

An Overview of Dementia

Dementia is a word that we are all starting to hear more and more in the media. But actually what is it and why is it important to funeral directors across the UK?

SAIF have recognised that Dementia is a growing issue within the UK and are today committing to become a Dementia Friendly organisation. Dementia is quickly becoming an issue that is touching the lives of many of our members and communities we serve. We cannot avoid Dementia and cannot be complacent in realising that we will need a high level of understanding of this disease for future clients and in supporting their families.

So what actually is Dementia?

Dementia is an umbrella term. It describes the symptoms that occur when the brain is affected by certain diseases or conditions. There are over 100 types of dementia although some are far more common than others. They are often named according to the condition that has caused the dementia such as vascular dementia which is caused by problems of supply of oxygen to the brain via the blood. Alzheimer's disease is the most common form of Dementia and is caused by proteins attaching to the stems of the brain cells causing them to die.

So how does this affect members of SAIF?

As funeral directors we are central to our communities at their most difficult times. We give compassion and understanding when families need it and provide a competent and professional service which must remain at the heart of our members' core values. But the fact remains that we must educate ourselves into the journey that families have

been through to provide a relevant level of understanding.

What does the research show?

- By 2020 over 1 million people will be affected by dementia.
- Dementia has become one of the UK's greatest health challenges and the impact on UK businesses is great.
- Almost 44% of people are directly or indirectly affected.

SAIF recommends a training course from training2care, a hands-on, sensitivity training programme which gives people a greater understanding of the physical and mental challenges people with Dementia:

<http://www.training2care.co.uk/virtual-dementia-tour.htm>