

Exploring the experience of people living with dementia in Dementia Friendly Communities (DFCs): A Realist Evaluation.

Background: A DFC may be defined by organisation or geographical area. There are more than 200 dementia-friendly organisations in Northern Ireland with previous evaluations adopting an organisational view. The aim of DFCs is that the person with dementia encounters someone within an organisation who is equipped and willing to provide an appropriate response to them. This study was developed in collaboration with people living with dementia who have experience interacting with DF organisations and services.

The aim of this study is to explore the day-to-day experience of people with dementia interacting with DFCs to understand the nature of these encounters and what characteristics either help or hinder their success by asking: 1.How do dementia-friendly interventions in DFCs lead to positive outcomes for people with dementia; and 2.How does context of the DFC influence outcomes for people living with dementia?

Methods: A realist evaluation using case study methodology. Phase1: a realist synthesis of the literature; Phase 2: non-participant observation and interview conversations with up to 10 people living with dementia in their everyday interactions within DFCs; Phase 3: 3-4 mixed focus-groups comprising people living with dementia, carers and people working in DFCs to support analysis of the findings from Phase 2. Data analysis and synthesis will seek to explain the relationship between the contexts and interventions used within DFCs and how these influence the outcomes thought to empower and support people affected by dementia.

Implications: Realist methodology acknowledges that the DFC programme will not necessarily work the same way for everyone. Therefore this study seeks to move from the macro view of DFCs presented in national evaluations to the micro view by exploring DFCs from the day-to-day experience of people with dementia.