Dementia Friendly Screenings: A guide for cinemas

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00 Foreword

Dementia is one of the greatest challenges we face in society today. People affected by dementia often have to give up the things they love due to inaccessible and unsupportive environments. Visiting a cinema is one of life's pleasures, which most of us take for granted. Cinemas have an important part to play in tackling the social and economic impact of dementia, by allowing people living with dementia to continue to participate in entertainment.

The Prime Minister's challenge on dementia states that by 2020 the UK will be first dementia-friendly nation. Dementia will affect everyone in every sector and every industry, from customers to employees. We want people living with dementia to live the life they want to lead in their communities, irrespective of their condition. This will only be achieved with greater awareness, understanding and support for those impacted by dementia. Becoming a dementia-friendly organisation means providing the opportunities to help every person with dementia continue to do the things they want to do.

Carey Mulligan

Front cover: Queen's Film Theatre Belfast. Opposite: Dukes, Lancaster

Cinemas are central to this aim. For many people, cinemas are a significant and constant feature in life. From their first family trip to the big screen as a child, to seeing latest blockbusters with friends as a teenager, to discovering independent arthouse cinemas as an adult, to taking their families to enjoy a film. Film is always an immersive experience, which leaves a profound and lasting impact on an individual each time they visit. It can promote activity and stimulation of the mind, can be an important tool of reminiscence, and is associated with relaxation, engagement and, above all, enjoyment.

Film has such a proud history of giving a voice to those who do not have one. Becoming dementia-friendly means cinemas can continue this by ensuring that everyone – regardless of any condition – feels welcome, supported, and valued to take part in the cinematic experience. Creating a social space where those affected by dementia can enjoy a simple leisure activity with their loved ones is so important, and helps to create a more inclusive society for all.

By developing an understanding of dementia, cinemas can make a huge difference to people living with dementia. Defeating dementia won't just happen in a lab or care setting, we need a step change. The way people think, talk and act about the condition throughout the whole of society has a role to play. I am delighted the cinema sector has come together to create this guide, and the incredibly important work they are doing to support people living with and affected by dementia will undoubtedly make a difference to so many lives.

Carey Mulligan
October 2017

"It was lovely to attend a dementia friendly screening with my 87-year-old father, knowing there was an understanding of dementia. This gave me the confidence to bring him, which I could not have done in an ordinary performance. I really enjoyed sharing time with my dad and really appreciated having such a supportive environment to do so."
Suzanne Palmer, Chapter visitor

01 Understanding dementia

Most of us enjoy the opportunity to appreciate the world outside the day-to-day – whether this is a visit to the theatre to see a play, viewing a movie at a local cinema or watching the television at home. What we love doing makes us who we are. It is unfair that just because someone has a dementia diagnosis, these cultural activities suddenly become off-limits. For people with dementia and the associated problems of isolation and depression, the provision of relevant and meaningful activities is crucial to their mental and emotional well-being. This challenge requires society to think and act more creatively in the kind of support that can be mobilised.

Often people stop doing the things they enjoy in their local community as their dementia progresses because they are worried about getting the support they need (Alzheimer's Society, 2013). This is due to lack of understanding, stigma of the condition, confusing processes and inaccessible environments. The impact on people's quality of life and implications on their health is huge, not being able to access parts of community life such as shops or pharmacies; but also other aspects of everyday life such as financial services or leisure pursuits.

An Alzheimer's Society survey revealed that **69 per cent** of people with dementia said that the main reason they stop going out is a lack of confidence.

Why do cinemas matter?

Besides their intrinsic value, the arts – including cinema-going – can make a difference to people with dementia. They don't rely on the kind of memory for complex sequences that the condition impacts and they offer other ways of communicating when verbal communication becomes more difficult. While the facts of an outing might be forgotten, the emotional memory remains in tact, so positive experiences and good feelings are really important.

Dementia friendly screenings aim to make cinema a key part of a dementia friendly community by providing an accessible, fun and inclusive experience. This enables people living with dementia, their families and carers to attend the cinema in a safe and welcoming environment.

Dementia friendly screenings are a relatively new but growing area of activity for UK cinema operators. This guide was created to help address this growing interest and to equip cinema operators with the knowledge and tools to help deliver dementia friendly screenings.

Holding dementia friendly screenings is not just a socially responsible step – it can also bring economic benefits to your cinema.

Dementia statistics

850,000

In 2015 an estimated 850,000 people were living with dementia, of whom 40,000 were aged under 65 (younger people with dementia) and 25,000 were from black and minority ethnic groups in the UK.

80%

Two thirds of people with dementia live in the community while one third live in care homes where 80 per cent of residents have a form of dementia.

2051

By 2051 there will be an estimated 2 million people living with dementia in the UK.

1st & 3rd

Dementia is the leading cause of death amongst women and the third leading cause of death in men.

1/3

A third of babies born today will develop dementia in their lifetime.

£26 bn

The financial cost of dementia to the UK is £26 billion per annum.

2/3

Two thirds of people with dementia are women.

670,000

There are 670,000 carers of people with dementia in the UK.

1/6th 80+

One in six people aged 80 and over have dementia.

44%

In 2015 only 44% of people with dementia in England, Wales and Northern Ireland received a diagnosis of dementia.

225,000

225,000 people will develop dementia this year, that's one every three minutes.

02 What is dementia?

Dementia is caused when the brain is damaged by diseases, such as Alzheimer's disease or a series of strokes. Dementia is an umbrella term for over 100 different types of the condition. It is progressive, which means it begins with mild symptoms that get worse over time and is not a natural part of the ageing process. Different types of dementia tend to affect people in different ways, a person with dementia might have difficulties with:

- **Memory loss** – problems recalling recent events or personal information, but being able to recall events in the past as if these were the present
- **Communication and language** – difficulty following conversations or finding the right word
- **Confusion** – being confused about time or place: losing track of time, days, dates or where they are
- **Thinking, reasoning and making decisions** – difficulty making decisions, solving problems or carrying out a sequence of tasks
- **Visual perception, vision and hearing** – problems in judging distances (e.g. on stairs); confused by patterns (e.g. thinking fruit on a tablecloth is real); difficulty with colour (e.g. believing a black mat is a hole); problems with hearing and poor vision, seeing things that are not really there (e.g. visual hallucinations)
- **Mood or behaviour** – dementia can affect changes in mood, for example becoming frustrated or irritable, withdrawn, anxious, easily upset or unusually sad. So a previously shy person may become more extroverted.

Over time people with dementia come to rely on others for help. Currently there is no cure for dementia. No two people experience dementia in the same way – it affects everyone differently.

"A trip to the cinema is a rare chance for people with dementia to participate in a 'normal' activity, and not to be reminded of their dementia."

Royal Albert Hall, London

03 First steps to becoming dementia friendly

Understand your audience

One of the first steps any cinema operator should take is to establish connections within their local communities. Working on a local level with service providers, charities and local organisations that already support people with dementia, can help you create a support network and identify a potential audience.

These are the people who will enable you to see your venue through the eyes of people living with dementia. Their feedback on your spaces will be useful to making first steps to becoming dementia friendly. Contact your local Dementia Friendly Community or use Dementia Connect to find out about local services that can help you.

Establishing good relationships with your local dementia experts and services may also give you a ready-made audience. Local services are often really happy to advertise dementia friendly events so forming connections with them is invaluable.

You'll also be able to consult with these organisations to find a good time for your screening, that doesn't conflict with other regular dementia events happening in your community.

Creating a local network will also help you understand the different stages of dementia and types of dementia within your local audience. This will allow you to tailor and adapt your environment and choice of screenings accordingly. You can find contacts for partner organisations on page 20.

Top tips:

- Tap into existing resources and knowledge
- Gather the views of people with dementia, their families and carers
- Meet specific local needs and support existing agendas and strategies
- Identify activity in the local community that could benefit from your resources and facilities.

Conduct an audit

All cinemas are different and some will lend themselves more easily to a dementia friendly environment than others. This guide aims to give best practice advice; it is understandable that not every cinema will be able to implement every change, but it is crucial that all cinemas are aware of the challenges people with dementia face, and that they do all they can to alleviate these by making the cinema as accessible as possible.

Preparation and ensuring your cinema is dementia friendly is key to delivering a successful screening. Before you start screenings, take time to understand what changes might need making – for instance, do the foyer, toilets or the screen itself need any alterations?

Your local network will help you undertake an initial audit and provide you with the recommendations on how to make your cinema dementia friendly. More information around how to make your cinemas dementia friendly can be found in section 4 on page 12.

Offer visits to individuals or group leaders so they can assess the environment before the event. This is particularly useful for larger groups, who may have a variety of support needs to consider. A personalised approach enables cinema staff to discover individual needs and plan ahead accordingly.

The pilot identified and overcame barriers and stigma to enable people living with dementia, their carers, companions and families to come to the cinema and watch a series of classic films and musicals. The simple steps and care that was taken in developing dementia friendly cinema enabled people who are often excluded, to enjoy an everyday cultural experience in a supportive, friendly and social environment. The pilot was very successful and had a dramatic impact on both the cinema's staff and operations and the audience members.
Tyneside Cinema, Newcastle

Dukes, Lancaster and Courtyard, Hereford

Conduct an audit of the cinema. It is important to see the environment through the eyes of people with dementia. Invite people with dementia who know your cinema alongside those who have never previously visited, to get the broadest range of responses. The feedback you receive will form the backbone of any alterations you may need to make to the environment.

Consider every aspect of the experience. How will your audience find out about your screening through your marketing? What is the arrival experience like? Think about the car park, main entrance, cafe, toilet facilities, ticket collection, navigating routes, stairs, lifts, lighting, sound, furniture and services.

We used our contacts at the Alzheimer's Society to arrange for the local Empowerment Group – made up of both people with dementia and carers – to come to the venue, South Hill Park, and deliver advice and feedback on all aspects of the screenings. The Empowerment group met at the venue and were shown both the introduction and around ten minutes of a film. They then gave feedback on the inclusion of adverts/ trailers and the type of films they would like to see, as well as on venue specific issues such as the lighting and sound levels in the cinema. The group also commented on the time of day that would be best for the screenings. We collated the feedback and used it to form a structure for the screenings.
Bracknell Film Society, Berkshire

Dukes, Lancaster and Courtyard, Hereford

The Hall's staff has learnt a great deal about dementia friendly events and has based its approach on the best practice as outlined in the Dementia Friendly Performances Guide published by West Yorkshire Playhouse. We provide in-house training for our front of house team – our staff are very proud to host these new events and champion the importance of doing so.
Royal Albert Hall, London

How to support people with dementia in your venue

The effects of dementia differ from person to person, but someone with the condition might:

- Find it more difficult to get to the venue or find their way around
- Respond to a film or movie scene in an unexpected way
- Struggle to follow a complex story or read a programme
- Worry about how staff, volunteers or other visitors will react to their symptoms.

By developing an understanding of dementia, you could make someone who is feeling isolated feel valued and welcome, which is why staff presence is crucial to the successful delivery of dementia friendly screenings.

Allow the person to take their time

- Try to understand how they might be feeling
- Put the person at ease – be friendly and smile
- Consider their feelings and respond to the emotions they are expressing
- If they are experiencing difficulty or appear distressed, ask direct questions such as whether there is someone they would like you to call, rather than 'What would you like me to do?'

Body language and physical contact

- Make eye contact
- Make sure that your body language and facial expressions match what you are saying
- Never stand too close or stand over someone to communicate
- Do not cover your mouth. The person should be able to see your face clearly.

Communicate clearly

The key to helping someone is being able to communicate with them. A person with dementia may not understand what you are doing or remember what you have said. Treat them respectfully by addressing them in conversation as well as any partner or carer they may be with. Following the guidelines below may help you communicate with someone who is experiencing difficulties associated with dementia.

- Speak clearly and calmly
- Use short, simple sentences
- Speak at a slightly slower pace
- Avoid speaking sharply or raising your voice
- Don't talk about people with dementia as if they are not there or talk to them as you would to a young child
- Listen carefully to what the person is saying, and give them plenty of encouragement
- If you haven't understood fully, tell the person what you have understood
- Be patient and allow the person to take their time.

Dukes, Lancaster

Train your staff to be dementia friendly

Instilling confidence in your staff on how to interact and respond to customers with dementia is vitally important both for them and the audience. Training for staff and volunteers should be a paramount consideration and something that all staff members are encouraged to do.

Make sure all staff are informed and able to support people throughout their visit. **Dementia Friends** is a social action movement which aims to increase understanding of dementia. It is a free, one hour session for staff to attend in person or they can watch the shorter online videos. These sessions will enable staff to feel fully connected to the event and empowered to support customers with dementia. **Dementia Friends** sessions should be offered to everyone from the box office to attendants/ushers, to café and housekeeping staff along with all other staff or volunteers supporting the event.

Screenings succeed when led by an individual who leads and inspires. Nominate a key member of staff with allocated time to drive the scheme forward and become a local champion so that other staff members can go to them for local support.

Staff presence is crucial, but is also a significant cost factor to consider. Many cinemas have enlisted the help of volunteers during dementia friendly screenings to help keep the running costs down. Local media students, Scouts or youth groups might be interested to develop their skills and volunteer.

Ensure there are plenty of staff and volunteers around. Volunteers will enhance the experience for audience members and participation groups, ensuring that plenty of help and assistance is available throughout the event.

A dementia friendly performance shouldn't be mono-generational – many people with dementia spend most of their time surrounded by older people, so having a mix of ages is both normalising and positive. It may be an idea for example to engage with local schools or youth groups. There are many people who prefer a less formal environment, who might enjoy and benefit from the environment provided of a dementia friendly screening and where appropriate, they should be welcomed to attend.

That said it is important that you effectively promote and communicate the purpose and nature of your dementia friendly screenings but also ensure that as far as possible those attending such screenings understand and respect the environment of the audience it is designed to serve.

> It's important to have enough hands around to help guide audiences to the cinema, show them where the toilets are, greet them, and generally to make sure they're comfortable. At Chapter, we feel this helps to create a friendly, supportive environment so that people feel able to approach us as staff, ask questions and interact.
> **Chapter Arts Centre, Cardiff**

04 How to make your cinema dementia friendly

Making your cinema dementia friendly will make it better for everyone. While there may be things that you can't influence, such as the venue's overall layout, small changes can make a big difference. Making sure staff and volunteers are dementia aware can also compensate for any challenges created by your cinema's design.

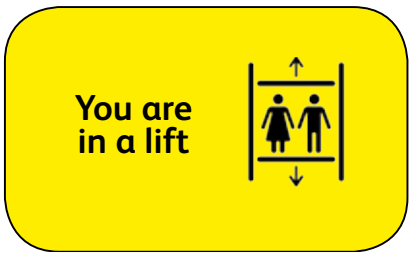
As well as considering the way dementia symptoms can affect someone's experience of your venue, there are other issues to bear in mind. Some people with dementia – and sometimes their family or carers – may have other health problems that affect their ability to get around.

Think about the following key areas:

Signage

- Signs for toilets, car park, entrances and exits are particularly important
- Use lower case lettering with good contrast between the text and the background of the sign, as well as contrast between the sign and the surface it is mounted to. This makes signage accessible for everyone
- Larger, simple fonts work best. Never use highly stylised or abstract images or icons. Alongside text, use a range of cues and clues including symbols or pictures
- Use all forms of relevant communication including standard Braille lettering
- Use plain English, not jargon or acronyms
- Signs should be fixed to the doors they actually refer to, being at eye level and well-lit wherever possible
- Ensure that glass doors are clearly marked
- It may also be an idea to cover mirrors, especially in lifts
- Any existing signs that may cause confusion or fall outside of the suggested guidelines should be covered up during and around the time of the screening.

To print out free Dementia Friendly Signage please visit:
bit.ly/dementiafriendlysignage



Arrival and front of house

- Make it easier for people to navigate the space through use of clear signage with good colour contrast – such as bold black type on a white background – and use symbols or pictures for extra clarity
- People are unlikely to be familiar with the geography of the cinema – it may be their first visit in a long time or they may not be able to recall their last visit. Is the entrance obvious and clearly signed where necessary? What will people's first impressions be when they enter your building? Did they receive welcoming information before telling them about facilities and where to go?
- Position staff and volunteers in bright t-shirts to act as a visual cue for people to follow. Placing staff at key points of the journey is enormously helpful: they are able to offer friendly guidance or direction to people who may be anxious or uncertain of the route
- Ensure that all areas are well lit, particularly entrances, exits and stairways. A few well-placed extra lamps can be beneficial
- Consider the sounds of the front of house environment. Is there anything that is not essential? Remove as many competing sounds as possible, such as video screens or background music
- Remove any unnecessary clutter of signage or displays: they can make the environment distracting and confusing. Is the foyer area visually cluttered? Is information and signage clear?

The Dementia Friends Information Sessions raised some very pertinent issues that we'd not considered before. We didn't know that people with dementia often have perception problems and that furniture and fittings in theatres and cinemas can cause issues – e.g. black mats/black table tops seem like holes and people will be reluctant to walk on them/place a tea cup on them.

Signage proved particularly tricky for us and we spent quite a while walking around the building, noting down areas where people may encounter issues with navigating their way around, then creating lots of signs to help.
Theatr Colwyn, Colwyn Bay

London's Screen Archives, Film London

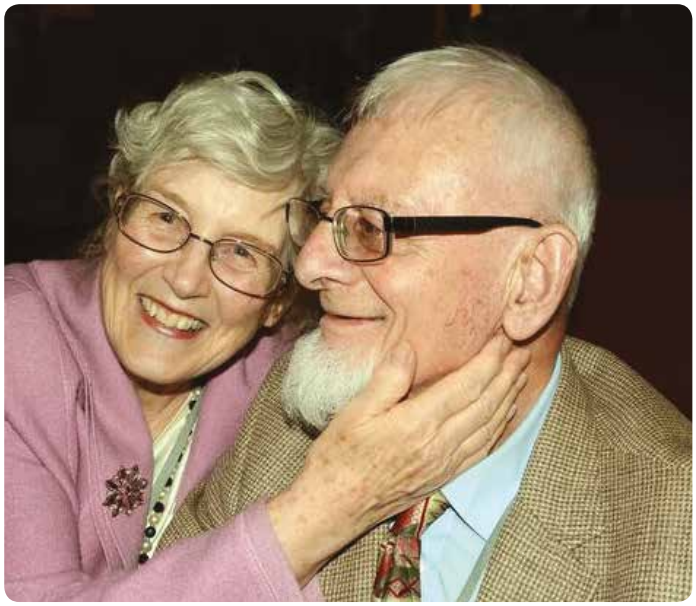
Built environment

- Flooring is important and can be a significant barrier to people living with dementia, especially those who might be experiencing perceptual or spatial difficulties
- Avoid highly reflective and slippery floor surfaces – plain or very lightly mottled flooring is the ideal. Wherever possible, avoid changes in the colour of flooring, or even a contrasting floorstrip, as it can appear to some people as a barrier, or a change in depth
- Make sure each floor/level of your building is clearly signed – for example, level 1, level 2, the stairs and lifts so they are clear to see and easy to navigate around. Ways out of screens, toilets and rooms should be signed so people with dementia know which door to use
- Where possible have clear sightlines – a view across a room can help a person with dementia to leave a room or head for something they want to see next
- Is there space for people to leave mobility aids such as wheelchairs, walking frames or mobility scooters if needed?

Toilet facilities

- Toilet facilities are particularly important as they are so closely linked with people's dignity
- Toilets should be easily accessible and well signed. Avoid 'arty' signage and 'stick people'. The word 'Toilet' or even a picture of a toilet is best
- Once inside the toilets, multiple doors can be confusing and people with dementia may struggle to find their way out. A simple 'exit' sign on the appropriate door is an easy solution
- Modern taps and hand dryers are not always immediately recognisable for their intended use – signage will help to indicate their purpose
- If possible, provide a toilet which is large enough to allow someone to have assistance without causing them or other people embarrassment.

Light Cinema and Bracknell Film Society



Seating

- Arrange some high-backed chairs with arms in areas where people may have to wait or queue, such as the foyer, near a toilet or by the box/ticket office
- Allocate a quiet space where people can spend time if they wish. Seating can help if people are feeling a bit overwhelmed or unwell – especially in large, noisy or very busy venues, people get tired and need a sit-down. The space should be easily accessible but away from the hustle and bustle.

The main differences between a regular screening and our dementia friendly screenings are as follows:

- Additional dementia friendly signage is put up around the venue
- A car park attendant directs people where to park
- Reminiscent films and musicals shown
- No adverts or trailers
- Lights are left on dim and volume is turned down
- The cinema isn't filled to capacity
- Relaxed screenings – meaning that all attendees can sing, dance or talk during the film
- 15 minute interval during the film
- Our ticket price includes refreshments and a chance to socialise afterwards
- It all includes a memento, such as a Hawaiian Lay for Blue Hawaii for example. This is theirs to take home to remind attendees of their outing, and was another great suggestions from the Empowerment Group!

All members of the BFS and also the South Hill Park stewarding team had Dementia Friends sessions delivered before the screenings started.
Bracknell Film Society, Berkshire

Theatr Colwyn

05 Programming

Selecting a film

Selecting a film is one of the fun parts of arranging the screenings – picking something that is going to resonate and engage is a great element of this process.

You will find over time that you will know which films work for your audience and you'll pick films that accommodate their needs.

- **Ask people with dementia what they would like to see** Alzheimer's Society and Age UK have local user involvement groups, as does the DEEP network (Dementia Engagement and Empowerment Project) across the UK, many whom would be happy to feedback on their experience in your venue. It's also worth getting in touch with your regional Dementia Action Alliance
- **Musicals are a good choice** as evidence suggests that the brain processes music differently to other functions, allowing people with dementia to enjoy songs and music long after other abilities are challenged. If showing a musical you could consider providing song sheets or even holding a sing-a-long or choir before, during or after the screening. Third parties such as local 'Singing for the Brain' services will be able to help and advise on this
- **Many cinemas have also found nostalgic or classic titles build good audiences** for dementia friendly cinema. However, you shouldn't feel unable to screen modern films and many cinemas screen new titles successfully
- **Consider your demographics carefully.** Do you have a large population of a specific ethnic group in your region? How should this impact your film choices? Similarly, consider audiences with early onset dementia differently. They may not be as keen on the classics or musicals, and could be looking for something more modern
- **Do not always assume that people living with dementia are unable to enjoy or understand a recent or complicated film.** It is important that people are not patronised, and offering choice is really key. There is no reason why most films which the cinema is showing to its mainstream audience cannot be shown in a dementia-friendly way
- **The show should be aimed at an adult audience**, unless organising an inter-generational event aimed at families as well
- **Consider the narrative of the film, as people with dementia can find it difficult to follow a plot.** It's also worth getting in touch with your local dementia friendly community
- **Make sure you and/or your screening team watch the film all the way through** to ensure it is suitable for the audience. Don't make assumptions based on trailers or descriptions
- **Pick a regular time slot for your screening** to make it easy for your audience to schedule.

Some titles that have worked really well for cinemas include:
La La Land, Calamity Jane!, Gigi, Oliver!, Singin' in the Rain, Gentlemen Prefer Blondes, Seven Brides for Seven Brothers, A Street Cat Named Bob, On the Town, The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel, Robot & Frank and *The Wizard of Oz.*

The QFT ensures that the programme is picked carefully. The films were selected following consultation with organisations working with people living with dementia. Cinemagoers are encouraged to suggest films they would like to see for upcoming dementia friendly screenings. Musicals are proving particularly popular. People living with dementia enjoy musicals because music "works very well with memory, and people like to sing along…"
The Queen's Film Theatre, Belfast

If you're looking for ideas, Park Circus hold the rights for many musicals and classic titles. You'll also find affordable rights available through Filmbank Media. Moviola, Independent Cinema Office, Cinema for All, Moving Picture Licensing Corporation and regional archives. Modern titles can be hired through a variety of different UK distributors. You can find their contact details at:
independentcinemaoffice.org.uk/resources/distributors

Film distributor contacts

Distributors	Description	Telephone/E-mail/Website
Park Circus	Park Circus represent over 25,000 films from Hollywood and British studios and a large number of independent rights owners.	**+44(0)141 332 2175** **info@parkcircus.com** **parkcircus.com**
Filmbank	Filmbank represent many Hollywood and independent film studios and distributors licensing screenings outside the home or cinema.	**+44(0)207 984 5957/8** **info@filmbankmedia.com** **filmbankmedia.com**
Independent Cinema Office (ICO)	The ICO is a national support organisation for independent exhibitors of all kinds including cinemas, film festivals and film societies.	**+44(0)207 636 7120** **info@independentcinemaoffice.org.uk** **independentcinemaoffice.org.uk/films**
Cinema for All	Cinema for All is a trading name for the British Federation of Film Societies. They are the national support and development organisation for community-led cinema.	**+44(0)114 221 0314** **info@cinemaforall.org.uk** **cinemaforall.org.uk**
Motion Picture Licensing Corporation (MPLC)	The MPLC license public exhibition of audiovisual content in public locations, such as retailers, waiting rooms, reception areas, bars, restaurants, activity centres, schools and care homes.	**+44(0)1323 649 647** **ukinfo@mplc.com** **themplc.co.uk**

Other useful sources of film

Regional and national archives

The regional and national archives located across the UK hold huge collections of film, dating from the earliest days of film up to the present day. Many archives are undertaking the work of digitising parts of their collections and have films available for screenings.

bfi.org.uk/Britain-on-film/regional-national-archives

Contact individual archives to request content.

Film Distributors Association (FDA)

The Film Distributors Association (FDA) can provide details for any theatrical releases. The FDA's website has the most up-to-date UK release information about titles being made available by distributors nationwide, alongside the names for relevant distributors. They include links to trailers where possible, along with formats available.

launchingfilms.com

Courtyard Hereford

06 Promoting screenings

Partnership with local agencies to promote the screenings is vitally important in helping to establish and develop a regular audience. Local outreach and establishing good relationships will also help you best understand the varying needs within your local community, which will help you to implement the most appropriate changes to your cinema environment.

Getting started – make contact

If your organisation is not already engaged in a partnership of this kind, you could approach:

Organisation	Description	Website/contact
Alzheimer's Society	Run projects including Dementia Connect and Dementia Friends. A full list of local services is available at:	**alzheimers.org.uk**
Young Dementia UK	A full list of local alliances is searchable at:	**youngdementiauk.org**
Dementia Friends	Find your local Dementia Friendly Community and attend a local Dementia Friends information session:	**dementiafriends.org.uk**
Dementia Action Alliance	A full list of local alliances is searchable at:	**dementiaaction.org.uk**
Age UK	A full list of local branches is available at:	**ageuk.org.uk**
Local councils	Hold a wealth of information about day, residential and homecare providers and about artists and arts organisations known to the culture team and arts officers. To find the contact for your local authority visit:	**gov.uk/find-your-local-council**
Care homes	Identify local care homes and talk to the manager about ways in which you could work together.	–
NHS trusts	Local community hospitals can play a key role in engaging people with dementia and their carers. To find out more, search 'authorities and trusts' at:	**nhs.uk**
National Arts and Health Alliance	A hub for information and research on arts and health work that aims to encourage the use of the arts by health and social care providers.	**artshealthandwellbeing.org.uk**
Artist networks	The Creative Dementia Arts Network has a large database of artists who work with people with dementia, as well as other arts organisations and venues undertaking dementia friendly initiatives.	**creativedementia.org**
Various	Scouts and Girl Guides Groups, local colleges and Sixth Forms running media or film courses.	–

Colleagues and friends networks – talk to your staff, trustees, and supporters/members of your organisation to see whether they know of local organisations that work with people with dementia, their families and carers.

Set up a forum or steering group with these experts and others who have specialist knowledge and interest.

Advertising the event

- **Words matter** – Using the right language when talking about dementia is important. There are handy guidelines and a host of other informative resources at: **dementiavoices.org.uk**
- **Advertise and spread the word** through local services and 'gatekeeper' organisations. Advertising should not be solely online – consider how to communicate through non-traditional means through GPs, information boards, local newspapers, support groups to ensure those who might be isolated hear about the screening
- **Clearly label the event as 'dementia friendly'** in order to provide a clear message to the audience and wider public about the event. But consider limiting labelling signs on the day to reduce any confusion or upset

- **Produce a leaflet to share all relevant information** in an accessible, dementia friendly style. Consider the font and colour contrast, remove any superfluous information. Think about making your copy easy to read so it's suitable for as many people as possible . Include a phone contact number to someone who is well-briefed on your dementia screening. Many carers require answers to specific questions before they feel confident to visit
- **If possible add a specific page on your venue's website dedicated to the dementia friendly screenings**, containing all applicable details and information. Don't forget to check that any information that you are posting online is accessible. People living with dementia or their carers may have a disability that requires information to be accessed in a different format. AbilityNet can provide guidance on accessible web design.
- **Social media can be really effective too.** Target your posts to groups in your area and encourage like-minded organisations to share on their own profiles
- **Once a booking has been taken, the customer should be provided with a comprehensive information pack.** This will be absolutely crucial in helping customers plan the logistics of their visit
- **It should include details** such as location of the theatre, drop off points, parking facilities, toilet facilities, refreshment services and interval times. It should also contain helpful supplementary information advising people of coins taken at nearby car park payment machines, for example, or pointing out that volunteers will be on hand to wait with people who have been dropped off close to the cinema while their supporter parks the car. Sometimes these packs can also include information about the content in the film. They are often referred to as 'social stories'
- **These details boost the confidence of customers**, alongside their trust in your staff and venue.

Originally we advertised these as 'easy performances' aimed at anyone over 55 who wanted a more relaxed film experience. Our intention had been to reduce the stigma of attending our dementia friendly activities, allowing people to enjoy a 'normal' activity. Sadly, this did not work at our venue. We found that unless an activity was explicitly labelled as dementia friendly those living with dementia, or perhaps their carers who are seeking out activities, were not confident in attending.
The Courtyard, Hereford

07 Best practice guidance on delivering dementia friendly screenings

Customer arrival to the cinema

- **Assign staff to wait with people who are being dropped off** in case of disorientation, and provide additional seating – such as fold-up chairs – at drop off points where people may need to wait as a group gathers. Consider having staff or volunteers to assist with car park payment machines
- **Look at your cinema's point of entry** – does it clearly look like an entrance? Reflective glass doors can be difficult to perceive for people living with dementia. If necessary, employ extra signage to mark the entrances, and to ensure people do not walk into glass doors
- **The box office staff are often the first point of contact**, so they should be provided with a list of FAQs to ensure they have all relevant information at their fingertips ready to share with customers
- **Ensure there are plenty of clearly-identifiable staff on hand to smile, assist and reassure visitors when needed**. Feedback consistently demonstrates that one of the most positive aspects of a dementia friendly performance is the presence of visible warm, friendly members of staff as customers arrive at the venue
- **Meet and greet guests at the door to reassure them that support is available** and allow them to ask any questions and to familiarise themselves with the venue. Assist with route-finding, show them toilets, refreshments, assist people on stairs, and help them settle in the auditorium. Be clear about who they can go to with any questions or queries
- **How far must people walk to the nearest seating?** – Consider putting chairs along the main route
- **If possible, provide additional space for storing mobility aids**, and have staff on hand to reunite the aid with the person who needs it at the interval and the end of the change to screening.

In terms of advertising, we put posters up around town, ran articles in the local paper, advertised in local newsletters, and sent emails to our subscribers and advertised on our website, and social media. Memory Matters shared information with the memory cafés network across Cornwall, and we connected with dementia groups through social media, who helped to promote the screenings. We also advertised in the local parish newsletter which we don't normally do, in order to reach a different audience.
Lost in Film, Lostwithiel, Cornwall

Royal Albert Hall, London

In the cinema

- **Provide staff with a copy of the seating plan** if you have allocated booked seats, showing any larger groups, or groups that may need specific assistance. It may then be helpful to assign individual staff to assist these groups throughout their visit. Sometimes it can be easier to keep seating unreserved so people can go where they feel comfortable on the day
- **Allow more time for people to take their seats by access to the screen earlier.** Many audience members may have limited mobility and feeling rushed may create anxiety and reduce their enjoyment of the experience
- **Aisle seats will be in high demand** as some audience members may use a mobility aid such as a walking frame to get to their seat and will need easy access to toilet facilities. Ensure plenty of wheelchair spaces are made available and increase capacity if possible
- **Consider flat-flooring your cinema** – If you have raked seating that can be retracted, consider a cabaret set up with tables and chairs. Your audience can bring their drinks in and have somewhere to put them, and you will have more space for those with mobility aids
- If you don't have the flexibility to flat-floor or create more wheelchair space, **make clear in all your communications that there is limited wheelchair seating available** so your audience don't become frustrated
- **Only use 70 per cent of the screen's seating capacity.** This will allow people to move to alternative seating if they wish to and avoids feelings of over-crowding or claustrophobia
- **Staff should be well spaced around the screen throughout the show** to assist if people need to move around or leave.

Lighting

- **Lights are left at a low level** – This helps reduce any anxiety about identifying exits and exit signs easily or locating the way out if anyone wants to go to the toilet. Dimly-lit areas and strong reflections can cause confusion and disorientation
- **Generally, try to create a softer, more relaxed feel** – lamps and up-lighters can be very effective.

Sound

- **Achieving comfortable sound levels can be a challenge.** We need to consider the ability of people with dementia to process sound, while acknowledging that many older people with dementia are hard of hearing: simply dropping levels too low means people may miss out. The best way to achieve this is to ask people with dementia to give you feedback, and work with your technician to find the best balance
- **Consider whether the film has any loud bangs** which might be distressing
- **Some people with dementia find higher pitched sounds painful**, particularly crescendos. Some may bring ear-plugs to the performance to counter this, but most will not, so consider how you can make these moments more comfortable for audience members, and keep a stock of free ear-plugs available.

Dukes, Lancaster

Preshow

- **Give an introduction** in which you inform guests about the cinema, key staff and the film they are about to see to provide context for everyone attending, regardless if it is their first time or they're a regular visitor
- **Be relaxed about the start time** to enable everyone to settle
- Where you are not contravening an agreement with your advertising agency, **don't show adverts before your dementia friendly screening**
- **Encourage people to engage with the film** – singing, clapping, talking, and laughing
- **Provide break out/quiet spaces** if people need to leave the screening
- **Consider having a screen showing a live relay of the show for people to continue watching if they have to leave the auditorium**. This can be valuable for visitors who may feel they are missing out if the person they support is unsettled in the auditorium. This can also be a way to accommodate more wheelchair users if all spaces are taken in the main theatre.

The Dukes offers regular film screenings and a range of creative activities including singing, storytelling, dance, poetry club and reminiscence workshops, which are all facilitated by specialist artists. By programming a wide range of activities we are providing choices for people in our local area who are living with dementia. Many attendees have reported, that this is the first time they have been to the cinema for many years – they now feel they have the choice to attend.
The Dukes Picturehouse, Lancaster

Courtyard, Hereford

Additional activities

Little extras can often make a big difference. Consider the following ideas for before or after the screening. Having an interval is also an option, this can help to break up the screening, but some people may find this disorientating so do check with the group if possible.

Café and refreshments

- **Recreate the simple things that people would socially do together** before their dementia was diagnosed. Thus, the café bar experience is fundamental: make it special, even if it's just coffee, tea, cakes, scones and sandwiches
- **Furniture should be easily movable to accommodate people's needs**
- **Provide a clear and easy to read menu**, using pictures if possible, to help people make their choice
- **Consider reserving tables for groups, and offering a pre-order option**. This will prevent decisions having to be made under pressure
- **Note the contrast between surfaces** – white plates on a white table will make eating difficult for people if they are unable to perceive where their plate is. Simply adding a plain, brightly coloured tablecloth could help
- **Ask people in advance about their requirements**. Ensure there are plenty of staff available to help carry food and drinks, and to assist people in choosing tables and seats. Have plenty of napkins available in case of spillages, and straws to make drinking easier. Mugs are better than cups and saucers.

Queen's Film Theatre, Belfast

a-z

Workshops and activities

Adding an extra activity to your dementia friendly screenings can be a great way to extend the experience for people living with dementia and their carers and companions. It gives the audience a chance to meet each other, talk about the film and make more of an occasion of the trip.

- **Work with a provider who knows their stuff.** If you already have an arts and education department, do they already run activities for older people? Perhaps you know a local organisation that do craft or arts for dementia. Or is there a university group that could run an activity?
- **Don't overcomplicate it** – the best activities are simple and achievable and provide something for the participant to take home with them
- **Be realistic about what can be done** – workshops shouldn't be too much longer than an hour. What can you create in that time? Can it be finished later?

Bracknell Film Society and Theatr Colwyn

- **Host your activity in a safe and comfortable environment** – open plan spaces can be oppressive, particularly if you struggle to filter noise. If you can continue the activity in your cinema screen, great – if you need to go elsewhere, find somewhere friendly and quiet. Think about creating a positive and friendly atmosphere
- **Activities don't have to be about arts and crafts.** Dance, poetry and drama workshops can all be hugely successful with audiences with dementia. Even simply giving groups access to a quiet room after the screening can be beneficial. This extends the social interaction and allows people to discuss what they have just seen.

Keith Oliver who runs the Cinema Club in Kent, is a huge advocate of offering a post film discussion. Not only does it offer a social activity, but it also gives people with dementia an opportunity to really engage with cinema and with each other. The format of each screening is always the same: show the film, have tea, coffee and refreshments, and then split into groups for discussion.

The discussions incorporate visual prompts for participants. The discussion groups never attempt to go over the plot of the film, they aim to draw on the emotions the film engendered in people. Discussion was often around the characters, or the themes. For example, the King's Speech provoked interesting discussion about dementia as an "invisible disability" compared to the King's very visible one. For its part, Paddington brought up issues of family dynamics and even provoked debate about refugees and the movement of people!
Cinema Club, Kent

Everyman Cinemas

08 Evaluation and improvement

A lot of time and energy goes into getting your first dementia friendly event as good as it can be, and it's essential that the lessons learned and the results of the work don't get lost.

- **Evaluation methods need to be appropriate, so consider being creative** with how you take feedback and use simple methods. Surveys can be quite daunting, particularly when they're too long or text-heavy, so sometimes friendly and creative devices can be the best way to get a good sample size for any evaluation, and get the best quality feedback. If you feel you have to create a survey, make sure that this is as clear and simple as possible. Keep options to a minimum, and use multiple-choice rather than free-text where possible. Always use full questions and do not refer back to previous questions; repetition is better
- **Keep it low-tech and have a chat** – sometimes the most useful feedback comes out of simple conversations. Use your post-film activity or refreshment break to talk informally to the audience and ask them to comment on their experience in their own words
- **Remain impartial.** Of course, you'll want to hear the best bits about your event – you and your organisation have been working hard on trying to make it just right – but praise is sometimes not as useful as constructive criticism. Invite suggestions for improvements, and thank those that share them
- **Use the feedback.** Make sure you have a debrief within your organisation, take all the feedback – internal and external – and produce a set of actions to carry out in time for the next/future events.

Once the feedback loop has been started, it's essential not to lose momentum. Keep an eye on audience reactions to your chosen titles. It's also important to take on board feedback about the physical space, your marketing output, the customer experience, and all the other elements of your event, to make sure it's all supporting your screening as best it can.

There was an intense consultation period which helped inform the changes and improvements to the current model. This included:

- An extensive audit of the building supported by Dementia Care and a range of temporary physical changes, including signage, contrasting stair treads, covered mirrors and padded columns
- Appointment and training of a staff member as the Cinema's Dementia Champion, who then trained all staff as Dementia Friends, with support from Alzheimer's Society
- Development of a robust evaluation framework with Newcastle University, appropriate for people with dementia and their carers and families
- Selecting and testing types of films with the audience
- Adapting how films are screened to accommodate the audience's needs
- Raising additional funding from Ballinger Trust to pay for physical adjustments, additional staffing to support audiences and the documentary film of the project.

Tyneside Cinema, Newcastle

09 Lights. Camera. Action! – next steps

We hope this guide has provided you with sufficient information to pilot a dementia friendly screening at your cinema.

The key to a successful screening is all in the planning – work in partnership with local organisations, appropriately prepare and adapt the space and train all staff to be dementia aware.

There are lots of useful resources to help make both your venue and staff 'dementia friendly' a few of these are cited at the end of this resource. That said, should you require any further help please contact one of the below contributing organisations.

> Going to the cinema is "such a normal thing that most of us take for granted". This initiative aims to create an environment where dementia does not act as a barrier for people to enjoy this experience, and where people living with dementia can do something ordinary whilst enjoying quality time with loved ones.
> **The Queen's Film Theatre, Belfast**

Alzheimer's Society

Dementia devastates lives. By 2021, one million people will be living with the condition. But dementia won't win. Until the day we find a cure, Alzheimer's Society will be here for anyone affected by dementia – wherever they are, whatever they're going through. Everything we do is informed and inspired by them.

We are the UK's leading dementia charity. Every day, we work tirelessly to find new treatments and, ultimately, a cure for dementia. We provide expert information, training, and support services to all those who need our help. And we are creating a more dementia friendly society so people with the condition can live without fear and prejudice.

Let's take on dementia together. Volunteer. Donate. Campaign for change. Whatever you do, unite with us against dementia.

Contact: **programmepartnerships@alzheimers.org.uk**
Website: **alzheimers.org.uk**

BFI Film Audience Network (FAN)

The BFI Film Audience Network (FAN) is a ground-breaking initiative that gives audiences across the UK the opportunity to see a broader range of films in a cinema setting. With £8.7 million of National Lottery funding over four years (2013-2017) the BFI FAN works with cinema exhibitors, film festivals, educators, film societies, community venues, film archives and other organisations in their regions or nations to boost audiences for film across the UK.

The BFI Diversity Standards underpin the BFI's entire strategy, placing access and inclusion at the heart of everything. Through FAN we, and our partners, work to increase the range and diversity of audiences engaging with film and promote active participation and opportunities for all.

FAN has supported projects across the UK such as A Life More Ordinary by Dukes Lancaster, Tinted Lens by Chapter Arts, and dementia friendly screenings across the Picturehouse Cinemas chain. These models have led the way in providing positive cinema experiences for people living with dementia. Discoveries from these projects, and the associated tools that have resulted, have been essential to the delivery of this guide.

Contact: **toki@filmhubwales.org**
Info: **the-bigger-picture.com**

UK Cinema Association

The UK Cinema Association (UKCA) represents the interests of over 90 per cent of UK cinema operators by number and market share. The UKCA advocates on behalf of the UK cinema sector at international, national, regional and local level. This includes lobbying and working with Government at all levels, with other sectors of the film industry, particularly distribution, as well as working with others to promote the value of cinema to the wider public.

The UK cinema sector is recognised as a world-leader in its efforts to meet the needs of disabled customers, and has already achieved a great deal in ensuring that cinemas are a welcoming and accessible environment for people with disabilities. Dementia friendly screenings are a relatively new but growing area of activity for UK cinema operators and involve the creation of a cinema environment that allows people with varying degrees of dementia to enjoy the big screen experience.

Contact: **info@cinemauk.org.uk**

10 Useful resources

Becoming a dementia-friendly arts venue: A practical guide

Another useful guide for arts venue managers and staff on making the environment, facilities and programming of arts venues accessible to people with dementia, families and carers has been created by The Alzheimer's Society:
bit.ly/BecomingADementiaFriendlyVenue

Innovations in Dementia: How to do an access audit

A really simple and useful way of doing an access audit of your venue has been created by Innovations in Dementia:
bit.ly/HowToDoAnAccessAudit

The Dukes Cinema – Unforgettable pilot report

Read the report of the findings of The Dukes and Age UK Lancashire's pilot scheme, Journeying Together, which led to the development of A Life More Ordinary:
bit.ly/JourneyingTogetherPilot

Dementia Friendly cinemas at Tyneside cinema – case study

This pilot identified and overcame barriers and stigma to enable people living with dementia, their carers, companions and families to come to the cinema:
bit.ly/TynesideCaseStudy

West Yorkshire Playhouse Dementia Friendly Performances Guide

A handy guide to staging dementia friendly performances has been launched by West Yorkshire Playhouse (WYP), two years after it staged the UK's first 'dementia friendly' show:
http://bit.ly/WestYorkshirePerformanceGuide

Dementia Friendly Business Guide

A guide to support both your customers and employees affected by dementia, as well as understand how your processes and physical environments can impact people with dementia and simple changes you can do to support your customers:
bit.ly/DementiaFriendlyBusinesses

Film Hub Wales – Dementia Awareness Stage 1 Toolkit

Includes simple things to make your venue and screenings more dementia friendly, as well as recommending organisations and links to further your venue's development:
bit.ly/FHWDementiaToolkit

Appendix

Reference projects

The following organisations have contributed case studies, resources and experiences to this toolkit.

Cinema Club, Kent

Started by a retiree headteacher who himself has a diagnosis of dementia, Keith Oliver began his own dementia friendly screenings in his community. Keen to avoid the commonly used classics and musicals, Keith set up screenings of modern titles in community venues and cinemas around Canterbury. A major element of the screenings was the discussion held about the films, an opportunity for audiences to connect.
bit.ly/AlzSocKeithsClub

Tinted Lens, Chapter Arts Centre Cardiff

Chapter have now been running dementia friendly screenings on a monthly basis since spring 2016, and are collaborating with other organisations in Cardiff to make the capital a dementia friendly community. In collaboration with academics from Cardiff University, the arts centre has been creating awareness around dementia through their Tinted Lens events – where charities, care providers, academics, arts organisations, and people living with dementia can come together to have conversations, enjoy workshops, watch films and learn about dementia. Chapter's dementia project is kindly supported by Film Hub Wales, Dunhill Medical Trust, Rayne Foundation and the National Institute for Health Research.
chapter.org/dementia-friendly-screenings
storiesofdementia.com

Musical Matinee Club, De La Warr Pavilion

This collaboration saw De La Warr Pavilion working with Bexhill Dementia Action Alliance, East Sussex County Council, and Rother District Council to deliver a series of screenings for people living with dementia. The Film Hub South East project successfully brought together those with multi-sensory needs and learning disabilities, with older people.
the-bigger-picture.com/case-studies/musicalmatineeclub

Creative Ageing, The Courtyard Hereford

The Courtyard was one of the first dementia friendly venues in the UK, and has had an established programme of activities for older people, since 2010. The team, dedicated to work with older people, run activities in the venue, outreach in the community and awareness days. The project aims to combat isolation for older people living in the rural county. Activities include programmes where artists collaborate with care homes and individuals to produce poetry, fine arts, and to participate in workshops around dance and drama. The Courtyard run quarterly dementia friendly screenings.
courtyard.org.uk/aop

A Life More Ordinary, Dukes Lancaster

This pioneering project has been giving people with dementia more choice, control and greater access to leisure and culture opportunities. The intention is that people can feel that they are able to come to an 'ordinary' social event, alongside other members of the public. The project has been rolled out to multiple venues across the north-west including Picturehouse at FACT Liverpool, Wem Town Hall Shropshire, Chorley Little Theatre, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, Oldham Coliseum, Theatr Colwyn and Light Cinema Experience in New Brighton. The resources created from this project have fed into this guide. The project has been supported by Esmee Fairbairn, The Rayne Foundation, The Dowager Countess Eleanor Peel Trust, The Evan Cornish Foundation, The Elspeth J Thompson Charitable Trust, Joseph A Jones Solicitors, Age UK Lancashire and The University of Lancaster.
dukes-lancaster.org/alifemoreordinary

Dementia Friendly Screenings
Queen's Film Theatre Belfast

Queen's Film Theatre have been running dementia friendly screenings since March 2017, and are committed to the Age-Friendly Belfast Charter. Their project has been funded by Department of Communities through Northern Ireland Screen.
queensfilmtheatre.com

Dementia Friendly Screenings, Royal Albert Hall

Each year, the Royal Albert Hall delivers an innovative education and outreach programme for thousands of children and adults, which aims to have a positive and lasting effect on everyone involved. The recently launched a new series of Dementia Friendly Screenings. These are programmed alongside other events and projects specifically organised for older adults. Through these offerings, they aim to enable a wide range of people to experience the iconic venue who may not otherwise be able to do so.
http://bit.ly/2f6jgK4

Lost in Film, Lostwithiel Cornwall

Lost in Film started programming dementia friendly screenings in 2015 in collaboration with Memory Matters South West. The free film afternoons are supported by Reaching Communities, an ongoing project run by Cinema For All with the support of the Tudor Trust, Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and the British Board of Film Classification. The project aims to connect community cinema with marginalised and disadvantaged audiences across the UK.
bit.ly/LostInFilm

Dementia Friendly Screenings,
South Hill Park Arts Centre

Bracknell Film Society worked with Bracknell Forest Dementia Action Alliance to form an empowerment group consisting of people living with dementia to consult on changes to the physical cinema at South Hill Park Arts Centre, as well as to provide programming advice.
southhillpark.org.uk/dementia-friendly-screenings

Picturehouse Cinemas, UK

Picturehouse Cinemas launched their Film Audience Network funded dementia friendly cinema offer across 19 UK sites in 2016 and this has now been integrated into their programme for the duration of 2017. Due to popularity of the screenings, the chain decided to increase the frequency of screenings from every six to every four weeks. Over 200 staff became Dementia Friends in the process to widen the cinemas' inclusivity.
bit.ly/PHblogDFscreenings

Reminiscence Screenings, London Screen Archives

London's Screen Archives has been hosting screenings for people living with dementia, as part of a three year funded project titled London: A Bigger Picture, which screens programmes of archive film following different themes, such as Childhood and School Days, and Fetes, Fairs and Weddings. During sessions led by Dementia Friends, audiences are encouraged to reminisce. It is funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund with support from the BFI and Creative Skillset.
londonsscreenarchives.org.uk/content/reminiscence-screenings

Dementia Friendly Cinema, Theatr Colwyn

Theatr Colwyn launched their project using the A Life More Ordinary model, and with advice and tools provided by Dukes Lancaster, they went to achieve one of the highest audience attendances for a first-time dementia friendly screening, of 160+. Successfully using social media as part of their campaign, and relying heavily on volunteer support, they ran a series of screenings which they are looking to continue through 2017 onwards.
theatrcolwyn.co.uk

Dementia Friendly Cinema, Tyneside Cinema

Tyneside ran an action research pilot project in 2015. The project was initiated by the Elders Council of Newcastle, supported by a steering group of specialist partners, part funded by the Ballinger Charitable Trust and evaluated by Newcastle University's Institute for Ageing. Simple steps were taken to improve the venue for the audience, and to programme appropriately, resulting in people who are often excluded, enjoying an everyday cultural experience in a supportive, friendly and social environment. Tyneside has now embedded dementia friendly cinema into its programme. The cinema has also piloted running lunch clubs and a 'Cinema Buddies' programme with Age UK Newcastle for older people to overcome isolation.
tynesidecinema.co.uk/about-us/our-venue/dementia-friendly-cinema

Supporters

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In partnership with