

## BEST PRACTICE ALIGNMENT REVIEW

Programme:

# Safer approaches

for older adults and people living with Dementia

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Alignment to National Dementia Care Workforce  
Frameworks, Guidance and Quality Standards

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# 1. Executive Summary

## Purpose of this Review

This document provides a standards-based review of the Maybo **Safer approaches** – Dementia programme against nationally recognised dementia workforce development frameworks, clinical guidance and quality standards.

The review considers the extent to which the programme's learning outcomes and objectives support the knowledge, skills and behaviours expected of staff working with people living with dementia across health and social care settings.

The review has been undertaken using the two modules that comprise the **Safer approaches** – Dementia programme:

- Positive Approaches to Behaviour
- Safer De-escalation

The programme has been mapped primarily against the Dementia Training Standards Framework (DTSF), the nationally recognised workforce development framework for dementia education and training. The DTSF establishes the knowledge, skills and behaviours required to support people living with dementia through person-centred and evidence-informed practice.

To provide additional assurance regarding relevance to contemporary dementia care practice, the programme has also been reviewed against:

- NICE Guideline NG97: Dementia – Assessment, Management and Support for People Living with Dementia and Their Carers
- NICE Quality Standard QS184: Dementia

Together, these frameworks provide a comprehensive picture of the workforce capabilities, care principles and quality expectations associated with high-quality dementia care.

## Methodology

Each framework has been reviewed against the stated learning outcomes and objectives of the **Safer approaches** – Dementia programme. Individual requirements have been categorised as:

- **Full Coverage** – The requirement is directly addressed through programme content, learning outcomes and learning objectives.
- **Partial Coverage** – The programme supports the underlying principles of the requirement but does not comprehensively address all aspects of the standard.
- **Outside Scope** – The requirement falls outside the intended purpose of the programme and would typically be addressed through clinical training, organisational procedures, specialist education or professional qualifications.

## Summary of Findings

The review demonstrates strong and consistent alignment across all three frameworks. The strongest areas of alignment relate to:

- Person-centred dementia care
- Understanding behaviour as communication

- Recognition of distress, agitation and aggression
- Positive behavioural support approaches
- Communication and relationship-based interventions
- Dynamic risk assessment and decision making
- De-escalation and conflict reduction
- Rights-based and least restrictive approaches
- Prevention of escalation and crisis situations
- Reflective practice and continuous improvement

Particularly strong alignment is demonstrated against the Dementia Training Standards Framework competencies relating to person-centred care, communication, interaction and behaviour, safeguarding responsibilities and positive support strategies.

The programme also supports implementation of key recommendations contained within NICE Guideline NG97, particularly those relating to staff training, understanding behavioural distress, communication, psychosocial interventions and the management of non-cognitive symptoms associated with dementia.

Similarly, the programme contributes to achievement of relevant outcomes described within NICE Quality Standard QS184, particularly those relating to managing distress, supporting wellbeing and providing education and skills development for those supporting people living with dementia.

## Scope and Limitations

The **Safer approaches** – Dementia programme is designed to support staff in recognising, understanding and responding to behavioural expressions of need and distress through person-centred, preventative and least restrictive approaches.

The programme is not intended to provide training in:

- Dementia diagnosis
- Medical assessment
- Prescribing and pharmacological interventions
- Specialist clinical treatment
- Care coordination functions
- Service commissioning responsibilities
- Advanced clinical decision-making

Consequently, requirements relating to these areas are identified as either partially aligned or outside the scope of the programme.

## Conclusion

The review demonstrates that the **Safer approaches** – Dementia programme provides a strong evidence-informed foundation for supporting staff to deliver safe, compassionate and person-centred dementia care.

Through its emphasis on behaviour understanding, communication, dynamic risk assessment, de-escalation and least restrictive practice, the programme equips staff with the knowledge and skills required to recognise distress, reduce escalation and promote positive outcomes for people living with dementia.

The programme aligns strongly with the workforce development expectations of the Dementia Training Standards Framework and supports implementation of key principles contained within NICE Guideline NG97 and NICE Quality Standard QS184.

## 2. Dementia Training Standards Framework (DTSF)

### Overview

The Dementia Training Standards Framework (DTSF), developed by Health Education England and Skills for Health, provides nationally recognised learning outcomes for the health and social care workforce supporting people living with dementia. The framework establishes core competencies across three tiers, ensuring staff develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours required to deliver person-centred, evidence-based dementia care.

The **Safer approaches** – Dementia programme aligns strongly with the DTSF, particularly within the areas of:

- Person-centred care
- Communication, interaction and behaviour
- Risk reduction and prevention
- Understanding distress and behaviours of concern
- Positive behaviour support
- Dynamic decision-making
- De-escalation and conflict reduction
- Reflective practice and safeguarding responsibilities

The programme's Positive Approaches to Behaviour and Safer De-escalation modules support learners in achieving many of the Tier 2 learning outcomes expected of staff providing direct support to people living with dementia.

### DTSF Alignment Matrix

| DTSF Subject Area                               | Requirement Summary                                                  | Maybo Module / Objective(s)                    | Alignment Commentary                                                                                        | Level of Coverage |
|-------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Person-Centred Care (Tier 2)                    | Recognise individuality, life history, relationships and preferences | Positive Approaches to Behaviour 3.1           | Supports understanding the needs, expectations and experiences of individuals living with dementia          | Full Coverage     |
| Communication, Interaction & Behaviour (Tier 2) | Understand behaviour as communication and respond appropriately      | Positive Approaches to Behaviour 2.1, 2.3, 2.4 | Core focus of the programme. Behaviour is explored as communication of need, distress or unmet need         | Full Coverage     |
| Communication, Interaction & Behaviour (Tier 2) | Identify environmental and interpersonal triggers for distress       | Positive Approaches to Behaviour 2.3           | Learners explore common triggers including communication barriers, unmet needs and environmental influences | Full Coverage     |

| DTSF Subject Area                               | Requirement Summary                                                            | Maybo Module / Objective(s)                                        | Alignment Commentary                                                                             | Level of Coverage |
|-------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Communication, Interaction & Behaviour (Tier 2) | Recognise distress early and respond appropriately                             | Positive Approaches to Behaviour 2.4; Safer De-escalation 2.3      | Supports recognition of escalation indicators and selection of calming responses                 | Full Coverage     |
| DTSF Subject Area                               | Requirement Summary                                                            | Maybo Module / Objective(s)                                        | Alignment Commentary                                                                             | Level of Coverage |
| Communication, Interaction & Behaviour (Tier 2) | Adapt communication approaches to individual needs                             | Positive Approaches to Behaviour 3.3; Safer De-escalation 2.1      | Promotes adaptive communication, non-verbal awareness and environmental adjustments              | Full Coverage     |
| Communication, Interaction & Behaviour (Tier 2) | Use positive verbal and non-verbal communication                               | Positive Approaches to Behaviour 3.2; Safer De-escalation 2.1      | Learners develop skills in positive interactions, reassurance and constructive engagement        | Full Coverage     |
| Law, Ethics & Safeguarding (Tier 2)             | Balance rights, safety and legal responsibilities                              | Positive Approaches to Behaviour 1.2                               | Supports understanding of duty of care, rights, responsibilities and safeguarding considerations | Full Coverage     |
| Communication, Interaction & Behaviour (Tier 2) | Identify risks and vulnerabilities that may contribute to distress             | Positive Approaches to Behaviour 1.3                               | Encourages proactive identification of factors that increase risk and escalation                 | Full Coverage     |
| Communication, Interaction & Behaviour (Tier 2) | Select proactive strategies that minimise escalation                           | Positive Approaches to Behaviour 1.3, 3.2; Safer De-escalation 1.2 | Focuses on prevention, positive support and early intervention                                   | Full Coverage     |
| Communication, Interaction & Behaviour (Tier 2) | Dynamically assess situations and select appropriate responses                 | Safer De-escalation 1.1, 1.2                                       | Strong alignment through use of dynamic risk assessment and the SAFER decision-making model      | Full Coverage     |
| Communication, Interaction & Behaviour (Tier 2) | Provide comfort, reassurance and support for distressed behaviour              | Safer De-escalation 1.2, 2.1, 2.3                                  | Supports practical de-escalation techniques and calming approaches                               | Full Coverage     |
| Person-Centred Care (Tier 2)                    | Consider culture, identity and personal background when supporting individuals | Positive Approaches to Behaviour 3.1; Safer De-escalation 2.2      | Encourages individualised and respectful responses based on personal needs and circumstances     | Full Coverage     |

| DTSF Subject Area                         | Requirement Summary                                          | Maybo Module / Objective(s) | Alignment Commentary                                                                 | Level of Coverage |
|-------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Safeguarding (Tier 2)                     | Recognise responsibilities following incidents and concerns  | Safer De-escalation 3.4     | Supports escalation procedures, reporting responsibilities and post-incident actions | Full Coverage     |
| Leadership & Quality Improvement (Tier 3) | Reflect on practice and contribute to continuous improvement | Safer De-escalation 3.5     | Promotes reflective learning and continuous improvement following incidents          | Full Coverage     |
| Leadership & Quality Improvement (Tier 3) | Support others to manage distress safely and effectively     | Safer De-escalation 3.1     | Develops confidence in recognising, responding to and supporting safer practice      | Partial Coverage  |

## Summary of Alignment

The strongest alignment between the **Safer approaches** – Dementia programme and the Dementia Training Standards Framework is within Person-Centred Care, Communication, Interaction and Behaviour, and Law, Ethics and Safeguarding. The programme directly supports the framework's expectations that staff understand behaviour as communication, identify causes of distress, adapt communication styles, use positive and preventative approaches, and make informed decisions that balance safety, wellbeing and individual rights.



### 3. NICE Guideline NG97

#### Dementia – Assessment, Management and Support for People Living with Dementia and Their Carers

##### Overview

NICE Guideline NG97 provides evidence-based recommendations for the assessment, management and support of people living with dementia and their carers.

While NG97 covers a broad range of topics including diagnosis, care coordination, pharmacological interventions, hospital care, palliative care and support for carers, the primary areas relevant to the **Safer approaches** – Dementia programme relate to workforce development, communication, behavioural support and the prevention and management of distress.

The strongest alignment is demonstrated against Section 1.13 (Staff Training and Education) and Section 1.7 (Managing Non-Cognitive Symptoms), which focus on understanding behavioural distress, communication, staff capability and non-pharmacological approaches to supporting people living with dementia.

##### Scope of Alignment

This review focuses on those NICE recommendations that relate directly to the aims and learning outcomes of the **Safer approaches** – Dementia programme. Recommendations relating to diagnosis, prescribing, specialist clinical interventions and healthcare-specific pathways fall outside the intended scope of the programme.

##### NG97 Alignment Matrix

| NICE NG97 Recommendation       | Requirement Summary                                                                             | Maybo Module / Objective(s)                                            | Alignment Commentary                                                                                                 | Level of Coverage |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Person-Centred Care Principles | Recognise the person's individuality, perspective, relationships and wellbeing                  | Positive Approaches to Behaviour 3.1, 3.2, 3.3                         | Supports person-centred approaches that recognise individual needs, preferences, communication and positive outcomes | Full Coverage     |
| 1.1.2                          | Use modified communication methods where needed                                                 | Positive Approaches to Behaviour 3.3; De-escalation 2.1, 2.3           | Develops communication approaches that support understanding, reduce anxiety and promote positive interactions       | Full Coverage     |
| 1.7.1                          | Conduct a structured assessment to understand possible reasons for distress before intervention | Positive Approaches to Behaviour 2.1, 2.3, 2.4; De-escalation 1.1, 1.2 | Strong alignment through understanding behaviour as communication, identifying triggers and recognising escalation   | Full Coverage     |

| NICE NG97 Recommendation | Requirement Summary                                                                                        | Maybo Module / Objective(s)                                                   | Alignment Commentary                                                                                              | Level of Coverage |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1.7.2                    | Use psychosocial and environmental interventions to reduce distress                                        | Positive Approaches to Behaviour 1.3, 3.2, 3.3; De-escalation 2.1, 2.3        | Prioritises prevention, communication, environmental awareness and de-escalation strategies                       | Full Coverage     |
| NICE NG97 Recommendation | Requirement Summary                                                                                        | Maybo Module / Objective(s)                                                   | Alignment Commentary                                                                                              | Level of Coverage |
| 1.11.1                   | Training should support understanding behaviour, communication and personalised care                       | Positive Approaches to Behaviour 2.1–2.4, 3.1–3.3; De-escalation 2.1–2.3      | Strong alignment with understanding behaviour, communication, de-escalation and positive support strategies       | Full Coverage     |
| 1.13.1                   | Staff should receive person-centred and outcome-focused dementia care training                             | Positive Approaches to Behaviour 1.2, 2.1, 3.1–3.3                            | Directly supports person-centred care, rights, communication, understanding needs and promoting positive outcomes | Full Coverage     |
| 1.13.2                   | Staff should understand and respond to agitation, aggression, pain and behaviours indicating distress      | Positive Approaches to Behaviour 2.1–2.4, 3.1–3.3; De-escalation 1.1, 2.1–2.3 | Core focus of the programme                                                                                       | Full Coverage     |
| 1.13.2                   | Staff should adapt communication styles to support people living with dementia                             | Positive Approaches to Behaviour 3.2, 3.3; De-escalation 2.1, 2.3             | Develops communication approaches that support understanding, reduce conflict and promote positive engagement     | Full Coverage     |
| 1.13.2                   | Staff should use interventions that reduce the need for restrictive practices and antipsychotic medication | Positive Approaches to Behaviour 1.3, 3.2; De-escalation 1.2, 2.1–2.3, 3.3    | Emphasises prevention, positive support, dynamic risk assessment and least restrictive responses                  | Full Coverage     |
| 1.13.6                   | Staff should be trained in difficult and emotionally challenging conversations                             | Positive Approaches to Behaviour 3.2, 3.3; De-escalation 2.1, 2.3, 3.1        | Develops communication, conflict management and de-escalation skills relevant to challenging interactions         | Full Coverage     |

## Summary of Alignment

The strongest alignment between the **Safer approaches** – Dementia programme and NICE Guideline NG97 is demonstrated within Sections 1.7 (Managing Non-Cognitive Symptoms), 1.11 (Supporting Carers) and 1.13 (Staff Training and Education). The programme provides comprehensive coverage of person-centred approaches to understanding distress, recognising behavioural indicators of unmet need, adapting communication, preventing escalation and reducing reliance on restrictive interventions.

## 4. NICE Quality Standard QS184: Dementia

### Overview

NICE Quality Standard QS184 describes priority areas for quality improvement in dementia care and outlines what high-quality support should look like for people living with dementia and their carers.

The areas most relevant to the **Safer approaches** – Dementia programme relate to understanding and responding to distress, supporting wellbeing through positive interactions, adapting communication and developing the knowledge and skills required to support people living with dementia safely and effectively.

The strongest alignment is demonstrated against:

- Quality Statement 5 – Activities to Promote Wellbeing
- Quality Statement 6 – Managing Distress
- Quality Statement 7 – Supporting Carers

### Scope of Alignment

This review considers only those quality statements that directly relate to the intended learning outcomes of the **Safer approaches** – Dementia programme. Quality statements relating to diagnosis, advance care planning and care coordination are outside the primary scope of the programme.

### QS184 Alignment Matrix

| NICE QS184 Quality Statement | Requirement Summary                                                                                          | Maybo Module / Objective(s)               | Alignment Commentary                                                                                                         | Level of Coverage |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Statement 1                  | Raising awareness of dementia risk reduction through lifestyle change                                        | Not addressed within programme scope      | The programme focuses on supporting people living with dementia rather than dementia prevention                              | Outside Scope     |
| Statement 2                  | Referral to specialist dementia diagnostic services                                                          | Not addressed within programme scope      | Diagnosis and referral pathways are outside the scope of the programme                                                       | Outside Scope     |
| Statement 3                  | Opportunities to discuss advance care planning                                                               | Positive Approaches to Behaviour 1.2      | Supports principles of rights, decision-making and person-centred care but does not specifically train advance care planning | Partial Coverage  |
| Statement 4                  | Named practitioner coordinating care                                                                         | Positive Approaches to Behaviour 1.2      | Supports collaborative and person-centred working but does not address care coordination roles                               | Partial Coverage  |
| Statement 5                  | People with dementia are supported to choose activities that promote wellbeing and reflect their preferences | Positive Approaches to Behaviour 3.1, 3.2 | Supports understanding individual preferences, strengths, needs and positive outcomes                                        | Full Coverage     |

| NICE QS184 Quality Statement | Requirement Summary                                                                               | Maybo Module / Objective(s)                                                      | Alignment Commentary                                                                                                              | Level of Coverage |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Statement 6                  | People with dementia have a structured assessment before treatment for distress                   | Positive Approaches to Behaviour 2.1, 2.3, 2.4; Safer De-escalation 1.1, 1.2     | Strong alignment through behaviour assessment, understanding triggers, identifying causes of distress and dynamic risk assessment | Full Coverage     |
| Statement 6                  | Address environmental and psychosocial causes of distress before intervention                     | Positive Approaches to Behaviour 1.3, 2.3, 3.2; Safer De-escalation 2.1, 2.3     | Supports preventative, non-pharmacological approaches and positive behavioural support strategies                                 | Full Coverage     |
| Statement 7                  | Carers are offered education and skills training                                                  | Positive Approaches to Behaviour 2.1–2.4, 3.1–3.3; Safer De-escalation 2.1–2.3   | Develops understanding of behavioural change, communication, distress and supportive responses                                    | Full Coverage     |
| Statement 7                  | Training helps carers understand and respond to behavioural change and adapt communication styles | Positive Approaches to Behaviour 2.1–2.4, 3.2, 3.3; Safer De-escalation 2.1, 2.3 | Direct alignment with understanding behaviour as communication, adapting communication and reducing distress                      | Full Coverage     |

## Summary of Alignment

The **Safer approaches** – Dementia programme demonstrates strongest alignment with Quality Statement 6 (Managing Distress) and Quality Statement 7 (Supporting Carers), which are central components of effective dementia care.

The programme supports staff and carers to recognise behavioural expressions of unmet need, understand factors contributing to distress, adapt communication and implement preventative and de-escalation strategies before situations escalate.

Overall, the programme provides a strong contribution to the behavioural support, communication and workforce capability elements of NICE Quality Standard QS184 and supports the delivery of high-quality, person-centred dementia care.

## 5. Overall Conclusion

This review demonstrates that the Maybo **Safer approaches** – Dementia programme is strongly aligned with nationally recognised dementia workforce development frameworks, clinical guidance and quality standards.

The programme shows particularly strong alignment with the Dementia Training Standards Framework, supporting the development of workforce knowledge and skills in person-centred care, communication, understanding behaviour as communication, positive behavioural support, dynamic risk assessment, de-escalation and safeguarding responsibilities. These areas represent core competencies for staff supporting people living with dementia across health and social care settings.

The review further demonstrates that the programme supports implementation of key recommendations contained within NICE Guideline NG97 and contributes to achievement of relevant outcomes described within NICE Quality Standard QS184. In particular, the programme reflects national expectations relating to the recognition and management of distress, the use of psychosocial and environmental approaches, effective communication, support for carers and the promotion of least restrictive practice.

Across all three frameworks reviewed, a consistent theme emerges: the importance of understanding the person behind the behaviour, recognising behavioural expressions of need and distress, and responding through compassionate, person-centred and preventative approaches. These principles are central to both the Positive Approaches to Behaviour and Safer De-escalation modules.

While the programme is not intended to provide training in clinical diagnosis, pharmacological interventions or specialist dementia treatment, it provides a strong evidence-informed foundation for staff whose role involves supporting people living with dementia who may experience distress, agitation, anxiety, aggression or other behaviours of concern.

Overall, the **Safer approaches** – Dementia programme equips staff with the knowledge, understanding and practical skills required to promote positive outcomes, reduce escalation, support wellbeing and deliver safe, dignified and person-centred dementia care consistent with nationally recognised best practice expectations.