



PLYMOUTH
CITY COUNCIL

MEMORY CONCERNS - WHAT CAN I DO?

Information for organisations



DAA Dementia
Action Alliance

Working to become
**Dementia
Friendly**



Memory Concerns

Everyday contact that businesses and organisations have with older people can help develop positive relationships and build a picture of that person. For an older person living alone staff in local businesses and other organisations may be the first to notice changes in:

- Communication skills
- Memory
- Ability to manage money
- Behaviour
- Understanding

Simple things like repeatedly buying the same shopping within a short time span, or being unsure of where or why they have come shopping, struggling to find the right money, appearing lost or other changes to behaviour may highlight developing problems.

The person experiencing some of these difficulties may have dementia but equally they may not, as memory problems and confusion

can be associated with a number of different conditions (many of which are easily treatable).

What should I do if I have concerns?

Remember that each person is an individual an approach that will work with one individual may not for another.

If you have an established relationship with the person it may be possible to have a conversation around memory issues and any support your business or organisation could provide, to help access the services you offer. If possible it is useful to ask if the individual has seen their own General Practitioner (GP) regarding their memory issues, as they can facilitate tests to rule out other conditions with similar symptoms and provide referrals to clinical specialists.

Some people choose not to discuss medical conditions with anyone, even close family, and may find such a conversation very difficult. Try to find a balance between offering help and respecting privacy.

Where family members are also known, they could be approached. However it should be noted that occasionally family members are reluctant to acknowledge changes in a loved one's abilities.

Who can I speak to for more advice?

For general advice regarding concerns about individuals where the person is not open to an approach but behaviour is causing concern.

There are several helplines available:

- Alzheimer's Society: 01752 608909
- Advice Plymouth: 01752 520052 or 08444 111444
- Age UK Plymouth 01752 256020

If the individual's GP is known it can be useful to have a conversation with the GP to and make them aware. Please be aware that GPs are not permitted to disclose any confidential information with other individuals but can listen to concerns.

If the GP is unknown and the concerns are significant but not life threatening (including safeguarding concerns around neglect or abuse) the Plymouth City Council Adult Social Care team can be contacted on:

- 01752 668000 or Out of Hours 01752 346984

If you are concerned about a person with altered behaviour or memory problems who you feel is at significant risk of immediate harm please phone the emergency services on 999.

What will happen?

If calls logged with the Alzheimer's Society, Advice Plymouth or Age UK are noted to have significant concerns these can be referred on to the adult social care team, where the individual may already be known and a referral to the GP will be made.

If the individual is unknown to Adult Social Care information regarding the individual's GP can be sought and a referral made. A social work assessment can also be completed if the individual agrees.

Some people may be aware that they have memory issues but choose not to take any action, this is entirely within that person's rights and as long as the individual has mental capacity to make that decision no further action would be taken. You should however continue to support them in accessing the services provided by your organisation.

What can the GP do?

Before a diagnosis of Dementia can be considered the GP needs to rule out any other underlying conditions that may cause similar symptoms to a dementia. If the tests are all clear and the difficulties remain then a referral would be made by the GP to the Memory Service at Mount Gould Hospital.

Memory Service Team

The Plymouth Community Memory Service is provided by a multi-disciplinary team of professionals, working together to ensure that people who are concerned about their memory or who have been diagnosed with a dementia get the best possible care and support.

Referrals to the service come from various sources within the health and social care community. If someone has concerns about their own or a loved one's memory they are advised to initially speak to their GP so appropriate pre-screening tests can be completed. Once the referral is received by the memory service it will be triaged and the memory service will then make direct contact with the person referred/ carer to arrange an assessment.

For further information please contact the memory service on 01752 435363.

There is no hard and fast rule in accessing help and support for individuals experiencing changes in their ability to cope in everyday situations. If communities respond to the needs of the individuals and work to remove the stigma associated with memory loss and dementia, individuals with dementia will be able to live well in the community with or without a diagnosis.