

Fire and Home Safety Information

for people living with
Dementia and their
families and friends



We want to encourage people living with Dementia to continue to live safely and independently in their own homes.

Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue (HWFRS) offer Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSVs), which can include additional advice for people living with, or caring for those with Dementia.

We encourage another member of the family or a regular carer to be present during the home safety visit.

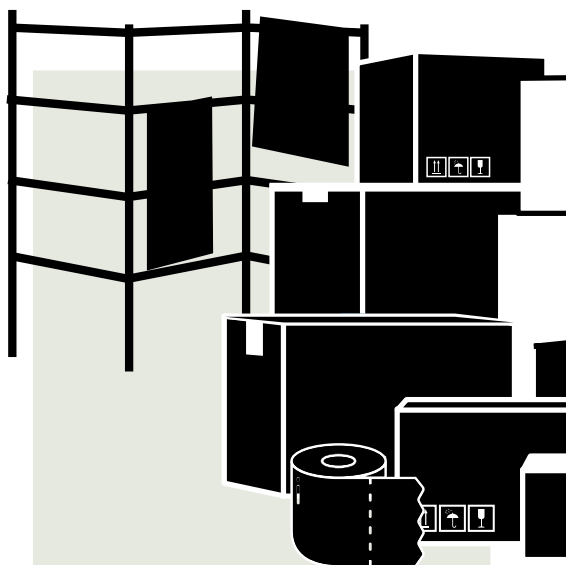
Dementia affects people in different ways, but can result in confusion, memory loss and disorientation. There may be reduced ability to finish thoughts or follow directions. There may be reduced mobility, hearing and sight loss, balance problems and loss of co-ordination. As the condition progresses, the person may struggle to perform familiar tasks, remember recent events or recognise potential dangers. If you have concerns regarding a friend or relative, in the first instance, contact their GP.

The following are all tips that may help to make a person with dementia safer in their home.

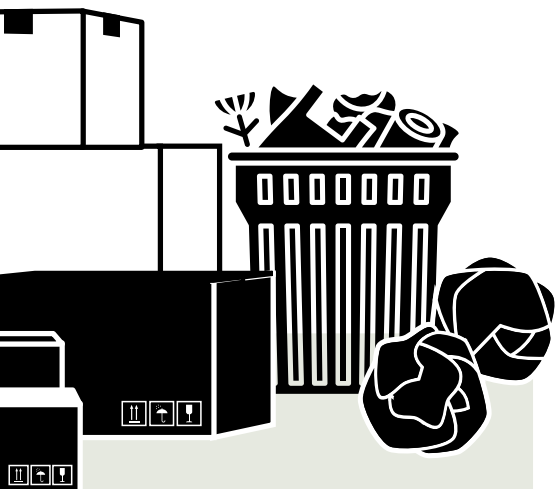
Contents

Mobility, Hearing and Sight Issues	2
Kitchen Safety	4
Electrical Safety	6
Fires/Heating Safety	10
Candle Safety	12
Child Safety	12
Smoking Safety	13
Fire and Gas Detection	14
Bedtime Routine	16
Escape Plan	18
General Safety Tips in the Event of a Fire	20
General Safety	21
Caring for Yourself	24
The Herbert Protocol	25
Contacts	26
Become a Dementia Friend	32

Mobility, Hearing and Sight Issues

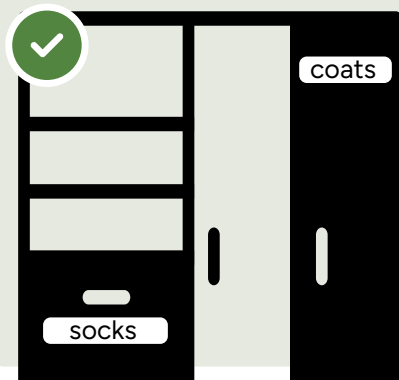


- i Reduce clutter if possible.** Too much clutter can add to confusion. For instance, a dark mat in front of a door may look like a hole in the floor to a person with dementia.
- i Good lighting.** Dim or poor lighting can make a person with dementia feel “closed in”.



i Consider decorating the home in contrasting colours to help the person recognise areas of a room or house more easily.

i Try using picture or word cards/labels around the home to identify rooms, cupboards etc.



i Non-slip flooring: Remove loose rugs and mats, seal up carpet edges and provide non-slip flooring.

i Clear pathways: Ensure there is a clear path from the bedroom to the toilet/bathroom and to all exit doors and windows. Consider using plug-in night lights along the hall.



Kitchen Safety

DID YOU KNOW...

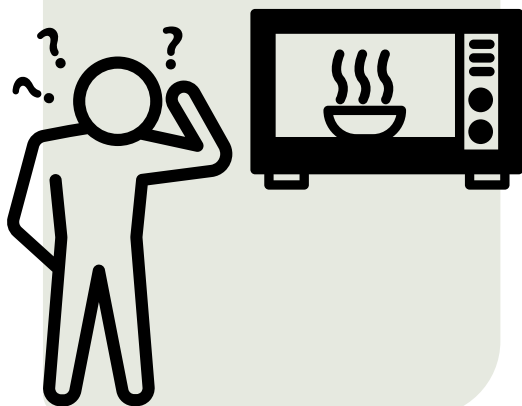
A significant proportion of house fires start in the kitchen due to food being left unattended.

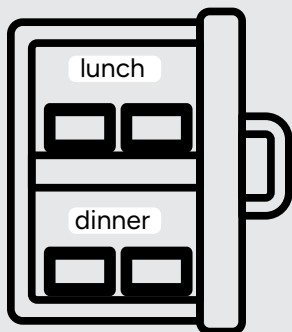
People living with Dementia are susceptible to distraction and forgetting to turn cookers/hobs off after cooking.

i There are various **assistive living devices** on the market, such as automatic cut-offs for cookers and gas cooker locking valves.

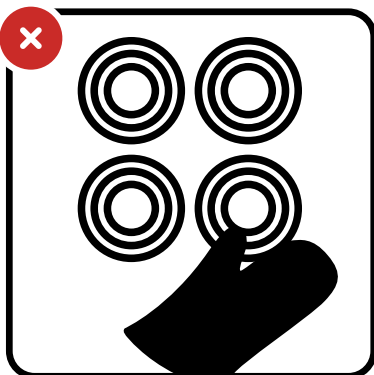
Locking cooker valves from Cadent: <https://cadentgas.com/locking-cooker-valves>
or call 0800 389 8000 for more information.

i **Some people with dementia can forget how to use the microwave oven** properly. For example, they may forget to take food out of a foil tray or set the timer for too long.

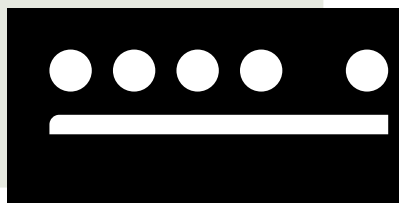
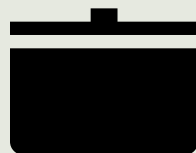
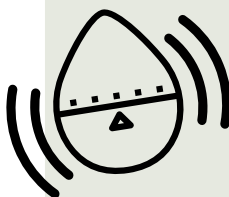




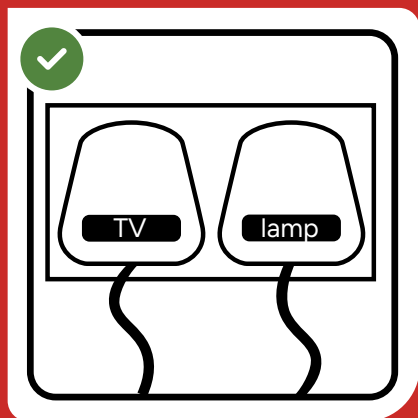
- i** It is important to make **regular checks** that **a person is eating properly** and that **food is not left to rot in the fridge or cupboards**.
- i** **Consider labelling kitchen cupboards** with pictures or text showing what is in them.
- i** **Provide a clear, easy to use kitchen timer** as a means of helping the person to remember that something is cooking.



- i** Try to ensure that the **cooker is clear** and **nothing is left on top of the hob** (such as a **tea towel, for example**). Keep the hob, oven and grill clean so there is less likelihood of a build-up of cooking grease which may start to smoke or even catch fire.



Electrical Safety



- i Consider labelling plug switches** with instructions such as 'Do not switch off' or 'Switch off at night'.
- i Label plugs** with the name or diagram of the equipment it is connected to such as "TV", "washing machine" and "Toaster".
- i Remove electric blankets from beds if the person is suffering with incontinence.** All electric blankets should be professionally tested every year to ensure there is no damage.
- i Check plugs throughout the home to ensure a good fit in the socket.** Where possible, do not use the old multi-plug adaptors as these tend to pull out of the socket. Consider replacing them with a standard, short cable 4-plug extension lead.

- i DO NOT overload sockets.** No plug socket should contain more than a total of 13 Amps-worth of appliances.



- i If you are using an extension lead,** it is simply an extension of the one plug socket, and as such should not contain more than a total of 13 Amps worth of appliances.

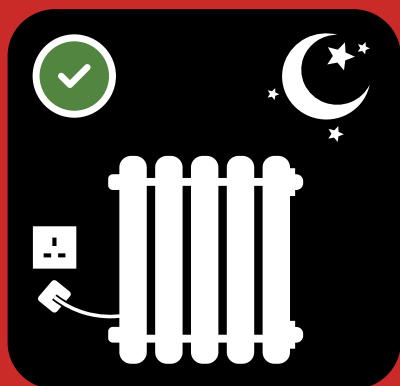
- i Ensure that the wiring is checked** periodically by a qualified electrician.
- i Regularly check for warm or hot plugs or sockets, scorch marks, fuses that often blow or flickering lights.**



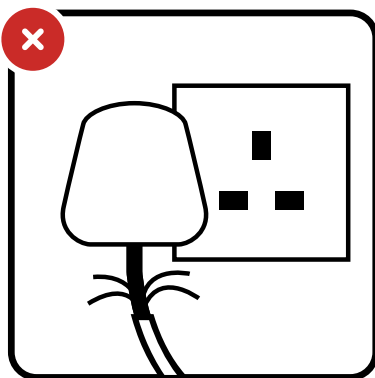
The general rule of thumb for safe loading is as follows:

- **3 Amp fuses for appliances up to 700 watts** (For example: clock, lamp, radio).
- **5 Amp fuses for appliances up to 1000 watts** (For example: laptop, computer, DVD player, blender, printer).
- **13 Amp fuses for appliances of 1000 watts and over** (For example: washing machine, dishwasher, kettle, toaster, microwave, fridge/freezer, hairdryer, electric heater).

Electrical Safety continued



-  **Check for frayed or damaged cables.** If you find any of these, have them replaced by a qualified electrician.



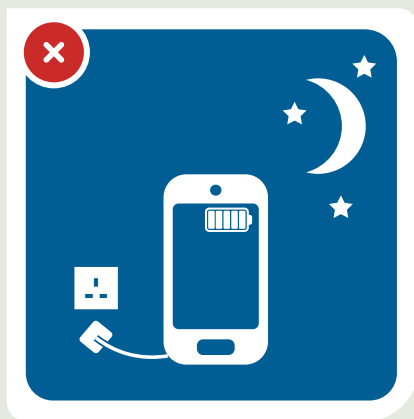
-  **DO NOT run appliance cables under carpets, mats or rugs.**
-  **Try to avoid using 'reel' extension leads indoors.** If you do, then the full length of cable **MUST** be fully unwound and left loosely coiled with plenty of air around it. If you don't do this the cable could overheat and catch fire.

i Keep electrical appliances away from water. For example, don't place a vase of flowers on top of a TV set.

i Avoid trailing cables in the kitchen. For example, the kettle cable hanging over the side of the counter.

i Switch off as many electrical appliances as possible at night.

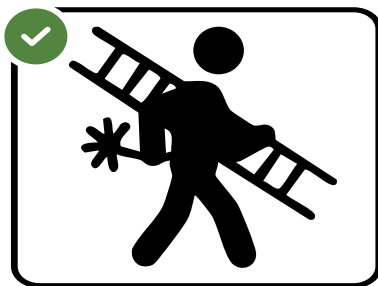
i Do not charge mobile phones, tablets, laptop computers etc overnight or leave them charging once they have reached 100% because this can damage the batteries and be a potential fire hazard. Unplug charging cables after use and replace any damaged cables immediately. If bare wires are showing through the cable casing, then it is no longer safe to use.



Fires/ Heating Safety

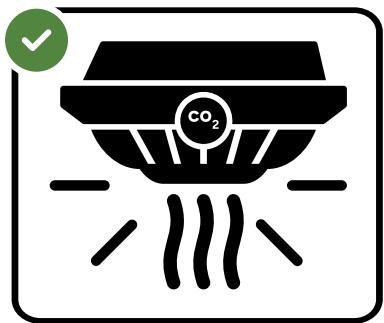


- i** If you use an open fire, ensure that the chimney is swept regularly and certified safe at least once a year. It is advisable to have a carbon monoxide alarm.

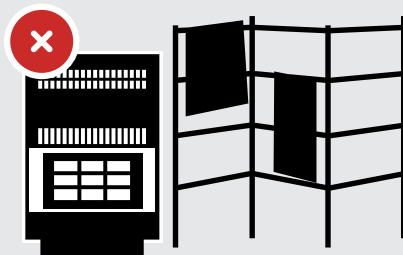


- i** Ensure that an adequate 'spark guard' is always left in front of an open fire, even when it would seem the fire has died out. Do not put clothes in front of an open fire to dry.
- i** Ensure that all wood, coal and other fuels are stored at a safe distance from the fire.
- i** If a gas fire is in use, ensure that it is serviced by a Gas Safe engineer at least once a year.

- i** **For any home that has any gas appliances,** ensure there are an appropriate number of carbon monoxide alarms placed around the home. You can also purchase gas alarms, which will detect 'non-burning' gas – for example, if the gas hob has been switched on but not ignited.



- i** **Ensure that chimneys, flues and vents are not blocked and have them checked regularly.**
- i** **Try to avoid having 'exposed element' heaters in the home.** Consider buying oil filled radiators with thermostatic/timer controls.



- i** **Electric heaters should be placed well away from anything flammable, such as furniture, curtains and seating.** These heaters should not be left unattended or left on overnight.
- i** **As dementia advances, it can become difficult for a person to gauge how warm or cold they are.** Try, if possible, to set the hot water controls to a safe level (maximum 60°C). Try to set the heating to come on at regular times during the day to ensure a comfortable and steady temperature.

Candle Safety

- i Remove candles, oil burners etc.** and replace with simple 'push button' torches, battery operated candles or tea lights.



Child Safety



- i Try to ensure that children are always supervised by another adult.** A person with Dementia is less likely to be able to remember and think about all the possible hazards around the house.

Smoking Safety

DID YOU KNOW...

We can provide fire retardant resources if there is evidence of unsafe smoking.



- i** **Try to discourage smoking as much as possible.** However, for those who do smoke, ensure there are plenty of ashtrays around.
- i** **The risk for people who use incontinence pads is greater as these pads can be highly flammable.** Consider obtaining a small fire resistant blanket to place over the lap when smoking. Fire resistant bedding is also available. Certain skin creams can be highly flammable too. Airflow mattresses and oxygen therapy users.
- i** **Smoking in bed carries the highest risk – it is very easy to fall asleep and drop the cigarette.** Consider placing a fire resistant blanket on top of the bed or use fire retardant bedding.

Fire and Gas Detection

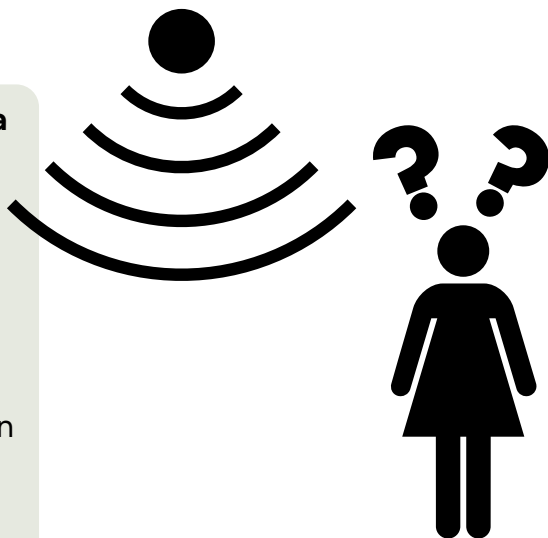


i **Ensure that there are adequate smoke alarms throughout the home.**

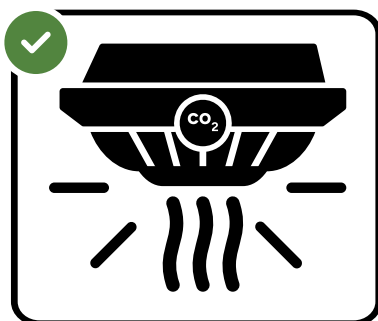
There are specialist alarms available for those with a hearing impairment, which include a bright flashing strobe light by the bedside and a vibrating pad under the pillow to alert people to danger at night when they do not have their hearing aids in. This type of alarm system may however be too confusing for someone with advanced dementia.

- i** **A person with dementia may not be aware of what the sound of an alarm means, or they may be frightened by the noise it makes and become confused.**

Consider installing a Telecare linked detection system. This is a smoke alarm which is linked through to a centre. It means that when the alarm sounds due to fire or smoke, the signal goes straight through to the control centre, who will then alert the emergency services. Other types of alarms can also be run through this system, such as carbon monoxide and gas detectors.



- i** **Ensure that there are adequate carbon monoxide and gas detection alarms** throughout the home if there are gas appliances, open fires or a wood burning stove.



Bedtime Routine

Either by person themselves, family member or Carer



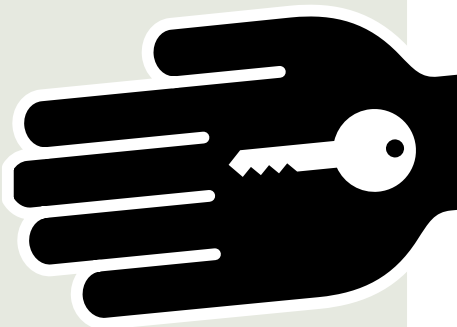
- i Shut doors at night**
– particularly kitchen and sitting room doors and any other rooms which contain electrical equipment.



- i Check that the fire guard is in place** (if an open fire is still in use).
- i Switch off electrical equipment and appliances, where possible, before going to bed**



- i** **Ensure that windows and doors are secured, ensuring that keys are readily available in case of an emergency.** Consider putting hooks up in appropriate places with clearly marked labels saying “PLACE FRONT DOOR KEY HERE AT NIGHT” or “LEAVE WINDOW KEYS HERE”.



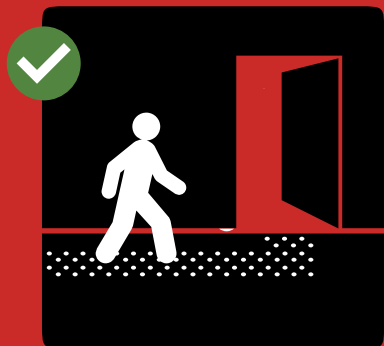
It is essential that if windows are kept locked, then there must be a key in all rooms and that all people either living in or visiting the home know where the keys are.

- i** **Ensure that all smoking materials are fully extinguished.**



- i** **Empty all ashtrays** into an appropriate fire-proof bin outside the building before going to bed.
- i** **Don't put the washing machine, tumble dryer or dishwasher on before going to bed.**

Escape Plan



It may be very difficult to explain an escape plan to a person with dementia because of their memory problems.

It may be helpful to walk and talk through an escape plan. There are usually two or three main options for escape in the event of a fire:

A Plan A

Getting out via a main exit.

If the way is clear of smoke and fire, **get out** of the house, **shut the door** behind you and get to a neighbour's house to **raise the alarm** by calling **999**.



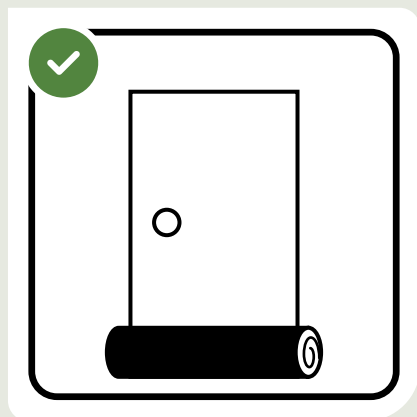
**GET OUT
STAY OUT
AND CALL
999**

B Plan B

Making yourself safe in a room.

If it is not possible to get out of the house, either because of poor mobility or because smoke or fire is preventing it, then the next best thing is to **make yourself safe** in a room.

Shut the door and place **something at the bottom of the door** such as a dressing gown or a pillow to stop as much smoke as possible from entering the room.



If there is a **telephone or mobile in the room**, there is a greater chance of being able to call for help.

DIAL
999
ASK FOR THE
FIRE SERVICE

Try to give as much information about **where in the house you are** so that the Fire Crew can find you quickly.

Press your pendant alarm, if applicable.

Open the windows and get lots of fresh air.

Shout to attract attention from neighbours and passers-by.

If **smoke is starting to enter the room**, then try to **get down on the floor**. The air will be clearer down on the floor, as smoke rises to the highest point and works its way down.

General Safety Tips

In the Event of a Fire

If a fire does occur
in your property:

**GET OUT
STAY OUT
AND CALL
999**



DO NOT investigate.

For example, if the smoke alarm is sounding, do not go around the house to see where the fire is. Do not open closed doors because the fire may be the other side.



DO NOT try to tackle

a fire, no matter how small it may seem at the time. A fire can get out of control very easily, but more importantly, toxic smoke builds up very quickly.



Get as close to the floor as possible if there is a lot of smoke in the room/house.

The air will be clearer down on the floor, as smoke rises to the highest point and works its way down.

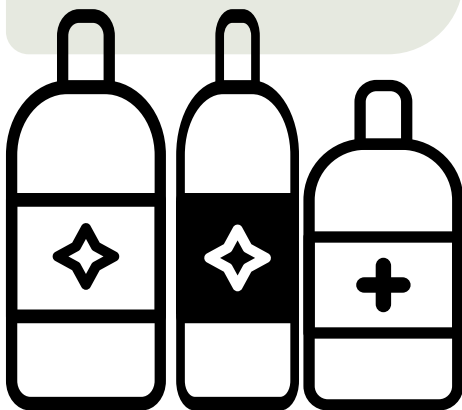


GET OUT, STAY OUT and CALL 999.

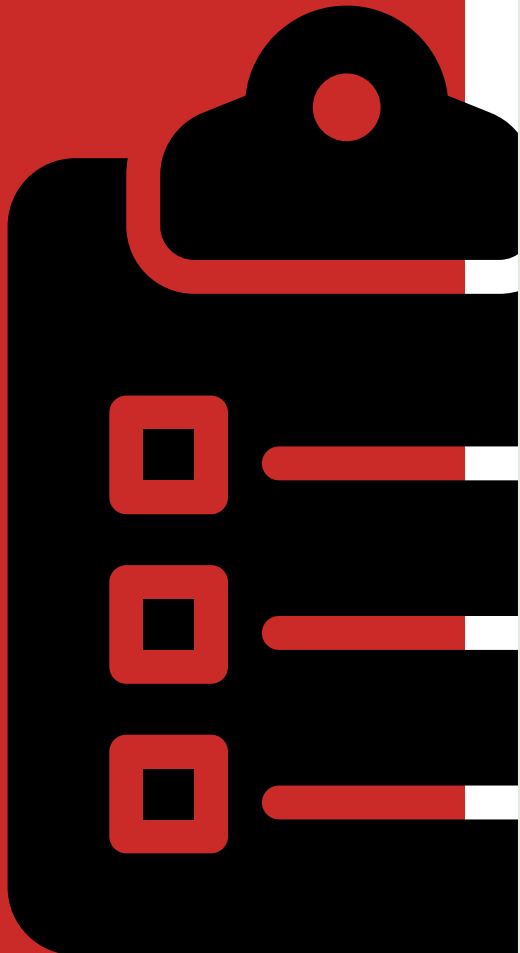
General Safety



- i Put notices inside the front door with reminders** such as “Take keys” and “Lock door”.
- i Make sure essential items are easy to find** – such as toilet rolls, washing equipment etc.
- i Be careful with medication or other potentially hazardous items.** A person with dementia may not be able to tell the difference between a bottle of cleaning liquid and a bottle of medicine. Keep all medication in a separate container, well away from other potentially hazardous household items.



General Safety



-  **Remove any unnecessary electrical items that are no longer needed.**
-  **If the person you care for has other carers visiting on a regular basis, it is important that you have an open channel of communication with them, so that information can be shared.**
-  **Remove locks from toilet and bathroom doors so that the person cannot become trapped inside.**
-  **Try to ensure that the bathroom is made as safe and accessible as possible.** Consider additional hand rails, raised toilet seat, bath/shower seat, non-slip flooring and non-slip bath surface.

i **To help avoid confusion about visitors to the home**, keep a diary of all planned visits near to where the person usually sits.

i **Consider making up a noticeboard** containing a list in bold lettering containing names and contact numbers of all relevant people.

i **Consider getting a key safe box** installed outside the home so that authorised people can gain access in an emergency.

i **Put a safety chain inside the front door** to encourage the person not to open the door to strangers or anyone they are not expecting.

i **Consider getting taps adapted** so that they automatically switch off after a certain time or they limit the amount of water released.

i **Try to introduce assistive technology devices in the early stages of dementia** as it may become harder for the sufferer to learn new things as the dementia advances.

i **Consider getting a Personal ID bracelet** for the person you care for, containing all of their relevant emergency contact details.

i **There is a vast range of Movement Sensor equipment** available that can be put in place – such as sensor pads – so that a monitoring office can be aware if a person has perhaps fallen out of bed or left the house unexpectedly.

Caring for Yourself



In order to be an effective help or carer for someone living with Dementia, it is essential that you also take good care of yourself.

- i** Try to have regular breaks.
- i** Try not to neglect your physical health.
- i** Try to build up your own support network of family, friends and professional organisations that can support you by listening and sharing some of the responsibilities.

The Herbert Protocol



People living with Dementia sometimes go out and find it difficult to find their way back home.

The Herbert Protocol is a national scheme being introduced by the police in partnership with other agencies which encourages carers to compile useful information which could be used in the event of a vulnerable person going missing.

Link to Herbert Protocol:
www.westmercia.police.uk/notices/af/herbert-protocol/

The form should be completed online or by hand with an attached photograph and retained by the family member or carer. It should be handed to a police officer, if a person is reported missing.

www.westmercia.police.uk/notices/af/herbert-protocol/

Contacts

Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service

0800 032 1155

safeandwell@hwfire.org.uk

Support in Herefordshire:

GP Surgery

Alzheimer's Society Dementia Advisors

01432 371137

Dementia Matters Herefordshire

01432 804480

(Mon – Fri 9am-5pm)

—

Technology enabled care services (TECS) team

01432 261650

Herefordshire County Council – Living aids, technology enabled care and telecare

[www.herefordshire.gov.uk/
social-care-and-support/
adult-social-care/care-
providers-and-housing-
options/living-aids-technology-
enabled-care-and-telecare/](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/social-care-and-support/adult-social-care/care-providers-and-housing-options/living-aids-technology-enabled-care-and-telecare/)

—

Carer Support:

Carer Links Herefordshire – TuVida

01432 663057

www.tuvida.org/carers-links-herefordshire

Herefordshire Young Carers

01432 663057 or

0333 323 1990

Adult Social Care:

Herefordshire County Council – Adult Social Care

[www.herefordshire.gov.uk/
social-care-and-support/adult-
social-care/contact-adult-
social-care/](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/social-care-and-support/adult-social-care/contact-adult-social-care/)

Advice and Referral Team

01432 260101

Contacts

continued

Support in Worcestershire:

GP Surgery

Older Adult Mental Health Team

Referral through GP

Worcestershire Technology Enabled Care

0800 032 0226

www.taking.care/worcestershire

New Lifeline (Redditch and Bromsgrove)

01527 64252

[www.redditchbc.gov.uk/
residents/living/support-at-
home/new-lifeline](http://www.redditchbc.gov.uk/residents/living/support-at-home/new-lifeline)

Carer Support:

Worcestershire Association of Carers

0300 012 4272

[www.carersandcommunities.
org.uk](http://www.carersandcommunities.org.uk)

Redditch Carers Careline – Supporting Carers in the Redditch area

01527 66177

www.carerscareline.co.uk

Worcestershire Young Carers

01905 619886

Adult Social Care:

Worcestershire County Council – Adult Social Care

[www.worcestershire.gov.uk/
council-services/adult-social-
care/get-contact-adult-social-
care](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/council-services/adult-social-care/get-contact-adult-social-care)

Adult Front Door Service

01905 768053

Contacts

continued

Support Nationally:

Herbert Protocol

The Herbert Protocol is a form that carers, family or friends of a vulnerable person, or the person themselves can fill in. It contains a list of information to help the police if the person goes missing, including: medication required, mobile numbers, places previously located and a recent photograph.

www.westmercia.police.uk/notices/af/herbert-protocol

Dementia Friends Awareness

Sessions aim to change people's perceptions of Dementia; changing the way we think, talk and act around people living with Dementia and by giving people an understanding of the condition.

www.alzheimers.org.uk/get-involved/dementia-friends

Age UK

0800 169 8787

Age UK – Dementia Wellbeing Service

0333 038 3711

National Dementia Helpline

0300 222 1122

Alzheimer's Society

www.alzheimers.org.uk

Dementia Support Line

0333 150 3456

Admiral Nurses

0300 1231734

Become a Dementia Friend



Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service is signed up to the Dementia Friends programme coordinated by the Alzheimer's Society.

This initiative aims to change people's perceptions of Dementia; changing the way we think, talk and act around people living with Dementia and by giving people an understanding of the condition.

Dementia Awareness sessions are run by volunteer Dementia Friends Champions, who are trained and supported by Alzheimer's Society. Each information session lasts around one hour. After attending the voluntary session people will be offered the opportunity to become a Dementia Friend themselves.

If you are supporting someone who is living with Dementia and would like more information on the condition or are interested in attending a Dementia Friends Awareness session you can get information from Alzheimer's Society website at www.alzheimers.org.uk or contact their helpline on 0300 222 1122.

HOW SAFE ARE YOU?



SCAN ME

Complete your **FREE** online
Home Fire Safety Check now!

www.safelincs.co.uk/hfsc



SMOKE ALARMS

Get it, fit it, test it



ELECTRICS

Switch it off



CIGARETTES

Put it out, right out



COOKING

Take care when cooking



CANDLES

Never leave unattended



ESCAPE PLAN

Plan a safe escape



For further information about a **FREE**
Home Fire Safety Visit call us on:

0800 032 1155



www.hwfirer.org.uk/advice



PREVENTION



PREVENTION



HEREFORD & WORCESTER
HWFR
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE



HWFire



© 2026 Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service

Prevention Team, Worcester Fire Station,
McKenzie Way, Worcester WR4 9GN

0800 032 1155 | safeandwell@hwfire.org.uk | www.hwfire.org.uk