

This resource is the first in a new suite of guidance written to accompany the [Dementia Skilled – Improving Practice](#)<sup>1</sup> learning resource, which was updated in 2016.

If you are:

- a social service worker or student
- an assessor
- an educator or trainer
- a manager

this guidance will help you get the maximum benefit from dementia learning.

Alongside many other learning resources produced by NHS Education for Scotland (NES) and the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC), the **Dementia Skilled - Improving Practice** learning resource and accompanying guidance will support learning which will contribute to significant changes in the way we work with people with dementia, their families and carers. **Dementia Skilled – Improving Practice** is a free and flexible resource to support learning. It is both easy to use and versatile and the accompanying guidance will give you a variety of ideas about how to use it to increase knowledge and improve practice.

The **Dementia Skilled – Improving Practice** learning resource and guidance were developed as one strand of a much wider implementation plan for [Promoting Excellence: a framework for all health and social service staff working with people with dementia, their families and carers](#)<sup>2</sup> (2011). You can view the full range of other resources on the SSSC website and the NHS Knowledge Network website.

## About this suite of guidance

The guidance is designed to support you to use **Dementia Skilled – Improving Practice** effectively, as a learner or as someone who supports the learning of others. The Dementia Skilled practice level is defined in **Promoting Excellence** as the level of knowledge and skills required by those workers who have 'direct and/or substantial contact with people with dementia, their families and carers'.

The guidance will be particularly useful to people working in social services and those studying or delivering associated qualifications and awards such as the SVQ Social Services and Healthcare and the HNC Social Services. However it will also be of relevance to people working in health and other settings, particularly when considering how **Dementia Skilled – Improving Practice** can add broader value to workforce development.

## Why is dementia learning so important?

Supporting the health and social service workforce to improve their dementia knowledge and skills will help to make sure that people with dementia, their families and carers experience a better quality of life.

Scotland's demography is changing and the prevalence of dementia in Scotland is currently estimated to be growing rapidly. In 2015 there were approximately 90,000<sup>3</sup> people living with dementia in Scotland. Over the next 20 years it is predicted that the number of people in the population who are over 65 years will increase significantly. As a result there will be a disproportionately greater increase of people in the oldest age groups, so it is likely that numbers of people with a diagnosis of dementia in Scotland will increase considerably. Dementia can also affect younger people and it is estimated that 3200 people in Scotland under the age of 65 are living with dementia. Many people who have dementia will not have a formal diagnosis. We recommend you keep up to date with current figures and diagnosis rates by checking the Scottish Government or Alzheimer Scotland websites.

## What progress has been made so far?

The Scottish Government has made dementia a national priority. In 2010 the Scottish Government launched the first National Dementia Strategy. This was followed by the second National Dementia Strategy in 2013, with a third strategy planned for 2017. All strategies have committed to a national approach to improving dementia education and learning across health, social services and related settings.

Under the first strategy, and working in partnership with local government, the NHS, third and independent sector providers and significantly Alzheimer Scotland and the Scottish Dementia Working Group, the Scottish Government pledged to transform dementia services by developing common standards of care for the first time. Published in 2011, they

are titled the [Standards of Care for Dementia in Scotland](#)<sup>4</sup>. They have been used extensively to promote a human rights-based approach to improvement across a range of health, social service and related settings.

The Scottish Government asked NES and the SSSC to produce the **Promoting Excellence** framework so that health and social service workers and employers could understand the knowledge and skills required to achieve the quality of care and support outlined in the standards. **Promoting Excellence** is aspirational and future focussed, describing what we must do now and in the years ahead to support delivery of the change actions outlined in Scotland's National Dementia Strategies. The aim is to equip the entire health and social service workforce to support people with dementia more effectively and to improve quality of life.

The framework details the specific knowledge and skills, in relation to dementia, that each worker needs to possess to ensure their individual practice is high quality, safe, effective, person-centred and outcomes-focused.

Both **Promoting Excellence** and the **Standards of Care for People with Dementia in Scotland** support the aspirations of Scotland's National Dementia Strategies and aim to:

- develop and support services to deliver world class dementia care and treatment for everyone
- build on extensive involvement and consultation with partners in all sectors of care
- build on the lived experiences of people with dementia, their families and carers
- respond to the range of very real issues and challenges including increased demand on services and supports.

Since 2011 thousands of people have used the **Promoting Excellence** framework and learning resources to improve their knowledge and skills and you can read individual articles and success stories on SSSC News Online. You can also read about the experiences of six social care organisations in the 2015 and 2017 SSSC publications [The impact of Promoting Excellence in social service settings](#)<sup>5</sup> and [Promoting Excellence and its impact on social service settings](#)<sup>6</sup>.

## How is Promoting Excellence structured?

### 1. Practice Levels

**Promoting Excellence** recognises that the knowledge and skills the workforce requires will be diverse, and that learners need to access resources at the level that is best suited to their role and function and that best meets their career development needs. The framework identifies four practice levels:

#### **Dementia informed practice level**

- Provides the baseline knowledge and skills required by all staff working in health and social service settings including a person's own home.

#### **Dementia skilled practice level**

- Describes the knowledge and skills required by all staff that have direct and/or substantial contact with people with dementia and their families and carers.

#### **Dementia enhanced practice level**

- Outlines the knowledge and skills required by health and social service staff who have more regular and intense contact with people with dementia, provide specific interventions and/or direct/manage care and services.

#### **Dementia expertise practice level**

- Outlines the knowledge and skills required for health and social service staff who by virtue of their role and practice setting play an expert specialist role in the care, treatment and support of people with dementia.

The minimum practice level for each learner is not about seniority. Instead it's about level of responsibility in promoting a good quality of life for people with dementia. Carers and family members will unquestionably play a vital role in this respect and will hold unique expertise and experience. The **Promoting Excellence** framework and resources offer an opportunity for everyone to develop the knowledge and skills they need and in many cases workers, carers and family members will find it beneficial to learn together. The SSSC produced **Promoting Excellence: planning for dementia learning and development** to show how the practice levels and range of available resources can be used. It is available at [www.sssc.uk.com/promotingexcellence](http://www.sssc.uk.com/promotingexcellence).

## 2. The dementia journey

In addition to the four practice levels, **Promoting Excellence** arranges knowledge and skill criteria around the concept of the dementia journey. This concept supports those using the framework to design learning interventions for workers that are sensitive and responsive to the needs of people across their individual journeys with dementia. This includes for example an emphasis on what we can all do – regardless of work setting or role - to support people with dementia and their carers to maximise their wellbeing at all times and achieve the things that are important to them.

**Promoting Excellence** describes the journey in the following way:

- keeping well, prevention, and finding out it's dementia
- living well
- living well with increasing help and support
- end of life and dying well.

## 3. Quality of life outcome indicators

Finally, alongside the practice levels and dementia journey, **Promoting Excellence** is underpinned by eight quality of life outcome indicators to help learners appreciate the impact they can have on the lives of people with dementia, their families and carers. The knowledge and skill criteria in each level are clustered around suggested outcome indicators to support you to make relevant connections between learning, practice and the right of people living with dementia to experience the best quality of life possible.

They can be used in many ways, including within the design of learning programmes to help capture learning in the context of real practice. **Promoting Excellence** learning resources and programmes will use the outcome indicators in this way.

Care Inspectors are also developing their awareness of **Promoting Excellence**, and the quality of life outcome indicators are encouraged as a supplementary tool to guide existing inspection and improvement processes. The outcome indicators may equally be used by commissioners of services to support the monitoring of care services to ensure they are outcomes-focused and provide high quality care and support to people with dementia, their families and carers.

There are eight outcome indicators used in **Promoting Excellence** and they are set out below next to the **Standards of Care**. You will see that the outcome indicators and standards complement each other.

### **Standards of Care for People with Dementia in Scotland**

As a person with dementia...

- I have the right to a diagnosis.
- I have the right to be regarded as a unique individual and to be treated with dignity and respect.
- I have the right to access a range of treatment and supports.
- I have the right to end-of-life care that respects my wishes.
- I have the right to be as independent as possible and to be included in my community.
- I have the right to have carers who are well supported and educated about dementia.

### **Promoting Excellence** quality of life outcome indicators

People with dementia...

- ...have access to a timely and accurate diagnosis of dementia.
- ...feel empowered and enabled to exercise rights and choice, maintain their identity and to be treated with dignity and equity.
- ...maintain their best level of physical, mental, social and emotional well-being.
- ...have access to individuals, groups and organisations that can support their spiritual or personal beliefs and reflect their cultural wishes.
- ...have access to quality services and can continue to participate in community life and valued activities.
- ...feel safe and secure and are able to be as independent as possible.
- ...are able to maintain valued relationships and networks and have the opportunity to develop new ones, both personal and professional.
- ...and their family, friends and carers have access to information, education and support that enhances the well-being of the person with dementia and those that support them.

## How does Promoting Excellence relate to other work-based learning?

Promoting Excellence has been designed in a way that recognises and connects with sector specific standards and frameworks. The following documents can be found online:

- **Promoting Excellence** mapped to the NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework available at [www.knowledge.scot.nhs.uk/promotingexcellence](http://www.knowledge.scot.nhs.uk/promotingexcellence)
- **Promoting Excellence** linked to the leadership capabilities for social services available at [www.stepintoleadership.info/assets/pdf/Promoting-leadership-in-dementia-practice.pdf](http://www.stepintoleadership.info/assets/pdf/Promoting-leadership-in-dementia-practice.pdf)

More connections to wider learning and professional development are explored in the following guidance resources, produced to accompany **Dementia Skilled – Improving Practice**:

- [Guidance for managers](#)<sup>7</sup>
- [Guidance for assessors and learners](#)<sup>8</sup> (showing connections to work-based qualifications)
- [Guidance on using the Continuous Learning Framework and the leadership capabilities for social services](#)<sup>9</sup>
- [Guidance on mapping Dementia Skilled – Improving Practice to the Standards in Social Work Education](#)<sup>10</sup>

All of these resources contain helpful tips and examples for how Dementia Skilled practice level can be successfully embedded in your work setting.

To view these resources visit the [SSSC Learning Zone](#)<sup>11</sup>.

What's in the **Dementia Skilled – Improving Practice** learning resource?

**The Dementia Skilled – Improving Practice** learning resource contains five individual modules listed below:

- Understanding dementia.
- Promoting person and family centred care and community connections.
- Promoting health and well-being for people with dementia.
- Meeting the needs of the person with dementia who is distressed.
- Supporting and protecting people's rights.

The modules have been written for a wide variety of workers across health and social services. They will be particularly useful for workers providing direct support to people with dementia, including:

- in residential care
- in care at home
- in hospitals
- in community health settings
- in day care
- as personal assistants.

The modules are explored in more detail within part two of this guidance suite, [Guidance for managers<sup>12</sup>](#).

Before exploring the **Dementia Skilled – Improving Practice** learning resource, we recommend you first view the DVD **Informed about Dementia**. The DVD will introduce you to characters used in later resources. It is an important starting point for learning and will help you to develop a baseline which can then be built on through additional learning and skills development at the appropriate levels.

The DVD chapters are available on the SSSC Learning Zone and learners will also be able to apply for an Open Badge. Visit [learn.sssc.uk.com/dementiainformed](http://learn.sssc.uk.com/dementiainformed). You can order DVDs by emailing [enquiries@sssc.uk.com](mailto:enquiries@sssc.uk.com) or telephone 0345 60 30 891.

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.sssc.uk.com/about-the-sssc/multimedia-library/publications/70-education-and-training/2906-dementia-skilled>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2011/05/31085332/0>

<sup>3</sup> Alzheimer Scotland statistics (2016)

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2011/05/31085414/0>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.sssc.uk.com/about-the-sssc/multimedia-library/publications/promoting-excellence-newsletters/the-impact-of-promoting-excellence-in-social-service-settings>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.sssc.uk.com/about-the-sssc/multimedia-library/publications/promoting-excellence-and-its-impact-on-social-service-settings-2>

<sup>7</sup> <http://learn.sssc.uk.com/s/dg1>

<sup>8</sup> <http://learn.sssc.uk.com/s/dg2>

<sup>9</sup> <http://learn.sssc.uk.com/s/dg3>

<sup>10</sup> <http://learn.sssc.uk.com/s/dg4>

<sup>11</sup> <http://learn.sssc.uk.com/dementiainformed>

<sup>12</sup> <http://learn.sssc.uk.com/s/dg1>