

Greater Manchester Dementia-Friendly Pharmacy Framework: Top tips & case studies

The **Greater Manchester Dementia-Friendly Pharmacy Framework** is a simple seven-step guide to help pharmacies provide a more welcoming and supportive service to people with dementia and their carers. This guide includes top tips and examples from pharmacies that have already completed the framework.

Their top piece of advice is: Don't be daunted by it... You'll probably be surprised by how many of the requirements you already meet, and can do a lot quite easily to comply with the rest.

Why it matters

- More people now live with dementia and this number will increase
- You'll provide better clinical and customer care to people with dementia and their families/carers
- This will benefit your pharmacy by building a loyal customer base
- Your pharmacy team will feel more confident supporting people with dementia and their families/carers

How to sign up

- Go to PharmOutcomes Assessments and find the GM Dementia-Friendly Pharmacy Framework ([see screenshots](#))
- Complete the self-assessment showing what you already have in place (i.e. current compliance)
- Work towards full compliance with measures you don't yet have in place, using this guide and the other resources on our website

Tips to help your pharmacy complete the self-assessment

- Don't be daunted by it. Most pharmacies are surprised by how many of the requirements they already meet. If you already have a consultation room, for instance, you'll meet the first requirement. If your team's done Dementia Friends and Safeguarding training for Quality Payments, you'll also meet those criteria.
- Focus on what you can do, rather than what you can't. There are lots of ways to make your pharmacy and your services more accessible for people with dementia and their families/carers, without big structural changes.
- "We found the face-to-face Dementia Friends training very helpful," says Mo Alam, Pharmacy Manager at Dennis Gore Chemists in Prestwich. "We've all done the online Dementia Friends training where you watch videos, but a couple of the team have also been to the face-to-face sessions and shared their learning with the rest of us. It gave us a much better insight into what it's like for people with dementia and their carers."

For more information about the GM Dementia-Friendly Pharmacy Framework, visit the dementia section of our website (<http://bit.ly/2jBVD1Q>) or contact enquiries@gmlpc.org.uk or 0161 228 6163.

- Think about how you can support carers, as well as people with dementia. “We’ve got contact details for most carers so we can keep them informed about medication, make sure they have the right compliance aids and so on – with the patient’s consent,” says Mo.
- Complete the framework as a team, using everyone’s experience and skills. Counter staff and delivery drivers will have important insight and experience. The team can help rewrite SOPs etc, where needed.
- Speak to people with dementia and/or their carers (as appropriate) to see how the pharmacy can support them. Different people may have different needs, and their needs may change over time. “We do weekly deliveries for some people who were having problems when they got their prescriptions delivered monthly,” says Mo.
- Look out for signs someone may be having problems and discuss it with them and/or their carers (as appropriate). Mo recalls: “One patient contacted the pharmacy a couple of times to say we hadn’t delivered their medication, even though they had signed for delivery. We contacted their carers and they installed a locked box in their room where we could leave the medication safely. The care team has a key to get the medication when they visit.”
- Liaise with the person’s GP as well. “We have a few patients who are good at taking medication in the morning but can’t remember to take it at tea-time. When we spoke to their GP, they changed them onto atorvastatin so they could take all their medication in the morning,” says Mo.

Examples of what you can do for each part of the self-assessment

PHARMACY ENVIRONMENT:

Quiet area

Examples could include a consultation room.

Accessibility

You don’t need to make big structural changes to your pharmacy. Simple steps like making sure you have clear signage, reducing clutter, and creating an obvious route to the dispensing counter are important. Brighter lighting also helps. This [checklist](#) is really useful. Focus on what you can do. You don’t need to do building work/refurbishment just to be dementia-friendly but if you’re planning to upgrade your pharmacy premises anyway, then look at how you can make the new facilities as accessible as possible for people with dementia and their carers.

PHARMACY TEAM:

At least one Dementia Friend

Most pharmacies will already comply with this because of Quality Payments. If no one in your pharmacy is a Dementia Friend, you can easily do it by registering online and watching short films. [See how here](#).

Pharmacist CPD

This could be a CPPE module like [this one](#) or any learning, education or training activity increasing your knowledge and understanding of dementia. You could write up this learning as one of your four CPD entries required for revalidation.

Vulnerable adults

Most pharmacies will already comply with this by having done Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults training for Quality Payments. If you need training, [CPPE provide it](#).

Patient support, PMR notes, relative/carer contact details

These are things that many pharmacies already do each day. If you don't already do it, it's easy to build it into your routine work. Have a team discussion to get people's ideas on how to support people with dementia and their carers (e.g. prompt charts, adherence aids, simplifying meds). Start recording people's support needs in the PMR and asking them for a relative/carer's contact details in case of queries. Build these steps into your SOPs and make sure the whole pharmacy team is aware of them.

Contact with other pharmacies

Again, many pharmacies already do this but if you don't it's easy to start and build it into your SOPs.

PUBLIC HEALTH & LIFESTYLE:

Regular exercise, smoking, alcohol & diet

Many pharmacies – especially Healthy Living Pharmacies – are already proactive at providing people with information on how to be more physically active, stop smoking, reduce alcohol consumption, and eat more healthily. If you're struggling to find signposting information, check out the [HLP](#) and [dementia](#) resources on our website. We've got loads of useful links there, both to national and local information.

OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICINES:

Repeated requests for OTC medicines

Pharmacy teams are usually great at getting to know people and their buying habits. People who repeatedly buy the same items may have an undiagnosed medical condition or it could be linked to memory loss. If you haven't already got a system in place for sharing information like this, find one that works for your pharmacy. It could be an alerts book or folder where staff can put notes, something you discuss in team meetings, etc.

Checking change; helping patients choose between medicines

These are things that many pharmacies already do as part of good customer service. If not, build it into your routine practice by making sure all the team is aware. For example, be proactive about offering help if someone seems to be having difficulty finding or choosing a product.

PRESCRIPTION ORDERING, COLLECTION & DELIVERY:

Repeat request slips; prescription exemptions

The framework just asks pharmacies to proactively help people to complete their request slip or exemption declaration, where appropriate.

Prescription ordering prompt

Many PMRs will allow you to set up automatic reminders for patients on repeat prescriptions, so speak to your provider if you're not sure how to do this. Mo Alam from Dennis Gore Chemists says they then contact the patient to check they still need the medication, and either deliver it to them or send a text reminder when it's ready for collection.

Over-ordering of prescription medicines / GP notification

When someone orders a prescription, check the PMR to see when it was last dispensed and flag up any queries (e.g. potential over-ordering). Discuss it with the person (or their carers, if appropriate) and let their GP know. It could enable you all to agree a better process to help people manage their medicines.

Proof of identity

People with dementia may forget personal details like their address. Make sure your SOP includes other ways for people to identify themselves e.g. by asking if they have a bus pass (which may feature their photo, name and address), or anything with their name and address on in their wallet, purse or handbag. Another option may be to ask if they have the right-hand side of a script, as some people will carry these.

Delivery service

Many pharmacies will already have delivery services with drivers who became Dementia Friends as part of Quality Payments, if not before. Phone ahead, where appropriate, to let people know when to expect the driver – it could reassure someone with dementia. Make sure drivers are also alert to, and report back on, any signs someone is having problems with their medicines. Asking drivers to bring back the person's used dosette box, for instance, could alert you to any issues. Try to use the same driver if possible.

Repeat dispensing and EPS

Again, this is good practice and many pharmacies already check patient suitability for repeat prescriptions and EPS. The NHS across Greater Manchester is encouraging the use of repeat prescriptions and EPS – if you need further information, contact your LPC.

MEDICINES ADHERENCE:

Understanding medicines

Use non-clinical language when explaining medicines to someone with dementia (or their carer) and make sure they understand what you're saying – the framework suggests showing people the medicine, if possible.

Adherence aids, medicine indication, medicine labelling, MDS – and non-adherence

There are lots of tools you can use to help patients, including those with dementia, and carers to use their medicines correctly. They may include dosettes or reminder charts that people can tick off. Communication with the person's GP is key – let them know if you think the person would benefit from additional information on their prescription, explaining what the medicine is for (e.g. small yellow pill for blood pressure) or when they need to take it (e.g. with breakfast). As mentioned above, asking delivery drivers (or whoever collects the prescription from the pharmacy) to bring back used dosette boxes may alert you to any issues with adherence.

Consistent brands

People can find it very confusing when their medication looks different e.g. because it's from a different manufacturer. While it's increasingly difficult for pharmacies to make sure people get the same brand every time – due to pricing and supply issues, as well as prescribing switches – it's best to provide familiar items to people with dementia, wherever possible. If it is different from normal, explain this to them e.g. via counter staff/delivery driver, prescription labelling, etc.

SIGNPOSTING:

Dementia leaflets

Organisations including the Alzheimer's Society and Dementia UK produce excellent leaflets that you can order via their websites: [Alzheimer's Society leaflets](#); [Dementia UK leaflets](#).

Local and national signposting information

We've got loads of useful [signposting information on our website](#), including links to national and local organisations that can help. There is a vast range of support available across Greater Manchester, including memory cafes, carers support groups, signing for the brain, exercise classes, practical advice (e.g. on benefits and social care), and even a dementia law clinic at the University of Manchester which offers free advice to people with dementia and their carers. Visit the [dementia section of our website](#) and scroll down to the Signposting section. If you're still struggling to find information, contact your nearest [Dementia Action Alliance](#) or local branch of Alzheimer's Society, Age UK, etc.

Patient referral

Pharmacy teams are well-placed to spot signs that someone may be experiencing memory loss or whose condition may be deteriorating. This element of the framework just asks pharmacies to be proactive about contacting GP practices if you have any concerns they may be showing signs of dementia or their condition could be deteriorating.

Why not consider joining your local Dementia Action Alliance?

Joining your local [Dementia Action Alliance](#) is a great way of connecting with others in your area who are proactive around dementia. You'll also find out about local events and support, which is ideal for signposting. Greater Manchester and Bolton LPCs are members of DAAs in their areas.

Final thoughts on completing the framework

We hope this guide has reassured you how achievable the Greater Manchester Dementia-Friendly Pharmacy Framework really is. Most pharmacies will already be compliant with most of the measures, and the rest are not complicated or expensive to put in place.

Best of all, completing the framework to become a Dementia-Friendly Pharmacy will benefit your pharmacy and your patients/customers because:

- More people now live with dementia and this number will increase
- You'll provide better clinical and customer care
- You will build a loyal customer base
- Your pharmacy team will feel more confident supporting people with dementia and their families/carers

So why not get started now? Go to PharmOutcomes and search for GM Dementia-Friendly Pharmacy Framework (under 'Assessments') to sign up your pharmacy.

CASE STUDIES

HOW & WHY WE COMPLETED THE DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY PHARMACY FRAMEWORK

Mo Alam, Pharmacy Manager at Dennis Gore Chemists in Prestwich

Dementia is something we come across more and more in the pharmacy and it's also close to many staff members' hearts.

We worked through the framework as a team – for example, Natalie did the SOPs; Tom got details of local support groups. We also share our knowledge and ideas, and we're developing a folder for the team.



Mo and Tom from Dennis Gore Chemists

Doing it as a team has been important because it means we all understand how to support people – for example, being calm, patient and understanding even when the pharmacy is very busy. We've really emphasised that and everyone has taken it on board.

Having key information to hand (e.g. carers' contact details) is important. A couple of times, someone called to say their medication hadn't been delivered, even though they'd signed for it. We discussed it with their carers and now we put the patient's medication in a locked box in their room and their carer has a key for it. We also work closely with GPs. For example, where patients can't remember to take medication at teatime or dinnertime, we've contacted their GP to suggest alternatives that only need to be taken in the morning (e.g. atorvastatin instead of simvastatin).

The framework might look like a lot of work but when you read through the requirements, you realise that you're probably doing most of it already and the rest is something you can work towards. Becoming a dementia-friendly pharmacy has been good for us, as well as for patients and carers. We feel really proud of what we've achieved and are keen to keep learning and developing.

The momentum that has built up around dementia after doing the framework has been phenomenal. There is even more awareness in our shop regarding dementia and Alzheimer's. Tom is also raising money by doing the national Three Peaks Challenge climbing Ben Nevis, Scafell Pike and Snowdon within 24 hours, so even more people are now asking for information and getting a better understanding around dementia.

CASE STUDIES

HOW & WHY WE COMPLETED THE DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY PHARMACY FRAMEWORK

Nisar Hussain, Pharmacy Manager at Well, Block Lane, Chadderton

Achieving the framework has been down to teamwork. Counter staff are often the first people to pick up on signs that someone may have dementia. Other times, we get carers who highlight that patients need additional support taking their medication. We help by doing an assessment and make reasonable adjustments which may include providing blister packs.



Nisar (centre), with Asma and Yvonne from Well

Our approach is to be very friendly. I've been here over 17 years and we know the people who come in. For example, when Asma noticed someone coming in every few days trying to re-order their medication, we let the GP know our concerns, and found out later the person had been diagnosed with dementia. We use our PMR to record people's needs. Good communication is crucial. We speak to people, carers, doctors and nurses to discuss support with medication adherence and make sure they have what they need.

Most importantly, though, we treat every patient as an individual and give them that support and time: a good, caring approach and a listening ear. We don't rush people in any way whatsoever and we build up a relationship with them. If someone needs time, one of the assistants will take them into the consultation room. Well pharmacy encourages all colleagues to be trained Dementia Friends, so every member of the pharmacy team can work together to provide patients with the care, support and attention they need.

The Dementia-Friendly Pharmacy Framework fits nicely into the great work our team were already doing, and we embrace any change in our pharmacy that further improves patient care. We have shared the framework with other local healthcare professionals to raise awareness of the support our pharmacy can provide and help build more effective local relationships.

CASE STUDIES

HOW & WHY WE COMPLETED THE DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY PHARMACY FRAMEWORK

Shiraz Shaffi, Hootons Pharmacy, Horwich, Bolton

Hootons Pharmacy was one of the original organisations to join the Bolton Dementia Action Alliance as part of the Horwich Dementia Friendly Community work. The aim was to bring about a change in the way we look at people living with dementia. Our goal was to enrich the lives of people with dementia by raising awareness in the community and helping overcome some of the barriers in reaching out to these people. We did this by aiming to improve the services we deliver as an organisation and committing to action plans that aim to improve the lives of people living with dementia.

This was achieved by making our staff dementia-friendly and training champions, who would promote services geared towards dementia awareness. In becoming a member of the Dementia Action Alliance, we have taken action through recognition and accreditation and aim to improve access, knowledge and support in improving the lives of people suffering from dementia and their carers.