

## Prime Minister and the Cabinet become Dementia Friends to mark #GivingTuesday

Tuesday 2 December, 2014

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The Cabinet followed David Cameron's lead and all became Dementia Friends today (02 December) as part of a nationwide initiative, run by Alzheimer's Society, to raise awareness and understanding of dementia

As part of the Dementia Friends information session, members of the cabinet learnt more about dementia and the little things they can do to help those living with the condition.

This unprecedented event took place during the weekly meeting of the Cabinet and marked the Government's commitment to #GivingTuesday. The day offers the opportunity for people, charities and businesses to come together and help a good cause. David Cameron announced the event would be taking place earlier this morning on Good Morning Britain.

Not only is dementia the biggest health concern of the over 55s, but it costs the UK economy over £26 billion a year and yet many are not living well with the condition.

Alzheimer's Society's Chief Executive, Jeremy Hughes delivered the Dementia Friends session to the Prime Minister and the Cabinet along with Eileen Sills, Chief Nurse at Guy's and St Thomas' Hospital.

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

'Dementia is the biggest health challenge facing the country today and cannot be ignored. By the end of the next Parliament over one million people will be living with the condition.

'The Prime Minister and his Cabinet have shown leadership in the fight against dementia. By becoming Dementia Friends, they are raising awareness and understanding of dementia. Every government department has a role to play to improve the lives of people living with the condition. The Cabinet is joining businesses and communities across the country in saying people with dementia must be included and supported. Everyone can become a Dementia Friend.'

Following the event, David Cameron, UK Prime Minister tweeted: 'A brilliant session by @DementiaFriends at Cabinet. I want ministers to ensure staff in their departments to join this great scheme.'

Dementia Friends is a joint initiative with Public Health England funded by the Cabinet Office and Department of Health which helps people to understand a bit more about dementia and the little ways they can help.

Alzheimer's Society's Dementia Friends programme is the biggest ever initiative to change people's perceptions of dementia. It aims to transform the way the nation thinks, talks and acts about the condition and spans across the political spectrum, with all three leaders of the main political parties Dementia Friends, as well as many more Members of Parliament.

The Session comes at the same time as the release of the well-known Dementia Friends advert, which appeared on TV screens again from 1st December. The advert, starring celebrities such as Chris Martin, Lily Allen and Sir Terry Pratchett encourages people to become a Dementia Friend this Christmas.

Whether you attend a face-to-face session or watch the online video, Dementia Friends is about learning more about dementia and the small ways you can help. From telling friends about the Dementia Friends programme to visiting someone you know living with dementia, every action counts.

We need to create more communities and businesses that are dementia friendly so that people affected by dementia feel understood and included. Go to [dementiafriends.org.uk](http://dementiafriends.org.uk) to find out more.

**Photos of the cabinet becoming Dementia Friends available on request**

- 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](http://alzheimers.org.uk)

Alzheimer's Society provides a National Dementia Helpline, the number is 0300 222 11 22 or visit [alzheimers.org.uk](http://alzheimers.org.uk)

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E. [support\[ \]@pressat.co.uk](mailto:support[ ]@pressat.co.uk)

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