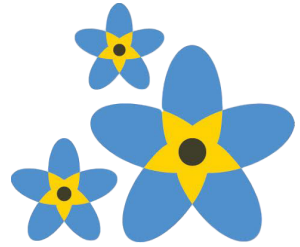


# **Dementia Friendly Journeys:**

## **Taxi Guide**



**Supporting people living with dementia  
to travel safely in Leeds by taxi**



## Introduction

This guide aims to provide information about how to create dementia friendly journeys for people living with dementia.

We want to help people who provide transport to offer a great service for people with dementia in Leeds.

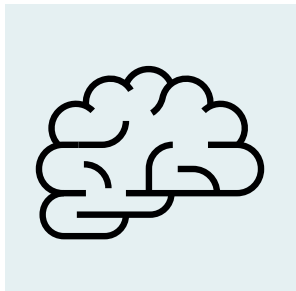
## Quick Facts about Dementia

Dementia is caused by diseases that affect the brain and it affects every person differently. Dementia often starts with short-term memory loss but it can also affect the way that people think, speak and do things. People with dementia can become confused, find it difficult to communicate, may have difficulty remember the words that they want, and can have difficulties planning.

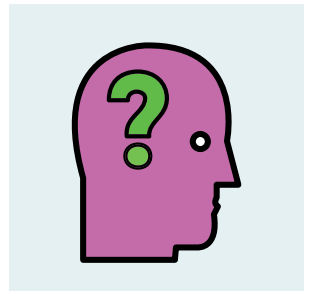
### Key messages:



**Dementia is not a natural part of the ageing process.**



**Dementia is caused by diseases of the brain.**



**It is not just about losing your memory.**



**It's possible to live well with it.**



**There is more to the person than the dementia.**

**This guide contains guidance for managers and for drivers and phone operators.**

For driver's and phone operator's guidance see pages 6 onwards.

## **MANAGERS GUIDANCE**

### **Why being dementia friendly is good for business**



- People with dementia and carers will come to trust your service and become more regular customers
- Improves your reputation and the quality of your service
- Having awareness of dementia can help drivers on a personal level who may be caring for a relative living with dementia

### **Why being dementia friendly is good for customers**



- Allows people to get out independently, helping to increase people's quality of life and reduce isolation
- Reduces any stress and anxiety about travelling to regular activities
- Access to suitable transport helps provide carers with respite

### **Training staff in dementia awareness**

Below are some tips for training taxi drivers in dementia awareness, taking into account variable work shifts:



- Use one of the online short films for new driver's induction—follow the link to sign up for free to access training videos:  
<https://www.dementiafriends.org.uk/register-partner-admin>

- Integrate dementia awareness information into existing training sessions (e.g. safeguarding) for new drivers
- Provide each new driver with an information leaflet, link or top tips from this booklet about dementia; make these available in appropriate languages as required:

[https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/info/20111/publications\\_about\\_dementia/961/how\\_to\\_help\\_people\\_with\\_dementia\\_a\\_guide\\_for\\_customer-facing\\_staff](https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/info/20111/publications_about_dementia/961/how_to_help_people_with_dementia_a_guide_for_customer-facing_staff)

<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/dementia-guide/Pages/about-dementia.aspx>

*(Top Tips sheets are available for free from Dementia Friendly Leeds, please email [leedsdaa@opforum.org.uk](mailto:leedsdaa@opforum.org.uk) for copies)*

- Have information on hand for drivers to look at whenever they need to, e.g. in staff rooms and notice boards, and be prepared to answer questions
- Encourage more senior drivers to take on a 'mentor' role and support and share dementia friendly information with a small group of newer drivers.

## Other Useful Measures to take



- Introduce systems so carers of people with dementia can set up monthly accounts or pay online to avoid cash being needed during the journey.
- Ask staff to inform their manager of any concerns about passengers and be aware of safeguarding. Managers then, where appropriate, will pass on concerns to local organisations or the police. This includes people who may be lost or confused on the streets when a driver passes them.
- Make allowances for the extra time it will take a driver to transport a person living with dementia when making bookings. They may need an extra couple of minutes to get in and out of the car.
- Where possible, try to ensure the same driver or two/three drivers are booked for the same individual. This allows both the driver and individual to get to know each other well and feel more confident.

### **Useful Links and Resources:**

#### **Reporting suspected abuse of an older person:**

<https://www.gov.uk/report-abuse-of-older-person>

#### **Downloadable Factsheet about dementia:**

[https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/info/20033/publications\\_and\\_factsheets](https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/info/20033/publications_and_factsheets)

#### **Dementia Guide in Video Form:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RLBuyglcttU>

# DRIVER & PHONE OPERATOR GUIDANCE

## Top Tips on supporting a person with dementia



- Ring the person on arrival and offer a prompt of the reason for the journey



- Tell the customer the make and colour of the taxi car



- Where possible, make sure the passenger can see you clearly when you speak to them



- Speak slowly, calmly and clearly



- Avoid asking lots of questions suddenly, allow extra time for the passenger to respond



- Reduce background noise if possible e.g. radio



- You can offer to write down or repeat fares and information, some people find this easier to understand

### **Remember:**

**Dementia can affect people's memory, language, co-ordination and more. It can be disorientating and frightening at times. A friendly smile and patience can go a long way.**

# OVERCOMING COMMON CHALLENGES

We have outlined 8 common challenges drivers and operators may come across and how to overcome them:

## Challenge 1: Person ringing several times to check booking



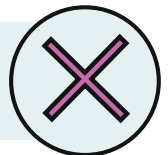
### Why could this happen?

People with dementia experience memory loss and so may be more worried about missing appointments, or forget that they are already booked in.

### Resolution:

- Speak to person with dementia, with a carer present if required, and determine if there is a routine to the journeys they make. The phone operators can then reassure individual of the correct time and date for their journey and should reduce phone calls.
- Offer a reminder phone call when the taxi driver has arrived to reassure the individual

## Challenge 2: Person ordering a taxi and then refusing it on arrival



### Why could this happen?

Dementia can affect people's short term memory so they may find it difficult to remember recent events, such as booking a taxi.

### Resolution:

- Prompt the individual not just with where they are going but why e.g; "It's your taxi to take you to your singing group in St Matthew's Centre"
- Knock on the door, and ensure you appear friendly and patient. Remember – having dementia can be disorientating, so putting people at ease is essential

### Challenge 3: Person finds payment difficult



#### Why could this happen?

Dementia can affect people's perception and how they see things, so finding the right coin or note can be challenging.

#### Resolution:

- Set up a regular account with the person, or with a trusted carer, so money doesn't have to be exchanged during the journey
- Offer to support the person to count the change – but remember, a person with dementia is an adult and the tone should remain respectful at all times
- Encourage the person to take their time. Sometimes all a person needs is a little longer to complete a task and not feel pressured to rush

### Challenge 4: Person becoming agitated during journey



#### Why could this happen?

Sometimes dementia can be frustrating– try to put yourself in that person's shoes. It can affect your memory, your co-ordination, your perception and more. This can make life challenging, and some days it may be a struggle to express your needs verbally.

#### Resolution:

- It's not your fault that the person is agitated – take a breath, stay calm and listen. This is usually the best way to diffuse a situation



- If the distress is caused by lack of understanding in a conversation it can help to repeat back slowly what you have understood
- If the distress is confusion over a fare or a journey you can offer to write it down for the person

## **Challenge 5:** **A person seems lost or distressed in the street**



### **Why could this happen?**

As dementia progresses it can affect more memories, such as remembering you moved house or changes to your local area.

### **Resolution:**

- If you are concerned about a person's wellbeing you can contact the police – and be aware of the Herbert Protocol. This is a protocol where a person with dementia's details are taken. They can then be reported missing and be searched for before 24 hours have passed. It can be useful to inform people with dementia and carers of this. See more information here: <https://www.westyorkshire.police.uk/dementia/herbert-protocol>
- Some people carry a helpcard with them in their wallet or pocket, with contact details of a carer or friend on it. You can offer them a prompt: 'Do you have a helpcard in your wallet or pocket?'
- There is a 'Safe Places' mobile app where organisations can sign up as a registered safe place. They will support people who are lost or distressed, make them a drink and call someone for them. You can look up the nearest place and offer to assist them there.

## Challenge 6:

### Person is saying inappropriate things during journey



#### Why could this happen?

Dementia affects every person differently but can sometimes affect people's inhibitions. This can lead to people speaking aloud inappropriate thoughts or comments.

#### Resolution:

- Whilst it can be difficult it's important to remember that the person's brain is physically affected by dementia and it is not their fault. Stay calm, and depending on the severity of the comment, you can choose to simply ignore or not respond to it.
- Gently but firmly tell them the comments are not appropriate. Make eye contact as non-verbal cues can be easier to understand.
- Redirect them to a more positive comment – look at a building you are passing or ask if they were born in the area.

## Challenge 7:

### Person's speech doesn't make sense



#### Why could this happen?

Because dementia affects the brain use of language can be affected. Dementia can lead to word displacement, for example a person may say 'horse' when they mean 'dog'

#### Resolution:

- Encourage people to take their time when speaking. Try to give extra time for people to respond after asking a question
- Giving specific questions can be easier than open questions e.g. "Where are you going?" can be "So you're going to the shopping centre, is that right?"



- Try not to contradict the person where possible – this can be upsetting and tends to happen frequently.
- If you are unsure what a person means, repeat back what you have understood and check.
- Humour can work well in some situations if someone is trying to find a word, keep it light and friendly

All these are just examples of how dementia could affect someone. Dementia affects each person differently and can change over time.

The best approach is to remain observant, friendly and patient with the customer. People can have good days and bad days (just like all of us).

Go with the flow, and remember, a friendly, understanding driver can be the difference between a person getting out that week or not.

### **What people with dementia in Leeds think:**

“ I ask for a dementia friendly driver when I ring up ”

“ It's all about how friendly and helpful the driver is. All journeys start with a driver ”

“ I sometimes forget where I'm going and say the wrong place, and the driver reminds me why I booked the taxi ”

## Other Support and Opportunities

### Dementia Friends Sessions

Dementia Friendly Leeds can offer hour long free dementia friends sessions that can be tailored for drivers. These provide information and understanding about dementia. Please get in touch for more information.

### Dementia Action Alliance

You can join the Dementia Action Alliance, a network of organisations who want to declare their support for people with dementia.

### Follow this link to join:

[http://www.dementiaaction.org.uk/join\\_the\\_alliance/get\\_involved](http://www.dementiaaction.org.uk/join_the_alliance/get_involved)

### Attend local events

We hold bi-annual events to share stories and best practise across Leeds. Our events are free to attend; our alliance members get first invite. Keep an eye on our twitter page and newsletter for upcoming events:

Tweet: [@leedsdaa](https://twitter.com/leedsdaa)

**For more guidance, staff training and support, contact Dementia Friendly Leeds:**



0113 244 1697



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[www.opforum.org.uk/dementia](http://www.opforum.org.uk/dementia)