



E: cdo@gov.scot

(by email)

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**Dementia post-diagnostic support and oral/dental health**

Dear colleague

Scottish Government launched its dementia strategy in 2023; Dementia in Scotland: Everyone's Story.

<https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/strategy-plan/2023/05/new-dementia-strategy-scotland-everyones-story/documents/dementia-scotland-everyones-story/dementia-scotland-everyones-story/govscot%3Adocument/dementia-scotland-everyones-story.pdf>

In it, government restated its policy that every person in Scotland is offered a year of post-diagnostic support (PDS) following a diagnosis of dementia. There are staff in every health and social care partnership in Scotland who visit people with such a diagnosis, advising them on what to expect on their dementia journey and also how to prepare them and their family for what might be ahead, e.g. ensuring finances are in order and power of attorney is in place. These "Post-diagnostic support Practitioners" also give advice on health matters. Healthcare Improvement Scotland produce a Quality Improvement Framework which gives an outline of what should be covered during the post-diagnostic support period. We have had the opportunity to highlight the importance not just of good oral care but also ensuring dental treatment is up to date. The latest version of this document published in March 2025 can be found here:

[https://www.healthcareimprovementscotland.scot/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/FoD\\_Quality\\_Improvement\\_Framework\\_dementia\\_PDS\\_March\\_2025.pdf](https://www.healthcareimprovementscotland.scot/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/FoD_Quality_Improvement_Framework_dementia_PDS_March_2025.pdf)

There is a real opportunity for us as a profession to offer an early assessment of dental need, do some forward treatment planning and hopefully prevent future dental problems, e.g. perhaps a tooth that has been monitored for a while, now needs a decision made about whether an extraction, which would be better in the longer term, should be prioritised.



It is helpful to have early discussions about future dental treatment need before capacity and consent, as well as potential patient distress, become issues. You will note that the updated Quality Improvement Framework will now advise that Post-diagnostic support Practitioners should encourage people newly diagnosed with dementia to make an appointment with their dentist, to start these discussions and pre-empt dental problems from arising.

To highlight this new initiative, NES arranged two webinars on the topic of Dementia Awareness Training for Dental Teams, which will be made available on Portal TV. These cover assessment and treatment for those living with dementia and also include some information on prevention and the national oral health improvement programmes.

[Dementia Awareness Training for Dental Teams - Webinar 1 | Turas | Learn](#)

[Dementia Awareness Training for Dental Teams - Webinar 2 | Turas | Learn](#)

Early assessment in the dementia post-diagnostic support period aligns to the pillars of “Realistic Dentistry”, such as person-centred care and shared decision making, so this topic is also included in the webinars.

Additionally, there is a TURAS module on shared decision making which can be completed. NES Dental Directorate will offer 1.5 hours of verifiable CPD to those dental team members registered with the GDC who complete the module.

[Shared Decision Making | Turas | Learn](#)

The aim of these webinars is to equip you to deal with patients who may present at your dental surgery, saying “I’ve just been diagnosed with dementia and I’ve been told to see my dentist”.

I imagine, that many of you or members of your team will have been impacted by dementia either directly or indirectly and you will be aware that preparing for the future is important. So, I hope that we as a profession can actively play our part in supporting our patients as they adjust to living with dementia.

Yours sincerely



Tom Ferris  
Chief Dental Officer