

People with dementia and their carers talk about stigma and social isolation. They report losing friends, seeing people cross the street to avoid them, feeling lonely, and struggling to use local services. Research with the general public has shown that this is often down to the fear, misunderstanding and helplessness people feel in the face of dementia. They simply do not understand enough to support someone with dementia.

The common misunderstandings about dementia – that it's an inevitable part of ageing and that nothing can be done to improve people's lives – prevent communities and society from becoming more dementia-friendly.

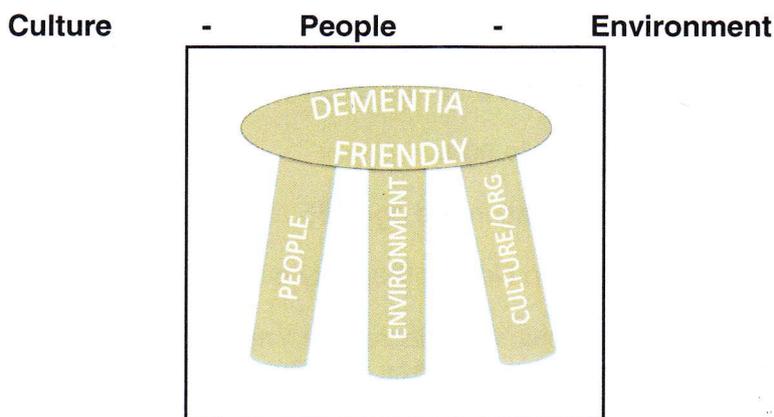
The national dementia friendly communities programme is closely intertwined with local Dementia Action Alliances (DAA). Local DAA will be groups of stakeholder organisations who have come together to improve the lives of people with dementia. The **first** of these local DAA is the **Norfolk & Suffolk Dementia Alliance**, which was established 18 months before the concept of regional action alliances were conceived. These local alliances will be supporting and engaging with the development of dementia friendly communities.

DEMENTIA FRIENDLY DOCTRINE

What does Dementia Friendly mean?

In considering this the Alliance has developed a "Dementia Friendly Doctrine" which is pertinent to all health and care settings as well as the wider community at large. This doctrine is a bunch of principles or positions rather than specific instructions. This is about 'what' should be done and not 'how' it should be done. Whereas innovations will be developed to assist in delivering 'how' specific elements of dementia friendly care are provided, the principles and the doctrine, will endure. 'Dementia Friendly' needs to be a philosophy, and state of mind and not a badge earned just because a few initiatives have been launched. The Dementia Friendly Doctrine has 3 key principles and, as with a 3-legged stool, all three are required to achieve the 'balanced' goal of a Dementia Friendly Community.

The three key principles are:



Culture is about leadership and leaders setting the right conditions for their area of responsibility to be 'Dementia Friendly'. It's about raising awareness and understanding. It's about putting in place the right organisational structures to deliver a dementia friendly agenda.

In terms of the wider community, **People** is about increasing levels of awareness and understanding within the community. The independent commercial sector should be encouraged to view our aging population as an opportunity rather than a threat and recognise that there are benefits to having staff appropriately trained, competent and confident to deal with customers with varying degrees of dementia.

Environment is about ensuring that the communities where people with dementia live contribute to the wellbeing of people with dementia rather than diminishing it. This might include simple signage and appropriate use of colour and lighting but also might involve more sophisticated and integrated engagement with assistive technology.