The Contribution of Physical Activity to Social Connectivity and Wellbeing in Older Adults Living with Dementia

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1. The challenge
Improving access to and the inclusiveness of physical activity for people living with dementia and their family supporters

2. Project aim
To understand the experiences, benefits, and constraints on provision, of physical activity provision for adults living with dementia in Dementia Friendly Communities (DFCs).

Benefits of physical activity
- Delay/prevent dementia
- Connect with community
- Improve mood
- Aids sleep
- Social connections
- Mental Stimulation
- Reduce isolation and loneliness

Barriers to physical activity
- Personalised support
- Stigma, worries, confidence
- Expertise, skills of provider
- Lack of information
- Access – i.e. transport
- Range of symptoms: mobility, cognitive, balance, visual

3. Public involvement
15 People living with dementia and 11 family supporters
From 3 different public involvement groups
Input on data collection and definition of physical activity

4. Data collection
Online survey
DFC leads across England (n=31 responses)
Asked about physical activities available within communities and resources for delivery.

Three case study sites:
With different experiences of delivering physical activity
semi structured interviews and focus groups
50 providers and/or commissioners of physical activity
15 people affected by dementia

5. Findings
- Difficult to access information about dementia-friendly physical activities
- Limited evaluation by providers evidencing benefits of dementia-friendly physical activities
- Limited data collected by providers to evidence equitable and inclusive activities
- DFCs offered a range of dementia inclusive and specific physical activities (see example pictures)
- Examples of adapting equipment and services to meet individual needs of people living with dementia
- Addressing access issues by taking activity to place of residence (care homes, sheltered accommodation)
- Local Authorities key in funding, co-ordinating, signposting and facilitating physical activity in DFCs

6. Recommendations
- Diagnosis an opportunity to link people to local physical activities (dementia inclusive & specific)
- Physical activity providers to access dementia training on adapting activities (& to share successes)

7. Impact
- Resource of dementia-friendly activities produced in collaboration with borough council
- Scan QR code for online version of booklet. Also available as hard copy
- Booklet featured as a case study in county council health and wellbeing strategy