



Public Health  
England



Duncan Selbie  
Chief Executive

## Friday message

Friday 9 May 2014

### Dear everyone

On Wednesday, in partnership with the Alzheimer's Society, we launched our Dementia Friends national campaign which aims to mobilise the whole country to help create a more dementia friendly society. More than 670,000 people are currently living with dementia in England and this number is set to double in the next 30 years. The truth is that people with dementia can live well and independently for many years if they have a little help, patience, understanding and kindness from those around them – family, friends, neighbours and strangers. Dementia is caused by various diseases which affect the brain and often coexist. It is the condition we fear most once we hit the age of 50, with one in three people over the age of 65 developing the disease. It will touch the lives of every single one of us because we will all know someone living with the disease hence the importance of being more aware and learning how we can help. Dementia Friends addresses this need in a variety of face-to-face and online ways and more on this can be found on the Dementia Friends [website](#). Working with the Society, we want to recruit one million Dementia Friends. I became a Dementia Friend three months ago and it has already changed me, making me more alert to the very simple things I can do to help. The campaign, which is supported by a stellar cast of celebrities, has already achieved a remarkable breadth of media coverage and you can view our television advert [here](#). I hope you will want to join this extraordinary movement.

Yesterday, quite unintentionally, but very relevant to our dementia campaign, I had the very enjoyable experience of joining the Extra Care Charitable Trust in Birmingham who had invited me to their first Health and Wellbeing Conference. Extra Care are an integrated provider of housing, care and support for older people, pioneering new ways of helping people live well in later life, caring for and about 4000 residents through 14 retirement villages and 17 housing schemes, mainly across the Midlands and North, with plans to greatly expand over the coming years. They create and operate housing communities for older people where they can enjoy independence, choice and opportunity, as well as extra care when they need it, in the comfort and privacy of their own homes. This plays perfectly to what older people say they want and it works economically too with an almost 10% reduction in their call on the local NHS and social services. I worked in care of the elderly for ten years in the 1980's and what Extra Care are offering today was inconceivable then, just imagine what the next 30 years will bring in improved care and outcomes.

I am glad to give recognition today to Professor Adrian Davis, our academic leader on population health, who was this week [awarded](#) the Aram Glorig prize for his lifetime contribution to public health research on hearing and communication. Presenting the award at the 32<sup>nd</sup> World Congress of Audiology, Professor Robert Cowan, President of the International Society of Audiology said that "Professor Davis has led the way in defining the descriptive epidemiology of hearing and communication in the world". This was both a personal and professional honour and we are very fortunate to have Adrian on our team.

And finally, this coming Monday is international nurses' day which this year focuses on the responsibilities and opportunities nurses have to improve the health of the population and the need worldwide for sufficient highly skilled nurses to ensure the best possible outcomes for the people, families and communities for whom they care. To find out more, see our Director of Nursing, Viv Bennett's blog that goes live on Monday at <https://vivbennett.blog.gov.uk/>.

With best wishes