

# Dementia Inclusive Communities: how to get involved



# Welcome to the dementia inclusive community

With the number of people being diagnosed with dementia increasing year on year, many of us and the people we love will be affected by this condition during our lifetime. That's why the Dementia: Understand Together campaign is striving to work towards building dementia inclusive communities.

By using this symbol you are sending an important message to your staff, visitors, customers, patients, members and all other stakeholders new and old – that you really care and want to create an environment and community that represents all of society.

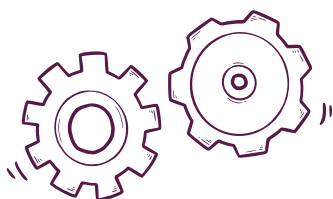
## There are 4 key outcomes that people with dementia and their families say matter to them



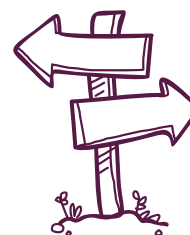
That they are **understood, respected** and **valued**



That they can **stay socially connected** and **engage in community** life if they wish to do so



That local businesses and amenities **are responsive to people's needs**



That the built **environment is accessible** – this includes layout, signage, lighting and access to a quiet space or restroom if available and needed

These outcomes are at the core of helping us to build dementia inclusive communities.

# Before you begin, ask yourself...

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## Do I or we as a business or organisation know what dementia is?

Whether you know a little or nothing at all, that's not a problem. As a first step, even if you've completed training in the past, it would be great for you and any staff or volunteers you may have to learn more about dementia. We recommend you review the training resources and options to suit you at [understandtogether.ie/get-involved](https://understandtogether.ie/get-involved)

We know that every organisation has its own process and systems in place for training and development. If you need support to build dementia awareness or built environment training into your existing plans, please contact [understandtogether@hse.ie](mailto:understandtogether@hse.ie)

We also appreciate, especially for larger organisations, that including a new or updated training model can take time. You don't need all staff or volunteers to have completed this training before you use or display the symbol, but you should make a commitment that this is done within a reasonable timeframe and built into the induction process for any new starters.

## How inclusive are we? If you have a premises, service or online presence, is it safe and easy for everyone to access?

Whether you have a premises people can visit, a service people can use or a website or social media presence, it's really important that these are inclusive and can be easily accessed by everyone. Consider if you're being as inclusive as you possibly can.

Again, there are free resources available to help you learn more about how to create an inclusive environment at [understandtogether.ie/get-involved](https://understandtogether.ie/get-involved)

You may also find these services useful for producing inclusive content for websites, letters and emails:

- National Adult Literacy Agency provide tips and training for communicating in plain English – [nala.ie/plain-english](https://nala.ie/plain-english)
- WebAim.org have great practical tips on following Web Accessibility Standards – [webaim.org/resources](https://webaim.org/resources)
- Ireland's [National Disability Authority](https://publicservice.universaldesign.ie) has a [toolkit](https://publicservice.universaldesign.ie) that presents information on written, spoken and digital information – [publicservice.universaldesign.ie](https://publicservice.universaldesign.ie)

## Do we pride ourselves in providing great customer service and being friendly?

Of course you do! One of the easiest things you can do to be or make your organisation as inclusive as possible is ensuring that you, and any staff or volunteers, treat people with consideration, respect, dignity and kindness.

We all do this in our day-to-day lives but we also know it can be very easy to react badly or insensitively when we're under pressure, when we don't know the answer or we're simply in a rush. It's ok to have a bad day.

## If you work with staff or volunteers, remind them to:

- Take their time when communicating with others – listen and give people time to respond or take an action
- Remember no question is a wrong question – if you don't know the answer to something, explain that you will find out and follow up on that commitment

# Getting started

Once you've considered training needs, the questions in this guide and taken any necessary actions, we'd love for you to begin displaying and using the new community symbol.

We have produced materials and resources which you can order online. Just search for dementia in the topic drop down menu at [healthpromotions.ie](https://healthpromotions.ie):

- Window or door stickers for display on glass or perspex
- Badges
- Posters

We know that many businesses and organisations may need to create their own point of sale and promotional

materials. Before developing anything, please refer to the Dementia: Understand Together brand guidelines. You will find these and can download the new community symbol in different formats at [understandtogether.ie/get-involved](https://understandtogether.ie/get-involved)

We can also email these to you and help with branding queries, if you need support or advice contact [understandtogether@hse.ie](mailto:understandtogether@hse.ie)

Please register as a champion or partner. By signing up you'll receive regular updates on campaign activity nationally and locally plus training offers and information about events where you can link with other champions, partners and services for advice and support: [understandtogether.ie/get-involved](https://understandtogether.ie/get-involved)

## There are 6 simple actions we can all take to support someone with dementia:



**See the person, not the dementia**



**Talk about dementia**



**Stay in touch**



**Ask how you can help**



**Support the person to keep up hobbies and interests**



**Make sure your service or space is easy to use**

# Answering questions

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If you work with people - then it's likely that staff, customers, visitors, members, volunteers or patients might have some questions about why you have started to use this symbol and what it means to be part of a dementia inclusive community.

It might be helpful to appoint a dementia champion(s) for your organisation, someone who is willing to engage with staff, volunteers and the public.

As well as helping to explain and answer questions, the champion(s) could lead on training and help to raise awareness with others. For instance, by reminding staff to allow customers more time to pack their bags, get off at a stop or to make a payment.

Your champion(s) could also be a liaison with members of the public who would like to know more or need more support. It may be helpful to have more than one champion or arrange a handover to cover any leave.

## Here's some discussion points which we hope will help any champion:

I'm/we're part of the Dementia: Understand Together campaign, that aims to create dementia inclusive communities by raising awareness, showing solidarity and offering support to people with dementia, their family and friends.

We hope that if someone has dementia, is a carer or has been affected by dementia in any way sees this symbol, they will know that we care and we will always aim to show understanding and offer support.

This symbol has been created with people living with dementia, carers, healthcare professionals, voluntary and community organisations and members of the public. This is what they told us would best represent inclusive places, groups and services when they are out and about.

This symbol shows others that we are an inclusive, safe and trusted place for everybody - not just those with dementia. Everything we do to be more dementia aware will ultimately be of benefit to everyone in our community.

# Next steps

To create dementia inclusive communities all over Ireland, we need people like you to help us spread the word and inspire others.

## There are some simple ways you can help:

- Send us your photos and videos with the new symbol being used. Whether you organise a launch event or simply add the symbol and the poster to the front of your premises, meeting place or materials – once you start to use it, please take some photos or even a short video that you can share with us to use in our newsletter and on social media.
- Remember, if you include people, you need to ask their permission to share their image. You can use the HSE consent forms for anything you are planning to share with us: [hse.ie/branding](https://www.hse.ie/branding)
- Post on social media – you can also tag us in your social media posts so that we can share and like. Our social media accounts to tag are:  
[facebook.com/dementiaunderstandtogether](https://www.facebook.com/dementiaunderstandtogether)  
[twitter.com/dementia\\_office](https://twitter.com/dementia_office)  
[#understandtogether](https://twitter.com/understandtogether)
- Tell your story – we're always looking for people to share their experience of being a champion or partner. If you've had a good experience, or even a bad one that's helped you make an improvement to your service or business since becoming involved, we'd love to hear from you. As well as supporting the campaign, this can also provide a good promotional opportunity and highlights the efforts of your organisation to your local community and beyond.

# Thank you for your commitment

There is no expectation by displaying or using the symbol, that you or any staff or volunteers that you may work with, should be experts in dementia.

We also understand there is no guarantee that you will always get things 100% right for people with dementia and their families and carers, all of the time.

But by displaying and using the symbol you are showing the public that you have committed to working towards creating a dementia inclusive community and that gesture is appreciated by people with dementia and by all of the partners and champions involved in this campaign.

Thank you.

