



Dementia Policy

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Date Policy Completed	March 2025
Version no.	1.0
Previous Review Dates	3/26
Review Date	March 2027 (or when updates are required)
Applicable to	All staff and contractors
Policy Signed By	RICHARD DRAKEFORD

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish clear guidelines for Re-Pat Ltd staff in providing safe, effective, and compassionate care for patients with dementia during transport in the ambulance.

This policy aims to ensure that individuals living with dementia receive the highest standard of care, minimising stress and confusion while promoting dignity and respect.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all clinical Re-Pat Ltd staff involved in the assessment, treatment, and transport of patients with dementia.

3. Definition of Dementia

Dementia is a general term for a decline in cognitive ability severe enough to interfere with daily life. It includes various conditions such as Alzheimer's disease, vascular dementia, and other neurodegenerative disorders.

Patients with dementia may experience cognitive impairment, memory loss, confusion, agitation, and difficulty communicating, which can complicate interactions during emergency care.

4. General Principles for Care

Re-Pat Ltd staff must approach patients with dementia with patience, understanding, and empathy. The following principles should guide all interactions:

- **Respect and Dignity:**
Treat all patients with dementia as individuals, always maintaining their dignity and respect.
- **Clear Communication:**
Use simple language, speak slowly, and maintain eye contact. Avoid jargon and provide instructions in short, clear steps.
- **Safety First:**
Ensure the safety of the patient and crew during transport, addressing any specific needs or risks related to dementia.
- **Calm and Reassurance:**
Recognise that dementia patients may become anxious or confused. Use a calm and reassuring tone to minimize distress and confusion.

5. Assessment and Identification

When assessing a patient with dementia, Re-Pat Ltd staff should:

- Identify signs of dementia during the initial assessment, including confusion, memory loss, disorientation, or difficulty with verbal communication.
- Ask family members or caregivers for information on the patient's diagnosis, baseline behaviour, and preferences for care if they are available at the scene.
- Check for medical alerts (e.g., wristbands, ID cards) that may indicate dementia or other relevant conditions.
- Assess the patient's level of cognitive impairment, understanding that dementia can affect a person's ability to process information and follow instructions.
- Document any specific behavioural changes or potential risks related to dementia, including agitation or aggression.

6. Communication and Interaction Techniques

Re-Pat Ltd staff should utilize the following strategies to communicate effectively and minimize distress for patients with dementia:

- Use a calm, steady voice:
Speak clearly and at a slower pace, using a reassuring tone.
- Avoid correcting confused or incorrect statements directly:
This may cause frustration or agitation. Redirect the conversation gently if necessary.
- Provide simple explanations about the care being provided:
Reassuring the patient that they are safe.
- Use non-verbal cues:
Gestures, facial expressions, and touch (when appropriate) can help convey empathy and understanding.

7. Managing Behavioural Symptoms

Dementia patients may display behavioural symptoms such as agitation, aggression, or confusion. Re-Pat Ltd staff should:

- De-escalate situations:
If the patient becomes agitated, remain calm and avoid raising your voice or using physical restraints unless necessary.
- Provide comfort:
Offer reassurance and validation, acknowledging the patient's feelings. Use distraction techniques, such as calming music or conversation.
- Minimise environmental stressors:
Keep the ambulance environment as calm and quiet as possible. Dim the lights if necessary and avoid abrupt movements.
- Physical touch:
Be mindful of how and when to use physical touch, as patients with dementia may misinterpret it or react negatively.

8. Medication and Medical Treatment

- Monitor for medication needs:
- Many dementia patients may be on prescribed medications. If available, bring any medications with the patient to the hospital, or request information from family members or caregivers about current medications and dosages.
- Consider underlying conditions: Be aware that patients with dementia may have other comorbidities, and cognitive decline may affect their ability to communicate their physical symptoms accurately.

9. Transport Considerations

When transporting dementia patients, Re-Pat Ltd staff should:

- Ensure comfort and safety:
Provide appropriate support during transport, considering the patient's physical and cognitive needs.
- Use a familiar caregiver if possible:
A caregiver's presence may help reduce confusion and anxiety for the patient.

- Adjust to patient's condition:
Dementia can affect mobility and the ability to follow instructions. Ensure that any necessary mobility aids (e.g., wheelchair, walker) are available and use appropriate techniques for safe patient handling.
- Monitor closely for changes in condition throughout the transport:
As patients with dementia may not be able to report discomfort or distress.

10. End-of-Life and Palliative Care Considerations

For patients in the advanced stages of dementia, or those with a terminal diagnosis, Re-Pat Ltd staff should:

- Provide compassionate care:
Ensure that the patient's comfort and dignity are prioritised and work closely with family members or caregivers to facilitate decision-making.
- Honor advance directives:
If available, adhere to any existing advance directives or end-of-life care plans. Always ensure that decisions are made in accordance with the patient's wishes and in collaboration with their healthcare providers.

11. Training and Education

To ensure effective care for dementia patients, Re-Pat Ltd staff will:

- Receive regular training in recognising the signs and symptoms of dementia and the care of this patient group (Key Skills).

12. Documentation and Reporting

All interactions with dementia patients must be documented thoroughly, including:

- Patient's cognitive status and behaviour:
Note any signs of confusion, agitation, or distress.
- Communication strategies used:
Record the techniques used to manage the patient's symptoms and behavior.
- Medical interventions provided:
Document any treatments, medications, or procedures performed.
- Family or caregiver interactions:
Include any relevant information provided by caregivers that may affect care decisions.

13. Review and Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed annually or as needed, based on changes in best practices or regulations regarding dementia care. Re-Pat Ltd staff are encouraged to provide feedback to ensure continuous improvement in the care of dementia patients.

