Age UK Barnet and other key partners, we are regularly developing and posting the key risk reduction messages.

2. Awareness of living well with dementia after diagnosis:

A new “Living Well with Dementia” information leaflet has been produced with the help of key stakeholders. The leaflet outlines key information about dementia, where to go for diagnosis, how to support those living with it, and signposts to key support services. 4,000 leaflets have been distributed to libraries, faith organisations, key partners and councillors. An ‘easy read’ version is currently in development.

Barnet Carers and Age UK Barnet have hosted/participated in several events including an information event at St Barnabas Church, a Living Well Event, a Pan-Barnet GP Event, multiple Dementia Cafes, a Health Champions Lunch and Learn, new elected members training, and the Age UK Dementia Action Week Sing-a-long.

During the Dementia Action Week, May 2023, we created six videos and shared a comms toolkit that signposts activities through the month.

In collaboration with key partners, a number of video case studies about dementia have been released marking the launch of the Dementia Strategy. These case studies highlighted the importance of early diagnosis, the support available, preventative measures, and the stories of individuals:

- [Living well with dementia in Barnet](#)
- [The importance of prevention and diagnosis](#)
- [Launching Barnet’s dementia strategy](#)

3. Promoting the importance of becoming Dementia Friendly:

The importance of becoming dementia friendly and the Dementia Friendly Venues and High Streets have been promoted in magazines, social media, and newsletters as well as at in-person networking events (as above).

Work is underway on creating a new Dementia Friendly brand for Barnet. This would replace the old Alzheimer’s Society branding and be used by the council and key partners to signify they are dementia friendly.

7. Future Plans

We are working towards refreshing the Dementia Friendly Action Plan 2024-25 in line with recent strategic developments. The engagement with PLWD and their carers will continue to ensure that their views, needs and wants are reflected in the plans going forward.

The refreshed plan will maintain current priorities as well as include new areas of work. Examples include:

- New NCL Dementia Friendly accreditation at the ICB level – Alzheimer’s Society announced that they can no longer continue with the Dementia Friendly Communities accreditation, therefore, we are working across the five NCL boroughs to develop our own accreditation to sit alongside the Mayor’s accreditation as this is only designed for arts and cultural venues. Once we have completed our own accreditation scheme, we can include GP surgeries, businesses and all manner of venues and spread the dementia friendly mission further.
- Dementia Friendly Fire Service – We have successfully reached out to the fire service and trained one quarter of the fire staff in Barnet. Training was conducted in partnership with Age-Friendly Barnet to ensure that not just PLWD, but all older people are supported. The training was very positively received, and plans are underway to train the remaining staff next year.
- Dementia Friendly Transport – Following concerns raised through the Age Friendly Barnet survey we have made the bus network an area of focus for both work streams. We have had positive dialogue with representatives of the bus network, and plan to hold training sessions for bus managers and key personnel as well as information sessions for drivers.

8. Conclusions

People affected by dementia still have an incredible amount to offer to their community. Dementia Friendly Barnet in collaboration with the Age Friendly agenda will continue to address environmental factors which can help in reducing the risk of dementia as well as creating environments conducive to living well with dementia. By doing so, PLWD can continue to play an active and valuable role even years after diagnosis.

APPENDIX 1 DEMENTIA FRIENDLY VENUES IN BARNET

1	Ann Owens Centre - Age UK Barnet
2	Arts Depot
3	Brunswick Park Medical Practice
4	Burnt Oak Leisure Centre
5	Candlewood House Care Home
6	Chickenshed Theatre
7	Chipping Barnet Library
8	Colindale Community Trust
9	Copthall Leisure Centre
10	Dell Field Court Care Home
11	Finchley Church End Library
12	Finchley Reform Synagogue
13	Goodwin Court
14	Meadowside Care Home
15	Michael Sobell Day Centre (Jewish Care)
16	New Barnet Leisure Centre
17	Phoenix Cinema
18	RAF Museum
19	Samuel Beckman Day Centre (Jewish Care)
20	Station Road - Age UK Barnet
21	St Barnabas Church