

The image features a close-up of a hand holding a black pen, poised to write on a document. The background is a blurred office setting with a person working at a desk. The entire image is overlaid with a color gradient that transitions from a teal blue at the top to a bright yellow at the bottom. The text is positioned in the upper right quadrant.

# WORKING WITH DEMENTIA

Information  
for  
Employers

This guide has been prepared as part of a dissemination grant awarded by the Alzheimer's Society. It is based on the findings of the Alzheimer's Society funded project 'Dementia in the Workplace: the potential for continued employment post diagnosis' which was completed in 2015 and the Carnegie Trust for the Universities of Scotland funded project 'Employers' responses to Dementia in the Workplace in Scotland' completed in 2018.



## Key facts about dementia

- Dementia is an umbrella term which describes a range of symptoms which progressively affect cognitive functioning.
- Alzheimer's disease is the most common cause of dementia, but there are a number of different causes of dementia.
- Although more commonly associated with older age, dementia can affect people of all ages.
- Symptoms of dementia include problems with a range of cognitive functions including:
  - / memory problems
  - / spatial awareness
  - / language and communication
  - / judgement and decision making
  - / changes in mood or personality



## Dementia in the workplace

People with dementia often report they first notice symptoms in their employment. Examples of these include:

- Missing meetings
- Misplacing belongings or equipment
- Tasks taking longer to complete
- Difficulties with communicating
- Problems remembering instructions which are not written down

For an individual who is diagnosed with dementia whilst still employed, these symptoms can impact on their performance at work. However, it is possible for people with dementia to continue working after diagnosis, with the appropriate support.



**Person with dementia**

*"I suppose about six or seven years ago I started to notice that my memory was giving me trouble. I couldn't have a conversation with people because I had no recollection of what they were talking about."*

## Supporting continued employment

It is possible for people with dementia to continue working after their diagnosis. People with dementia who have continued working report it helps them to manage their symptoms and that the routine and social interactions help to keep them well and preserve their self-confidence. In order to support an employee with dementia it is important to consider the following:

- Dementia can be considered a disability as defined within the Equality Act 2010.
- Under the Equality Act 2010 employers have a responsibility to make 'reasonable adjustments' to an individuals' work environment or job description to support them to continue employment.
- Focusing on an employee's abilities and what they can do is reported as helpful in making adjustments and planning support.
- Some examples of 'reasonable adjustments' which have supported people with dementia to continue employment post diagnosis include:
  - / Flexible working, such as altered shift patterns, reduced hours, working from home.
  - / Adaptations to job descriptions.
  - / Memory aids, e.g. online calendars, providing written information and instructions.
  - / Technology, e.g. mobile phones, voice recognition technology etc.
  - / Environmental adaptations to reduce noise and distractions.

Employers report that Dementia Awareness Training is the most helpful resource in equipping them to support employees with dementia. Having an understanding of what the employee is experiencing helps the employer to provide support and make well-informed adjustments to the individual's job description or work environment.



**Line Manager of employee  
with dementia**

*"I made a specific job description for him so that he carried out those specific tasks every day."*

## Leaving employment

People with dementia may require support with the process of leaving work. This may be as a result of the employee being unable to continue working at the point of diagnosis or deciding to retire after a period of working post diagnosis. This includes support with paperwork relating to pensions, advice on the transition to retirement from employment as well as an acknowledgement of their contribution and a formal way of marking their retirement.



**Person living with dementia**

*"I was sat at home and no decisions made until much later on when they suddenly said 'we're going to retire you'."*

## Further support and information

### **Alzheimer's Society**

[www.alzheimers.org.uk/](http://www.alzheimers.org.uk/)

### **National Dementia Helpline**

0300 222 11 22

### **Alzheimer Scotland**

[www.alzscot.org](http://www.alzscot.org)

0808 808 3000

### **Age Scotland Early Stage Dementia Team**

[www.ageuk.org.uk/scotland/](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/scotland/)

0800 12 44 222

### **Dementia UK**

[www.dementiauk.org/](http://www.dementiauk.org/)

0800 888 6678

### **Young Dementia UK**

[www.youngdementiauk.org/](http://www.youngdementiauk.org/)

01993 776295 - general enquiries

01865 794311 - support-related enquiries

### **Dementia Friends**

[www.dementiafriends.org.uk/](http://www.dementiafriends.org.uk/)

[www.dementiafriendsscotland.org/](http://www.dementiafriendsscotland.org/)

### **Healthy Working Lives (Scotland)**

[www.healthyworkinglives.scot/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.healthyworkinglives.scot/Pages/default.aspx)

### **Health at Work Network (NHS England)**

[www.nhshealthatwork.co.uk/](http://www.nhshealthatwork.co.uk/)

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