**Symptoms of dementia**

Each person is unique and will experience dementia in their own way. The different types of dementia tend to affect people differently, especially in the early stages. How others respond to the person, and how supportive or enabling the person's surroundings are, also greatly affect how well someone can live with dementia.

A person with dementia will have cognitive symptoms (problems with thinking or memory). They will often have problems with some of the following:

* day-to-day memory - difficulty recalling events that happened recently
* concentrating, planning or organising - difficulties making decisions, solving problems or carrying out a sequence of tasks (eg cooking a meal)
* language - difficulties following a conversation or finding the right word for something
* visuospatial skills - problems judging distances (eg on stairs) and seeing objects in three dimensions
* orientation - losing track of the day or date, or becoming confused about where they are.

As well as these cognitive symptoms, a person with dementia will often have changes in their mood. For example, they may become frustrated or irritable, withdrawn, anxious, easily upset or unusually sad.

With some types of dementia, the person may see things that are not really there (visual hallucinations) or believe things that are not true (delusions).

Dementia is progressive, which means the symptoms gradually get worse over time. How quickly dementia progresses varies greatly from person to person.

As dementia progresses, the person may develop behaviours that seem unusual or out of character. These behaviours may include repetitive questioning, pacing, restlessness or agitation. They can be distressing or challenging for the person and their carer.

A person with dementia, especially in the later stages, may have physical symptoms such as muscle weakness or weight loss. Changes in sleep pattern and appetite are also common.

5 things to know about dementia

* Dementia is not a natural part of the ageing process.
* Dementia is caused by diseases of the brain.
* It is not just about losing your memory.
* It's possible to live well with it.

There is more to the person than the dementia.