

# Independent Evaluation of The Guinness Partnership's Dementia Project

**November 2018**



## Forewords

**By 2050 the number of people living with dementia in the UK is projected to have risen from 850,000 today to two million people.**

Guinness recognises the scale of this challenge, and in 2015 we committed to becoming a dementia-friendly organisation.

We were, and remain, well placed to make the commitment. The range of homes and services we provide gives us a real opportunity to make a difference to people's lives. A safe, secure and well-designed home, combined with a reliable, adaptable and sensitive support offer, helps enable those living with dementia to lead more independent and fulfilling lives.

We have invested in training and research, and in the physical fabric of our buildings in order to do this.

Today, we have 1,250 Dementia Friends at Guinness. As part of the Dementia Housing Working Group we helped to shape the national Dementia Friendly Housing Charter, designed to help housing professionals support people living with dementia and to facilitate consistency and good practice across our sector.

We've published our own good practice guide on how to create a dementia-friendly environment, looking at both the interior and external design of our homes. We have tested this at pilot locations around the country.

And we have been invited to sit on the Prime Minister's Champion Group for dementia and the Housing and Dementia Research Consortium.

Our focus on becoming dementia-friendly is having a real impact on people's lives. Our customers living with dementia can be more assured we will provide support should they need it, and know that we will help them to live as they want. We are improving our knowledge of which customers are living with dementia so we can tailor our services. And because staff awareness is now so much higher, dementia-friendly thinking is a part of our day-to-day approach.

This report by the Housing LIN considers the progress we have made since 2015 in becoming a dementia-friendly organisation. We are delighted by the recognition of our work, and welcome the very useful recommendations for the future that we will reflect in our approach as we roll out what we've learnt so far.

As a major provider of social housing with 140,000 customers, we have a responsibility to do whatever we can to prepare for a future with more people living with dementia.



**Catriona Simons**  
Chief Executive  
The Guinness Partnership



**Paul Watson**  
Managing Director  
Guinness Care



**Faced with a rising number of people with dementia living in a housing with care environment, there is growing sector recognition that there is an urgent need to become dementia-friendly aware. But it's not just a numbers game. Whether it is in the way we design our homes, manage our housing and/or deliver our services, the simple message is that we need to listen better to the needs and aspirations of people with dementia, their families and carers.**

I am proud that the Housing LIN is committed to raising sector awareness and working with the Dementia Action Alliance, the Housing and Dementia Working Group and others to enable our industry to meet the challenge on dementia. In particular, our networked expertise in shared learning and continuous improvement enables us to draw out the relevant policy developments, highlight cutting edge research and showcase innovative examples of practice that supports people with dementia at home.

Lastly, this independent evaluation and the accompanying recommendations conducted by the Housing LIN show the real value of Guinness Partnership's Dementia Projects, not just in dementia-friendly business terms but the improved outcomes for customers. These are lessons well worth sharing.



**Jeremy Porteus**  
Housing Learning and  
Improvement Network

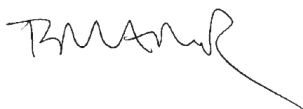


**There are around 850,000 people in the UK living with dementia with many things to factor in when considering how best to support people who have dementia.**

This includes the design of buildings and their surroundings, which are important in the development of both generic and specialist housing, so that people who are affected by this challenging illness can continue to live independently.

That's why In 2018, staff at Homes England chose the Alzheimer's Society as its staff charity of the year and established a number of work streams including, Awareness Raising on Dementia; Carers Network for Staff; Dementia Friends Training; Fundraising and developing a Dementia Friendly Living & Best Practice Showcase.

We welcome the work being undertaken by the Guinness Partnership in becoming a more dementia friendly organisation and we look forward to continuing to work with them on this important issue.



**Tom Walker**  
Deputy Chief Executive  
Homes England





# Table of Contents

<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>2. Context</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>3. Project Objectives and Outcomes</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>4. Findings: Were the objectives met?</b>	<b>11</b>
4.1. Increased awareness among customers regarding dementia	11
4.2. Improved awareness and skills among staff (including contractors) related to dementia.	11
4.3. Providing clear, accessible and useful information for customers and staff, about living with dementia, the support offered by Guinness and other local services	12
4.4. Developing a system for identifying and recording customers whose dementia means that they may require services, support or information to be delivered in a specific way	13
4.5. Development of an improved offer of aids, adaptations and assistive technology to customers living with dementia	14
4.6. Developing dementia-friendly specifications for new developments, major repairs, planned and cyclical works	15
4.7. Providing tailored support to customers living with dementia in tenancy sustainment	16
4.8. Helping customers living with dementia to access appropriate support and care services	16
4.9. Involvement in national and local partnerships on dementia	17
<b>5. Findings: Have the outcomes been achieved?</b>	<b>18</b>
5.1 Improved quality in homes and service for customers	18
5.2 Improved staff skills	18
5.3 Flexible, tailored services	18
5.4 Reputation	19
5.5 Learning organisation	19
5.6 Value for money	19
5.7 Commercial	19
<b>6. Findings: Wider organisational benefits</b>	<b>21</b>
6.1 Embedding dementia-friendly changes	21
6.2 Extending change to general needs housing	21
6.3 Organisational change	21
6.4 Reducing stigma related to dementia	21
6.5 Partnerships	21
<b>7. Recommendations</b>	<b>22</b>
Appendix 1: Background material assessed as part of evaluation	23

# 1. Introduction

The Housing LIN (Learning and Improvement Network) was commissioned by The Guinness Partnership (Guinness) to undertake an independent evaluation of the progress made in becoming a more dementia-friendly organisation. Guinness implemented a two year project in 2015 to take forward developments, initially in two pilot areas of Havant and Manchester with a view to rolling out successful approaches more broadly.

## **This report is based on an evaluation that gathered evidence from several sources:**

- Analysis of relevant documents and website content produced by Guinness (see Appendix for more detail).
- Focus groups with 12 members of staff based in Manchester and Havant.
- Group discussion with 2 members of staff and 3 customer/volunteers involved in the 'Feel Good, Stay Well' club based at Auden Court in Manchester.
- Semi-structured face-to-face interviews with 3 customers of Guinness and 1 family member who are living with dementia.
- Interview with Sara-Jane Little, Programme Partnerships Officer at Alzheimer's Society.
- Discussion with the project lead.
- The Housing LIN's extensive resources and networks that enable us to compare the progress Guinness has made, with other organisations seeking to be more dementia-friendly.

## **This evaluation report sets out:**

- The context in which Guinness has established this project.
- The project objectives and outcomes.
- The extent to which the objectives were met.
- The extent to which the outcomes were achieved.
- The wider organisational benefits.
- Recommendations.

## 2. Context

Dementia presents a huge challenge to society, both now and increasingly in the future. There are currently 850,000 people in the UK with dementia, of whom approximately 570,000 live in England. Dementia costs the UK economy £17 billion a year and, in the next 30 years, the number of people with dementia in the UK will double to 1.7 million, with the costs trebling to over £70 billion a year<sup>1</sup>.

Two-thirds of people with dementia live in their own homes, making the provision of appropriate housing and housing support services essential to meeting their needs.

The Dementia Project was started by Guinness as part of its strategy and accompanying research report, published in 2015, to become a dementia-friendly organisation<sup>2</sup> in order to better meet the needs of its customers living with dementia. This was a pioneering document for the sector, predating the Alzheimer's Society charter, and helped put Guinness on the Dementia-friendly map.

Knowledge and understanding of dementia and its impact is constantly evolving. Becoming more dementia-friendly means making changes across all aspects of policy and practice, and taking account of emerging learning within and outside the organisation. In this sense, the process of becoming dementia-friendly never stops. The findings in this report are therefore a snapshot of the situation at the end of the two year project.



<sup>1</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/168220/dh\\_094051.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/168220/dh_094051.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.guinnesspartnership.com/care-services/community/becoming-dementia-friendly-organisation/>

### 3. Project Objectives and Outcomes

The project covered two geographical areas; for the first year in Havant and then including Manchester in the second year. To achieve the objectives and outcomes set out below, Guinness planned to change its ways of working to better meet the needs of customers living with dementia in both its general needs and specialist/ supported housing.

When the project began a number of objectives were set that were seen as important in achieving the main outcomes (opposite).

#### **The objectives were:**

- Increased awareness among staff, contractors and customer re living with dementia.
- Improved skills among staff and contractors in being dementia-friendly.
- Improved information for customers, staff and others re dementia and the support Guinness could offer.
- A system to identify customers living with dementia in a way that would allow services and support to be tailored to their needs.
- Greater access to aids, adaptations and assistive technology.
- Internal and external environments that enable customers living with dementia to remain independent.
- More help for customers living with dementia to sustain their tenancies and access support and services they need.
- Stronger relationships with local statutory and voluntary services who offer support to people living with dementia.
- Increased engagement with local and national initiatives to make services and communities more dementia-friendly.

## The project aimed to achieve the following outcomes:

**Quality** – improvements in homes and services for customers, some of which can be achieved at minimal or no additional cost.

**Skills** – staff will be better able to serve not only customers living with dementia but have a wider understanding of how to deliver services for customers facing similar challenges (and arguably, all customers).

**Flexibility** – in the longer term, this will increase Guinness's capability to tailor its services and make them more responsive to customer needs. This is about information and business systems as well as staff skills and behaviours.

**Reputation** – Guinness wishes to be making a genuine commitment to playing its part in improving the lives of people living with dementia.

**Learning organisation** – to find sensible ways which speed up and make more effective the process of learning and improving, and basing decisions on what services Guinness should develop based on good quality evidence and trials.

**Value for money** – many of the benefits are hard to quantify, but some can be. Some will be internal (e.g. by sustaining tenancies for longer); others will be potential benefits to integrated health and care services (e.g. reducing costs of hospital admission and delayed discharge through dementia-friendly services and adapting the home).

**Commercial** – if Guinness can deliver and show the evidence of the benefits to its customers and the capabilities that it has, this is a valuable selling point in relationships with NHS (acute, primary and community mental health) and adult social care commissioners. Among other elements, it has the potential to show how a housing and care organisation can deliver 'added value' in practice where it can integrate those functions effectively to enable people to live well at home with dementia.





## 4. Findings: Were the objectives met?

Set out below are the findings regarding the extent to which the Project's objectives have been met to date and any evidence about the impact of changes in policy and practice on the organisation and its customers.

### 4.1. Increased awareness among customers regarding dementia

In both pilot areas (Havant and Manchester) there has been awareness-raising for some customers living in older people's housing e.g. sheltered housing and extra care housing.

Staff also noted that those who had attended awareness-raising sessions also passed on information to other customers through word of mouth so that awareness spread wider. The outcome of this is having customers who are more likely to recognise when a person's behaviour is affected by dementia, are more tolerant of unexpected behaviour and better able to assist other customers who may be in difficulty. This has the added benefit that customers are less likely to request that action be taken against someone, so risks to sustaining tenancies are reduced whilst an individual's confidentiality is protected.

**Conclusion:** Progress has been made in raising awareness among customers, and this has increased the likelihood of customers with dementia receiving the support they need to continue to live independently. There is an opportunity to roll out this awareness-raising across all customer groups, including new customers.

### 4.2. Improved awareness and skills among staff (including contractors) related to dementia.

Guinness has used the brief Dementia Friends sessions to raise awareness among staff and it is now part of the induction for new staff joining Guinness Care, which is the specialist care and support subsidiary company within The Guinness Partnership.

Dementia Friends sessions<sup>3</sup> are intended to increase participants' understanding of dementia, and to think about the small things that individuals and organisations can do to make a difference to people affected by dementia.

Data on numbers who have attended showed 1,250 people had attended by February 2018 and 12 Dementia Champions identified. The plan is to identify more Champions across the organisation to assist with training and sharing good practice.

In addition to Dementia Friends sessions, Guinness has rolled out other types of more in-depth training for staff. There are e-learning modules available to staff that cover key aspects of dementia as well as the action Guinness is taking. Induction when staff join Guinness Care includes five hours' face-to-face training on dementia. Guinness has also accessed external dementia training such as that provided by Oldham Council. Training in Mental Capacity and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards has been provided to all front line staff.

In pilot areas the personal development plans for individual members of staff include a commitment to putting the Dementia and Housing Project into practice. In-depth training materials have been developed for specific groups of staff, such as those working in communications, to ensure that best practice re dementia is followed.

Contractors and non-care staff have been included in the roll out of training and this has led to referrals from arborists, cleaners and caterers who come into contact with Guinness customers. Staff interviewed said this was a direct result of the training provided.

---

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.dementiafriends.org.uk/WEBSession#.Wx1OG0gvxnJ>

To raise awareness in general, Guinness has made use of The Grid (internal online network) to highlight developments related to dementia. There was some evidence that assumptions were being made by some staff about dementia being a condition of old age. This created difficulties for customers with early onset dementia, living in general needs housing whose needs could go unrecognised.

**Conclusion:** Before the project, staff awareness of dementia came mainly from direct experience at work (with Guinness or elsewhere) and/or through personal experience.

Although care staff have supported people with dementia for many years, they did not necessarily have the breadth of knowledge and confidence to consistently apply best practice. The investment of training resources reflects the priority given to this aspect of the service, and alternative channels for learning make it more likely that staff will access training.

Awareness has spread beyond the pilot areas due to development of e-learning, Dementia Friends sessions and more time allocated in induction training. There now appears to be a major cultural shift taking place, with staff integrating dementia-friendly thinking into their day to day work; for example, the flagging system (see 3.4 below) has encouraged improved communication between different staff and organisations about customers' needs.

### **4.3. Providing clear, accessible and useful information for customers and staff, about living with dementia, the support offered by Guinness and other local services**

Guinness has made use of its internal online network (The Grid) to provide information about dementia to staff, and this is updated and supplemented with articles about new developments, case studies etc.

The organisation is using DEEP guides (created by the Dementia Engagement and Empowerment Project<sup>4</sup>) to ensure that information in all formats is dementia-friendly. When the project began a Launch Pack was developed that sets out practical ways in which Guinness can support customers with dementia.

There are two information booklets about the approach Guinness is taking to being dementia-friendly. Produced by a leading architect's practice, there is an internal guide about the design of buildings that covers new developments and the refurbishment of existing buildings with the aim of making them dementia-friendly. The second guide describes action to date and future plans to meet the expectations of the national Dementia-Friendly Housing Charter<sup>5</sup>.

Rather than develop a bespoke Guinness information hub about dementia, the organisation has chosen to provide links to the Alzheimer's Society Dementia Connect service.

At a local level, Guinness has trialled a digital noticeboard (see 4.5) in an extra care housing scheme to provide easy access to up to date information for customers, staff and visitors.

**Conclusion:** Guinness has made effective use of some external information sources such as Dementia Connect rather than developing its own information hub, as originally envisaged when the project started. The ability to search by postcode for local services on the Connect website means that staff and customers can see what is available. Guinness could also link up with the Housing LIN's website.

The use of DEEP guides has allowed staff to benefit from work done elsewhere on effective communication. Regular items on The Grid have maintained staff awareness related to dementia.

---

<sup>4</sup> <http://dementiavoices.org.uk/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/get-involved/dementia-friendly-communities/organisations/housing-charter>

#### 4.4. Developing a system for identifying and recording customers whose dementia means that they may require services, support or information to be delivered in a specific way

A system for flagging up on a customer database the fact that a customer with dementia may require a different approach, is being rolled out. This enables all services, such as those handling rent arrears, repairs or cyclical maintenance, to take account of individual needs and respond accordingly. During the evaluation, examples were provided of:

- Contractors visiting people in advance of doing work to reassure the customer.
- Repairs being prioritised due to the anxiety caused to the customer.
- Finance staff realising that arrears may build up due to cognitive problems in managing money.
- Handling unexpected behaviour through negotiation and discussion rather than apply the anti-social behaviour policy.

The flagging system has encouraged staff to work together in meeting a customer's needs; rather than taking action alone they are more likely to contact staff within and outside Guinness to agree on the best way forward. Contractors have said that they like having this information, so they are better able to provide an appropriate service.

The challenge in implementing a flagging system is in staff knowing customers well enough to recognise changes in their behaviour over time that might suggest new cognitive problems. In addition, as the customer has to consent to the flag, there will be people who have dementia with needs who are not flagged. Towards the end of the project 80 customers had been identified as having dementia but only half had agreed to be flagged. As this process is a valuable aspect of safeguarding, it would be beneficial to have much more coverage.

**Conclusion:** The flagging system has made a difference where customers have been identified and consented to being flagged. In order to be of wider benefit many more customers with dementia would need to be covered. Based on modelling by Guinness of the likely prevalence of dementia among customers (in the region of 300-350 in housing for older people and 350-450 in general needs) the current number flagged is a small percentage.

The nature of Guinness's housing for older people makes it more likely that staff who are on site regularly will get to know customers reasonably well. Guinness is creating new posts of Independent Living Managers that will cover more than one housing scheme and give priority to supporting those with the greatest need.

The situation in general needs housing is more challenging as customers are less likely to have regular and consistent contact with the same staff. However, the new Customer Liaison Officer (CLO) role – as outlined in 5.2 below – has the potential to change this.

## 4.5. Development of an improved offer of aids, adaptations and assistive technology to customers living with dementia

There has been a trial of a digital noticeboard located in a communal area in an extra care housing scheme for older people. The aim was to provide reminders to everyone about upcoming events and activities, provide notice of things such as fire alarm tests or dates and other relevant information. The evaluation with customers and staff indicated that this was useful for all customers, their families and staff. It also reduced the requirement for written material to be sent to every customer and for verbal reminders thus producing a cashable saving in the longer term (the cost of installation was £2,200).

A Dementia Day Clock was trialled to assist a customer who had difficulty distinguishing day and night and whose sleep/awake patterns were causing disruption to others. The outcome was some improvement in sleeping patterns. Guinness has purchased a day clock for one of their few remaining registered care homes, as they recognised its value in communal areas that were used by customers with dementia.

Two iPads have been purchased for use in the Take a Break service<sup>6</sup> that allows carers to have a break. An application called 'House of Memories' is used to assemble words, images and sounds that are specific to an individual and their life history, which recalls enjoyable experiences and familiar settings. It has proved very popular with customers, staff and family carers.

Other assistive technologies have been used or are in consideration. Alarms to identify when somebody is wandering and at risk have been used. Tailored solutions were provided to enable a hearing impaired customer to know when the doorbell or phone rang or smoke alarm went off, as her spouse was unable to respond. A GPS-based help with navigating away from home, is awaiting a suitable customer.

**Conclusion:** It is early days in developing assistive technology specifically for dementia, but Guinness has made progress in trialling a range of solutions, several of which can be rolled out where resources allow. With digital switchover by 2025 from the current analogue systems, the interface of digital applications with internal data systems needs to be considered early on to identify potential security issues in relation to the organisation's IT systems.

---

<sup>6</sup> A carers support service in Hampshire. <http://www.carerstogether.org.uk/take-a-break-service.html>

## 4.6. Developing dementia-friendly specifications for new developments, major repairs, planned and cyclical works

The dementia-friendly design guide is being used for new housing developments for older people as well as for refurbishment. The principles are being extended to general needs stock, and the estates service uses a checklist to assess stock that includes dementia-friendly aspects. Examples of changes can be seen in the refurbishment of the Jubilee Centre in Waterlooville, Hampshire, for which bespoke signage was commissioned and all aspects of interior design considered.

Guinness has committed to spending £5m over 5 years, subject to annual budget approvals, on a programme of refurbishing housing for older people that will meet dementia-friendly design specifications. An example from this programme (Arthur Kille House) is cited in a forthcoming RIBA publication on age-friendly housing, co-written by Jeremy Porteus of the Housing LIN.

The estates staff and contractors are now aware of factors such as lighting levels, layout to aid navigation, flooring materials, signage, thresholds between areas and at main doors, colour contrasts etc. These changes are beneficial for all customers; for example, good lighting and contrasting colours make it easier for everyone to find their way in buildings.

A small but significant change noted by staff is the fact that when customers are moving into housing the staff discuss with families the potential value in moving some familiar furniture and other items into the new place. In the past the tendency was to assume that replacing old, worn items with new was the best.

**Conclusion:** The design guide is an important tool for development staff as well as those involved in asset management; for example, surveyors responsible for flagging up repairs and maintenance requirements.

The total estate owned by Guinness is large and the process of making changes to existing stock through its asset management plans, cyclical maintenance and planned refurbishment will take time.



## 4.7. Providing tailored support to customers living with dementia in tenancy sustainment

The policy and practice in tenancy sustainment has changed to take account of the fact that customers may be living with dementia. For example:

- Where customers are in arrears the customer services staff adopt a different approach to identify if the issue relates to problems managing finances, claiming benefits or confusion around payment processes.
- An enhanced financial assessment is offered to customers who may not be accessing all the income they could.
- The implementation of the antisocial behaviour policy has changed so that complaints about unexpected behaviour are investigated with an understanding that the customer in question may have cognitive problems that mean they are unaware of the impact.
- Issues such as hoarding, problems with personal care and isolation are more likely to be assessed with the possibility of dementia being involved.

The experience of housing staff is that customers with dementia are more likely to be able to remain in their own homes for longer in comparison to the past when customers would move into a residential home at a crisis point. Improved awareness and open discussions with customers, their families and others who can support them, is more likely to lead to a workable plan to manage whatever problems are occurring. It is also possible to anticipate how needs may develop over time. An example was provided of a customer who had been reassured that, as their needs increased, they would be able to request a move to more appropriate housing and with access to a parking space.

**Conclusion:** As a result of increased awareness Guinness operational staff are more attuned to the possibility that cognitive problems may be the cause of unneighbourly behaviour, arrears or other factors that put their tenancy in jeopardy. Customer Care staff on phone lines and finance staff who have a key role in tenancy procedures are better equipped to identify underlying causes and work with colleagues to resolve issues in a positive way.

## 4.8. Helping customers living with dementia to access appropriate support and care services

Guinness Care offers support services to older customers, and the increased training and awareness for staff has made these services more flexible and tailored to meet the needs of people living with dementia. In Waterlooville in Hampshire, the Jubilee Centre, attached to sheltered housing, has been refurbished to be dementia-friendly and provides communal space that is offered free to local groups for a range of activities. This enables people living in the scheme to participate and encourages connections with local groups who can offer support.

The 'Feel Good Stay Well' club in Manchester was set up with 'Together Dementia Support', who employ a facilitator to work one day a week with attendees to organise activities. The club has been running for about nine months and has regular attendees, some whom are living with dementia and their family carers. The club is open to any older people and it was hoped that external agencies such as social services, GP practices and community groups would signpost people with dementia to the service. However, there have been no referrals of this type despite information and visits being made when the club was starting. Even within Guinness it is felt that information about the club has not been disseminated as widely as it could be.

Also in Manchester, 'Growing in the City' (Men's Shed Manchester) are working with Guinness to develop a horticultural project/club at an older person's housing scheme, with the aim of improving mental health and inclusion and encouraging older men to participate.

Guinness is in the process of enabling customers to access a Bupa-run elderly care line, which offers advice and support on all aspects of ageing.

The experience of staff is that customers are now more likely to get signposted to services that can support them than in the past. With the information on The Grid it is easier to access information about relevant services. Guinness Care staff will develop 'Hospital Passports' with customers so that if they need to be admitted to hospital there is relevant information that can enable more tailored care. Guinness has also started using the Alzheimer's Society 'This is Me' leaflet template<sup>7</sup>, which summarises key points about the customer so that any service or organisation can better meet their needs.

The importance of Guinness staff liaising with external support providers is highlighted by the difficulty that several of the customers interviewed had in accurately describing the support they received in terms of home care, or in fact whether they received any care at all. Staff commented on the fact that in recent years the pressures on social care have meant that it is harder to get a social work assessment for customers living with dementia or to have continuity in social work support through a named worker.

**Conclusion:** Customers living with dementia have been supported to access a range of appropriate services. Guinness is improving these connections at various levels and in different ways with a very practical approach to engaging customers and their families. Through its approach Guinness has brokered a range of bespoke support methods to be established that enhance the lives of customers living with dementia.

## 4.9. Involvement in national and local partnerships on dementia

Guinness has worked with the Alzheimer's Society and other providers, trade and professional bodies such as the Housing LIN, to create the national Dementia-Friendly Housing Charter, which it now uses as a way to assess its progress.

Guinness has joined the national Dementia Action Alliance (DAA) to promote positive changes for people living with dementia. It is also a member of the Dementia Housing Working Group (DHWG)<sup>8</sup> and the Housing and Dementia Research Consortia (HDRC)<sup>9</sup> hosted by the University of Worcester Association for Dementia Studies.

Guinness is working with social care commissioners in Cheshire and Chester to have a dementia Centre of Excellence at Deva Point, an extra care housing scheme. The model is that the commissioners fund a certain number of support hours for some customers, and staff in the scheme receive enhanced training on dementia, which benefits all customers.

Working alongside customers from LGBT communities, Guinness is supporting national and local forums where customers can access advice and information, and share their experiences of ageing and dementia. The fact that LGBT customers are more likely to live alone and be socially isolated has highlighted the need for increased awareness, and plans are underway for customers to assist with this.

As stated above Guinness is a long-standing co-sponsor of the Housing LIN's dementia webpages. Alongside this, it is a leading member of our regional networks and leadership sets, and is a supporter of our sector-leading annual conference. This year Will Wimshurst Architect represented Guinness on the platform.

**Conclusion:** Guinness is active in national forums and networks related to being more dementia-friendly and in co-producing practical tools such as the Dementia-Friendly Housing Charter. Its profile as a dementia-friendly organisation has been raised and its reputation enhanced.

---

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/get-support/publications-factsheets/this-is-me>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.housinglin.org.uk/housing-networks/dementia-and-housing-working-group/>

<sup>9</sup> [https://www.worcester.ac.uk/discover/Housing-and-Dementia-Research-Consortium-\(HDRC\).html](https://www.worcester.ac.uk/discover/Housing-and-Dementia-Research-Consortium-(HDRC).html)



## 5. Findings: Have the outcomes been achieved?

The comments below link back to section 2 and the extent to which the outcomes set have been achieved.

### 5.1 Improved quality in homes and service for customers

As and when homes and communal spaces are being newly developed, refurbished or adapted/repared, the needs of people living with dementia are influencing design. Services in general are being provided by staff and contractors with a greater awareness of dementia, which makes them more responsive to customers.

### 5.2 Improved staff skills

The range of training opportunities related to dementia mean that a larger group of staff and contractors have new or refreshed skills, so they are better able to support customers living with dementia. This is an ongoing process to ensure that all staff and contractors are covered.

### 5.3 Flexible, tailored services

Systems such as flagging are beginning to make a difference to some customers with dementia. Services such as advice, information, tenancy support, finances and repairs can now be adjusted to take account of specific requirements. Developments in building design are already benefitting a larger group of customers and this will increase as work is rolled out.

## 5.4 Reputation

Guinness has put resources and goodwill behind its work on becoming more dementia-friendly and this has had a positive impact on its reputation. The fact that it has been invited to sit on the Prime Minister's Champions Group for dementia and to speak at dementia-related conferences illustrates this.

## 5.5 Learning organisation

The project led to a number of trials of approaches to building design and signage, customer and community engagement and assistive technology. These have been evaluated and successful models adopted.

## 5.6 Value for money

It is early days to measure cashable savings and this would require detailed analysis before and after costings. There are some examples of improved efficiency being generated by the project. The use of digital noticeboards in one extra care scheme reduced the need for paper-based information for each customer and allowed better promotion of paid-for activities. Over time the reduced costs and use of staff time could mean the noticeboard paying for itself.

Other areas with potential for savings include tenancy sustainment and improved wellbeing. It is clear from staff interviews that customers whose behaviour due to dementia would in the past have led to them losing their tenancy, are able to remain in their homes for longer. Where needs are identified early, and support provided, there are fewer ad hoc interventions required to respond to problems for the individual and other customers. Improved coordination between services and with contractors is likely to reduce the number of abortive maintenance/repair visits.

The wider health and care economy will benefit from improved customer wellbeing as dementia-friendly improvements to home environments and support are likely to lead to reduced falls and hospital admissions.

## 5.7 Commercial

Guinness can demonstrate that they are taking practical steps to be more dementia-friendly, for example in aspects such as staff training. This evidence is more persuasive to potential investors in services than simple statements of intent. Guinness is working with social care commissioners in Cheshire and Chester who will invest resources in creating a dementia Centre of Excellence at Deva Point, an extra care housing scheme.



## **6. Findings: Wider organisational benefits.**

### **6.1 Embedding dementia-friendly changes**

The pilot project came to an end in 2017, which meant that the Project Lead role ended. There is always a risk that a time-limited project will not have a long-lasting impact on the way people work. However, there is evidence from interviews with staff and external stakeholders that the project initiatives have led to permanent changes in the way that the organisation responds to customers with dementia. A focus on improving clarity of communication with customers and listening will improve the services for everyone.

### **6.2 Extending change to general needs housing**

The nature of Guinness's housing for older people and Guinness Care is that most customers will have more regular contact with staff, who can get to know the customer (and family) and would be more likely to notice changes in behaviour suggestive of cognitive problems. There is an opportunity to implement this approach to dementia-friendly across all of Guinness's housing for older people and other specialised housing as applicable. Customers in general needs housing are far less likely to be known in this way.

However, Guinness is in the process of creating Customer Liaison Officers (CLOs) to support people living in general needs housing. These roles will be patch-based and technology enabled so that they can spend most of their time in the field and be the first point of contact for customers. It is hoped that this approach will allow CLOs to build relationships with customers and get to know those who may need more help, including those living with dementia. The concept of the CLO as overseeing a whole process (e.g. from report of problem to resolution) is key to this model and should benefit all customers.

### **6.3 Organisational change**

In addition to Customer Liaison Officers, Guinness Care has created two Health and Wellbeing Coordinator roles to cover the country. The aim of the roles is to encourage the sharing of good practice and to look for funding opportunities so that services can be enhanced. The role reflects a commitment to learning and a recognition that with limited staff numbers a more tailored service for people with greater needs is a continuing challenge.

The dementia-friendly agenda has been integrated into the different levels of planning within The Guinness Partnership. This includes the overall Business Plan, Operational Plan, Health & Wellbeing Plan and is being linked to staff performance management.

### **6.4 Reducing stigma related to dementia**

The fact that dementia is a regular topic in training, communications and embedded in design has allowed family members of customers with dementia to feel confident in discussing their relative's needs with staff. As one person put it: "It is a relief for family members as they no longer have to keep it secret". This change has allowed for more open communication and made it more likely that customers, families and staff will raise issues in the knowledge that the needs of the person will be central to any response.

### **6.5 Partnerships**

Some strong partnerships with other organisations have been built from the project and these have enabled more progress to be made than would be the case if Guinness was working on its own. When budgets are constrained the sharing of experience and resources has been beneficial.

## 7. Recommendations

In the course of this evaluation, people who were interviewed and the evaluation team, identified actions that would build on the progress made in becoming dementia-friendly and these are summarised below.

**7.1** There would be benefits in extending joint training/learning with other housing providers, including visiting dementia-friendly housing schemes run by others.

**7.2** There is work to do in reviewing the content of letters that go out to customers, in particular the ones about arrears and also their delivery. Ways to improve liaison between Guinness finance staff and local authorities regarding the dates for paying Housing Benefit should be considered.

**7.3** For future generations of older people, the use of voice-activated technologies will seem more normal and these could assist people living with dementia.

**7.4** The work that has started on supporting LGBT customers with dementia is important. Customers from this community are more likely to live alone, be distant from families and may have avoided contact with statutory organisations over the years. As this group ages the problems of isolation, ill health and frailty need to be identified early on so customers can be supported.

**7.5** The work on developing dementia-friendly community clubs/groups has produced positive results but is in early stages. The ideal of having volunteer-run groups is worth pursuing but it requires sufficient time to develop and enough resource to fund a facilitator in the early days. Obtaining referrals from other organisations (and from within Guinness) requires persistence and the time to allocate to liaison. The role of the new Independent Living Managers in relation to such groups needs to be clarified.

**7.6.** Communicate to local adult social care and health services the comprehensive approach that is being taken to support people living with dementia. Establish Guinness's exemplary credentials and to help build wider supportive networks for Guinness's customers.

## Appendix 1: Background material assessed as part of evaluation

Quantitative Evidence data capture template – designed by Housing LIN and completed by Guinness, Feb 2018

Becoming a Dementia-Friendly Organisation Summary report, The Guinness Partnership, May 2015

Project Initiation Document for Dementia-Friendly Project, The Guinness Partnership, 2014

Guinness Care – Dementia Care Strategy 2017-18

Dementia and Guinness – our work in line with the dementia-friendly housing charter, The Guinness Partnership, 2017

Dementia Friendly Housing Charter – what we are doing – spreadsheet produced by Guinness to match dementia-friendly activity to Charter contents, The Guinness Partnership, 2018

Items about becoming more dementia-friendly published through The Grid, the online newsletter produced by The Guinness Partnership.

Creating a dementia-friendly environment – specification guidance and checklist, The Guinness Partnership, April 2017

User Guide on Warning Flags, plus guidance on the dementia warning flag and its use, Guinness Partnership.

Information provided about iPad trials using House of Memories app. 2018

Quayside Signage Data Sheet, illustrating types of signage used.

Report on Assistive Technology trials by Guinness over 2 year project.

Housing for Older People Quality Assessment template used by estate service in Guinness to plan and prioritise works.

Launch pack for Dementia-Friendly Project illustrating design features and support being offered to customers

Summary of feedback from customers on features and support being offered through dementia-friendly project.

Dementia Friendly Housing Charter – Alzheimer's Society, March 2017.

## About the Housing LIN

The Housing LIN is a sophisticated network bringing together over 40,000 housing, health and social care professionals in England and Wales to exemplify innovative housing solutions for an ageing population.

Recognised by government and industry as a leading 'knowledge hub' on specialist housing, our online and regional networked activities:

- connect people, ideas and resources to inform and improve the range of housing choices that enable older and disabled people to live independently
- provide intelligence on latest funding, research, policy and practice developments, and
- raise the profile of specialist housing with developers, commissioners and providers to plan, design and deliver aspirational housing for an ageing population.

To view other examples of housing and dementia, visit the Housing LIN's dedicated 'Focus on Dementia' pages at:

<https://www.housinglin.org.uk/Topics/browse/HousingandDementia/>



## Acknowledgements

Guinness would like to acknowledge the crucial work of the following people in ensuring the success of the Housing and Dementia project.

**Wendy Wells** - Housing and Dementia Project Lead at Guinness

### **Guinness's Housing for Older People Steering Group**

We would also like to thank **Margaret Edwards** (Consultant for the Housing LIN) for carrying out the customer and stakeholder workshops.



If you have any questions about this report  
or for associated information please contact  
**[wendy.wells@guinness.org.uk](mailto:wendy.wells@guinness.org.uk)**



Hillfields House, Matford Court, Exeter EX2 8NL  
**[www.guinnesspartnership.com/care-services](http://www.guinnesspartnership.com/care-services)**

The Guinness Partnership Ltd is a charitable  
Community Benefit Society No. 31693R  
Registered in England and is Registered  
Provider of Social Housing No. 4729.