

Adjournment Debate on *Patient access to NICE-approved products*– 30th November 2021

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This briefing includes:

1. Suggested Interventions
2. Background
3. Alzheimer's Society work in this area.

1. Suggested Intervention

- *As the Minister will know, Cognitive Rehabilitation Therapy is an important care intervention which can help support people with dementia live independently for longer. With the support of this therapy, people are supported with specific strategies that can help them continue with daily activities. Yet, despite being listed in the NICE recommendations, there is a barrier to delivery – occupational therapists, and other staff in memory clinics, don't have the capacity to deliver this 1:1. Programmes like the NIHR and Alzheimer's Society funded 'GREAT into Practice project' at University of Exeter have explored how memory assessment and home care services might play a role in providing this. Can the Minister say what can be done to increase capacity, and ensure that people living with dementia are able to access Cognitive Rehabilitation Therapy?*

2. Background

There are an estimated 850,000 people living with dementia in the UK.¹

People with dementia often feel happier when supported with everyday activities and things they enjoy. It's not always necessary for people to stop doing these things after a dementia diagnosis; they may just need to find different ways of doing them.

Cognitive rehabilitation is a type of therapy that can make managing everyday activities easier for people with early-stage dementia. Several studies have shown that it can help them to maintain their independence. It is tailored to the individual person and can be done in their own home. Over several sessions, a therapist works with the person with dementia and their carer to set personal goals.

The type of goal that is set depends on what the person wants to do. Some people wish to find ways of staying independent, for example strategies to continue using household appliances or mobile phones. Some may want to continue managing important and meaningful daily tasks and will work with therapists on developing strategies to enable them to continue cooking meals and to safely withdraw money from a cashpoint.

3. Alzheimer's Society work in this Area

Alzheimer's Society funded the initial pilot study behind the GREAT trial² at University of Exeter, which found goal oriented cognitive rehabilitation therapy (GREAT-CR) to be effective in enabling people with early-stage dementia to improve their everyday functioning. It uses evidence-based rehabilitation strategies to address the impact of cognitive impairments in the areas where people with dementia themselves want to manage better.³

Alzheimer's Society also funded an implementation project called 'GREAT into Practise' which enabled GREAT-CR to be implemented in some NHS memory services and care homes. The project also created 'My Life, My Goals' a self-help guide⁴ produced with and for people living with early-stage dementia. The guide can support people who are unable to access a therapist to receive cognitive rehabilitation therapy and/or are able to identify their own goals and strategies but might benefit from support to do this.

¹ Wittenberg, Raphael et al. Projections of older people with dementia and costs of dementia care in the United Kingdom, 2019-2040. 2019. Care Policy and Evaluation Centre, London School of Economics and Political Science. https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/sites/default/files/2019-11/cpec_report_november_2019.pdf

² NIHR <https://doi.org/10.3310/hta23100>

³ GREAT Cognitive Rehabilitation. Exeter University <https://sites.google.com/exeter.ac.uk/great-cr/cognitive-rehabilitation>

⁴ <https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/blog/life-after-dementia-diagnosis-guide-setting-reaching-goals>

About GREAT CR

- The focus and scope of GREAT CR depends on the circumstances of the person with dementia and the difficulties experienced.
- The GREAT CR plan is developed through discussion between the CR Practitioner, the person with dementia and, where available, family/care supporters.
- GREAT CR is built around individual CR goals. Goals are brief statements about the improvement the person aims to achieve in particular abilities or activities. They relate to personally meaningful activities – things that the person feels would make a difference to his/her quality of life.
- The number of sessions and the exact techniques to be used with the person are not rigidly specified. The CR Practitioner can plan a course of GREAT CR depending on the person's needs.
- CR practitioners help the person to achieve personal goals through developing strategies that compensate for cognitive problems and introducing enhanced learning techniques that help the person make the most of remaining cognitive abilities.
- Practical goals addressed in a person's home setting, GREAT CR is relevant for everyday functioning and translates directly into observable benefits.