



Dementia-friendly tourism
A practical guide for businesses

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INTRODUCTION

There is a powerful business case for tourism businesses to become dementia-friendly. Having an understanding of dementia and how to support those affected will help to future-proof your business, increase customer satisfaction and generate revenue. Adopting more dementia-friendly practices will not only improve accessibility for customers with dementia and their carers, but staff and the wider public as well.

Visiting attractions and staying in accommodation can be challenging for people with dementia, their carers, and loved ones. Ensuring they have a great holiday can be extremely rewarding for you and your staff and can help people with dementia to live well.

VisitEngland, VisitScotland and Alzheimer's Society, along with England's Inclusive Tourism Action Group, have worked together to

produce this practical guide. The guide aims to support tourism businesses of all sizes to become more dementia-friendly through top tips, case studies and signposting to further resources. It highlights the need for increasing awareness and improving physical environments.

Small and simple low or no cost changes can make a big difference. This guide highlights things you can do, organised around the themes of Information, People and Place.

Ensuring your business is dementia-friendly is just one aspect of becoming an accessible and inclusive business. It is important to consider how to support people with the widest range of accessibility requirements. You can find links to further guidance on how to support all customers at the end of this guide.



WHY BECOME DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY?

Increased revenue

People with health conditions and impairments spend around £1.3 billion on trips in Scotland each year.¹ By becoming dementia-friendly, you will retain customers and win new business as disabled people are anecdotally very loyal to places that meet their particular requirements.

Future-proofing

The older you are the more likely you are to develop dementia and tourism businesses are becoming more dependent on older consumers. The number of domestic holidays taken by the over 55 age group continues to increase, with a 32% uplift between 2006 and 2018.² By making changes now, you will be reacting to a growing need from customers and staff.

Improved customer service

Increased knowledge and awareness of dementia will make you and your staff more confident when dealing with all types of customers.

Competitive advantage

Research shows 3 in 4 disabled customers and their families and friends have moved their business elsewhere as a result of a lack of disability awareness by businesses.³

Enhanced reputation

Becoming dementia-friendly will help you to demonstrate that you are socially responsible and value your customers. It will also help you to better understand the needs of your customers.

1. Great British Tourism Survey 2015, Great Britain Day Visits Survey 2015, International Passenger Survey 2010. Great British Tourism Survey 2006-2018 3. Business Disability Forum, 2015 4. Alzheimer's Society

Reduced seasonality

People with dementia may prefer to book 'out of season', as places are likely to be less busy and staff may be able to give them more time and attention.

Complying with the law

Under the Equality Act 2010, businesses have a legal obligation to ensure consumers are adequately protected and that access to services is as inclusive as possible. This includes making 'reasonable adjustments' for disabled customers and staff, including people with dementia.

Over 850,000

people are living with dementia in the UK, this will increase to over 1 million by 2025⁴

Why tourism matters to people with dementia

Staying active helps people with dementia to live well, remain independent and keep doing the things they enjoy. Holidays and days out can promote physical and mental well-being for people with dementia, their friends, families and carers. Tourism has the power to stimulate the senses, help people to connect with meaningful places and provide opportunities for positive experiences and enjoyment.

“I’ve always travelled and gone places, continuing to do this makes me feel included. Why stay in one place, when we have such a beautiful country to explore!”

*Gill,
a person living with dementia*

WHAT IS DEMENTIA?

Dementia is caused when the brain is damaged by diseases, such as Alzheimer's disease, or a series of strokes. It is not a normal part of the ageing process.

There are many different types of dementia, but the most common type is Alzheimer's disease. Dementia is progressive, which means it gets worse over time. Different types of dementia tend to affect people in different ways, especially in the early stages. Often it may be hard to know if someone has dementia. That's why it's really important to provide good support and information to everyone.

A person with dementia might:

- Have problems with their day-to-day memory, for example, difficulties recalling events that happened recently.
- Have problems concentrating, planning or organising, for example, difficulties making decisions, solving problems or carrying out a sequence of tasks.
- Have problems with language, for example, difficulty following a conversation or finding the right word.
- Be confused about time or place, for example, losing track of the day or date, or becoming confused about where they are (even in familiar places).
- Have visual perceptual difficulties, for example, difficulty judging distances or misinterpreting patterns or reflections.
- Show changes in their mood such as becoming frustrated or irritable, withdrawn, anxious, easily upset or unusually sad.
- Show changes in behaviour such as repetitive questioning, pacing, restlessness or agitation.

Some people with dementia may find that their symptoms can vary a lot from one day to another.



Samox
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LIVING WELL WITH DEMENTIA

It is possible to live well with dementia. Many people with dementia continue to be active and carry on with the things they enjoy.

Even as dementia progresses, people can lead active, healthy lives, carry on with their hobbies and enjoy friendships and relationships. However, as dementia progresses people will need support from others.

Common challenges faced by people affected by dementia:

- Lack of confidence to travel, go to new places and stay away from support systems at home and their regular routine.
- Unfamiliar and busy environments, such as information desks and service counters, which can make communication difficult and increase confusion.
- Navigating new places, as people living with dementia can sometimes get lost.
- Locating and using the toilet. People with dementia may also experience difficulties with continence.

- Difficulties with mobility and getting around – for example, challenges with a lack of handrails.
- Worries that they or their loved one with dementia will get lost or walk off at night if the room or venue is not secure.
- Perceived costs of a holiday, coupled with additional costs of living with dementia, meaning that holidays can be seen as unaffordable by some.

This guide suggests ways to support people with these challenges.

“If I can go on holiday at my age and with my challenges, anyone can”

Dennis, a person with dementia



INFORMATION

Promote your offer

Work with local community groups and networks including Alzheimer Scotland and Age UK to let people affected by dementia know about the services you offer. Often people with dementia will rely on different communication channels, rather than social media and online. Think about taking out adverts in magazines, working with key partners or charities to get the word out to often isolated people affected who might not know support is available.

Providing information

It's really important for people with dementia and carers to have information about where they're going beforehand. It can help them plan and also reassure them of what to expect when they arrive. You can support people affected by dementia by giving them accessible information about your venue and letting them know what support is in place.

“It was the fear of the unknown, I suppose. But on that holiday I could feel all my problems falling away...”

*Jim,
a person affected by dementia*

You can assist customers by:

- Asking them what support they need and stating in your information that you can support people affected by dementia.
- Helping with travel arrangements, for example, letting them know what parking options are available or what the best public transport options are.
- Informing them about what dementia-friendly facilities you have, for example, accessible toilets and signage.
- Providing information on local dementia-friendly businesses, activities, events and health care providers to allow people to plan in advance.
- Offering flexible ticket options - for example, 'carers go free', reviewing cancellation charges and providing as many different ways of booking as you can manage (phone, fax, text phone, online, email, third party websites). Every customer will have their own preference.
- Prompting customers during their booking for any additional requirements, for example, the ability to reserve a particular table, a familiar bedroom or fast track queues for those unable to stand for long periods of time, if possible.
- Providing them with confirmation of the booking, clearly stating the amount paid or to be paid on arrival, as well as information on the venue. You may also want to think about providing a written confirmation on request and reminders for the booking closer to the date.
- Giving them a named contact if they have any questions after the booking.
- Using welcoming terminology when describing people, for example, say "living with dementia" instead of "suffering with dementia".
- Ensuring staff wear name badges and make it clear they can support people affected by dementia, for example, by wearing the Dementia Friend badge.

Video or virtual tours and written information with images can be particularly helpful as it can be re-visited. This can help reduce anxiety and prompt someone's memory. It is also important to ensure the language, style, length and format is easily understood by people with dementia. Customers need to feel confident their booking has been made and requests acknowledged.

Accessibility Guides

The majority of information can be included in your Accessibility Guide. This is a guide produced by tourism operators to provide potential customers with important accessibility information about a venue, property or service. The guide enables individuals with accessibility requirements, their family and friends to make informed decisions about where to stay and visit based on their needs. This includes not just wheelchair users but people with hearing loss, visual impairment or learning disabilities, older people,

families with young children and more. Many disabled people look at Accessibility Guides before deciding to book or visit.

VisitEngland and VisitScotland provide a free to use website for the easy production and publication of Accessibility Guides. You can produce a guide by answering a series of questions on your venue's accessibility, uploading useful photos and adding any further information. You will be given a unique web link to promote your guide, which you can add prominently to your website and share across social media channels. Go to accessibilityguides.org

Security and safety

Ensure customers are aware of safety or evacuation processes. Offer features which could support customers with dementia, including portable vibrating alarms or strobe light alarms for people who can't hear audible alarms. Ensure guests are made aware of potential hazards such as hot water and changes in floor level.



Debbie Matthews, Accessible & Dementia Tourism Consultant, tells us how important advance information is for people with dementia

“Having pre-visit information is key to whether people with dementia leave the house or not. No one wants to risk having a bad experience, as it can be very traumatic if things go wrong. Good information helps to provide reassurance and confidence.

It is useful to know how the venue has addressed possible sources of stress. Nottingham Racecourse has a specific Accessibility Guide for people with invisible illnesses. It is not only useful for those with dementia but also people with autism, ADHD, social anxiety and general anxiety disorder.

The guide describes the quiet room where people can go if they get upset or anxious. There is always a Dementia Friend present and other users of the room are understanding and sympathetic. Without such a space, people may feel they have to leave and go home.

Knowing that staff are dementia aware helps to provide reassurance. The guide also explains our #GoRacingGreen initiative, which racecourses are starting to adopt. It is aimed at people that live with various conditions that make coming to the races difficult for them. We explain that a green ribbon can be worn by people with invisible conditions, their companions and others to show that they support the initiative and are empathetic.

We also promote an afternoon tea session to local dementia groups. This is held at a mid-week race meet for a reduced fee. It is great for the racecourse as it helps to bring in more people at a quieter time.

Promoting your business to people with dementia helps to give people the opportunity to live and can have a massive positive impact on their quality of life.”

Find the guide at:
**[thejockeyclub.co.uk/
nottingham/visitor-info/
/go-racing-green/](https://thejockeyclub.co.uk/nottingham/visitor-info/go-racing-green/)**

PEOPLE

Understanding and awareness

Gaining a greater understanding of dementia will mean you and your staff are better able to support customers. Training and awareness is particularly important for customer-facing staff and those who are most likely to interact with customers affected by dementia. Making sure you and your staff are aware about how dementia can impact customers can also alleviate any challenges created by your venue's design – for example, if a certain route has a lot of steps.

“Staff at the Eden Project helped my husband to use the zip wire. He had the time of his life”

*Maria,
a person affected by dementia*

Dementia Friends Scotland

Dementia Friends Scotland is an Alzheimer Scotland initiative to raise awareness of dementia and reduce stigma. Anyone, at any level of an organisation, can become a Dementia Friend. It's free and individuals can complete the learning using the method and duration that best suits your business. The simplest route for you and your staff to become Dementia Friends is by registering at dementiafriendsscotland.org and watching the online videos.

It is important Dementia Friends learning is embedded within staff inductions and a regular refresher is undertaken. For more information about rolling out Dementia Friends please contact dementiafriends@alzscot.org Further dementia awareness training is available through Alzheimer Scotland.

10 top communication tips:

1. **Talk to the person with dementia**

Don't just talk to their friends and relatives when they are visiting together.

2. **Think about the environment**

Try to talk to the person in a quiet area and remove any unnecessary distractions.

3. **Speak slowly and clearly**

Use short, simple sentences, check the person has understood each point and recap if necessary.

4. **Give the person time**

So that they can process what has been said and respond.

5. **Listen carefully**

Be patient and listen carefully to the words of people, even if they appear muddled or unclear initially.

6. **Try to communicate in a conversational way**

Not just question after question.

7. **Rephrase rather than repeat**

If the person doesn't understand what you're saying.

8. **Use non-verbal communication**

For example, a friendly smile can go a long way and it may help pointing at a picture of someone you are talking about or writing things down.

9. **Consider your body language**

sudden movements or a tense facial expression may cause upset or distress and can make communication more difficult.

10. **Do not dismiss a person's worries**

If a person is feeling sad, let them express their feelings.

Supporting staff affected by dementia

There are more than 42,000 people under the age of 65 with younger onset dementia. Alzheimer Scotland can provide information on supporting an employee living with dementia within the workplace. Go to alzscot.org/dementiafriendlyorganisations

Providing a warm welcome

Inform others

Make sure all staff are aware when you have a customer with dementia visiting so they can be extra attentive, helping the customer if they become disorientated and fast tracking any processes if possible.

Be hospitable

A person with dementia may feel tired or unsettled when they arrive somewhere new. Offer a drink on arrival and provide a quiet place to sit.

Assist customers

Support guests to complete forms and take customers to their destination - for example, hotel room, cloakroom or garden space. For accommodation, offer a room which is best for them. This could be close to the lifts or main facilities, or in a quiet location.

Be flexible

If a person with dementia wants to go round an attraction in a different order to the usual route, or check in earlier or check out later.

Be respectful and sensitive

Use discretion as some people may request additional assistance without wishing to disclose their condition. Remind and reassure customers of any arrangements they made at the time of booking.

Don't make assumptions

If someone appears rude it may be because they are uncomfortable or anxious.

Support carers

Caring for someone with dementia can be stressful, so be patient and understanding to improve the holiday experience for both the carer and person with dementia. Almost half of carers have a long term health condition or disability themselves.¹

1. Source: Personal Social Services Survey of Adult Carers in England, 2016-17: NHS Digital



Emily Hope from Beamish Museum tells us why it is important for staff to understand dementia

“Every new member of staff or volunteer completes a Dementia Friends session, regardless of their position. As a Dementia Friends Champion I help to deliver these one hour sessions as part of the induction process. Staff tell us that a key takeaway is that dementia affects everyone differently. As the most recent memories often go first, our period settings at the museum can be more familiar for people with dementia.

All staff are given the Dementia Friends badge to wear. The badge comprises a small blue forget-me-not flower that indicates the person has an understanding of dementia and

they can support people affected by the condition. Our staff in period costume have a lovely crochet version of the badge which is in-keeping with their costume.

Every year we run a week of activities in Dementia Action Week. This not only benefits our visitors but acts as a useful refresher for staff.

Dementia Friends sessions definitely help improve the customer experience at Beamish. For example, if a visitor is struggling with change, staff know to be patient and reassure them. Our approach to welcoming people with dementia is really rewarding as we can see from the smiles on people’s faces that visiting us helps them to continue to get out and live well.”

PLACE

Improving the physical environment

Dementia can cause people difficulties when navigating and interacting with environments. Small changes to layout or signage, for example, can go a long way to reducing stress and confusion. Not all improvements require major refurbishment or expense; consider what low cost adaptations you can make next time you renovate or redecorate.

“On arrival, there were no seats and a lot of noise. A ‘quiet space’ would have alleviated these issues.”

*Steve,
a person living with dementia*

Signage

- Provide signage at key decision points to and from facilities, including main entrances, toilets, lounges and reception desks.
- Consider text and pictorial signs to help people identify different rooms.
- Use upper and lower case lettering, not block capitals, and use large, simple fonts along with recognisable symbols or images. Avoid abstract or joke signage - for example, ‘buoys’ and ‘gulls’ on toilet doors.
- Make sure there is good colour contrast between the sign wording and the background.
- Ensure signs are at eye level, well-lit and can be seen from wheelchair height on the door or place they refer to.

Alzheimer Scotland can support your business in becoming dementia friendly through their website: alzscot.org/dementiafriendlyorganisations



Visibility and lighting

- Ensure curtains are open in the day, remove unnecessary nets and blinds, and cut back hedges or trees if they overshadow windows and block out sunlight.
- Consider automatic lights, especially in toilets and bathrooms.
- Outline the edges of steps and stairs to ensure they are clearly visible.
- Ensure door handles contrast in colour to the body of the door and the frame and the door contrasts in colour to adjacent walls.
- Avoid pools of bright light, glare from lighting and deep shadows.
- Light switches should be easily accessible and straightforward to use.

Toilets

- Have a unisex accessible toilet, and ideally a Changing Places toilet, where an opposite sex carer or partner can help if the person needs assistance.

- Make cubicle doors clearly visible - door furniture should include handles.
- Put a 'Way out' sign on the inside of the toilet door(s) to help people to easily find their way out.
- Label hot and cold taps and show how to use sensor taps, flushes and hand dryers.
- Provide contrasting toilet seats and hand rails to the walls and rest of the toilet.

Seating and flooring

- Provide high-backed chairs with armrests in places where people may have to wait, as well as in quiet areas where people with dementia can take 'time out' if they are finding it difficult with noise and other distractions.
- Ensure seating contrasts to the floor, wall and surroundings. Avoid abstract designs.
- Avoid dark rugs and mats as they can be perceived as black holes and avoid shiny or reflective flooring, bold patterns and stripes, as they can cause confusion.



Furnishings and facilities

- Avoid surfaces, pictures, walls and window coverings that are shiny or reflective or have bold patterns and stripes, as they can cause confusion - for example, flower patterns may appear 3D as though you can pick the flowers and horizontal lines on blinds may be seen as bars.
- Position mirrors carefully, as a person with dementia may be distressed if they don't recognise themselves. Consider providing coverings for mirrors and avoid positioning on the back of doors.
- Consider providing a spare set of linen in guest bedrooms.
- Provide a simple bedside clock and large clocks in key areas that display the day, date and time.
- Provide a simple system to contact a staff member for help if required.
- Avoid rugs and cluttered furniture which could create trip hazards and ensure there is space to move around tables and chairs.

- Lay out teabags, coffee sachets, milk and sugar separately, with clear written and pictorial labels to help people independently make drinks.
- Consider providing accessibility products – for example, a wheelchair, large button phone, magnifying glass and coloured towels in white bathrooms.

Noise

- Reduce background noise - for example, from TVs, radios, alarms, doorbells, announcements or telephones, which can impact on an individual's ability to concentrate and communicate.
- Use carpets, cushions and curtains to help absorb background noise.
- Consider promoting a 'slow' or 'relaxed' time when music is switched off and have a quiet room available for people to take time out.
- Ensure hearing loops are serviced regularly, turned on and advertised.



Case Study

Marilyn Buchan discusses how she has made her business accessible for visitors with dementia

“Buchanhaven cottage is a unique self-catering house situated on the outskirts of Kirkwall in the Orkney Islands.

Buchanhaven has been designed to be dementia-friendly and attention has been paid to lighting, colours and signage. Bright lighting is essential as it allows people to see things clearly and not mistake objects for something else. Contrasting colours is also useful for recognition, such as a brightly coloured toilet seat and a red table cloth which contrasts with white dishes, allowing people to enjoy their food. I also supply a

raised toilet seat and shower chair if requested and rooms have signage (at wheelchair level).

There is a notice board on the wall which can be used to leave notes if required. The mattresses are all waterproof in case of little accidents. Buchanhaven’s sitting room/ kitchen is open plan, which allows the carer to keep an eye on the person with dementia at all times. The outside area is also enclosed so no one can wander away if outside.

A supply of books and DVDs on dementia is available and I am also on hand to offer advice or point in the right direction if anyone needs help.”





The Scottish Football Museum and National Galleries provide organised reminiscence activities.

Richard McBrearty, Project Director, Scottish Football Museum says:

“We manage a reminiscence programme, Football Memories Scotland, which supports people living with dementia. Groups meet across Scotland in relaxed and friendly environments where old football images, films and memorabilia are used as memory triggers to unlock trapped memories and encourage discussion.

We have a ‘Memory Lane’ section in the museum and a national ‘Memory Box’ programme. One of the boxes is kept within the museum for visitors to access, which contains things like a football rattle and carbolic soap.

We also have a weekly dementia friendly reminiscence group and a monthly dementia specific reminiscence group, supported by Alzheimer Scotland staff.”



Meg Faragher, Communities Learning Coordinator, National Galleries says:

“We run a variety of dementia-inclusive creative activities. The focus of these sessions is on playfulness, enjoyment and connection, where participants are encouraged to share memories with others.

Working with musicians from Live Music Now Scotland we programme quarterly dementia-friendly Music Concerts at the Portrait Gallery. The concerts are short and informal and the repertoire includes songs that the audience know and are invited to sing along with. For care homes or community groups, we offer free themed reminiscence and creative workshops that can be booked at any time.”





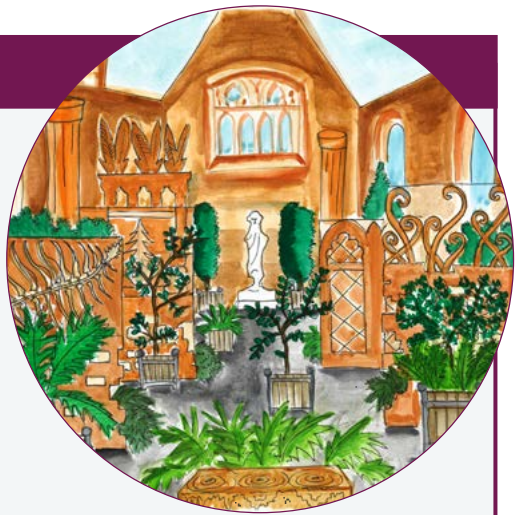
Zara Luxford from Nymans explains the development of a garden co-created by people with dementia

“Our ‘Garden in the Ruins’ is a new garden space. It is part of a three year project to open up the ruins area for the first time and we were delighted to work with the Alzheimer’s Society to bring our plan to life and improve our welcome for people with dementia.

We undertook some audience research and our discoveries encouraged us to think about the potential number of people who could be visiting Nymans who already have dementia. The Alzheimer’s Society enabled us to connect with small groups from our local branch, who worked with our Project Manager to select plants and helped design the garden area.

Once the garden is complete, we will be keeping contact with the local branch and their members will help our team tend and care for the garden.

The location of our ruins area makes the garden perfect as a



safe space for people with dementia. We will make the first hour of opening a quiet hour, to benefit everyone who would like a place for reflection away from the busy hub-bub of other areas.

We have thought more broadly too about how we can make the whole experience at Nymans more dementia friendly. The Alzheimer’s Society has supported our team with training and has also provided an assessment of our whole visitor experience with advice about how we can become more dementia friendly. The ‘Garden in the Ruins’ is the start of our journey and we are looking forward to getting feedback”.

For more information about Nymans, please visit: nationaltrust.org.uk/nymans

WHAT CAN YOU DO NEXT?

Talk to your colleagues about dementia and register your business so you and your staff can become Dementia Friends:
dementiafriendsscotland.org

Produce and publish an Accessibility Guide:
accessibilityguides.org

Help to make your community dementia friendly. A selection of resources are available to download:
alzscot.org/dementiafriendlytoolkit

Further guidance

Alzheimer Scotland provide information sheets that cover all aspects of dementia. These are available for download from their website:
alzscot.org/information

Alzheimer Scotland can support your business in becoming dementia friendly through their website: **alzscot.org/dementiafriendlyorganisations**

Alzheimer's Society dementia friendly guides are available for download from the website:
alzheimers.org.uk/organisations

Go to VisitScotland's Inclusive Tourism Toolkit for tips and training tools to help your business become more inclusive:
visitscotland.org/accessible-tourism

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VisitScotland is the National Tourism Organisation for Scotland and has a crucial role to play in helping to deliver the Scottish Government's core purpose of creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable inclusive growth.

As the lead delivery agency for the visitor economy, VisitScotland focuses its resources on marketing Scotland as a tourism destination and the perfect stage for events, with the aim of attracting domestic and international visitors.

Information within this booklet was created with Alzheimer's Society, the UK's leading dementia charity who provide information and support, improve care, fund research and create lasting change for people affected by dementia in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

It is also supported by Alzheimer Scotland. As Scotland's national dementia charity, their aim is to make sure nobody faces dementia alone. They provide support and information, fund vital dementia research and campaign for the rights of people with dementia. With thanks to the following for their contributions to this guide:

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