

Alzheimer's Society

# Recognition process for Dementia Friendly Communities

Consultation paper

## **Consultation on a recognition process for dementia friendly communities**

**Deadline: Monday 15<sup>th</sup> October**

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### **1. Background**

Alzheimer's Society and its partners in the Dementia Action Alliance are committed to delivering a social movement that will see a major shift in quality of life for people affected by dementia. There is the potential to see huge progress in societal awareness and understanding of dementia, and improved quality of life for people with the condition, if we work in partnership towards the development of dementia friendly communities.

#### **1.1 What is a dementia friendly community?**

A dementia friendly community is any community that shows a high level of public awareness and understanding of dementia (for example, a local or national organisation such as a shop, bank or corporation, or a village, town or city). Such communities are more inclusive of people with dementia, and improve their ability to remain independent and have choice and control over their lives.

#### **1.2 Why is a recognition process needed?**

Many organisations, villages, towns and cities are already taking steps towards becoming or have an ambition to become dementia friendly. However, realising dementia friendly communities will take a number of years and whilst such communities are being developed, it is vital there is a process to allow them to declare that they are working towards becoming dementia friendly.

During this early phase of the development of dementia friendly communities, it is premature and could be counter-productive to introduce a system of accreditation, and this recognition process will therefore not introduce a kite mark that shows that somewhere is dementia friendly.

But it is vital that there is a process which ensures that all communities are working towards common standards that will truly change the things that matter to people affected by dementia. The process will also enable people with the condition to identify who is committed to the social movement and understand the common goals that the community or organisation is striving

for, and to hold them to account. In addition, registering in the recognition process allows organisations and communities to identify others who are similarly committed, and to be part of a network of communities and organisations that can share information, ideas and support.

### **1.3 The consultation**

Alzheimer's Society, working with members of the Prime Minister's Champion Group on Dementia Friendly Communities, is therefore taking the lead to develop a system of recognition for dementia friendly communities that can be adapted as the movement evolves.

This discussion paper outlines a model for a recognition process and asks for responses to help inform its final development. Please respond to the consultation by 15 October 2012. It is anticipated that organisations and communities will be able to register for the recognition process and have use of the logo in late 2012/early 2013.

## **2. A recognition process**

### **2.1 Outline of the recognition process**

Initial discussions about a recognition process have been held by the dementia friendly communities champion group. Members have stated that there should be a common framework of value based standards that communities must strive for, with a recognisable logo. The use of the logo would show that a community is committed to the standards and working together towards achieving them. A logo is currently in development which will be made available to organisations and communities that are committed to supporting the dementia friendly communities work. We are working on what rules – if any – will sit around the use of this logo.

Initial discussions have also found that:

- The framework should not be too prescriptive in its approach, but should provide common national value based standards that are achievable and that make a real difference to people affected by dementia.
- Overly bureaucratic processes that require expensive assessment by external reviewers could actually disincentivise long term sustainable engagement and therefore tangible changes in local communities.
- The use of a kite mark and accreditation process to indicate compliance with value based standards by organisations is not appropriate. The most effective approach would be a staged approach to introduce and reinforce the concept which would start with the development of the logo for raising awareness and high level values for communities as a whole. As evidence on dementia friendly communities develops, for example evidence on what people with dementia and carers want and gain from a dementia friendly community (to be published in the summer 2013) and learning from those areas working towards becoming dementia friendly becomes available, the recognition process can be adapted and extended.

## 2.2 The values and standards

Communities would be expected to support specific values by working towards named standards. They would not be expected to have achieved these standards before being able to register as working towards becoming dementia friendly, but rather commit to them and show progression towards them. The values should be limited in number and high level, for example:

- We believe that people with dementia have the right to a good quality of life and to remain independent in their local community
- We believe that people with dementia have the right to live well, engage in and contribute to their local communities as long as they wish to do so
- We will address negative attitudes and raise awareness and understanding of dementia.

It is suggested that the standards could be tailored to either a community (for example a village, town or city) or an individual organisation (local or national). The following standards are suggested.

Our community has:

1. A Dementia Action Alliance initiative (or a similar group or effective network).
2. The support of a number of recognised local leaders championing the work, including from the statutory and commercial sectors. For example, a head of local business, a local council leader, a member of the parish council.
3. Analysed the key issues to address within their area that need to be adapted/changed to enable them to become dementia friendly.
4. Involved people affected by dementia, understands their experiences and needs, and is taking account of this as it works towards the standards.
5. Identified which businesses and organisations are a priority to undertake dementia awareness and understanding training, for example pharmacists, dentists, hairdressers, the emergency services, retail and banking staff, and other community based service providers. There is a way of recording those that have been identified and which have undertaken training, which is accessible by the public.
6. A range of appropriate organisations and bodies providing information on dementia and available services and support. This information is in different formats (for example written, online) in different outlets.

Our organisation is:

1. Seeking to network with other local dementia-friendly organisations or communities.
2. Undertaking dementia awareness and understanding training.
3. Supported by a senior member of staff, for example a manager or director.
4. Analysed the key issues to address to enable them to become dementia friendly.

5. Working to involve people affected by dementia, understands their experiences and needs, and is taking account of this as it works towards the standards.
6. Providing information as appropriate on dementia and available services and support. This information is in different formats (for example written, online) in different outlets.

### **2.3 Monitoring the recognition process**

Discussions around the practical administration of such a framework indicate this should be cost neutral and non bureaucratic, yet provide some platform for monitoring. It is intended that communities and organisations will be supported and held to account by people with dementia and carers living in the local community. To enable this, Alzheimer's Society will provide a webpage where each community can register. Registering would commit them to:

- Working towards the standards.
- Publicly showing how they are working towards the standards and self-assessing progress made on an annual basis. This would be in the form of an annual summary of continued activity against the standards and an action plan for further development.
- Providing mechanisms for feedback and comments from local communities in appropriate formats, on a continual basis as well as following the annual report.
- Enabling people with dementia and carers to be fully involved and engaged in this process of commenting on progression.

It is suggested that information on progress and mechanisms for feedback is provided locally, with a link to this information from the Alzheimer's Society registration page. For example, the local information could be held on the webpage of the local dementia action alliance or similar group, or on an easily identifiable section of an individual organisation's website.

Communities that are not fulfilling the above requirements and/or not showing progression towards the standards after reasonable time and support, and where people with dementia and carers have expressed concerns, will be removed from the registration scheme and will not be able to use the logo. Overall governance and decision making on progression and registration continuation could be provided by the local Dementia Action Alliance or similar group if this is in place, or by the recognised local leaders.

### **3. Consultation questions**

1. Is this the right overall approach? Please explain your answer.
2. Do you think these are the values and standards we should be aiming for? Please comment.
3. How would you envisage self-assessment taking place? What processes would you like to see happen?

4. Do you think self-assessment on an annual basis is appropriate? Please comment.
5. Who should take responsibility for committing to the standards and the subsequent self assessment of activities against these across an entire community (village, town or city)? For example could this be the local leaders championing the work?
6. Do you have any comments on the suggestion that progress reports and mechanisms for feedback should be hosted locally?
7. Do you have any other comments on the suggested monitoring and overall governance of the work?
8. Are there any areas of focus that have been missed in the suggested process?
9. Do you have any other comments you would like to make?