



Sunderland Carers Centre Guide To: Caring for Someone with Dementia

If you are caring for someone who has Dementia, it can be a difficult and lonely journey. Please remember you are not alone and our services can help and guide you to the best source of support for you.

At Sunderland Carers Centre we believe it is very important for carers to recognise their caring role. This is so they have access to the right information advice and guidance, and if appropriate support they feel is right for them. There is an estimated 850,000 with a Dementia diagnosis in the UK and around 700,000 unpaid carers who care for someone with Dementia. (Alzheimers Research UK 2021)

At Sunderland Carers Centre within our Carer Contact Team, we have a dedicated Dementia Advice Service. If you feel we can help you or someone you know, please contact the service on 0191 5493768 for free confidential information, advice and guidance.

What is Dementia?

Dementia is an umbrella term that encompasses a group of diseases that damage the brain. The four most common types of dementia are: Alzheimer's Disease, Vascular Dementia, Frontotemporal Dementia and Dementia with Lewy Bodies. Signs and symptoms vary across each disease and affect individuals differently. No one person with dementia will follow the same journey throughout their illness.

Below are our top tips to caring with someone with Dementia: For support, further information and advice and guidance with the tips below, contact us via our website or give us a call

Understanding & Awareness

Understanding Dementia and the specific type of dementia your loved one has can be very beneficial. We know this can seem incredibly overwhelming but there are lots of courses, information and support available. At Sunderland Carers Centre, we provide an 'Understanding Dementia' course. For more information, please visit <https://www.sunderlandcarers.co.uk/help/training-hub/>. We can also signpost you to a range of online training and information and/or provide you with information and guidance and discuss coping strategies.

Look to the future and plan

Carers Emergency Card

Plan for the future as early as possible. It is important to think about the future and what would happen if you were unable to care due to an unfortunate accident. You could apply for a Carers Emergency Card. The Carers Emergency Card is operated by Sunderland Care and Support and forms part of their telecare service. Sunderland Carers Centre facilitates the completion of Carers Emergency Card forms on their behalf and supports carers to plan for the future and possible emergencies. The aim of the scheme is to provide carers and the person they care for the opportunity to plan for any emergencies, where the carer is unable to care, including who the carer would like to be contacted. The scheme is recognised by Sunderland City Hospitals and the Emergency Services. On completion of the Carers Emergency Card form (which we can help you to do), please return to Sunderland Carers Centre in the freepost envelope

that we will provide and we will register you with Sunderland Care and Support. Once registered, you will receive a pocket-sized card to keep with you. The card will have a telephone number to call in an emergency if you have an accident. There will also be a unique reference number on for people to quote when contacting Sunderland Care and Support. The unique number links to your personal details that are held securely by the Telecare Service.

Emergency Plan

You may find it beneficial to create your own emergency plan which includes all of the following details: details of the name, address and contact details of the person you look after, who you and the person you look after would like to be contacted in an emergency – this might include friends, family or professionals, details of any medication the person you look after is taking and where it is stored, details of any ongoing treatment they need, noting details of any allergies, details of their GP and pharmacy, any ongoing treatment they need, any care and support services they receive, any continence products needed and who supplies them, any mobility challenges and mobility aids such as a wheelchair or hoist and anything behavioural others need to be aware of.

The Alzheimer’s Society have a resource called “This is Me.” It is a booklet that can be used to record details about your loved one with dementia such as, a their cultural and family background, important events, people and places from their life and their preferences and routines. You can download a “This is Me” booklet from the link below or we can send you a copy in the post.

<https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/get-support/publications-factsheets/this-is-me>

Thinking and planning for the future can also include planning around health and finances. Please follow the link below for our Guide to Lasting Power of Attorney.

<https://www.sunderlandcarers.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Guide-to-Lasting-Power-of-Attorney.pdf>

Coping strategies for changes in communication

As time goes by, you will begin to notice differences in your loved one’s ability to communicate with you and others. You may find it beneficial to make a list of Do’s and Don’ts when it comes to communicating with your loved one with dementia and this can be shared with family and friends. Below are some examples, as it may take time and some getting used to adopting a different way of communicating with someone with Dementia.

Do’s ✓

Keep communication short and clear
Speak clearly and calmly
Give visual prompts to help understanding

Don’ts ✗

Speak in paragraphs with more than one idea
Sound agitated or raise your voice
Give too much information at one time

Coping strategies for changes in behaviour and personality

Dementia can cause changes in personality and affect behaviours. Knowing what some of these changes can be can help you prepare some coping strategies. By making some changes and implementing coping strategies, you can help improve your loved one’s wellbeing as well as your own. For more information, please follow the link to helpful resources on the Alzheimer’s Society website.

<https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/about-dementia/symptoms-and-diagnosis/symptoms/behaviour-changes>

Adult Needs Assessments

The support needs of your loved one may increase which will affect the level of care that they need. Adult Needs Assessments are carried out by the Local Authority and a member of their social work team will complete the assessment. The assessment will look at what support is needed, which could include practical support at home e.g. personal care, meal prompting, getting up and going to bed, day services/day care and residential/nursing care. To request an Adult Needs Assessment, contact the Local Authority on Tel 0191 5205552 or via their website at [Adult social care - Sunderland City Council](#).

There will be a financial assessment that sits with the Adult Needs Assessment to determine the cost of a care package and if the person who needs the care will pay towards that care needed.

Carers Assessments

Sunderland Carers Centre carries out Carer's Assessments (for adults over 18 looking after other adults over 18) on behalf of Sunderland City Council.

The assessment is **not** about how good you are caring but about how you can be supported in your caring role. You can have a Carers Assessment even if the person or people you care for do not receive Social Care services themselves or they refuse services. A Carer's Assessment is a way of discussing the impact your caring role is having on your own well-being. If you would like a Carers Assessment, please contact us.

If your loved one goes into hospital

John's Campaign

John's Campaign is about the right of people who care for someone living with dementia to be able to stay with the person with dementia and the right of people with dementia to be able to have a family carer stay with them. It applies to all hospital settings. However, remember that this is a right to do so, if you so wish and not a duty. A hospital cannot insist that you stay with your loved one. For further information visit the website [John's Campaign \(johnscampaign.org.uk\)](http://johnscampaign.org.uk)

Having the Alzheimer's Society 'This is Me' Booklet completed can also be very useful in ensuring that the hospital staff are fully aware of your loved ones needs if you are not at the hospital.

Don't be afraid to ask for help and support

Caring for someone with Dementia can be challenging and overwhelming but you are not alone. Talking to other people who are also caring for a loved one with Dementia can be extremely helpful, it's like a community where everyone helps each other out. You can find a vast online community through the Alzheimer's Society and Dementia UK. Whether you have a question that needs an immediate answer or need emotional support when life feels overwhelming, at Dementia UK, they have specialist Admiral Nurses who have the time to listen and the knowledge to solve problems.

<https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/>

<https://www.dementiauk.org/>

It is also important to practice self-care, as this helps protect your health and well-being. Sunderland Carers Centre has a Guide to Self-care which can be found by [clicking here](#).