

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

NIHR | Applied Research Collaboration East of England

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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

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

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).



Gardening with raised beds

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



Seated cricket with foam bat and ball

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



Trishaw with care home residents



SCAN ME