

C4: Supporting customers and employees affected by dementia

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Why businesses and organisations matter?

Dementia costs businesses £1.6 billion per year (CEBR, 2014). We found that 73% of UK adults surveyed do not think that businesses and organisations, are geared up to deal with dementia (Alzheimer's Society, 2013). With over 89% of employers believing that dementia will become a bigger issue for their organisation and their staff (Employers for Carers, 2014).

With the UK statutory retirement age rising, and the number of people with dementia expected to rise to 1 million by 2021, we will see many more people developing dementia or becoming a carer whilst still in employment. Businesses need to future proof their organisations, as consumers want businesses which value their customers. A key benefit to organisations in becoming dementia-friendly is that when a business gets it right for people with dementia, it gets it right for everyone.

This pilot engaged with 10 major businesses to test the viability of a framework for businesses to become dementia friendly. These included large organisations including: Heathrow, BT, British Gas, Sainsbury's and Barclays. An assessment was made on how they support employees, customers or clients in key areas including HR processes/procedures, training and awareness, customer support and physical environments.

The findings were made into a Dementia Friendly Business Guide, to support all organisations through guidance, best practice case studies and sector specific actions. We need to ensure that businesses train their staff to be aware of the impact of dementia, adapt their products and processes to tackle the challenges customers and staff face, and review public facing buildings to ensure accessible environments include dementia.

We have created this guide to support businesses to look after both their staff and customers affected by dementia. This resource looks at three key areas that can be adopted by any organisation – large or small.

People:

- Training and awareness
- Supporting staff affected by dementia

Processes

- Customer and client support
- Information provision and signposting

Places

- Reviewing their physical environment.
- Community engagement