

Report finds scale and cost of dementia escalates

September 11 2014, by Louise Pratt



[Dementia UK: The Second Edition](#), prepared by King's College London and the London School of Economics for the Alzheimer's Society, finds that the cost of dementia to the UK has hit £26 billion a year and that people with dementia, their carers and families shoulder two-thirds of the cost themselves. The charity calls for the government to end the artificial divide between health and social care which unfairly disadvantages people with dementia.

The report is the most comprehensive review of [dementia](#) costs and prevalence in the UK to date. It reveals how people with dementia and their carers foot a £5.8 billion social care bill for help with everyday tasks such as washing and dressing. The 1.3 billion hours of unpaid care that carers, usually spouses or adult children, provide would cost the state £11.6 billion if they did not provide it for free. Meanwhile the

current cost of dementia diagnosis and treatment to the NHS comes in at £4.3 billion and local authorities pick up a further £4.5 billion.

The new research also reveals that numbers of those affected by dementia is escalating. By 2015 there will be 850,000 people living with dementia and if current trends stay the same and no action is taken, this number is expected to bypass two million by 2051.

Professor Martin Prince, Professor of Epidemiological Psychiatry and Head of the Department of Health Service and Population Research at King's said:

'This report highlights that the numbers of people with dementia now needing care and support already pose a significant challenge for health and social care, government and society. Their needs will only be met through concerted and focused attention. The scale of the future dementia epidemic in the UK can probably be limited through more attention to prevention - our progress towards achieving healthier brain ageing needs to be monitored in regular national surveys.'

In addition to Dementia UK, Alzheimer's Society has published [Dementia 2014: An Opportunity for Change](#) which provides a snapshot of how well people with dementia are living in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. It draws together evidence from a survey of over 1,000 people with dementia. Key findings include:

- Just over half of people with dementia (58 per cent), reported to be living well
- Nearly two-thirds (61 per cent) said they had felt anxious or depressed recently
- 7 out of 10 people were living with another medical condition or disability as well as dementia
- Of those looked after by a carer, 43 per cent said their carer

received no help with their caring role

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

'This new research exposes the staggering financial and human impact of dementia. It is plain to see that our [social care](#) system is on its knees, leaving an army of tens of thousands of unpaid carers bearing the brunt. If you have cancer or heart disease you can quite rightly expect that the care you need will be free. That is just not the case for people with dementia.'

Alzheimer's Society is calling for:

- A 66 per cent [dementia diagnosis](#) rate across all areas so that people do not miss out on the support currently available – with a commitment now to reach 75 per cent by 2017
- No one to wait longer than 12 weeks from seeing their GP to diagnosis
- A guarantee that everyone has access to a Dementia Adviser or equivalent following a diagnosis to help them live as well as possible at all stages of the condition

Martin Knapp, LSE Professor of Social Policy, said:

"The cost of dementia is high, but the key question is what does that cost buy? We need to make sure that people with dementia and their carers get effective and cost-effective treatment, care and support."

Provided by King's College London

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