

# lifestyle

## Dementia Friends Champion Helen Morris looks at attitudes to dementia



ALZHEIMER'S Research UK has just released a new report following their latest national Dementia Attitudes Monitor.

It confirms the concerns expressed in my February column around self care and prevention of dementia, with 48 per cent of the 2,361 respondents unable to name one of the six established risk factors.

They are heavy drinking, genetics, smoking, high blood pressure, depression, and Type 2 diabetes – five of which are under our control. More encouraging though is the finding that those aged 45-54 years - the age at which taking action to improve brain health may have the greatest long-term benefit - have the highest levels of awareness and 40 per cent believe they can reduce their risk of developing dementia, compared to just 28 per cent of those aged 15-24.

Interestingly, 73 per cent of adults would want to be given more information in midlife about their personal risk of developing dementia, if doctors could do so, seeing value in enabling people to 'plan for their future' (59 per cent), 'access treatments that

could help' (50 per cent) and 'access care that could help' (47 per cent).

However, others thought it was 'too stressful for the person being diagnosed'.

The perception of dementia is improving slowly, with 22 per cent thinking they would find it hard to talk to someone who has dementia, whilst 62 per cent disagreed.

There is still a clear need to educate more people, especially younger adults, about the reality of living with dementia, and that conversation and social interactions are not just possible but essential to avoid stigma and isolation.

It sounds like the perfect opportunity to repeat my monthly offer of running a one-hour Dementia Friends session for any local groups.

If you think this might be useful, please do get in touch.

For the full report visit the website: [www.dementiastatistics.org.uk/attitudes](http://www.dementiastatistics.org.uk/attitudes)

• Contact Helen Morris if you want her to run a Dementia Friends session for your group.

Call her on **07976 702171** or email her at [Helen@helenmorris.org.uk](mailto:Helen@helenmorris.org.uk)

## Freemasons' equipment donation is boost for progressive Alt school

THEIR school days are long since behind them but thanks to the generosity of local freemasons, youngsters at Alt Academy can not wait for play time again.

A donation of £3,100 from the East Lancashire Province masonic charity enabled the Alt Lane school to purchase and install a new Early Years trim trail.

Pupils were definitely the most agile as guests, including Les Taylor, Oldham District chairman, Steve Clark, charity steward for East Lancashire province and Antony Hughes, CEO of the Harmony Trust that runs Alt, tried out the equipment.

Mr Hughes said: "The key thing for us is it is so important for children's learnings to have access to high quality equipment outside.

"There is a great outdoor space at Alt Academy and there is an ambition to have a Forest school so we are working towards that."

The improved play area is another tick in the box for the former Alt Lane Primary that received a 'good' across all areas Ofsted report in September 2017 after being rated inadequate in November 2013.

Head of Academy, Janette Sharp, said: "There are 17 areas to fulfil the curriculum for early years and physical (activity) is an important area.

"When we got our 'good' grade at Ofsted we had big pieces of equipment but it just rotted and we had to keep cordoning bits off.

"So, we've had to improve our outdoor environment and be creative with our funding.

"If you haven't got big pieces of equipment children don't know how to risk take, learn social skills



The cheque is presented headteacher Janette Sharp, left, and Alt Academy pupils; Oldham District chairman Les Taylor cuts the ribbon on new play area



including turn taking."

Another £1,000 has been raised to remove and replace old playground markings.

"We are always aiming to develop our outdoor areas," added Janette. "The next thing we want to do is improve the garden and mud kitchen."

Mr Clark explained: "A school like this has to have outside support coming in from somewhere and it is great to be able to help out.

"And it is worth mentioning freemasonry is the second largest provider of charitable monies in the country behind the National Lottery."

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