







# **Evolving allied health professional (AHP) education** to promote the right to dementia rehabilitation

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#### Background

The policy framework for allied health professionals (AHP) working in Scotland recognises that education is key to the transformational changes required to enhance brain health, including rehabilitation outcomes, with people living with dementia (Alzheimer Scotland, 2017, 2020).

The role of rehabilitation has been recognised as essential to support people living with dementia to maintain and sustain positive lives for longer (WHO, 2023). However, often people with dementia are prevented access to rehabilitation services (Goodwin & Allan, 2019), with 'rehab potential' often cited as a reason not to provide input (Wade, 2022).

Recognising post graduate education and training has been identified as a mechanism through which to enhance therapist knowledge, skills and confidence when working with people with dementia (Ries, 2022), a non-credit bearing continuing professional development (CPD) short course was developed and piloted in 2022, entitled:

'The right to Allied Health Professional (AHP) rehabilitation with & for people living with dementia'.

### What?

- Designed via an inter-agency partnership (Edinburgh Napier University, Alzheimer Scotland, Brain Health Scotland, Scottish Dementia Working Group and National Dementia Carers Action Network).
- Delivered in person over 2-days and led by the voices of lived experience.
- Including a virtual learning environment to supplement taught learning and teaching.

## So what?

Examples of qualitative participant (n=27) feedback included:

- "I now understand the vast array of resources available for me to use as an AHP, with people with dementia"
- "rehabilitation is for all stages of dementia"
- "The importance of connecting and listening to people living with dementia and their carers in shaping our services"
- "To challenge colleague's attitudes to enhance the right to rehabilitation for people living with dementia.

## Now what?

- The CPD programme will run again in November 2024.
- To extend and embed a mixed method evaluation that will aim to;
  - Identify the usefulness and applicability of knowledge shared via the CPD short course to mobilise a rights-based approach to rehabilitation in AHP dementia practice.

"We need to put the person at the heart of everything we do as AHPs, to encourage understanding that every person has rehabilitation potential".

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