

Edinburgh to be dementia-friendly city

The capital is on its way to becoming a dementia-friendly city after a plan was approved to help improve the lives of people with the condition throughout Edinburgh earlier this week.

There are currently around 7,142 people with dementia in the city and it is expected that this number will increase by 62% over the next 20 years. With this in mind, improving services for people with dementia is a key priority for the City of Edinburgh Council, as it looks at ways to meet the needs of an aging population.

The [report](#), which was considered by the Council's Health, Social Care and Housing Committee, outlines the need to increase awareness of the issues that affect people with dementia and to challenge some of the stigmas attached to the condition.

In order to become a dementia-friendly city, the Council will reach out to retailers, public transport providers and partners in the health and voluntary sectors to provide advice about how to help people and service users with dementia. They will be given advice and information about how to help customers that may need extra assistance if they become confused or agitated.

For example, some people with dementia may find it difficult to explain what they need or to recognise bank notes, so they may need extra help and patience. It can also be helpful to move to a quieter area of the shop or office as background noise can be problematic. By ensuring that people throughout Edinburgh are more aware of the small things they can do to help, it is hoped that the city will provide an understanding and welcoming environment for all people living with dementia.

A series of leaflets and promotional materials will be produced to provide advice to residents and organisations throughout Edinburgh.



Convener of
Health, Wellbeing
& Housing – Ricky
Henderson

Convener of Health and Wellbeing, Councillor Ricky Henderson, said: “With the number of people with dementia continuing to increase, we must ensure that the complex needs of people with the condition are met.

“In order to achieve this and business continuity, on a city-wide basis, it is vital that we work closely with the private and voluntary sector to make sure that Edinburgh is a friendly and welcoming place for people living with dementia, whether they are accessing support services or going about their daily activities such as shopping and taking the bus.

“I hope that as we work towards becoming a dementia-friendly city, we can challenge some of the stigma and misconceptions about dementia by raising awareness about some of the small things people can do to help make life easier for people living with condition.”

Another important aspect of the plan is to make sure that people are well informed of the support services available if they or a family member is diagnosed with the condition. Early diagnosis is vital to ensure that people access the support they need to be able to manage living with dementia and live as independently as possible.

The Council’s is currently addressing this through a Dementia Implementation Plan, which aims to enhance post-diagnostic support and recruit ‘Link Workers’ to assist people with the

condition and their carers. It is hoped that by publicising these services as part of the dementia-friendly city campaign, more people will come forward to access the support available to them.

A programme of enhanced training will also be developed for staff across the Council to improve the quality of care for people with dementia and create tailored services to meet their needs.

Helen Hay, Regional Manager for South East and Central, Alzheimer Scotland, said: -“Alzheimer Scotland are delighted to be involved in this far-reaching initiative to make Edinburgh a dementia-friendly city.

“The dedication and enthusiasm shown by those involved bodes extremely well for the project. Local need, local knowledge and local commitment are at the heart of every successful dementia-friendly community.”