

The Irish Dementia Cafe Network

This document sets out the key features of the dementia cafe, guidelines for running a cafe, and the activities of the Irish Dementia Cafe Network.

Key features of the dementia cafe

1. The cafe welcomes people with dementia, their families and friends, health and social care professionals, and members of the local community who are interested and involved in dementia activities in their community. It is free of charge.
2. The cafe meets once a month (or more regularly), at the same time and in the same place.
3. The cafe upholds, and demonstrates in its practice, the four pillars of the cafe model. They are: Atmosphere, Information, Support, Community.
4. Communication and language used at the cafe is accessible and supports personhood for people with dementia.
5. There is a speaker/talk at most cafe meetings (at least 7 a year). The talk is delivered by an invited speaker(s) or might be a recorded talk
6. The cafe is part of the fabric of community-oriented care and connectivity pathways.
7. The cafe is run by a steering committee, which manages all aspects of the operation of the cafe and conducts a brief annual review of the cafe activities.
8. All areas of cafe operation (including management of money, personal data, volunteers etc) follow good practice, drawing on the cafe network's guidelines and resources.
9. The steering committee decides on the name of its cafe.
10. The cafe's membership of the *Irish Dementia Cafe Network* is indicated by the use of the cafe network logo on its promotional materials.
11. When a cafe steering committee joins the Irish Dementia Cafe Network, it commits to upholding the shared ethos and principles of the dementia cafe.

Pillars and principles

1. Atmosphere

Warm and welcoming, A safe space to talk.

There is a sense of equality between all cafe participants – attendees, cafe team and speakers. Inclusion and acceptance are core underlying principles, with a focus on the creation of a safe, caring space to talk. The cafe team sits among attendees, as well as doing practical cafe tasks. Refreshments are served. Music often features at the cafe to create a warm welcoming atmosphere.

2. Support

Peer support, Information/advice from health and social care professionals.

The cafe is a safe, supportive environment. Respect for the personhood of the person with dementia is central to the cafe ethos. Peer support is an important aspect of the cafe, as well as reliable, informal advice from health and social care professionals.

3. Information

Signposting by other participants (both peers, cafe team), Informative talk, Information table.

There are diverse information leaflets available at the cafe, including local services and supports. Speakers also sometimes bring information or resources with them and make them available to attendees. Cafes feature a wide range of speakers, on topics relevant to the experience of living with or caring for a person with dementia. Examples of speakers include an Occupational Therapist, Solicitor, Speech and Language Therapist, GP, community garda, pharmacist, community nurse, Person living with dementia, Family carer, Family carer co-ordinator, SAGE advocate, Geriatrician, Old Age Psychiatrist, and Optician. While cafes are encouraged to identify people in their locality to speak at the cafe, the cafe network also has a pool of resources which cafes can draw upon for topics they would like to cover but don't have any speaker for. Themes are sometimes linked with the seasons/holidays. Cafe groups are encouraged to get feedback and suggestions from cafe attendees.

4. Community

A sense of community, Raising awareness and understanding

The cafe is visible in the community, physically accessible and easy to access. The cafe supports a sense of community for people living with dementia, their family carers/care partners, extended family and friends. It is a place where people can share experiences and feel connected. Connectedness to the broader community is also part of the cafe ethos, ensuring that the person and family are supported within the community.

Guidelines for running a dementia cafe

Cafe Steering Committee

- A voluntary cafe steering committee has overall responsibility for the running of its dementia cafe.
- The cafe steering committee consists of a mix of people/skillsets, including:
 - An expert(s) by experience (a person with dementia and/or family carer) to ensure the cafe's format and content addresses the lived experience of dementia. Note: This is not a requirement at the cafe setup stage. However, the cafe steering committee must, within one year, ensure that the steering committee includes an expert by experience.
 - A person working in the HSE who is involved with services for people living with dementia and their carers, to ensure that the cafe is part of the continuum of care and support for people living with dementia and their family carers.
 - A health and social care professional to respond to any queries which require dementia care insight and expertise.
- Ideally, the steering committee will include an Alzheimer Society of Ireland dementia adviser or representative of the local Memory Technology Resource Room. Other key groups include Western Alzheimer Foundation and Family Carers Ireland.
- The cafe steering committee has a number of allocated roles (including but not limited to Cafe co-ordinator, Treasurer, Secretary etc). The steering committee decides on the number of meetings it will hold per year, and the term of office for the various roles.
- A timeframe is agreed for membership of the cafe steering committee, with efforts to recruit new members at regular intervals.
- The cafe steering committee agrees on the logistics of the cafe's operation, which includes management of personal data, attendance records, processes for managing finance and fundraising, public liability insurance (if applicable), and promotion.
- The cafe steering committee ensures that the cafe is run in a manner that is consistent with the core pillars and principles of the dementia cafe.
- The cafe steering committee regularly consults with attendees to incorporate their input into the choice of speakers/themes for the cafe.
- The cafe steering committee keeps records of attendance at cafes.
- The cafe steering committee actively liaises with other relevant stakeholders in its locality and region as part of developing its signposting for attendees.

COVID-19 considerations

- The cafe steering committee keeps up to date with the latest HSE public health guidelines and any new rules or approaches introduced as a result of the ongoing COVID-19 situation.

Running a virtual cafe

- If a cafe has a virtual component, the steering committee is responsible for it and ensures that it is run in a manner consistent with the cafe ethos and principles.
- A virtual cafe has additional considerations such as the use of technology, security, data protection etc. The network provides virtual cafe guidelines and encourages network cafes to contribute to them.

Start-up phase of a dementia cafe

- When setting up a dementia cafe, the start up cafe steering committee is encouraged to connect with the nearest network cafe, as part of its assessment of demand for a dementia cafe in its proposed location.
- The start up cafe steering committee is provided with the most up to date toolkit from the Irish Dementia Cafe Network to support it with start up

Irish Dementia Cafe Network

Every cafe that meets the principles and guidelines set out above is welcome to join the Irish Dementia Cafe Network. A toolkit is produced by the Irish Dementia Cafe Network to support start up dementia cafes and existing cafes. It includes guidelines, templates for attendance records etc. It is updated yearly in response to input and feedback from member cafes. The network also has a pool of resources for cafes, including videos of talks.

Network activities include:

- Facilitation of networking for dementia cafes
- Annual learning & networking event, in conjunction with the National Dementia Office
- Development of a pool of resources (eg short videos, resources for talks)
- Cafe Network website (dementiacafe.ie)
- Cafe Network social media (Twitter, Facebook)
- Promotion of network dementia cafes and network activities
- Development and dissemination of a Cafe Toolkit
- Supporting new start up cafes
- Delivery of a *How to set up a cafe workshop* for potential start up cafe groups
- Cafe Mentoring Programme
- Promotion of equity and accessibility to the dementia cafe service
- Maintenance of standards and mutual support for growth of a consistent, high quality service for people with dementia and their families
- Maintenance of connectivity with other community supports

Membership of the Irish Dementia Cafe Network

- The cafe steering committee is responsible for membership of the Irish Dementia Cafe Network, engagement around network activities, and the annual cafe activities review.
- The member cafe includes the network logo on its promotional materials, to indicate its membership of the network.
- The cafe steering committee conducts a yearly review of activities which forms part of the Irish Dementia Cafe Network membership renewal application. Anonymised information on the total number of people who attended the cafe is also returned, to be collated. This data contributes to the measurement of the impact and reach of dementia cafes across the country.
- Cafe steering committees are encouraged to provide input into network activities and the resources that the network gathers to support network cafes and start up cafes.
- The Irish Dementia Cafe Network develops resources and supports for member network cafes, in consultation with members. The network also provides opportunities for learning and networking for its members.

Application and annual membership renewal

Key elements:

- There is an application process (application form includes names of steering committee, name of cafe, agreed venue, date, declaration of meeting the Irish Dementia Cafe Network pillars and principles etc)
- Membership is annual, and free of charge.
- Each steering committee provides a short yearly report as part of cafe network renewal. This helps to measure impact and reflect on needs, provides feedback to network on cafe needs, supports maintenance of standards etc.

Logo of the Irish Dementia Cafe Network



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