First ever Alzheimer's Society Dementia Journalism Awards announced to launch charity's third annual Dementia Friendly Awards

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Alzheimer's Society has opened nominations for its third annual Dementia Friendly Awards. Sponsored by Iceland, the awards celebrate people, organisations and communities making an outstanding contribution towards improving the lives and experiences of people with dementia.

This year will see the introduction of the first ever Alzheimer's Society 'Dementia Journalism' awards, designed to recognise journalists from national and regional media in England and Wales who demonstrate best practice in reporting dementia in a sensitive way, helping to highlight issues and tackle stigma and common misperceptions.

850,000 people in the UK have a dementia, set to rise to over a million by 2021. With myths and misunderstandings around dementia continuing to contribute to the stigma and isolation many people feel.

Alzheimer's Society's Dementia Friends programme - the UK's biggest ever initiative to change the way people think, act and talk about dementia - is tackling this stigma which often results in social exclusion. There are already more than 1.5 million Dementia Friends in the UK, with a target to reach 4 million by 2020. The Dementia Friendly Communities initiative sets out to create more communities and businesses that are dementia-friendly, so that people affected by dementia feel understood and included in all aspects of community life.

As part of Alzheimer's Society's drive towards creating a dementia friendly society, the charity is inviting dementia friendly organisations and people across England, Wales and Northern Ireland to enter the awards to recognise their work in making communities better for people with dementia.

Nominations for 2016 are now open to all groups, individuals, organisations and partnerships that champion the rights of people affected by dementia to remain included and supported in their communities and daily lives. Nomination forms can be found atwww.alzheimers.org.uk/dementiafriendlyawards

Jeremy Hughes, Chief Executive of Alzheimer's Society, said: "Dementia is the biggest health and social care issue facing our society and there's no question that it has a profound and devastating impact. Additionally, the many myths and misunderstandings around dementia continue to contribute to the stigma and isolation that many people feel.

"The work people and organisations are carrying out up and down the country in a bid to raise better awareness, break down the stigma and make our communities more dementia friendly is inspirational. These awards allow us to celebrate the incredible dedication arts and cultural organisations have shown in improving the lives of people with dementia.

"I'd urge anyone and everyone to enter, so we can continue to show that life doesn't end when dementia begins."

The awards will be hosted by Angela Rippon OBE, Alzheimer's Society Celebrity Ambassador, who explains why she is delighted to be hosting this year's awards: "It's wonderful to see dementia friendly initiatives emerging from every corner of our communities - from schools to hairdressers and theatres to public transport.

"These awards are a chance not only to celebrate the splendid achievements of those who make a positive difference to the lives of people with dementia and their carers, but also to inspire others to follow in their footsteps as we strive to create Dementia Friendly Communities across our society."

Last year saw more than 300 applications. Alzheimer's Society is hoping to make this year's awards bigger and better than ever before, with nine categories to choose from and four new awards:

- NEW: The first ever Dementia Journalism award
- NEW: The first ever Inspiring Individuals award
- NEW: Young Person(s) Contribution of the Year, *supported by Express Newspapers*

- Dementia Friendly Community of the Year
- Dementia Partnership of the Year
- NEW: Dementia Innovation of the Year
- Dementia Friends Champion of the Year
- Dementia Friendly Organisation of the Year
- Outstanding Contribution of the Year

Previous successes include the staff and students at Bernard Gilpin Primary School in Wearside, who won last year's Dementia Friendly Educational Initiative Award. Their win followed work including building dementia into the pupils' curriculum, development of 'The Living Room' to hold sessions for people living with dementia, their families and carers, and promotion of the importance of inter-generational learning to Northumbria and Newcastle universities.

Enter 2016's awards now as an individual, or as part of an organisation or community. Refer to the individual entry criteria for your chosen award and apply using the nomination form at www.alzheimers.org.uk/dementiafriendlyawards

The closing date for submissions is midnight on Monday 1August 2016. For further queries email:dementiafriendlycommunities@alzheimers.org.uk.

All finalists will be invited to attend a glittering awards ceremony on Wednesday November 30 in Central London where winners will be announced.

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