Dementia Friendly Swimming

Join us for a swim in a safe and supportive environment
Frequently Asked Questions

If you’re interested in joining us for a Dementia Friendly swimming session, please read the FAQs below which we hope will answer any questions you may have. You can also see our website: www.swimming.org/dementiafriendly/faq.

What makes the session dementia friendly?

A diagnosis of dementia doesn’t mean you have to stop taking part in the activities you enjoy. Swimming is a great all-round activity that is beneficial to everyone. It is particularly beneficial for people living with dementia as the sensation of being in the water can provide a calming and soothing effect. Our Dementia Friendly swimming sessions allow you to continue doing something you love, or even give you the chance to try something new, in a safe and supportive environment.

Because we know that you might need a little extra help during your visit, we have specially trained staff and volunteers on hand to support you, all of whom completed dementia awareness training. You will be offered support if you need it at reception, in the changing area and on poolside, giving you the confidence to enjoy swimming as part of an active lifestyle.

We’ve also been working on improving our facilities to help make things easier for you. This varies from pool to pool but may include better signage, highlighted trip hazards, and identifiable wristbands. Some sites may even provide refreshments for you before or after your swim, giving you the chance to socialise with others who are in a similar situation to you.

How do I use the lockers?

Lockers are available in the changing area. Some may be especially for your use and will be identified by the ‘Working towards becoming Dementia Friendly’ logo.

Lockers may require a coin to operate them, but you will get this back when you reopen your locker.

Do facilities have mixed changing areas?

Most leisure centres have changing room areas with a range of different cubicle sizes. This means that there are larger changing areas available which you and your carer can use together if you prefer. There are also accessible toilet facilities and showers.
Can flip flops/towels be worn on poolside?

Yes. Flip flops can be worn on poolside but please, no outdoor shoes. Towels can be taken onto poolside and placed on the ledge around most of our pools, or hung up on hooks if they are available.

Is it possible for me or my carer to swim alone if the other doesn’t want to? Is there support to help with this?

Yes. There is an option at most of our pools for you or your carer to sit on poolside or in a gallery area overlooking the pool whilst the other one swims. Please check with the pool beforehand as support may vary.

Do I need to be able to swim?

Ideally yes, but don’t worry if it’s been a while since you were last in a pool. As long as you have some previous experience of swimming and feel comfortable about getting in the water, then you’ll be fine. We always try to provide a space in the pool without lanes, too, so that there is no pressure for you to swim in a straight line if you don’t want to. You can discuss any concerns you have about your swimming ability with us beforehand and we’ll be happy to advise you on which swimming session would be best for you to attend.

Should I register my interest in attending with someone at the centre?

For your first session we would like to offer you a tour of the facility and have a member of staff available to meet and greet you. Therefore, if you could let us know when you plan to attend, we can ensure that someone is available to welcome and support you. Please call the number on this leaflet for further information.

Can I access the sessions using public transport?

Most of our leisure centres are on local bus or public transport routes. Please call the leisure centre if you would like to find out more about how to visit us.

Are parking spaces available for blue badge holders?

Most of our centres have a number of parking spaces available for blue badge holders. The number of spaces will vary from centre to centre.

Do I need to check with my doctor before attending?

If you live with another medical condition such as a heart condition, respiratory condition or have a muscular/joint injury and you are not used to being active then it may be worthwhile checking with your doctor to see if you’re ok to exercise.
Join us for a session at:

Freeman’s Quay Leisure Centre  
Walkergate, Durham, DH1 1SW  
1pm-2pm every Monday

Teesdale Leisure Centre  
Strathmore Road, Barnard Castle, DL12 8DS  
10:45am - 11:45am every Tuesday

Chester-le-Street Leisure Centre  
Burns Green, Chester-le-Street, DH3 3QH  
11:00am - 12:00pm every Wednesday

£2.60 - free to carers supporting someone living with dementia  
Free refreshments available at each session

More sessions to be added soon please call for more information:  
03000 264572

To find out more information please visit: www.swimming.org/dementiafriendly.