

LIVING ALONE WITH DEMENTIA



How best to support people living alone with dementia who don't have family and friends nearby



Does someone near you live alone without nearby friends and family, and do they have dementia or dementia symptoms?

People can and do live on their own with dementia and without informal support. However, people need to be aware that a neighbour or acquaintance may be in this situation, and may need a bit of help.

People that do live on their own successfully with dementia* are clear about what others need to know and what helps.

This group exists - Don't make assumptions about the kind of support someone has. Anyone could find themselves on their own and living with dementia.

Check in with people - Find out if someone is in this situation and recognise that everyone needs a bit of help sometimes.

Listen to the person - Listen to the person's story and get to know what matters to them.

Fight the stigma around dementia - Someone might need a bit of help but that doesn't mean they are not managing. Think about how you talk about their situation.

Find ways to include people - If you are organising something like a social event or a community group, don't automatically exclude people with dementia who don't have someone to come with them. Ask how you can include them. Communicate with them in the way that works best for them.

*<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/dementia/about-dementia/what-is-dementia/>

Help people to access support - If someone needs a bit of support, help them find out who to talk to; this might be the local Council, their GP or a voluntary organisation. Don't just direct the person to support. With their consent*, help them make contact and check that someone is there for them.

Find out who else supports the person - Try and find out who else the person is in touch with. Ask if you can get in touch with the other people in that person's network so you can share important news if you need to. If you are in a person's network, keep in touch with them regularly. Offer and give that bit of help that can go a long way, for example, to put the clocks forward in their house.

Emotional wellbeing is essential - Ask people living alone with dementia about how they feel and who they have to talk to. See if there is support from other people in similar situations that they can access, perhaps from a voluntary sector group.

Plan ahead - Everyone needs to plan ahead for later life, including making plans for care and support or decision-making like Lasting Powers of Attorney. Plan ahead yourself and encourage others to do the same, particularly those who don't have family or friends close by.

*If you are worried that someone is at risk of harm, you should ask advice from your local Council's adult social care service.



Top tips from people living alone with dementia and without informal support

- Sit down with me and get to know me.
- I know if something's not right, take me seriously.
- If there is something for people with carers, there should be something equivalent for me.
- Make it obvious where I can get information.
- Please be proactive, don't assume.
- The little things make a big difference.
- Give me as many opportunities as I need to find the right support.
- Put me in touch with other people with dementia, they know a lot.
- Emotional support is the hardest on your own so opportunities to express myself are important.
- Peer groups that offer support do help.



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Find out more:

[Research on living alone with dementia](#)

[The UK Network of Dementia VoicesDem](#)

[Dementia UK](#)

[Alzheimer's Society](#)

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