# Population screening for dementia still not recommended for over 65s

**Thursday 15 January, 2015**

The UK National Screening Committee (UK NSC) has today (Thursday 15 January) upheld its recommendation against screening everyone aged 65 and over for dementia. The Committee reviewed the current evidence extensively and concluded that the current test for dementia, which is a form of questionnaire, does not accurately identify those people who have dementia and those who do not.

To recommend screening, the Committee would need to be confident that by acting early, treatments would slow or even prevent this serious disease. At the moment these treatments do not exist.

Alzheimer's Society opposes routine population screening, as there is not yet evidence to support it, but does support a case finding approach where clinicians ask those who are at a higher risk of developing dementia if they are concerned about their memory and then refer them for appropriate tests if they are concerned. There are no current proposals to introduce routine population screening for dementia.

**Jeremy Hughes, Chief Executive at Alzheimer's Society said:**

'Everyone with dementia has the right to know about their condition and tackle it head on, but the UK National Screening Committee are right that until tests are more accurate and the right treatments are available, population screening for dementia amongst all over 65s remains inappropriate.

'However, given that little more than half of the 850,000 people with dementia in the UK currently have a diagnosis, programmes that identify and work with people at risk of developing dementia are essential. Although we do not recommend universal screening, we strongly advise that GPs ask those who are at a higher risk of dementia about their memory. This is a vital step towards raising our historically low diagnosis rates. A timely diagnosis can open the door to treatments and support and give people time to plan for the future.'

- Ends -

**Notes to editors:**

225,000 will develop dementia this year, that's one every three minutes

Alzheimer's Society research shows that 850,000 people in the UK will have a form of dementia by 2015. In less than ten years a million people will be living with dementia. This will soar to two million people by 2051

Dementia costs the UK economy over £26 Billion per year. This is the equivalent of more than £30,000 per person with dementia.

Alzheimer's Society champions the rights of people living with dementia and the millions of people who care for them

Alzheimer's Society works in England, Wales and Northern Ireland

Alzheimer's Society supports people to live well with dementia today and funds research to find a cure for tomorrow. We rely on voluntary donations to continue our vital work. You can donate now by calling 0845 306 0898 or visiting alzheimers.org.uk

Alzheimer's Society provides a National Dementia Helpline, the number is 0300 222 11 22 or visit alzheimers.org.uk

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