Dementia Awareness Week: Library toolkit 2015

Introduction

Dementia Awareness Week takes place in England, Wales and Northern Ireland between 18 and 24 May. It is an Alzheimer’s Society initiative and a key opportunity for libraries to highlight the services and support they offer to people with dementia and their carers, including Reading Well Books on Prescription for dementia, and signpost to other sources of help and advice.

You may find the Public Library Dementia Offer a useful guide when thinking about relevant services and support. You can find it at: readingagency.org.uk/adults/Public_Library_Universal_Dementia_Offer.pdf

Alzheimer’s Society’s call to action for this year’s Dementia Awareness Week is letting the public know that they’re here if people have concerns about dementia. Their strapline running throughout the week is: ‘Alzheimer’s Society is here to help people living with dementia hold on to their lives and the things they love for longer. Because life doesn’t end when dementia begins.’

This toolkit provides ideas for displays, events and activities during Dementia Awareness Week, suggestions about which health partners to invite to events, and ideas for online and social media activity during the week.

The Reading Agency and Society of Chief Librarians will be circulating a template local press release for you to use to promote the books and your events during the week of 11 May 2015.

You can find background information about Reading Well Books on Prescription for dementia for you to use with health partners at the end of this document.
Ideas for activities at your library during Dementia Awareness Week

Displays

- Create a prominently positioned display of Reading Well Books on Prescription for dementia titles. User and prescriber leaflets and posters are still available to order from The Reading Agency shop: shop.readingagency.org.uk/products/reading-well-books-on-prescription-dementia-materials
- Order free posters and flyers (featuring three inspiring people with dementia who have succeeded in fulfilling their ambitions in spite of their dementia diagnosis) from Alzheimer’s Society, as well as copies of their Five Things You Should Know About Dementia booklet, from the end of April. Email marketing@alzheimers.org.uk
- Create a display of leaflets from local dementia organisations and services, e.g. Alzheimer’s Society, local Dementia Action Alliance, memory cafés, Age UK, etc.
- If your authority allows charity collection boxes in libraries, you may want to consider ordering a collecting bucket from Alzheimer’s Society to encourage charitable donations during the week. Email communityevents@alzheimers.org.uk

Events and activities

Here are some ideas of events and activities you could hold during Dementia Awareness Week:

- Work with your local Alzheimer’s Society to hold a drop-in memory café in your library, making the Reading Well Books on Prescription for dementia collection available, along with information and advice leaflets, and refreshments
- Hold a dementia information session and invite local health partners to hold stalls in the library
- Hold a reminiscence session using Pictures to Share titles and library reminiscence collections
- If you have any reading groups in your library, you could encourage them to read one of the Reading Well Books on Prescription for dementia titles for Dementia Awareness Week (one of the personal stories, such as Still Alice, might be particularly suitable). They can share their reviews of the books on the Reading Well website: www.reading-well.org.uk
If you have any Knit and Natter groups, encourage them to make a twiddlemuff – a hand-knitted muff which has been specially designed with the addition of buttons, beads, ribbons and zips, to provide stimulation for hands. You could host a collection bin for twiddlemuffs in your library and then distribute them to local care homes and day centres, following Gloucestershire Libraries’ example. Find out more: www.guidepoststrust.org.uk/blog/are-you-up-to-our-twiddlemuff-challenge. Share photos of them on Twitter using #twiddlemuffs

- Take a #shelfie of your Reading Well Books on Prescription for dementia titles on display and share it on Twitter
- Hold a reminiscence karaoke session, following St Helens Libraries’ example, featuring songs that will inspire memories and discussion
- Encourage staff members and library visitors to sign up to be Dementia Friends. They can either do this by attending a training session delivered by Dementia Champions, or by registering and watching a training video on the Dementia Friends website: www.dementiafriends.org.uk
- Host a Singing for the Brain session (contact your local Alzheimer’s Society for Singing for the Brain groups in your area)
- Invite a representative from Alzheimer’s Society or Dementia UK to give a talk in your library
- Check the guidelines for creating dementia friendly spaces and apply them as far as possible to your library space: www.dementiaaction.org.uk/environments
- You can find a poster maker template to promote Dementia Awareness Week events, created by Alzheimer’s Society, at the following link: postermaker.alzheimers.org.uk

If you have any other great ideas for events and activities to hold during Dementia Awareness Week, please let us know.

**Suggested health partners to invite to Dementia Awareness Week events**

- Alzheimer’s Society: www.alzheimers.org.uk/localinfo
- Memory cafés: www.memorycafes.org.uk
- Local Admiral Nursing team: www.dementiauk.org/what-we-do/admiral-nurses/individual-teams-services
- Local Dementia Action Alliance: www.dementiaaction.org.uk/local_alliances
- Age UK: www.ageuk.org.uk/about-us/local-partners/
- GPs
- Local IAPT team
- Health and wellbeing board
- Public Health
- Memory clinics
- Adult Social Care
You might also find the following resources useful for building health partnerships:

- [Template letter for health professionals](#)
- [Commissioning guide](#)

### Social media

We’d love to see what you’re up to during Dementia Awareness Week. Share your photos, stories and information about activities during the week using #DAW2015 and #ReadingWelldementia.

Alzheimer’s Society are asking their supporters to #DoSomethingNew during Dementia Awareness week, to show that it’s possible for people with dementia to do new things and have new experiences. They are encouraging people to post photos and videos to their social media accounts using the hashtag #DoSomethingNew.

Here are some useful Twitter usernames you can use to ensure we see and can share your posts:

- @readingagency
- @UKSCL
- @alzheimerssoc

If you’re tweeting about specific Reading Well Books on Prescription for dementia titles, you may want to include the author’s Twitter username, where available:

- Ian Donaghy (*Dear Dementia*): @trainingcarers
- Jessica Shepherd (*Grandma*): @JesSSShepherd
- Susan Elliot Wright (*When Someone You Love Has Dementia*): @sewelliot
- Simon Atkins (*First Steps to Living with Dementia*): @DrSAtkins
- Bernie McCarthy (*Hearing the Person with Dementia*): @McCarthyPsychol
- June Andrews (*10 Helpful Hints for Carers*): @ProfJuneAndrews
- Christine Bryden (*Dancing with Dementia*): @BrydenChristine
- Lisa Genova (*Still Alice*): @LisaGenova
- Chris Carling (*But Then Something Happened*): @ChrisCarling3
Suggested tweets

Feel free to write your own tweets during the week, but here are some you can use or adapt if you’d prefer:

- Join us for our #ReadingWelldementia event on Tuesday to mark Dementia Awareness Week #DAW2015 [+link]
- #DoSomethingNew this Dementia Awareness Week. Discover our collection of #ReadingWelldementia books [http://ow.ly/MkGFa] #DAW2014
- 850,000 people in UK are living with dementia. Our #ReadingWelldementia books provide information and practical advice #DAW2015
- Crowds gathering for our #ReadingWelldementia event for Dementia Awareness Week #DAW2015 [+photo]

Dementia Awareness Week online

You can find a wide range of digital resources to help you run Reading Well Books on Prescription for dementia on The Reading Agency website: readingagency.org.uk/adults/practitioners-guides/reading-well-resources-for-library-professionals.html

These include:

- Plasma screen artwork
- Photo bank
- Library handbook
- Digital user and prescriber leaflets

You may also want to encourage library users to visit the newly launched Reading Well website, where they can find information about the books and resources to help them make the most out of the scheme, as well as write book reviews of the titles and read the Reading Well blog: [www.reading-well.org.uk](http://www.reading-well.org.uk)

During Dementia Awareness Week, you could also signpost from your library website to organisations providing support for people with dementia and their carers:

- Alzheimer’s Society: [www.alzheimers.org.uk](http://www.alzheimers.org.uk)
- Dementia UK: [www.dementiauk.org](http://www.dementiauk.org)
- YoungDementia UK: [www.youngdementia.org.uk](http://www.youngdementia.org.uk)
- Carers UK: [www.carersuk.org](http://www.carersuk.org)
- Carers Trust: [www.carers.org](http://www.carers.org)
- The Dementia Engagement and Empowerment Project (DEEP): [dementiavoices.org.uk](http://dementiavoices.org.uk)
- Dementia Friends: [www.dementiafriends.org.uk](http://www.dementiafriends.org.uk)
- Age UK: [www.ageuk.org.uk](http://www.ageuk.org.uk)
- Cruse Bereavement Care: [www.cruse.org.uk](http://www.cruse.org.uk)
Evaluation

We would love to hear more about what you did to promote Dementia Awareness Week and Reading Well Books on Prescription for dementia. Please email readingwell@readingagency.org.uk with a short description of any activity you ran around Dementia Awareness Week, along with photos or videos.

About Reading Well Books on Prescription for dementia

Reading Well Books on Prescription for dementia recommends helpful reading for people with dementia and their carers, available from public libraries. It is delivered by The Reading Agency in partnership with the Society of Chief Librarians with funding from Arts Council England. The scheme is endorsed by leading health partners and delivered by public libraries as part of the Society of Chief Librarians’ Universal Health Offer, a positive vision for public libraries’ contribution to the health and wellbeing of local communities.

The scheme was launched in January 2015 and is available in 87% of library authorities in England. So far the response to the scheme has been overwhelmingly positive: since its launch, figures gathered by PLR show that loans of titles across the list have increased by 286%.

Reading Well Books on Prescription for dementia provides:

- Information and advice about dementia and ageing
- Support to live well with dementia
- Practical help for carers
- Personal accounts of people with dementia and their relatives and carers

The scheme builds on the success of Reading Well Books on Prescription for common mental health conditions, which was launched in June 2013 and reached 275,000 people in its first year.

The need

There is an enormous need for quality-assured support for dementia care. Research shows that dementia remains a key national challenge with a profound social, personal and economic impact on people diagnosed with the condition and their carers and families. While identification rates are rising, many people are still living without a formal diagnosis. Waiting times for a specialist assessment vary, depending on where you live, and support following diagnosis is not available to everyone as there is no mandatory minimum provision of care.¹

• There are 850,000 people in the UK who have dementia, including 700,000 people in England
• Over 40,000 people below 65 live with the condition
• Two thirds of people with dementia live in the community, one third in their own homes
• One third of people with dementia live in care homes
• Less than half (48%) of people with dementia have a diagnosis or are in contact with relevant services
• There are over half a million people caring for someone with dementia in England and 1 in 3 can expect to care for someone with the condition in their lifetime.

Reading Well Books on Prescription is a cost-effective way of delivering community-based dementia care and support. The national cost average of the scheme works out at around a £1 a person.

National partnerships

Reading Well Books on Prescription for dementia is supported by Alzheimer’s Society, British Association for Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapies, British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy, The British Psychological Society, Carers UK, Dementia UK, Innovations in Dementia, National Association of Primary Care, NHS England (IAPT), Royal College of General Practitioners, Royal College of Nursing, and Royal College of Psychiatrists.

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