

Dementia care professionals

If you've been diagnosed with a dementia, you're likely to see a range of health and social care professionals. This can be confusing, but they are there to help you and offer important support.

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Different care professionals you will meet

You will see professionals in a range of places, including hospitals and your home.

Some will be NHS health professionals, including doctors and nurses.

Others will be allied health professionals, such as dentists.

You might also receive help from social care professionals. These are usually arranged through your health Trust.

Doctors

After a dementia diagnosis, you will see different doctors, including your own GP and specialists.

General practitioners (GPs)

Your GP is your first point of contact if you have any concerns about your health. They will lead the team looking after your overall health.

Your GP will refer you to any other professionals, such as specialists or nurses.

You can see your GP in their surgery, or they might visit your home, if needed.

Your GP can:

- discuss your dementia and other health issues

- do a physical check-up
- arrange further tests
- review your treatments

Your GP will be able to offer ongoing support following your dementia diagnosis.

This may include:

- managing conditions that can also occur with some forms of dementia, for example, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and mental wellbeing
- giving advice on how to lead a healthy lifestyle

Consultants

Consultants are doctors who have had years of training and experience in a specific area.

Consultants who can offer support to people with dementia include:

- psychiatrists
- geriatricians
- neurologists

They can be involved in ongoing assessment and support.

- [Talking about risk and dementia](#)
- [\(external link opens in a new window / tab\)](#)
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If you need to see a consultant, your GP will arrange this and you'll see them at a hospital.

The consultant you see will depend on your needs, age and the services available in your area.

You might be referred to the consultants below.

Neurologists

Neurologists are specialists in the brain and nervous system. Some neurologists have particular experience of dementia.

Psychiatrists

You might see a psychiatrist to make sure your mental health is cared for. If you're over 65 years of age, you might see a specialist old age psychiatrist.

Geriatricians

Geriatricians are specialists in the care of older people and the conditions and disabilities associated with old age.

Clinical psychologists

Clinical psychologists are not medical doctors.

They assess memory, learning disabilities and other skills.

They also offer support to cope with any problems you might be experiencing.

Local memory service team

Local memory services teams specialise in offering support services to people with a dementia and those who support them.

Your local team can be contacted through your GP or your health and social care trust.

The team includes:

- a specialist memory nurse
- social workers
- occupational therapists
- a nurse prescriber

Services include:

- assessment
- diagnosis and treatment
- information
- education and support
- Dementia navigators

There are dementia navigator professionals in each health and social care trust.

A dementia navigator is a vital link person if you are living with a dementia.

Their role is to provide information and support.

This can be:

- face to face
- by phone

They will also give vital sign-posting to other services to make sure you can live as full a life as possible with your dementia.

The dementia navigators will be with you from the beginning and as the condition progresses to the later stages.

You can contact your local dementia navigator through your memory services team.

Nurses

As well as doctors, you will also receive care from some nurses.

Community mental health nurses

Community mental health nurses offer treatment, care and support for people with mental health problems and dementia.

They do not usually carry out physical nursing tasks.

District or community nurses

District or community nurses have had extra training in nursing people at home and are based at a GP surgery.

They can help you with:

- taking medication
- dressing wounds

Practice nurses

Practice nurses carry out a range of activities within a GP practice, such as flu jabs and check-ups.

They:

- carry out general treatments
- run clinics
- look after patients with ongoing illnesses

Allied health professionals

You may see other professionals for help with specific areas of physical health.

They might see you in your home, care home or hospital.

Occupational therapists

Occupational therapists can advise you on keeping skills and living independently for as long as possible.

They can also advise how technology and home adaptations can help you.

Physiotherapists

Physiotherapists can help with exercise and moving around and can advise carers on helping someone stay active safely.

Chiropodists

Chiropodists are trained to look after people's feet and advise on proper foot care.

Optometrists

Problems with sight can make you more confused, so it's important to get your eyes checked regularly by an optometrist.

Audiologists

Hearing problems can make you more confused. An audiologist can check for hearing problems and fit a hearing aid.

Speech and language therapists

Speech and language therapists can advise you and your carer on ways of communicating more effectively and on managing any problems swallowing.

Music therapists

Music therapists will engage you in shared musical experiences through singing, listening or making music to help with symptoms of anxiety or restlessness.

Dentists

You should get dental advice soon after a diagnosis as treatment can be harder as symptoms progress.

Dieticians

Dieticians can advise you to eat, tell you about poor appetite, weight loss, weight gain, vitamins and food supplements.

Continence advisers

If you have problems using the toilet, a continence adviser can offer helpful advice and give you information on useful equipment, such as commodes and incontinence pads.

Social care professionals

Social care professionals can help you with daily activities and non-medical support.

This could include an assessment by a social worker to give help and support at home with dressing or bathing, social activities, day care or respite.

Social worker

A social worker will usually assess your needs and ask about your income and savings.

This will help them decide what services you can receive and how much you have to pay towards them.

A social worker will also carry out a carer's assessment.

This enables the unpaid carer to discuss the help they need to support the person with dementia and maintain their own health and wellbeing.

This can help the carer find a balance between their caring responsibilities, work and other aspects of their life.

The social worker might also be able to direct you to other organisations which can provide information, help and support.

Social care workers

Social care workers work in different roles as domiciliary care workers in your own home, day care workers or in care homes.

They can help you with your personal care as well as your emotional and care needs.

For more information about the services available and how to access social care, contact your local Health and Social Care Trust:

- [Health and social Care Trusts](#)

Where to find help and support

You can find further information on dementia and support services available at the link below:

- [Help and support for people living with a dementia](#)