

British doctors to get bonus for dementia diagnoses

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Britain's National Health Service came under fire on Wednesday for setting up a temporary bonus scheme of for family doctors who refer patients with cases of dementia.

The new measure is the first example of a reward for doctors for individual diagnoses and is due to last six months as part of a drive to overcome under-reporting of the condition.

Katherine Murphy, head of the Patients Association, said it was "a distortion of good medical practice".

"Good GPs ([general practitioners](#)) will be diagnosing their [dementia patients](#) already. This seems to be rewarding poor GPs," she said.

"It is putting a bounty on the head of certain patients."

The bonuses amount to £55 (70 euros, \$88) for each case.

But Martin McShane, NHS England's director for long term conditions, said the measure was "to ensure that people living with [dementia](#) are identified".

The public health agency estimates that there are around 90,000 patients—an average of 12 per doctor's practice—who could benefit from a more timely diagnosis.

The £5 million being made available for the scheme comes on top of an existing project launched last year costing £42 million and a further £31 million in incentives already offered to [family doctors](#) for the care of patients after diagnosis.

Fewer than half of the 800,000 people estimated to have dementia in Britain know they suffer from it, according to health campaigners.

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