



Dementia Case Studies

Changes and/or Challenges

Jaden and Zoe

Jaden and Zoe live near to St Peter's Church. Jaden was diagnosed with dementia two or three years back – and you believe he is living with fronto-temporal dementia. For the last year or so, he's been coming to a church coffee morning regularly, which you coordinate. His partner Zoe drops him off at church, so that she has an hour to get on with the weekly shopping, before coming back to pick Jaden up – and it gives Jaden a bit of a break too. Last week, he got agitated and wanted to leave and walk home: he took a bit of persuading to settle down and have a cuppa. Also, you've been noticing Jaden becoming more tactile over the months; today when you welcomed him he wanted to give you a kiss. He's never done that before and you are left wondering about boundaries and safeguarding.

Lily

Lily has been coming to church for years – and you think she’s had a diagnosis of dementia but you’re not sure which type. She never used to swear, but you are noticing some swear words slipping into your conversation with her and you’re worried that other people may be offended. You heard some loud “tutting” from others at church today, over this.

Mikael and Anya

Mikael and Anya are regular members of the congregation at Holy Trinity Church. Mikael was diagnosed with vascular dementia and some years back and patterns have been changing for them, as a couple, over time. Anya is Mikael’s main informal carer: Mikael isn’t driving any more and he’s needing more support from Anya for everyday living. Also, this year there has been a marked change his mood and behaviour, becoming more volatile. Mikael is getting increasingly frustrated - and today after a church event you heard a real verbal outburst, with him shouting at Anya and hitting out at her. It’s left you concerned for her personal safety, but you know that things are at full stretch for them and you don’t want to put extra pressure on them.

Andrea

Andrea is retired, but in her working life she was a company director shouldering significant management responsibility. She’s a respected member of the community and a core member of the local church. In the past, she has been a member of the General Synod of the Church of England and has also been a churchwarden, but she has retired from both these posts. Andrea was diagnosed with dementia three years ago. She is still a School Governor and values this role, although she acknowledges that she is finding it increasingly difficult to keep up with the paperwork involved.

Joe

Joe comes to the church service at Christchurch most Sundays. He's lived with dementia for some years and lives alone. He's started to use his phone during the service, sometimes with sounds, in a way that's distracting to other people.

Kim

Kim is a Lay Reader and a member of the choir at St George's Church. She's been living with dementia for a while. She loves singing and joining the procession in church. But her balance isn't as good as it used to be and it's becoming more of a challenge to process in and out of church – and it's also a bit more challenging to find the right music for the next anthem and hymn during the service.

Mary

Mary comes to a singing group at church. People running the group have recently learned that she's got a diagnosis of dementia. They are thinking that they should say that she needs to come to the group with a carer.

**Sarah Thorpe, Dementia-Friendly Church Enabler
in consultation with
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