



**Dementia Friendly
Community** Tralee

Dementia Inclusive GAA Communities



Foreword from Kerry GAA

In Ireland 30 people are diagnosed with dementia every day and over 64,000 people are currently living with the condition.

Tralee Dementia Friendly Interagency Group was established in May 2019 with the aim of raising awareness of dementia in the community and to encourage everyone to share responsibility for ensuring that people with dementia feel understood, valued and able to continue to contribute to their community.

Kerry GAA are active participants on this group which has representatives from a wide spectrum of the community including the HSE, Tralee Chamber Alliance, Kerry County Council, An Garda Síochána and representatives from voluntary and statutory agencies.

The GAA is one of the most important community structures and we want to encourage people with dementia to continue to be an active part of this community.

One of our first initiatives undertaken by Kerry GAA in support of this, was the delivery of dementia awareness training to our Austin Stack Park, Fitzgerald Stadium and club stewards in 2022.

This training was organised by the Kerry GAA Health and Wellbeing Committee in partnership with the HSE.

I am now delighted to welcome the launch of the Dementia Awareness Resource Pack for all of the clubs in Kerry. This booklet aims to provide tips, advice and information on how to keep people with dementia engaged in their local GAA community, continuing going to matches and supporting their local clubs thus enjoying the social outing this provides.

I wish to thank the HSE our principal partners in this initiative and assure that Kerry GAA will continue to support any initiative going forward.

I also wish to thank the members of the interagency group for their significant contribution to this very valuable resource and their ongoing work to ensure that any person with dementia is helped to maintain their independence.

We all need to continue to create awareness of the importance of the areas as set out in this resource pack and support initiatives that address them.

Padraig Ó Súilleabháin

Cathaoirleach
Coiste Chontae Chiarraí



Did you know?

30 people will be diagnosed with dementia today



Over 64,000 people are currently living with dementia in Ireland



Dementia

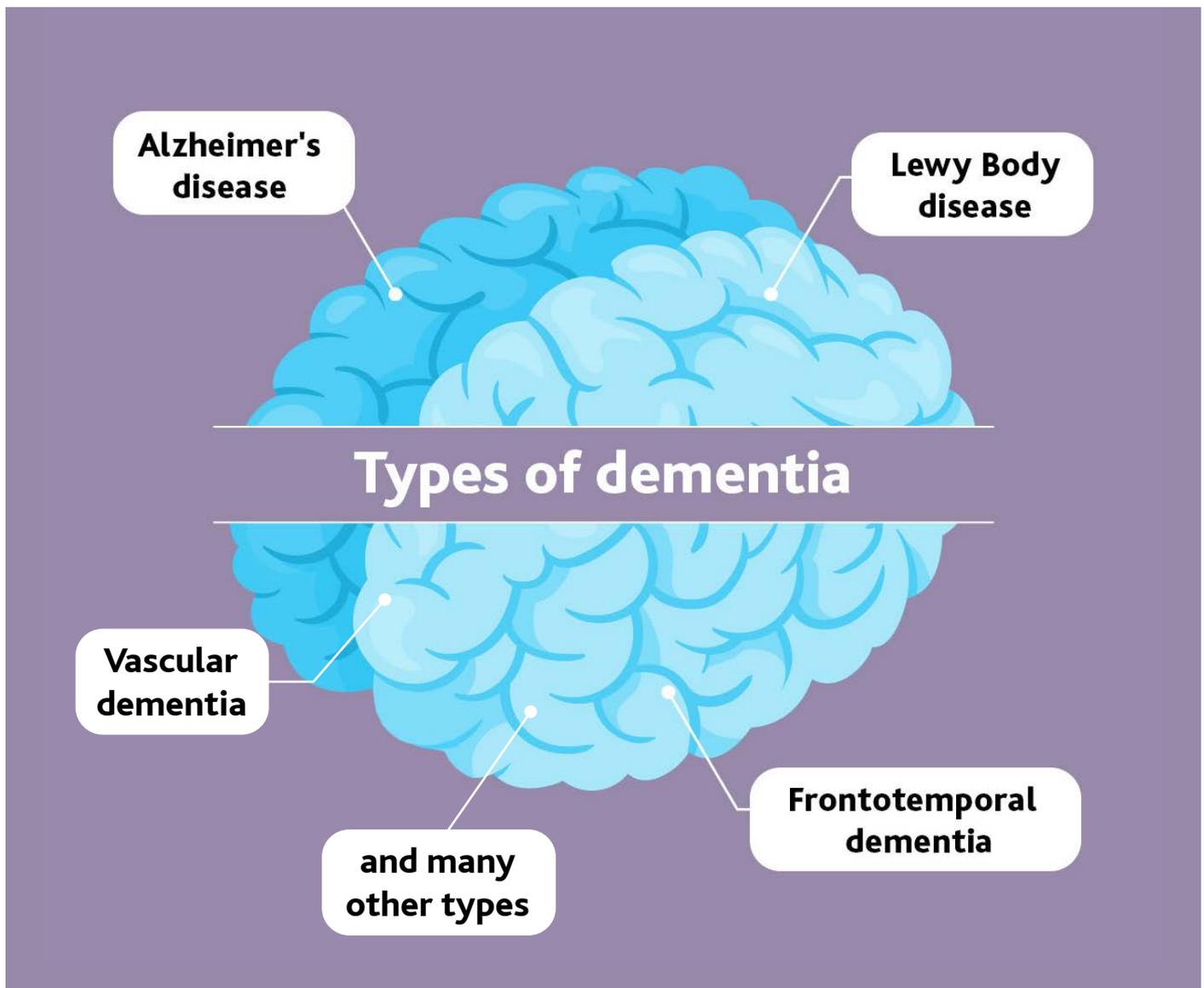
Many people worry about their memory. We all have little lapses in memory now and then, we may forget where we put our keys or we might not be able to think of a word that is on the tip of our tongue. Many people associate dementia with memory loss, however there are several other symptoms that affect a person with dementia depending on the type of dementia.

Dementia is an umbrella term used to describe a range of conditions which cause changes and damage to the brain such as Alzheimer's disease, Vascular dementia and Frontotemporal dementia.

Common signs of dementia are:

- confusion
- forgetfulness
- repetitiveness
- struggling to find words

This can make everyday situations stressful.



Sometimes people with dementia will need extra assistance to help them with everyday things such as the following:

Problems with language, the word on the tip of the tongue but can't say it - this could be people's names but also names of objects or places



Loss of interest in hobbies and pastimes - for example going to GAA matches



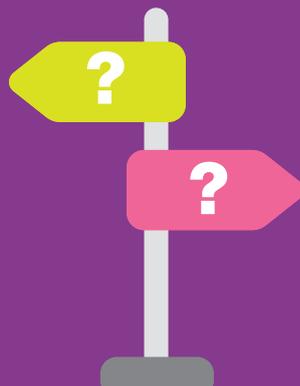
Memory loss, particularly with recent events - perhaps unable to recall the local game last weekend



Changes in mood and behaviour - this could be increased anxiety, aggression or becoming more passive



Getting disorientated in familiar environments



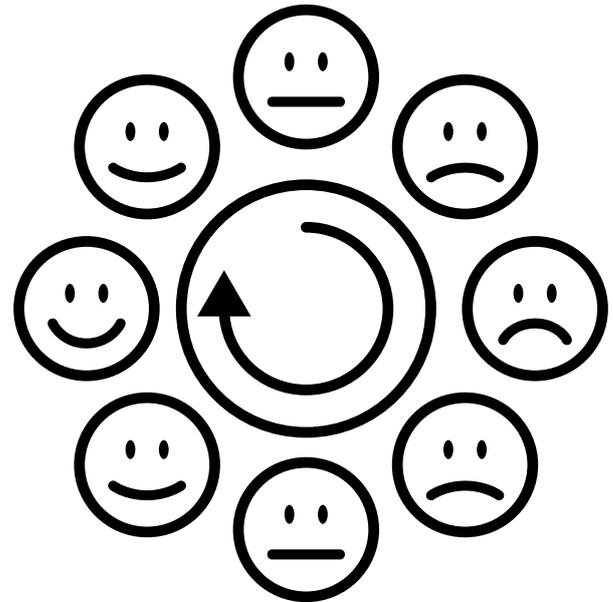
Difficulties with money counting and payments



How do people react if they are experiencing memory difficulties?

Each person reacts differently to memory loss.

- It can be very upsetting if memory loss becomes a frequent problem
- Someone might feel frustrated and annoyed at themselves for taking longer than before with daily tasks
- Others may react by laughing and joking
- Some don't accept they have memory difficulties
- Others might not have the insight that they have memory difficulties
- Some may shy away from social engagement and become socially isolated
- Others may only go to places where they are reassured and feel supported



“When you meet a person with dementia, you meet one person with one type of dementia”

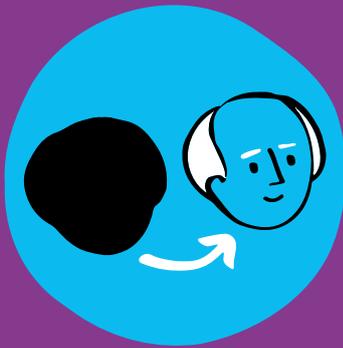
Professor Tom Kitwood, Psycho-Gerontologist and Dementia Care Pioneer

Dementia is not simply a health issue, but a social issue that requires a community response.

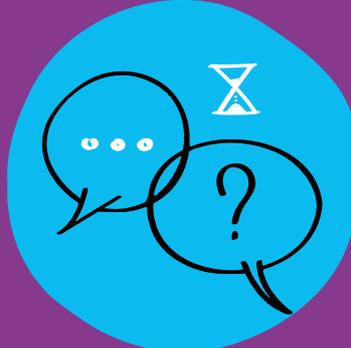
How can communities and clubs become dementia inclusive?

- Be aware
- Communicate effectively
- Create inclusive environments
- Enable people to be active in our communities
- Show respect, understanding and patience to all

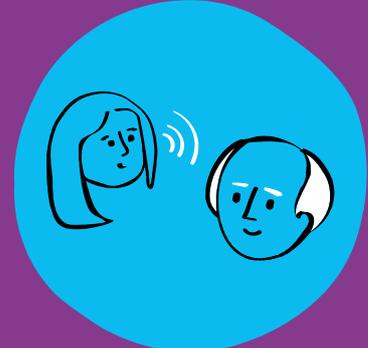
See the person as an individual, not just the symptoms of dementia.



See the person,
not the dementia



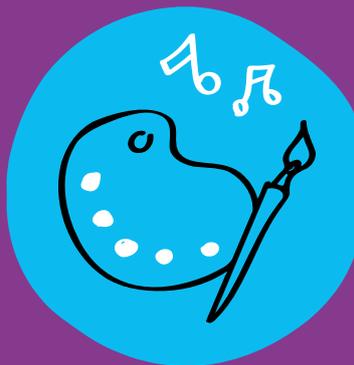
Talk about
dementia



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

Dementia friendly and inclusive communities encourage everyone to share responsibility for ensuring that people with dementia feel understood, valued and able to contribute to their community. Tralee was one of the first towns in Kerry to have a dedicated Dementia Friendly Interagency Group that works to raise awareness of dementia. They work with businesses in Tralee to strive to have a town that is inclusive for all. Kerry GAA are playing their role in helping, not only Tralee, but the whole of Kerry to become dementia friendly.

Tips when communicating and interacting with a person with dementia

- Be calm and patient
- Face the person, speak slowly and clearly
- Make sure you have their attention, say their name
- If sharing important information, make sure the surroundings are quiet with minimal distractions, for example turn off the radio, TV, move away from traffic or other people talking
- Try to get one idea across at a time, do not overwhelm the person with a lot of information
- Allow the person time to take in and process what you have said. Repeat if required
- Do not embarrass the person by correcting them bluntly
- Try not to confuse the person by asking them too many questions
- Use questions that ask for simple answers
- Do not ask questions that challenge the person's memory, for example who am I?
- Talk about familiar things, places, people and ideas
- Use names of things, people, places you are talking about rather than this, that, him, her, them or here, there - this will help to prompt and remind the person what the conversation is about
- Use facial expressions and hand gestures to make sure the person understands you. Actions speak louder than words

Respect, patience and understanding

Over 64,000 people are currently living with dementia in Ireland

Language is a powerful tool. The words we use can strongly influence how others treat or view people with dementia

Use empowering language. We have a responsibility to use language that is empowering and inclusive of the diverse experiences of people with dementia

Inclusive environments

Creating a dementia inclusive space can have a major impact on improving independence and accessibility for people living with dementia. Simple changes to signage, flooring and lighting can enable continued participation in communities.

Signage

Signage can support a person’s confidence to navigate communities, whether it is the local shop, car park, pitch or clubhouse. It is important to highlight certain services and facilities that are available such as toilets, this can be reassuring for people.

Inclusive signage should have the following characteristics to support wayfinding:

- Signs should be clear in bold type font with good contrast between the text, any images and background material. The sign should contrast with the surface it is mounted to or appears on
- Light Reflective Value (LRV) is a measurement for the amount a surface reflects or absorbs. For signage, especially for people living with dementia, the contrast between the light absorbed and the light reflected is very important. The minimum recommended ratio is between 60% and 70% (where 0 is black and 100 is white). If you are buying paint, the LRV is part of the paint code and is usually easily found. This means that key information that the sign is providing will be easier to identify. Often multi-coloured images will not meet this so using monochrome, 3D icons will assure the contrast ratio is met throughout the sign
- The background surface should be plain and clear of distraction, pattern and visual clutter. There should not be a glare or shine from the sign or the background

- Text should be the correct size for the viewing distance. Any icon or image should suit the size and space available. Please see the table below for guidance
- Signs should be at eye level (approx. 1.2m above finished floor level) and well-lit with no glare
- Be aware of images or icons on signs, highly styled or abstract images should be avoided. 3D pictograms are recommended over abstract images. Ensuring they are easily identifiable
- Think about placing signs at key decision points for someone who is trying to navigate your premises for the first time
- Signs for toilets and exits are important- if you navigate someone to a toilet make sure you navigate them how to then exit the toilet
- Ensure glass doors are clearly marked

The table below provides guidance on the recommended letter heights in signs for a range of viewing distances.

| Viewing distance (mm) | Recommended letter height (mm) |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
| 6000 | 200 |
| 4600 | 150 |
| 2500 | 100 |
| 2300 | 75 |
| 1500 | 50 |
| 750 | 25 |

The size of symbols should suit the size and space available, subject to a recommended border height of 150mm.

Source: https://universaldesign.ie/Built-Environment/Building-for-Everyone/Entire-Series-Books-1_10.pdf

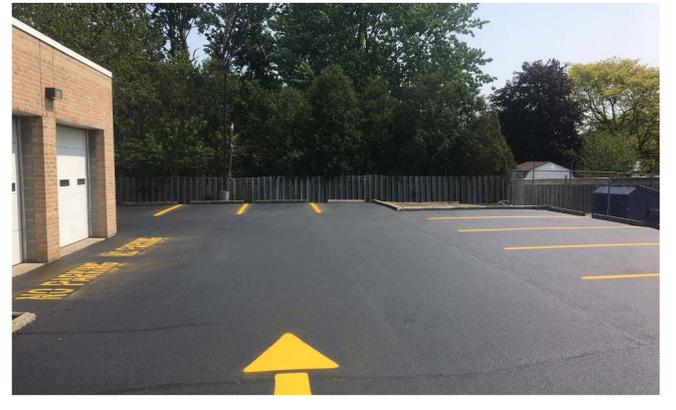


You can download symbols for signage that have all been co-designed and tested with people with dementia free of charge at: www.inclusivesymbols.com

Examples of environmental changes

Parking

Signed parking and some designated lined parking spaces in your GAA grounds/clubhouse may be helpful. People with dementia do not always have a disability parking pass and many people with dementia continue to drive independently.



Steps

Ensure steps are highlighted and signposted. Having colour contrast on the edge of a step can help with judging the depth of the step, also changing the colour of the top and bottom steps can help to avoid trips or falls.



Seating

An older person or person living with dementia may need to rest and sit at frequent intervals. Providing seating will enable people to access and use your premises and continue to be involved in the community by attending sporting events. Ideally, there should be appropriate seating every 25-30 meters from the car park of the club grounds. Seats should have arm rests, back support and be the correct height to enable a person to sit into the seat and stand up independently. These seats should not become a potential trip hazard in narrow spaces.



Colour is important to

- Mark boundaries
- Assist with wayfinding
- Identify potential objects
- Help recognise objects

If there are parts of a building that you do not want people to access then you could try removing any colour contrast. For example, if there is a store room that you do not want people to access then paint the door and the door frame the same colour as the surrounding walls.

Lighting and dementia

Light is a necessity for us all, it helps us perform visual tasks and it affects mood and perception. For someone with dementia, frequent misinterpretations can occur when there is poor lighting so having adequate lighting becomes even more important particularly in clubhouses and seating areas.

- Good lighting can cause a renewed interest in an environment
- Ensure light is even and constant
- Be aware of glare which can impact perception. Reducing glare increases comfort, minimises risk of falls and also increases attention span

Dementia inclusive signage checklist:

| | |
|---|---|
| Have you got the appropriate signage to enable people to easily access your grounds and the facilities within your grounds? |  |
| Are signs clear with the correct level of contrast between text, any images and background? |  |
| Is text the right size for the viewing distance and do any symbols suit the size and space available? |  |
| Is there contrast between the sign and surface it is mounted on? |  |
| Are signs positioned at the correct level and at eye line? |  |
| Do any images or icons easily identify the facility they are signposting? |  |
| Do images or icons meet with the minimum recommended Light Reflective Value? (Minimum recommended ratio is between 60% and 70%) |  |
| Are signs placed at key decision points for someone who is trying to navigate your grounds? |  |
| Are signs for toilets and exits clear? |  |
| Are glass doors clearly marked? |  |

What can clubs do to support people with dementia in their community?

Activity is essential to wellbeing and helps maintain our sense of self-worth as well as giving purpose and enjoyment to the day. Supporting a person who has dementia to remain active and still feel involved can be the key to maintaining quality of life even into the later stages of the illness. Being engaged in activities that are meaningful to the person with dementia should not stop because of diagnosis.

GAA clubs and communities can help by enabling people to remain active. We can create clubs and communities that are inclusive to all, where people don't feel judged or worried. It is important for GAA clubs to create a safe welcoming environment as they are the grass roots of communities in parishes, villages, towns and counties across the country.

- Social engagement is one of the most important factors for memory wellness and brain health. Keeping individuals active in communities is vital when someone gets a diagnosis of dementia. This might mean supporting them to continue to volunteer in an adapted role or continuing to attend matches. GAA clubs could enable people to attend matches by sending reminder messages out about dates and times of matches or by organising a rota of social drivers
- Make sure your club provides an inclusive environment. There is guidance within this document to help you, including a checklist to improve your signage and accessibility
- Provide reminiscence resources – long term memory and reminiscing is generally easier for people with dementia than remembering what happened yesterday. Reminiscing about the past builds on the strengths of a person with dementia as they are more likely to retain long-term memories. There are many ways to facilitate reminiscence sessions, such as creating club history books or organising showings of historic matches. There is a link to the Sporting Memories handbook at the back of this resource which may be useful
- Encourage club members to attend dementia awareness education or training. Ensure volunteers are aware of, and can identify, the main symptoms of dementia and know how they can provide practical assistance to those who may be struggling as a result of these symptoms
- Link with Tralee Dementia Friendly Interagency Group or your local dementia alliance regarding ongoing education, events or activities that will be relevant to your club
- Talk about dementia and create awareness within your club. Promote, advertise and highlight that your club is dementia aware which will in turn encourage continued participation in the club and hopefully attendance at matches
- Contact the local support services that are provided at the back of this resource for further information.

This is Jack, a 72-year-old man who has lived in Tralee for the last 50 years. He is a retired Garda and an active volunteer in his local GAA club.

Jack and his family noticed about 2 years ago he was beginning to become a bit 'forgetful'.

Jack would come home from the match and forget the score of the game. He couldn't tell his wife Mary whom he had been talking to.

Jack had a couple of experiences when he gave people the wrong change. One man showed little understanding. Jack became more anxious and bothered by this. A fellow club man said this to Mary his wife, as Jack could not recall events.

Following this, Jack's family encouraged him to go to the doctor and he was diagnosed with dementia. The doctor encouraged Jack to maintain his independence and highlighted the importance of social engagement and stimulation.

However, Jack stopped volunteering and doing the gate at matches, he also stopped attending matches.

Jack started spending a lot of time at home. He had lost his confidence and purpose. He missed out on his hobbies. He became socially isolated.



How could your club help Jack?

- Promote dementia within the club and your local community so that everyone (volunteers, players and spectators) is aware of dementia. Staff and volunteers will then have the knowledge to recognise that patience is required, allowing people with dementia to take their time to complete tasks or assisting people who might struggle to calculate money or may have forgotten the right money
- Give Jack a little more support - having another volunteer on the gate collecting money with Jack who has an awareness of dementia
- Provide an alternative volunteering role within the club - could Jack perhaps volunteer as a steward on match days instead of taking money?
- Introduce a volunteering buddy system - connecting Jack to someone who could support him and ensure he is not getting lost or disorientated while at club events
- Have a slow queue rather than a fast lane entering the match
- If Jack continues to drive could the club have accessible parking in the car park/field that is clearly sign posted?
- Use clear accurate signage to help access toilets and other facilities, differentiating between the dressing rooms
- Invite older members of the club to home games to show appreciation and inclusion



If you have any queries regarding the content of this resource pack or would like further information please contact your local Occupational Therapist at:

Kerry Memory Technology Resource Room
HSE

086 780 9989
mtrr@bailemhuire.ie

Local support

Alzheimer Society of Ireland's Kerry Dementia Advisors:

North Kerry Dementia Advisor
086 781 2217

East, West and South Kerry Dementia Advisor
021 4972504

www.alzheimers.ie

Dementia Friendly Tralee

www.tralee.ie/dementia-friendly-tralee

GPs and Public Health Nurses

www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/1/lho/kerry/

Acknowledgments

Steering Committee Members from Dementia Friendly Tralee

HSE:

Dolores McElligott, Catherine Murphy, Eibhlis Cahalane

Kerry GAA:

Jimmy Mulligan, Áine Ní Shúilleabháin

Dementia: Understand Together:

Fiona Foley, Áine Hutcherson, Matthew Gibb

National support

The Alzheimer Society of Ireland

National Helpline: 1800 341 341

Email: helpline@alzheimer.ie

www.alzheimer.ie

Dementia: Understand Together

National campaign led by the HSE, working with the Alzheimer Society of Ireland, Age Friendly Ireland, the Dementia Services Information and Development Centre, Age & Opportunity and Healthy Ireland. Supporting national and local partners and champions to grow dementia inclusive communities across the country. You can find training resources and order promotional materials online.

Email: understandtogether@hse.ie

www.understandtogether.ie

The Sporting Memories handbook

You can download this excellent resource for clubs at: <https://alzheimer.ie/creating-change/awareness-raising/sporting-memories-handbook/>

To order a copy by post, visit

www.healthpromotion.ie, select dementia from the drop down menu and follow the instructions to complete your details.

The National Disability Authority has a range of resources to help you build a dementia inclusive community

www.universaldesign.ie/built-environment/housing/dementia-friendly-dwellings

The Dementia Adviser service and national Helpline are provided by the Alzheimer's Society of Ireland supported with funding from the HSE.



**Dementia Friendly
Community** Tralee

