

# Five steps to delivering life-changing treatments for dementia

Almost a million people are living with dementia in the UK, and one in three who are born today will develop it in their lifetime. Dementia is a leading cause of death, with no disease-modifying treatments and a cost to the UK economy of close to £25bn a year now, and nearly double this by 2050. We are at a tipping point for progress in dementia research – **with concerted action from the next Prime Minister, the UK can be a world leader in dementia clinical trials and transform lives.**

## 1. Keep dementia research a priority for government

Significant advances in science and technology mean we now have the **potential to pioneer a new generation of treatments**. But we need **focused leadership and investment across government**, to bring together the right stakeholders and drive the delivery of new treatments. Government must seize opportunities such as the **10-year dementia plan and the recently announced Dementia Mission** and **deliver on the commitment to double dementia research spending by 2024**.

## 2. Enable earlier and more accurate diagnosis in the NHS

Dementia treatments in development **target earlier stages of the specific diseases that cause different types of dementia**. But this research is being slowed down because people are often **diagnosed too late and with too little accuracy** to be matched to the right clinical trials. Government must **invest in NHS diagnosis for dementia**, to provide the **cutting-edge tools and techniques** that will give people the answers they need faster and the **opportunity to participate in clinical research**.

## 3. Improve participation and diversity in dementia research

Recruitment to dementia clinical trials is **trailing behind other major diseases**. Fewer than 2% of people with dementia are recruited, compared with 20% of cancer patients. Additionally, **populations disproportionately affected by dementia are underrepresented** in research. Government action is needed to **increase public and clinician awareness and widen opportunities to participate in dementia research**, building on existing successful initiatives.

## 4. Increase the speed and scale of clinical trials

For patients in the UK to be **among the first to benefit** from new treatments, the UK needs to be a **leading location for clinical trials**. However, the last five years have seen a decline across disease areas in both the number of trials being initiated in the UK and the number of patients in each trial, putting us at risk of **falling behind global competitors**. Given the specific challenges in dementia, the government should **establish a dementia clinical trials network** with a single point of entry for new medicines and an aligned approach to agreeing contracts with drug manufacturers more quickly.

## 5. Prepare the health system for new treatments

We want those who will benefit to be able to **access new treatments** as soon as they are deemed to be safe and effective. **Investment will be needed** to deliver this in the NHS. The government should **bring together key decision-makers** across the health system to develop a clear action plan for enabling **fast and equitable access** to new treatments for dementia. NHS decisions about affordability should balance cost against the **significant individual, societal and economic burdens of dementia**.

For more information, read our [policy reports](#) or contact [policy@alzheimersresearchuk.org](mailto:policy@alzheimersresearchuk.org)