



Dementia friendly sports clubs and venues guide

A practical guide for organisations to
support people affected by dementia



Contents

Title

Dementia friendly sports clubs and venues guide

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Document purpose

This is a practical guide for sports clubs and venues wishing to become more accessible and inclusive for people affected by dementia. It aims to:

- inform and educate individuals so they have a better understanding of dementia and how it affects people
- provide tools and recommendations so that sports clubs and venues can help more people affected by dementia to continue accessing and spectating live sporting events
- share current good practice and creative ideas from across the sports sector
- offer ways for sports clubs and venues to support and signpost their fans, staff, players, and former players affected by dementia to appropriate services
- provide examples to sports clubs and venues on how they can set up, maintain, or improve their own community activity for people affected by dementia.

Target Audience

- Any member/s of staff at a sports club or venue wanting to make their facilities, community programmes, work environment, and built environment more dementia friendly.
- Any staff involved in corporate and social responsibility, accessibility, and inclusion for people with disabilities at a sports club or venue.
- National governing bodies and strategic leaders across the sport sector who are exploring how they can make their sport more accessible and inclusive for people affected by dementia.
- Individuals who deliver community programmes involving people affected by dementia.

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Foreword by Kate Lee, Chief Executive Officer

In the UK alone, 900,000 people are living with dementia. That's enough to fill some of the largest sports stadiums in the country ten times over.

Many thousands more are caring for someone with dementia, often unpaid and without support. People affected by dementia often have to give up the things they want to do due to a lack of understanding, stigma, or inaccessible environments.

Sport should be unforgettable. It has no boundaries and can provide a universal language for young and old alike. The colours and the laughter, the camaraderie and emotion, a relationship with sport can last a lifetime. It plays a crucial role in keeping people connected within their communities, creating new memories or revisiting old ones. This is one of the reasons why attending live sport is something people with dementia want to continue doing post-diagnosis.

This guide highlights the ways a sports club or venue can transform itself to better support people affected by dementia. Providing an accessible and inclusive environment for people with dementia isn't just about practical changes. It is about creating a culture, both inside and outside the organisation. Through empowerment, involvement, and awareness, sports clubs and venues can help people affected by dementia retain their sense of purpose, dignity, and allow them to have a good quality of life.

The entire sport sector has a part to play. The number of people living with dementia in the UK is set to increase to over a million by 2025 and to nearly 1.6 million by 2040. Now is the time to act to ensure every person with dementia can continue to do the things they enjoy and retain their independence. Together, we can create clubs and venues where fans affected by dementia can join you and enjoy the amazing sporting experiences you provide - and stay connected to the sport they love.



Kate Lee,
Chief Executive Officer,
Alzheimer's Society

Foreword by Peter Jones, Person living with dementia

My name is Peter Jones. I'm 68 and I have Vascular Dementia.

I have been involved in sport since I was at school. I've taken part in many types of sport, whether it be golf, cycling, or football. My son still takes me out to play golf and he looks after me on the course.

For over 24 years, I was a football referee and was fortunate enough to officiate at various venues up and down the country. I remember being appointed an official at a School National Cup Final at Goodison Park in Liverpool, where the guest of honour was one Sir Bobby Charlton. I got to wear the Three Lions on my shirt with the English Schools FA – that was a special moment for me.

I would love to be able to go back to watch sport live – I miss the buzz of the crowd and seeing professional sportspeople at the top of their game reminds you of why you became a fan. Just because you have a diagnosis, it doesn't mean you should stop attending. You may have followed a sport for years, but sometimes the barriers to attending feel too great.

Some of the challenges I face are accessing the grounds, trying to get back to my seat after going to the toilet, or even trying to stand up and watch what is happening on the pitch. While I love the atmosphere a crowd creates, I wouldn't feel safe among supporters anymore – I would be afraid for my safety and would find it overwhelming. Imagine going for something to eat at a stadium, but then being unable to remember how to get back from where you came from – or even where you are.

Then imagine not knowing who at the game might be able to help you. You feel lost and alone. It is not easy, but I know there are things that can be done.

I'm pleased that professional sport is coming on board and making a difference for people with dementia to enjoy watching sport again. It will help with our wellbeing, keep us connected to teams we have followed for years, and can also help our carers have a better quality of life too.

Sport has always been a big part of my life – please help me and many others to keep it that way.



Peter Jones,
Person living with dementia



Peter Jones (right),
Person living with dementia



Half of UK adults surveyed said dementia was the health condition they were most afraid of developing

What is dementia?

The word 'dementia' describes a set of symptoms that can affect memory, problem-solving, language, perception, and behaviour over time. These symptoms are usually mild to begin with, but for someone with dementia, they become bad enough to affect daily life.

A person with dementia may experience the following symptoms:

Memory loss

- Problems recalling things that happened recently. For example, where they left their ticket (although some people might easily remember things from a long time ago like historic sporting moments).

Difficulty thinking things through and planning

- Problems concentrating, following instructions, or solving problems – like counting out the right money to pay for a snack.
- Struggle with familiar daily tasks – like following the bus or train timetable to get to a match or event.

Problems with language

- Difficulty finding the right word – a person may know they are looking for the toilet but might struggle to communicate that in the moment.
- Struggling to follow a conversation or misinterpreting things you hear – a person may be given directions to their seat, but they could misunderstand, lose track, and go the wrong way.

There are many types of dementia, but Alzheimer's Disease is the most common



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When an organisation gets it right for people living with dementia, it gets it right for everyone. Person living with dementia

Being confused about time or place

- Losing track of what time, date, or season it is – like turning up at a club or venue for a match or event on the wrong day of the week.
- Not knowing where you are, even in a familiar place – like getting disorientated in the seat they've had at a club or venue for years.

Visual perceptual difficulties

- Problems judging distances – like when using the stairs or turnstiles.
- Misinterpreting patterns or reflections – shiny surfaces may look wet and patterned flooring could look like holes in the floor.

Mood changes or difficulties controlling emotions

- Unusual behaviour changes – like becoming anxious, sad, frightened, irritable, or easily upset.
- Losing interest in things and becoming withdrawn – like not showing up to games or no longer attending a community programme.
- Changes to personality – you may have seen the same supporter at matches or events for years but suddenly they seem like a completely different person.

Anyone can get dementia



There are currently around 900,000 people in the UK living with dementia and 700,000 informal carers.



There are projected to be over 1 million people with dementia in the UK by 2025. This is projected to rise to nearly 1.6 million by 2040.



The likelihood of developing dementia increases significantly with age.



Dementia can affect younger people too. This is often called 'young-onset' or 'early-onset' dementia.



Every year, dementia costs the UK economy £36.7 billion – nearly twice that of cancer.

Living well with dementia

A person who has dementia can continue to enjoy their hobbies, daily activities, friendships, and relationships. As their condition progresses, they may need adjustments or extra support with these things. Everyone can play a part in supporting a person with dementia to live well and remain independent for as long as possible.



The importance of sports clubs and venues to people with dementia

What role does sport play?

When someone receives a dementia diagnosis, this shouldn't mean they need to stop doing the things they enjoy.

People with dementia told us that attending live sport is important to them because it helps:

- create new connections between people with and without dementia
- develop trust with other supporters and staff at their club
- increase independence and reduce feeling socially isolated
- raise awareness and reduce the stigma associated with dementia
- create a sense of wellbeing as they can continue doing an activity they love.

Sport is a powerful tool that can contribute to the health and wellbeing of people affected by dementia. Research from Sport England (2017) tells us that watching, volunteering at sporting events, and participating in sport can all influence:

- Physical wellbeing, such as helping to manage the symptoms of dementia.
- Mental wellbeing, such as happiness and quality of life.
- Individual development, such as improved confidence and self-esteem.
- Social and community development, such as reducing isolation and promoting trust.
- Economic development, such as helping to save money spent through the NHS and other public sector spending.

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Sport means everything to me. I miss the roar of the crowd, being involved, shouting at players... I meet a lot of old friends when I go to sport, even though it's been more difficult to attend since I was diagnosed.
 Person living with dementia



What unique challenges do sports clubs and venues present to people with dementia?

Visiting sports clubs and venues can cause challenges for people living with dementia that may not always be obvious. Some examples might include:

- **becoming lost or disorientated** – difficulty navigating around the venue or forgetting the way back to their seat after going to the toilet
- **having difficulty getting into the club or venue** – difficulty getting through turnstiles or not knowing where the most accessible entrances are
- **feeling overwhelmed in a crowd** – caused by the noisy crowd atmosphere during the matchday or event, or feeling unsafe in large crowds of thousands of supporters
- **feeling uncertain on stairs and the concourse** – difficulty judging distances as they navigate staircases or from spillages and mess on the concourse floor affecting their perception
- **struggling to communicate with those around them** – not knowing who to ask for help or having difficulty finding the right words when talking to a member of staff.

What about participating in sport?

This guide is focused on helping sports clubs and venues to become dementia friendly, with a focus on improving the experience of fans spectating live sport and taking part in community activities. If you work for a sports centre, gym, or leisure facility and are interested in finding ways to become dementia friendly please read our **'Dementia Friendly Sport and Physical Activity'** guide.

The benefits of becoming a dementia friendly sports club or venue

Becoming dementia friendly can bring several other benefits to your sports club or venue. These can be split into the following categories:

Social benefits for becoming a dementia friendly sports club

- **Helping people to live well with dementia** – being able to continue doing what they love is an important part of living well for a person with dementia.
- **Helping people to stay independent** – people with dementia want to remain independent and live at home for as long as possible. Being supported by the organisations they visit can help them maintain this independence.
- **Improving accessibility for the whole community** – getting it right for supporters with dementia means others will benefit too, including older people.

- **Reducing social isolation** – people living with dementia are often isolated from their community due to lack of understanding and stigma surrounding dementia.

Commercial benefits for becoming a dementia friendly sports club

- **Retaining loyal fans** – fans with dementia often stop attending live sport once they feel the barriers to attend are too great. Becoming dementia friendly may also increase the chance that fans with dementia who left the club may return.
- **Increased revenue** – there are over 900,000 people with dementia. This number, together with carers for people with dementia, represents an enormous audience that might be neglected.
- **Improved customer service** – increased awareness of dementia can improve staff confidence when supporting affected fans.

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I think people can be intimidated by the prospect of understanding dementia. But they don't have to know it all, and once they see the benefits of helping us, it will seem less daunting

Person living with dementia

- **Enhanced brand reputation** – becoming dementia friendly helps sports clubs and venues demonstrate they value all their supporters and staff, while showing they are socially responsible.
- **Complying with the law** – under the Equality Act (2010), organisations have a legal obligation to ensure customers are adequately protected and that access to services is as inclusive as possible.

To understand what a good dementia friendly sports club looks like we:

- gathered evidence from across the sports sector to find out what works, how, and why
- asked people with dementia how they felt sports clubs and venues could provide a more dementia friendly experience
- reviewed our dementia friendly work across other sectors to identify good practice.

Becoming dementia friendly doesn't mean that sports clubs are expected to:

- become dementia friendly immediately
- have all the answers
- ask supporters or staff difficult or intrusive questions
- make changes to everything at their club or venue
- breach existing privacy guidelines, such as General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

People: Awareness training and supporting staff



Where should you start?



Focus on understanding the impact negative experiences can have on people with dementia at a customer-facing level and how you can improve this.



Consider which employees might benefit the most from improved awareness and think about what ways of learning are most suitable.



Reflect on the support you currently offer your staff to ensure they are best supported if they become affected by dementia.

To read our practical recommendations, you can find our **'Checklist: Dementia friendly people'** on **page 36**.

The impact of negative experiences at your club or venue for people with dementia

Fans with dementia rely on a sports club or venue being safe, secure, and welcoming to have a great experience at matchdays, events, and community activities. Everyone's experience of visiting a club or venue and interacting with staff will be unique because dementia affects everyone differently.

Without proper understanding of the common symptoms, it can be easy for customer-facing staff to misinterpret behaviour, not know how to handle a situation, or make people affected by dementia feel uncomfortable.

People with dementia told us that negative interactions with staff at clubs or venues leave them feeling:

- **awkward** – from not being able to understand what is being said or asked of them
- **embarrassed** – from being unable to complete tasks others may find easy and feeling judged
- **misunderstood** – from being confused and unable to articulate themselves when under pressure
- **ashamed** – from being humiliated or distressed by a perception of their behaviour.

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The first impressions we have of a venue are massive and that often involves the people we meet. It doesn't matter what sport it is - if they nail that, it's a great start.

Carer for a person living with dementia

The following are examples of good and bad experiences people affected by dementia have had at a sports club or venue:

Bad experiences

I forgot my way back to my seat after going to the toilet and was confused. I was disorientated and staggering a little and a steward approached me. **I struggled to communicate why I was lost and he thought I was drunk.** Security got involved and wanted to see my ticket. Fortunately, my friend had gone looking for me and found me before it escalated.

My husband lives with dementia and has been a fan of his hometown club all his life. He can't attend on his own anymore. **When I contacted the club to organise a personal assistant ticket, they disregarded the request** as he doesn't have the benefits to qualify. The communication was curt, rude, and unwilling to be flexible. We were stunned and we would not go back.

I had difficulties getting through the turnstiles. I had to swipe a QR code, it was fiddly, and I got confused as it wouldn't work. **A steward came over and shouted at me, but I couldn't understand them.** They grabbed my ticket, swiped it, and pushed me through. I felt intimidated and disorientated – I wondered how much longer I could keep attending if it would be like this every week.

Good experiences

When I contacted the venue to let them know I had concerns due to my dementia, **the staff were so kind and considerate.** They took their time to ask questions and really wanted to understand how my trip might be challenging. I don't get that everywhere I go so it was a real plus.

I mentioned to the lady selling food that my husband had dementia and **she was very patient with us.** Not only that, when I showed the stewards at our gate our tickets, we got taken straight to our seats. I don't know if that would have been the norm across the board, but it made us feel good.

I went to watch cricket for the first time since my diagnosis with dementia. There were a lot of people there on the day and I felt quite overwhelmed at first. **The staff escorted me to a safe place in the ground and were patient with me.** I felt relieved and reassured – it made me feel like I could come again and know I'd be well looked after.

Employees who understand dementia are more likely to be considerate and support people through patience, kindness, and being respectful. Use the following pointers as a starting point to improve awareness and understanding for your staff, therefore encouraging people with dementia to have positive experiences at your club or venue.



Putting it into practice

Talking about people with dementia

People with dementia are people first. You shouldn't treat a person with a dementia diagnosis as if their condition defines them. Advise your staff to use the following terms when talking about a person with dementia:

- A person/people with dementia
- A person/people living with dementia
- A person/people with a diagnosis of dementia
- A person/people affected by dementia.

Remind your staff that terms like 'sufferer' and 'victim' should never be used when describing people with dementia. These words are disempowering because they make people with dementia seem passive, childlike, or worthy of pity.

“Language is so important. It needs to be positive otherwise it just increases the stigma and makes me feel bad. I don't suffer with my dementia – I actually live pretty well. I don't want people to think less of me or pity me. Person living with dementia





Putting it into practice

Prioritise customer facing staff

Good communication is an important part of living well after a diagnosis of dementia. It helps people with dementia to maintain a sense of self and quality of life. You might find you have to change the way you communicate with a person affected by dementia as their symptoms progress.

Dementia can change the way a person communicates, examples of this include:

- **having trouble finding the right word**
- **repeating words and phrases**
- **using one word when they mean another.**

If a person with dementia is not able to express themselves, they could:

- **lose confidence**
- **feel anxious**
- **become withdrawn**

Because they are unable to communicate in the way they used to, people with dementia may get frustrated and their behaviour may become challenging or difficult to understand. Other challenges that people with dementia experience can include difficulty using and understanding words and language. Sight or hearing problems can also make reading facial expressions and body language difficult.

Who is the employee?	Why should they be aware?
Catering and hospitality	Helping people affected by dementia handle money and giving them more time when ordering food and drink.
Ticket office and reception staff	Improving customer interactions in-person, online, and on the phone. Anticipating when a person may require personal assistance.
Security and stewards	Providing the best support on a matchday, improving communication, and minimising risk of misunderstandings.
Community foundation or outreach	Encouraging staff to feel confident designing and running a community programme for people affected by dementia.
Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Staff	Shape understanding of the challenges of dementia as a disability and how it fits into long-term EDI strategy and policies.
Access teams (such as Disability or Accessibility Officers)	Developing bespoke access guides for supporters with dementia and improving their matchday experience.
Media and marketing	Adapting information and communications for someone with dementia.
Club or venue shops and megastores	Understanding challenges people affected by dementia may face when navigating a retail environment.



Putting it into practice

Train customer-facing staff via skill-specific training

A customer-facing staff member may be the only person representing your club or venue who interacts with supporters affected by dementia at a match or event. As well as raising dementia awareness, it is also important that these staff can develop the skills needed to confidently interact with people affected by dementia face-to-face.

Supporters with dementia have told us that having positive interactions with customer-facing staff means they are more likely to continue attending matches after their diagnosis.

Encouraging and supportive staff can help them to remain a part of the community and have better experiences.

Alzheimer's Society has developed a sport-specific training package for customer-facing staff in collaboration with people affected by

dementia. The content has a person-centred focus, relating to a person's experience when engaging with a sports club or venue. This includes a combination of case studies, real scenarios and shared experiences from people affected by dementia. These examples bring the challenges they face to life and is relevant to a range of sports club or venue environments and activities.

The training promotes the skills-based learning needed to equip club and venue staff with the ability to effectively communicate and engage with supporters affected by dementia. The skills-based element focuses on the person and their experiences rather than on dementia.

To find out more about this training and how your club or venue can get involved, please contact Alzheimer's Society at learning@alzheimers.org.uk

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I feel that staff can sometimes be unapproachable, especially stewards. Perhaps they are encouraged to be harder because of the attitude they might get from fans. But I am not there to cause trouble – I am there to watch football. Their mentality is important to me, I need someone to take their time and above all just be kind to me if I'm struggling.

Person living with dementia.



Supporting spectators affected by dementia

Over the next pages, we have outlined some key things for customer-facing staff to remember when assisting a person affected by dementia. These recommendations are a snapshot of dementia friendly adaptations that can be incorporated into staff inductions, pre-match or event briefings, or other materials prior to staff receiving more structured training. These include:

Offering understanding and reassurance

- Be aware that attitude is important. This means being approachable and putting a person with dementia at ease by smiling and being friendly.
- Be proactive rather than reactive. If a person with dementia appears to be looking for something they can't find, like the route back to their seat, ask if there is any way you can help.
- Do tasks with them and not for them. If a person with dementia can't remember how to do something, like operating turnstiles, offer to show them how to do it.
- Allow them to take their time. Taking a few seconds to allow a person with dementia to express their concerns or explain their issue can make a big difference.
- Don't put people with dementia under pressure. Break tasks down into smaller chunks and support them as they progress through each one.

Being aware of the physical environment

- Sports venues can be noisy, cramped, and busy. Offer to guide a person to a quieter place where it is easier to offer one-to-one assistance.
- Supporters with dementia may have difficulty reading or processing visual information. Directing them to important landmarks at a stadium, can be a way to help them regain their sense of direction.
- What is obvious to you may not be obvious to them. A spectator with dementia may get disorientated due to not recognising colours, faces or objects. Mirrors, shadows, steps, and patterned walls or floors may cause challenges for those with visual perception issues.
- Turnstiles are one of the biggest obstacles. Spectators with dementia may feel cramped going through the tight physical space or confused about how to process their ticket through a ticket scanner.

Avoiding jumping to conclusions

- Be mindful of the influence dementia has before making a judgement call. This might include disorientation, anxiety, challenges with visual perception, emotional behaviour, or issues caused by the environment.
- Some people may not wish to disclose they have dementia. You may find that some people say they have 'memory problems', which could refer to dementia or another cognitive condition. Either way, treat them the same – with dignity, respect, and kindness.
- Be aware of specific non-visible disability initiatives at the venue, like wristbands, lanyards, and badges. This will help you spot people who may need additional assistance.
- Use patience. Someone with dementia who finds it difficult to process information at a match or event may not be able to take in what you are saying. Be patient and use this as an indicator that they may be distressed.

Communicating clearly

Body language

- Make eye contact.
- Make sure that your body language and facial expressions match what you are saying.
- Try not to cover your mouth. The person should be able to see your face clearly as this will help them interpret what you are saying.
- Never stand too close or stand over someone to communicate.

Talking

- Speak clearly and calmly using short, simple sentences.
- Speak at a slightly slower pace but avoid sounding patronising. Talking to someone with dementia like they're a child is disrespectful and humiliating.
- Avoid speaking sharply or raising your voice beyond what is necessary to be heard.

Listening

- Listen carefully to what the person is saying and give them plenty of encouragement.
- If you haven't understood fully, tell the person what you have understood and check with them to see if you are right.
- Where possible, use visual clues. Write your message down if the person can read and use objects or pictures to help the person understand. For example, you may show a picture of a stadium gate, the shop, or a statue to help them better navigate.

Managing a difficult situation

- Stay calm and keep your breathing even.
- Reassure the person or anyone with them that they are not under any pressure.
- Explain to anyone else concerned that the situation is under control and that it will be resolved as soon as possible.
- If the situation remains difficult, ask a colleague or supervising member of staff for help.



Become a Dementia Friend

'Dementia Friends' is a programme that aims to raise the basic understanding of dementia as a condition. It is a starting place for organisations and their staff who want to find out more about how the condition can impact people. By becoming a Dementia Friend your staff can:

- learn about dementia and how it affects a person's life
- become more confident when spending time with someone with dementia
- understand how they can help people affected by dementia to remain active in their community
- reduce the stigma around dementia
- challenge common misconceptions about dementia.

Anyone, at any level of a club or venue, can become a Dementia Friend, including players, volunteers, youth teams, or board members.

It's about raising awareness and committing to an action to support people with dementia. There are different routes to getting involved, depending on the size and type of organisation. To find out more, visit

www.dementiafriends.org.uk

Building a network of Dementia Friends at your club is an excellent way to help people with dementia feel understood, included, and supported.

Dementia affects people in different ways, depending on the person and the type of dementia.

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You don't have to reinvent the wheel - Dementia Friends is quick, easy and gives a great introduction to what it's like to have the condition. I'd always recommend it to anyone wanting to know more.

Carer for a person living with dementia

Supporting staff affected by dementia

Dementia in the workplace

Living with or caring for someone with dementia can have a practical impact on a person, as well as an impact on their mental and physical wellbeing.

Staff affected by dementia should have a clear pathway of support that supports them at every stage of their journey. The Equality Act (2010) requires employers to avoid discrimination and make reasonable adjustments to ensure people with dementia or carers are not disadvantaged in the workplace.

However, while The Equality Act refers to dementia as a disability, it is not always considered one by employers. This can cause challenges for carers or people with dementia who are unaware of their rights, especially for those who are seeking flexible working arrangements under the Flexible Working Regulations (2006).

Some solutions you could consider to appropriately support your staff affected by dementia include:

- **Take the time to talk** to your colleague about the difficulties they're having. Never assume and focus on the individual.
- **Make reasonable adjustments**, such as amending duties, discussing workarounds, switching roles or offering flexible working practices – for example, staggered hours, working from home, or non-working days.
- **Empower managers and teams.** Through dementia information sessions and training, line managers and wider team members can develop an understanding of how dementia affects those diagnosed or those caring for a loved one.
- **Supporting people with dementia through occupational health.** Staff with dementia require further support as their condition advances. This is especially true when the time comes to consider leaving work. The choice to leave work needs to be a clear decision. It should consider the opinions of the staff member, their GP and consultants, and occupational health.



We embrace difference - everyone is welcomed

To confidentially report any acts of hate, discrimination or abuse please text
and start your message with the word: WOLVES.
Victim support is provided by Remedi's hate crime victim service, who can be contacted on 0333 150 3456

We are One Pack

- **Create a dedicated Carer's Policy.** A Carer's Policy will ensure that carers and their line managers know how to get support. Make sure this is up to date, includes essential information regarding leave, HR processes, signposting and is informed by good practice.
- **Kindness above all else.** Don't condescend or make employees affected by dementia feel ashamed because their job role has changed. Likewise, don't make a carer feel guilty because they aren't in the office as much due to caring responsibilities.

Directing people to support

Getting a diagnosis of dementia can be frightening. It is life changing and impacts not only the person, but their loved ones.

Alzheimer's Society's dementia support service is free, easy to access, and puts a person in touch with the right support immediately. Our Alzheimer's Society dementia advisers can support a person either over the phone or face to face, as well as connect them to a range of local services. If Alzheimer's Society don't operate in an area, there will be an alternative charity available to provide support.

If you are approached by anyone with dementia from your club or venue who is looking for support, you can direct them to Alzheimer's Society via phone:

0333 150 3456 or online:

www.alzheimers.org.uk/get-support

Checklist

Dementia friendly people

Developing a workforce at your club or venue that understands dementia and knows how to support people affected by it can take time. There are several steps a club or venue can take to achieve this including:

- **identifying the needs of your workforce**
- **increasing awareness**
- **developing staff initiatives and policies**
- **signposting staff to the right place**
- **communicating the message across your club or venue.**

Identifying the needs of your workforce

- Create a plan outlining the short and long-term dementia friendly goals for your club or venue and how upskilling staff will help you achieve them. Examples include offering a more inclusive environment for people with disabilities or contributing to meeting equality and inclusion standards.
- Select teams or groups of employees across your organisation who would benefit the most from understanding and awareness of dementia. You can use the information provided in this section of the guidance to assist.
- Review your onboarding process for new staff and consider what information and training about dementia is currently included or could be added.

Increasing awareness

- Implement dementia awareness training with scenario-based learning for those in senior frontline roles. Contact Alzheimer's Society to find out more about our bespoke train-the-trainer course by emailing learning@alzheimers.org.uk
- Register your club or venue with Dementia Friends via the online registration portal. Our Alzheimer's Society team can talk you through the options for rolling out the initiative across your workforce and find the best route for your staff. You can visit the website here: www.dementiafriends.co.uk

- Set a target for the number of staff you are aiming to make Dementia Friends. Prioritise frontline staff and aim to extend this to office and support staff over time.
- Provide all frontline staff with a copy of our **'Supporting spectators affected by dementia'** pull out on **pages 30/31**. This could be added to briefing documents, training handbooks, or provided as part of the onboarding process for new staff.

Developing staff initiatives and policies

- Ensure line managers are aware of policy and key legislation that is relevant for staff affected by dementia in their initial inductions.
- Understand your employees by asking questions relating to dementia on employee wellbeing surveys or employee audits. This will help you understand how many staff you may have at your club or venue that are affected by dementia.
- Advertise and communicate your flexible working policy to your staff. Highlight how people living with dementia and their carers could benefit.
- Ensure your organisation has an up-to-date carer's policy which clearly identifies processes, procedures, and signposting to specialist advice.
- Create clear methods of support from HR to line managers which provide consistent advice on what to do if a member of staff is affected by dementia.
- Offer and advertise an employee assistance programme or counselling service for employees who may need specialist support and advice.

Signposting staff to the right place

- Set up a method for your club or venue to directly refer staff and supporters into an Alzheimer's Society local service. Consider a two-way system in which staff and supporters can access our local services and members of the public can keep informed about initiatives and activities for people affected by dementia at your club or venue.
- Include information and leaflets about local Alzheimer's Society and carers services at the club or venue premises. Promote through your internal communications or HR portal.
- Get in contact with local services and invite them to hold drop-in opportunities at your club, either through your Community Foundation, at a matchday or through a fundraising event.

- Make signposting opportunities for employees as clear as possible so they can contact services independently or get a referral.
- Encourage staff to visit www.alzheimers.org.uk/get-support to find out more

Communicating the message across your club or venue

- Update your internal intranet pages that signpost to support organisations, key internal documents, and policies for staff who may need them.
- Create social media posts or blog posts that focus on increasing dementia awareness. Make sure these posts can be accessed internally by your staff and externally by the public.
- Set up information or awareness stands within the club or venue providing information about dementia and how you are working to become dementia friendly.
- Run activities and fundraising events during themed days or weeks, such as World Alzheimer's Month and World Alzheimer's Day in September and The Forget Me Not Appeal in June. You can visit our **'Working with Alzheimer's Society'** section on **page 100** to find out more.
- Mention your work with people affected by dementia in newsletters, magazines or matchday and event programmes. This could include articles about local and national services or club schemes and programmes that support people with dementia.

“
When my wife was diagnosed with dementia, I was worried about how she'd be able to continue, and how I'd be able to cope. Her workplace directed us to our local Alzheimer's Society, and we spoke to a Dementia Advisor. Her work then found ways to adapt her role to suit her, even if it meant she was doing fewer things than before.

Carer for a person living with dementia





Programme:
Engaging with fans and
designing community
initiatives

Where should you start?



Use different person-centred methods to involve fans and people affected by dementia to ensure activities reflect their needs



Be creative, innovative, and flexible in your approach to planning and delivering community activities – but remember keeping things simple can work too.



Engage with partners and local services to tell them about your opportunities, services, and activities.

To read our practical recommendations, you can find our **'Dementia friendly community activities'** checklist on **page 52**.

Adopting a person-centred approach

To become a dementia friendly club or venue, it is important to take a person-centred approach. Person-centred approaches are used with people affected by dementia to tailor activities and environments in a way that encourages them to feel included, as well as avoiding factors that could cause discomfort or distress.

Viewing someone with dementia in a person-centred way will allow you to:

- better understand their needs, motivations, and barriers for attending
- develop a better relationship between them and your sports club or venue
- increase the likelihood that they will continue attending matches or community activities
- deliver better services from the start rather than needing to adapt them once they are being delivered
- tailor your projects so they are delivered in a truly inclusive environment

The following table highlights how a person-centred approach differs from a more traditional service-centred approach which would aim to fit fans with dementia into existing services at your club:



Engaging with people affected by dementia needs to be valued from both sides. The club should always include the person in the conversation and really get to know their fans with dementia. They need to feel like the club values their contribution and attendance.

Carer for a person living with dementia

**Service-centred****Person-centred**

Talking about the person



Talking with the person

Planning for the person



Planning with the person

Focused on the person's labels and dementia diagnosis



Focused on the person's strengths, abilities, skills, needs and aspirations

Creating support based on what is assumed to work for all people with a dementia diagnosis



Finding solutions that work for the individual

Things are done that way because they work best for the club or venue



Things are done that way because they work best for the individual

Family and community members are seen as secondary



Family and community members are seen as true partners

Adapted from the National Disability Practitioners' 'What is a person centred approach?' factsheet (2016) and Mind 'Mental Health and Physical Activity Toolkit' (2019)



Putting it into practice

Involving people with lived experience of dementia in your work

The first step to being person-centred is taking the time to listen to the wants and experiences of people with dementia and carers. This is vital if you want to meet their needs and ensure they are safeguarded in your club.

Through engaging with people affected by dementia, you will:

- **put their opinions at the centre of any dementia-focused decision making** – so you can be sure a proposed project or initiative will be suitable for your target audience
- **gain a better understanding of their experiences** so you can learn more about how they currently access your club or what works well at others
- **ensure your dementia friendly activities reflect their needs** so you can understand their requirements for accessing a certain part of your organisation

- **better understand the barriers that might currently be stopping them getting from ‘sofa to seat’** – so you can address any potential access blocks which need short- or long-term change

- **learn about negative experiences which you may not have considered** – so you can collect insights and address challenges that arise as knock on effects

- **show your fans with dementia that they are valued** – so they can see their voices are being heard.

It is important to offer people with dementia several ways to engage so that you meet their personal needs. The options you choose might change based on time, level of involvement, support available, and budget. Some examples include:

- **discussion and focus groups** – an opportunity to engage a small group on a specific topic
- **1-2-1 conversations and interviews** – used to gain more personal stories and insight which may be useful for people who aren't comfortable talking in groups
- **surveys, questionnaires, and other self-report methods** – a simple way to gain feedback from a larger group of people
- **observation of people with dementia in their own environment** – a useful method for people with dementia who might be less able to communicate
- **working and steering groups** – a group that unites people with a lived experience of dementia who have specialist skills or experience. They may make specific decisions or contribute to projects, such as providing you with new contacts or giving feedback on proposed activities.

“
I don't feel like my club make enough of an effort to know my experience as a fan with dementia. How do they know I have dementia? I feel the club should be asking these questions, so that they know exactly how to look after the fans that need it most.

Person living with dementia



Putting it into practice

Using co-creation

Co-creation is another person-centred form of long-term involvement which is useful for developing and delivering new initiatives and programmes. At its core, co-creation is about designing with people, not for them. It could be anything from shaping the goals of a project, to designing the final product.

If this is an approach you wish to take to design your dementia friendly programmes, we suggest you consider the following when you begin planning:

- **Who you do want to recruit and why?** This could be people with dementia from existing groups, or people with particular characteristics and experiences. For example, you may wish to run a group for individuals from a specific demographic based on age, gender or ethnicity.
- **What considerations should you make to protect those attending?** This will include adhering to professional standards, any ethical considerations and following safeguarding processes.
- **What reward or compensation can you offer?** Consider removing financial barriers that prevent people getting involved. Part of your process could involve paying expenses or offering lunch.
- **Do staff need any training before co-creation with people affected by dementia?** This could be structured training, or it could be an information session like 'Dementia Friends'.

- **What information will you give to participants about the activity?** This will need to be clear, with context on why you want to work with them, including information about what will be involved.
- **How will you gain consent?** In England and Wales, The Mental Capacity Act (2005) explains that you should assume someone has capacity to give consent to take part in an activity, unless demonstrated otherwise. This may change for a person with dementia depending on their diagnosis.
- **How will you reflect on the process?** This includes what has worked well, what might be improved in the future, and how you can continue to keep people affected by dementia involved.

For a more detailed overview of this topic, please visit ['A practical guide to designing products and services for people affected by dementia'](#) to download a copy of Alzheimer's Society's 'Dementia and Co-Creation' guidance.

You can also access our ['Dementia Experience Toolkit'](#) to find out more about measuring the experience of people with dementia when creating new services and programmes.



Delivering dementia focused community activities

Running a community activity is a central way your club can engage with people affected by dementia locally. You can use the reach of your club and sport to bring fans living with dementia together, not only with other fans who have the condition, but from the wider community too. Community activities for people with dementia do not need to be complicated and keeping things simple is great when getting started.

Running dementia-friendly activities – what people with dementia say

We asked people affected by dementia to tell us what they wanted to see as good practice from sports clubs delivering community programmes. Here are their top recommendations:

- **Step back and think about how well trained your staff are to deliver.** Before you commit to delivering sessions, ask yourselves how much you know about working with people affected by dementia. Get staff running these sessions to take part in Dementia Friends. It's an easy and quick way of increasing understanding. See **page 33** for more information.
- **Consider how sessions can be adapted for everyone.** Dementia affects everyone differently, so tailor activities to suit the needs of your audience. For example, activities aimed at those with limited

mobility may not be as effective for a younger person with dementia.

- **Focus on how your session can improve wellbeing.** Consider the intention behind your session and how it will improve the physical and mental wellbeing of your attendees. Focusing on wellbeing can also help to promote your activity or session by including participants who aren't affected by dementia. This ensures people with dementia can have positive interaction with people who don't.
- **Think about what you can include in your session.** There are so many options that can be included in a programme for people affected by dementia. Reminiscence activities, tea and coffee, physical activity and adapted sport, music, dance and games are all great options. Unless you have a clear focus in mind, provide a variety of activities to appeal to your group.

- **Run the session at an appropriate time of day.** The time your session takes place will be important for getting people there. For example, sessions in the late afternoon and evening are sometimes not suitable for people with dementia. Some people with dementia may get tired or overwhelmed as the day goes on. Ask your attendees what time would work best for them.
- **Give people with dementia the opportunity to get involved in running the group.** An excellent way of helping people with dementia feel valued at an activity is to think about them not only as a participant, but as a potential volunteer. People with dementia who feel able to contribute may want to offer peer support or give something back to a group. Getting involved can make them feel empowered, valued, and create a sense of purpose and independence.
- **Ask the carer how you can support them.** Offering respite to the person with dementia also gives the carer a chance to take a bit of a break. Community programmes can be a valuable way for carers to get respite. When structuring your session, make sure to ask carers for their input.

Checklist

Dementia friendly community activities

Designing a dementia friendly community activity doesn't need a big financial commitment – instead focus on how each part of your programme can bring enjoyment and support to people living with dementia and their carers. The key steps to consider when thinking about launching your own activities are:

- **create a plan and outcomes**
- **involve people affected by dementia**
- **adapt your existing activities**
- **deliver your activity effectively**
- **promote your activity locally**
- **engage with the local community.**

Create a plan and outcomes

- Begin your planning process by thinking about your intended impact. Try not to make evaluation an afterthought, considering it before your sessions have started will help you map out outcomes.
- Use this time to consider how you will measure success. Will you use surveys or self-report measures? Or will you focus on how the sessions have made people feel through interviews and focus groups?
- Learn from programmes that already exist. Communicate with other clubs, replicate best practice and add your own ideas. Find out how they measured impact and what outcomes they have used to inform your own.
- Whether it is reminiscence, music, physical activity, or a café, build social interaction into your proposed programme, before, after, and during activities.
- Find out what dementia services are running in your local area to ensure that your proposed session offers something new. This will give people with dementia plenty of options during the week and can help with signposting to and from your session.

- Identify where and how you will source participants for your sessions. Partnering with your local Alzheimer's Society service, other dementia support services, fan groups, NHS organisations, or other key community groups can help with this.
- Think about how you can use volunteers to add value to your sessions. You may also want to extend opportunities to people with dementia so they can volunteer. Think about the role they could play in the week-to-week running of the session and build this into your plan.

Involve people affected by dementia

- Think about the people affected by dementia:
 - Why are they taking part in your activity?
 - What is important to them?
 - What are their motivations?
 - Do they feel they have any limitations?

Use these questions as a starting point for your discussions.

- Offer the right opportunities for people with dementia to get involved in the design process, either with or without their carers.
- Assess the physical environment in which the activities are taking place. Is it safe and inclusive? Involving people with dementia in this process is an easy way of finding out how accessible the space is.
- Use your discussions with people who have dementia to help determine and cement your outcomes. This will help you to measure the impact of your work when it comes to evaluation.
- Not everything will work first time but listening to participants and adapting sessions based on their feedback can make them successful. Keep engaging with people affected by dementia throughout planning, delivery, and evaluation.

Adapt your existing activities

- Look at what you already offer and make current activities more dementia friendly by using some suitable adaptations. For example, making sure everyone can take part in a sports activity by introducing chairs for people with limited mobility.

- Make sure your existing activities are meaningful. Do your attendees feel like valued members of society?
- It is common for people with dementia to feel excluded in their local community. Make sure the activities you promote are clearly advertised as suitable for them to ensure people with dementia can still have meaningful social opportunities.
- Ensure that the language around your existing activities is positive and encourages the inclusion of people affected by dementia. Language can be a barrier for people with dementia but using it correctly can be an important way of reducing stigma surrounding the condition.

Deliver your activity effectively

- Plan shorter sessions or include breaks so that activities are not too tiring or overwhelming. This is particularly true if you are planning on including physical activity.
- Give people affected by dementia extra time before, during and after your session.
- Choose an appropriate time of day to host your session, based on the needs of attendees affected by dementia.
- Maintain a consistent timetable so that people know what and who to expect each time you run your session.
- Include current or former players, managers, coaches, or other members of staff in your sessions. This can add great value to a session by showing fans with dementia that the sessions are important to the whole club.
- Carry out a risk assessment considering the challenges that people affected by dementia might face. These might change depending on the type of activity you are aiming to run and where it is being held. Keep this updated as necessary.
- Ask whether people need support when they arrive at your club venue and consider how you can provide this. It could be handing out a map, setting a meeting place at a landmark or assigning someone to meet and greet.
- Offer a range of activities and ensure you have the right equipment. This might be adapted sports kit for physical activity, memorabilia for reminiscence, or even just tea and coffee for a café.

Promote your activity locally

- Keep your messaging simple and clear – pictures and icons can be helpful.
- Offer ways to help people remember to attend their activity – for example text reminders, a phone call on the day, timetables, calendar stickers or appointment cards.
- Ensure that key information and timetables are updated and consistent on websites and other channels.
- Provide information about the programme in dementia-friendly ways – for example, create session outlines with timings and photos, specific access information for each activity and general information.

Engage with the local community

- Take time to work with partner organisations that support people with dementia and other long term health conditions. This can add real value to your work through supporting awareness-raising activities or working with organisations to create local dementia initiatives.
- Find out about outreach services and programmes in the community so that everyone who is interested can attend your event or activity. This can be helpful for people in rural communities, independent living facilities and care homes.
- Use your facilities to host other activities for people with dementia, either during off-peak times or during pre-season or close-season. For example, Alzheimer's Society local services often coordinate activities that could be hosted in suitable spaces on club premises. These include Dementia Friends sessions, Singing for the Brain, or Peer Support Groups.

“

We attend a local programme at the rugby club for people with dementia and their carers. It lets the carers get some respite, while people with dementia are supported by a trained member of staff. I so appreciate that opportunity to take a bit of a break.

Carer for a person living with dementia

Case studies

The following section includes case studies from sports clubs and venues that have developed dementia friendly community activities.

Rather than following the same formula, each club or venue has developed and adapted their sessions around specific themes, such as their club history or working in partnership. Some examples have also focused on tackling wider health outcomes, such as reducing loneliness or increasing physical activity levels.

Featured case studies:

- **Walkers & Talkers and Gloucestershire Cricket Trust**
- **Sporting Memories and The MCC Foundation**
- **Everton in the Community**
- **City in the Community**



Case study: Walkers & Talkers and the Gloucestershire Cricket Trust

Background

'Walkers & Talkers' is a collaborative project between the Gloucestershire Cricket Trust, the official charity of Gloucestershire Cricket, and Finders Keepers. The project is aimed at giving all supporters the opportunity to keep fit and meet other people.

What has been done?

The group was initially set up during the COVID-19 lockdown as a way of supporting people who felt isolated. The group has since flourished with numbers continuing to grow.

While the group is open to anyone, the focus on reminiscing about sport is especially popular for supporters living with dementia.

Features of the sessions include:

- an optional group walk around the Seat Unique Stadium, Gloucestershire Cricket Club's stadium
- Q&A sessions with guests – previous guests include ex-Gloucestershire players, ex-Bristol Rugby players, TV celebrities, and the Bristol Male Voice Choir
- opening the museum during the walk, available for anyone to attend
- free tea and coffee, with a space for discussion after the Q&A session.

'Walkers and Talkers' forms part of The Gloucestershire Cricket Trust's Extra Cover social inclusion programme. This includes Walking Cricket sessions for over 50's across Bristol and a Sporting Memories club which has been running in the Bristol Pavilion since 2014.



Case study: Sporting Memories and the MCC

Sporting Memories unites older people across Great Britain with long-term conditions such as dementia, depression, and loneliness through the power of sport.

Participants engage in weekly clubs in their local communities that focus on creating a warm, welcoming environment where older people can enjoy a mix of sports themed reminiscence, socialising, and gentle exercise in small groups.

Sharing memories of sporting moments and tapping into a passion for sport helps people to connect with others and their past. It also helps attendees recall positive thoughts and feelings which encourages them to become socially and physically active.

Sessions take place in a variety of locations, including libraries, village halls, leisure centres, sports clubs, and other community areas. The charity offers training for session facilitators and include a range of resources to enable conversation and physical activities to take place.

Some of the adaptations that Sporting Memories has used include:

- encouraging conversation during and between activities. This gives people a chance to socialise, enjoy themselves and share their own stories
- incorporating sport-themed gentle exercise routines during sessions – which can be seated or standing depending on abilities
- allowing people to move freely during the sessions to avoid discomfort and take comfort breaks
- taking a person-centred approach by inviting attendees to contribute to sessions through creating, leading or supporting activities
- refreshment breaks during sessions, giving carers and family members a meaningful period of respite.



Sporting Memories in action



How does this work in practice?

Reminiscence sessions at Lord's are aimed at people in Westminster and beyond who have a diagnosis of dementia. The sessions are not only for those who enjoy sport, but also for those with no prior sporting knowledge or interest.

The approach has been to keep cricket, and sport in general in the background of events, creating a 'memory café' style atmosphere which is accessible to people of varied backgrounds and interests.

Alongside their reminiscence session, The MCC community department also run a weekly walking cricket group and a coffee morning with Age UK. Linking these programmes creates opportunity for older people with different needs to access resources and activities through Lord's. The walking cricket group is particularly valuable as it offers a route to an accessible form of physical activity – with keeping active being important to people with dementia. Linking the sessions has worked well in practice, with members who originally joined the walking cricket group now attending reminiscence sessions and vice versa.

Andrea's Story

Before The MCC began running Sporting Memories sessions, Andrea had no interest in cricket or sport. She had also never been to Lord's, despite living a short walk away. After attending sessions, she developed a keen interest in cricket the Lord's Cricket Ground's history, and the laws of the game.

“

I think I have attended all the sessions and, of the similar events I attend, those at Lord's are now the most enjoyable. The staff are exceptionally good at looking after us, often on a one-to-one basis. I had no time for sport previously but having experienced the enthusiasm of those with an interest in cricket I have developed something of an interest myself. I have chosen for the first time ever to watch cricket on television, recognising views I have seen myself when attending sessions, and have even remembered facts I have been told at Lord's, such as the 5½ ounce balls, some of the signs the umpires use, and the 30,000 capacity.'

Andrea – Person living with dementia



The Prince of Wales visits
Pass on the Memories



Case study: Everton in the Community

Background

Everton in the Community offer a range of support programmes that combines direct support for people affected by dementia with tackling social inclusion in the older population.

What has been done?

Pass on the Memories

Pass on the Memories supports people living with dementia to improve their lifestyle, mental wellbeing, and quality of life. The project also aims to tackle increasing health inequalities related to older adults in the Merseyside area. Features include:

- a partnership with Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust and supported by their specialist clinical staff alongside dementia trained Everton in the Community staff
- free to access, operating on a referral scheme – participants can be referred by their GP or another healthcare professional as part of their long-term care plan
- combining interactive reminiscence activity, such as life story memory books, with creative activities, like singing, dancing, and arts and crafts
- the opportunity to visit places of interest, including the Merseyside Maritime Museum, Museum of Liverpool, and historical buildings across the city
- the opportunity to take part in health screenings and health MOTs – these are aimed at helping people with dementia understand their health behaviours, including weight, diet, and physical activity
- additional information and advice on topics linked to poor health outcomes in older adults, including fuel poverty and energy efficiency.



Case study: City in the Community

Background

Manchester City's charity, City in the Community, have launched a dementia friendly initiative for participants to enjoy social and physical activity through football and the historic draw of the club.

What has been done?

ReminisCITY programme

ReminisCITY promotes active and engaged lifestyles using football as a prompt for reminiscence, enjoyment, and social interaction among participants.

Features of the sessions include:

- a programme of activities taking place in and around the Etihad Stadium and Campus
- social elements where participants can relive and discuss classic Manchester City moments
- physical and creative activities, such as stadium walks and arts and crafts
- attendance from ex- and current players from both the Men and Women's teams to participate in Q&As with attendees.

ReminisCITY Memory Walks

Building on the success of City in the Community's RemnisiCITY programme, Manchester City launched a new stadium tour experience for supporters living with dementia. The tour is designed to engage supporters living with mild and moderate forms of dementia by reconnecting them with the Club in a safe and supportive environment.

Using memorabilia and specialist tour guides, the 70-minute experience reflects on the Club's long history and celebrates memories from the past.



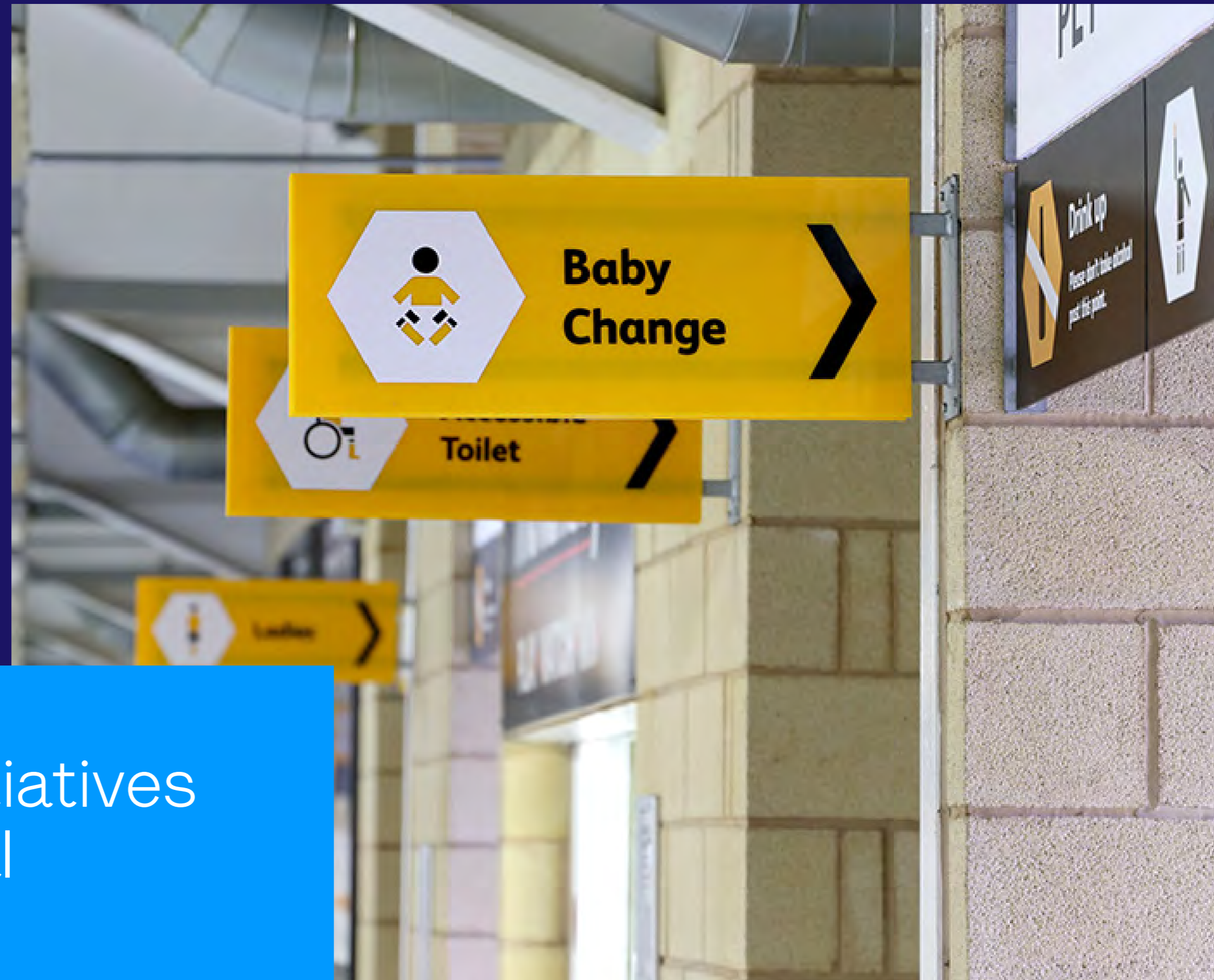
Anne and Arthur enjoying ReminisCITY

What people affected by dementia say:

Anne and Arthur are regular attendees and offered us their perspective on the value of the sessions:

'We have been coming to these sessions for the last 12 months. When Arthur was diagnosed with Alzheimer's Disease, we knew then that it would both be of great interest and help to us. We love the sessions, we have a really good time – lots of laughter, leg pulling, and jokes. We thoroughly enjoy it. I enjoy coming but I particularly enjoy seeing that Arthur gets such a lot out of it. He is recalling things that were obviously well buried and I am happy about that.' – Anne

'I like all the people who come here, they are very pleasant, and it is a pleasure to come. One thing that I find is that when they show videos of past games, I try to remember if I have been to those games, or even if I haven't been, do I remember the game and details about it. I just can't remember things as well as I used to, and I think sessions like this are very helpful.' – Arthur



Place:

Accessibility initiatives
and the physical
environment

Where should you start?

- **Understand that access to your club or venue for people affected by dementia begins at home.**
- **Consider all aspects of the ‘sofa-to-seat’ process and the challenges people affected by dementia might experience.**
- **Make sure information about your club is easy to find and that there are specific initiatives available for people affected by dementia.**
- **Conduct a physical environment audit at your club or venue with people affected by dementia.**

To read our practical recommendations, you can find our **‘Checklist: Dementia friendly ‘Sofa-to-seat’** checklist on **page 82**.



“

One of the main reasons I would avoid attending is the travel. Not necessarily how I’m going to get there, but how easy it is for me to get lost once I get to the station, or even when I’m just walking to the stadium.

Person living with dementia



The 'sofa-to-seat' process for people affected by dementia

Access begins before a person affected by dementia arrives at your club. It is important to consider all the factors that make up their journey to your venue – something we describe as the 'sofa-to-seat' process.

Common problems people with dementia face accessing information

If people affected by dementia can't access the information they need about a matchday or event, they are less likely to continue attending. To reach as many people as possible, information about your club and venue should be provided in several ways. Some people with dementia may:

- **find technology challenging and using a club website could be alienating.** They might prefer getting their information in the post or by hand.
- **find technology easy and find accessing your club website empowering.** Their challenge might be how easy it is to find the information they need or how accessible the language and website is.
- **prefer their carers or family to get information on their behalf.** This means the information available needs to be tailored to the important things they'd want to know. For example, how they can access support, medical information, or the best place to sit in the ground for people with cognitive conditions.

Your website will contain plenty of useful information, however, if people affected by dementia can't find or understand that information, it will present access challenges.

Similarly, getting a ticket to watch your team

should be a streamlined process. Complex website menus or limited information about recommended seating are often mentioned as challenges for people with dementia. Time limits can also cause issues for people with dementia who may need more time.

“
The turning point for my Dad was when everything went online. The club didn't send information by post anymore - everything had to be accessed by website. He found that difficult to navigate. The phone line then became completely automated which he found confusing. In the end, it was too much, and he stopped attending.
 Carer for person living with dementia

Common problems people with dementia face getting to your club

Travelling to and from a club can be daunting for people living with dementia and their carers. It's important that people living with dementia and their carers know what to expect to ease any potential anxiety.

Transport to and from your club or venue

- While public transport is a common way for fans to get to sports events, it can be stressful for those affected by dementia.
- People with dementia may avoid public transport because of worries about negative attitudes from other passengers.
- People with dementia may also find getting safely to the club from stations or bus stops confusing. This is especially true for larger venues with big crowds.

Navigation to a club or venue

- How you guide people affected with dementia through the physical environment leading up to your club is relevant at every step of the journey.
- This process can be challenging due to the visual and sensory issues that people with dementia can experience.
- Enhancing this experience for people affected by dementia is especially important in complex environments, such as urban city centres or the rural countryside.

- As these locations become more complicated, they can become more stressful, leading people with dementia to feel unsafe or anxious. This can be the case at both familiar and unfamiliar locations.

Not enough information about non-visible disabilities

- Accessibility is a central focus for sports clubs and venues. However, the accessibility information given by clubs and venues can sometimes focus too heavily on physical disability, like wheelchair access, or 'seen' disabilities.
- While access for people with physical disabilities is important, services and information for those with non-visible disabilities is equally relevant. Not providing this information may make people with dementia feel that the club or venue is unsuitable or that their needs aren't being considered.

Parking

- Parking is a common concern for all supporters who have disabilities. It is especially relevant for people with dementia as not all people with dementia will qualify for a blue badge disabled parking permit.
- Creating suitable, easy access parking close to the venue is important as it will help reduce the risk of issues related to balance, co-ordination, and spatial awareness when getting from the car to the venue.

Prior to the pandemic, 1 in 4 disabled people said that negative attitudes from other passengers prevented them from using public transport.

“You need to know where you're going and how you're going to get there to manage the anxiety. Yes, at bigger venues, but at small ones too. You don't want to go the wrong way because you couldn't find a map, only to find the entrance was 100 metres away! Person living with dementia



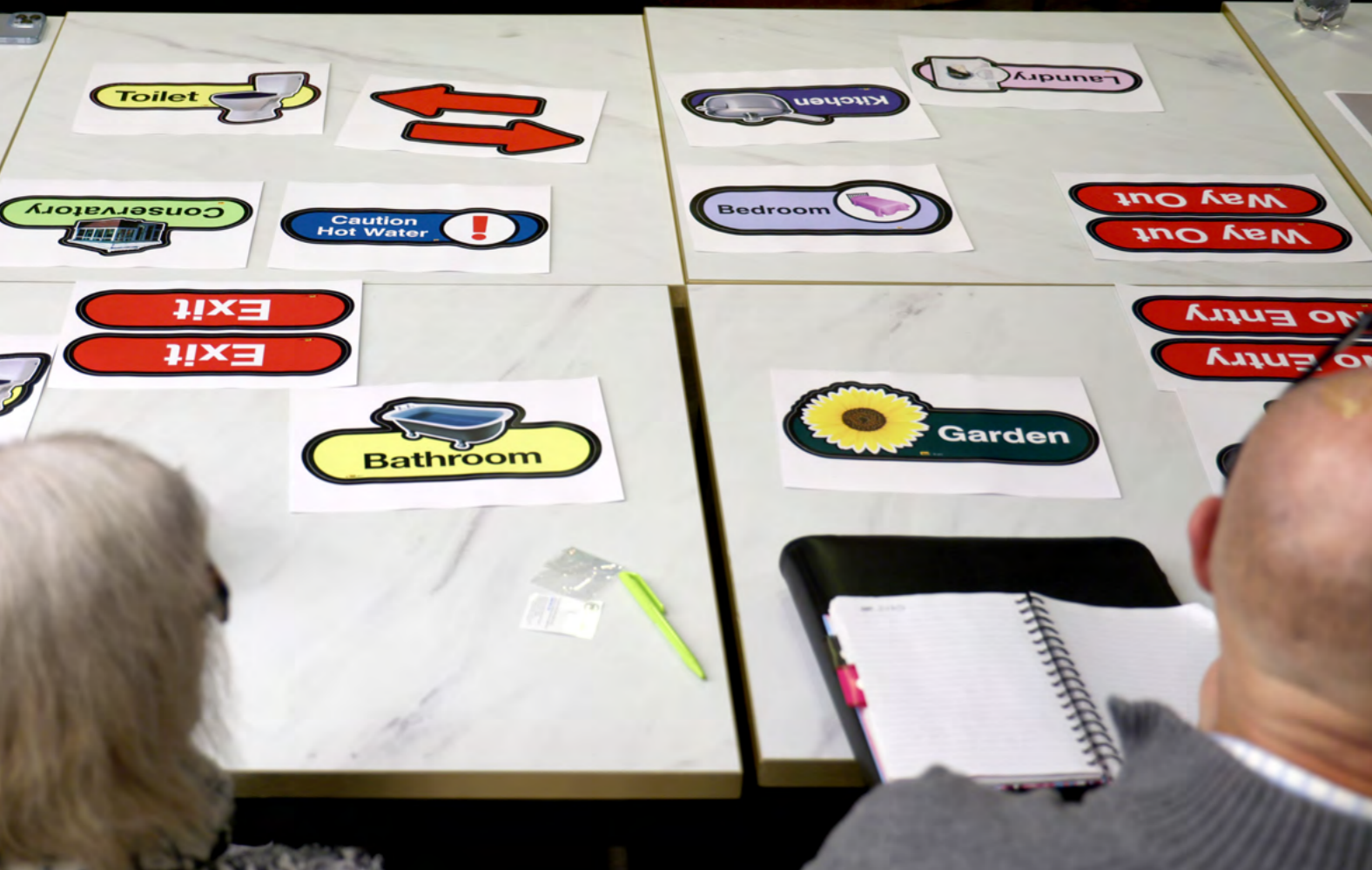
Putting it into practice

Non-visible disability identifiers

Some people with dementia may feel that wearing a non-visible disability identifier, such as a badge, would single them out. They might prefer to keep their diagnosis private and blend into the crowd like other fans. However, identifier schemes are often highlighted by people affected by dementia as a great option for helping discreetly show staff that they might need some extra support.

While there are some existing schemes you can sign up to, many clubs have created their own initiatives. This means they can connect with their fans, understand their needs, and have more control over how fans can sign up for the scheme. When creating an identifier, it's important that it:

- remains discreet and subtle to maintain people's dignity and privacy
- comes in an easy-to-use format – wristbands, badges, and lanyards are common examples
- involves your fans with non-visible disabilities in the co-design process to find a method that suits your audience
- removes barriers, such as cost and specific disability benefits. Remember to be flexible, some people affected by dementia do not qualify for certain benefits so getting a letter from their doctor could be an effective compromise.



“
Stadium signage in my experience can be quite hit and miss. I find the time it is most important is when I go to sports where we move around a lot, like at golf going from hole to hole. Those kinds of places can be like rabbit warrens, so if the directions and signage are off, then you can easily get stuck.

Person living with dementia

Common problems people with dementia face from the physical environment

Having accessible and inclusive facilities is one of the biggest steps you can take to become dementia friendly. Even small changes to your physical environment can improve how people with dementia get around your club or venue. These changes do not need to be expensive and can be scaled to suit the budget of your organisation.

Sports clubs and venues have unique layouts meaning people with dementia face different challenges compared to those they may experience around the community. It's important to consider all aspects of the physical environment which could cause challenges for people living with dementia. This will include indoor and outdoor spaces, both built and natural.

People affected by dementia told us that making the physical environment accessible for them at sports clubs and venues is important because it can:

- help a person living with dementia stay independent for longer
- help reduce anxiety and stress for people affected by dementia when attending a matchday, event, or other on-site facilities (such as the club shop or ticket office)

- help manage potential risks and keep people living with dementia safe when they access your facilities
- reassure family and carers that their loved ones with dementia are safe and secure when visiting
- have transferrable benefits for people with other cognitive and neurological conditions, such as autism or Parkinson's Disease.

To make sure changes will improve accessibility in your club, we always recommend engaging with people affected by dementia. This enables you to identify the biggest challenges and tailor to specific needs on a club-by-club, venue-by-venue basis. While it may not be practical to adjust all the examples provided, small changes can make a big difference.

We asked people affected by dementia what aspects of the physical environment should be considered at clubs or venues to make them dementia friendly. Here are their top recommendations:



Quiet Spaces

- While some people with dementia love the atmosphere and noise of a matchday or event, others identify it as one of the biggest barriers they face. Some people find it disorientating and overwhelming, especially in an enclosed space.
- Offering the choice of a quieter environment is helpful to people with dementia who might feel anxious or confused on the day. Some may need to take time out from the noise during a match or event. Creating a quiet space allows this in a safe, secure environment.

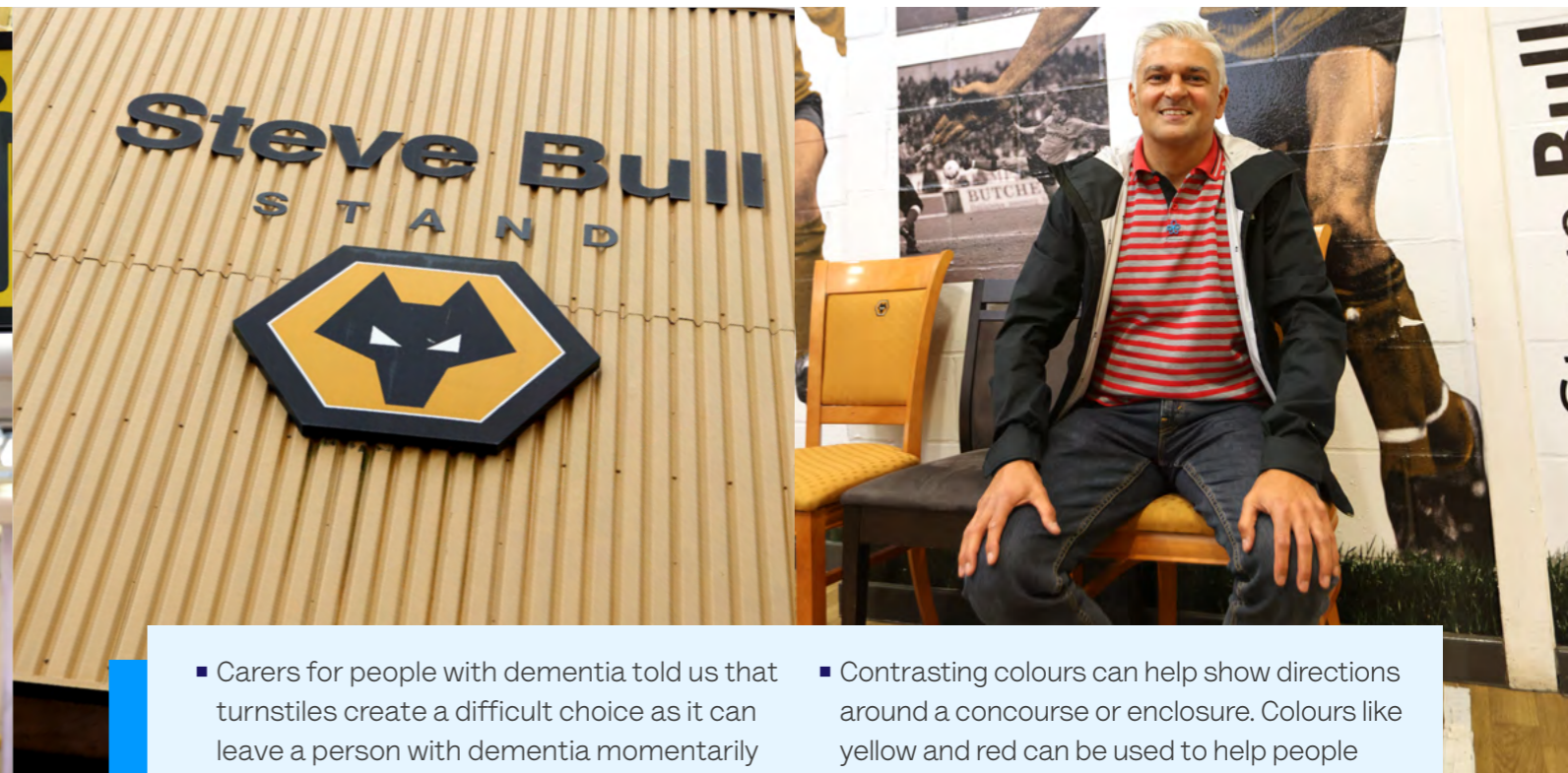
Signage

- Signs play a vital role in keeping people with dementia independent around a stadium or venue. Signs can include text, images, or a combination of both, and should contrast well with the background to make them easy to read.

- Getting your signage right is crucial for a person with dementia to navigate your stadium or venue. If signage is not clear for people without dementia, it will be even more challenging for those with the condition.
- Think about how people with dementia experience your physical environment. A veteran season ticket holder with dementia might feel like they're attending for the first time every time they visit your venue. Clear signage can help them to understand their surroundings.

Entrances

- The most mentioned physical barrier for people affected by dementia at stadiums and venues are turnstiles. People with dementia told us that older turnstiles make them feel cramped when going through the tight space. Modern turnstiles with ticket scanners can leave them feeling confused about how to process their ticket.



- Carers for people with dementia told us that turnstiles create a difficult choice as it can leave a person with dementia momentarily separated from them depending on who goes through the turnstiles first.
- Having a separate, turnstile-free accessible entrance can reduce this anxiety, not only for people affected by dementia, but for those with other cognitive or neurological conditions who may face similar challenges.

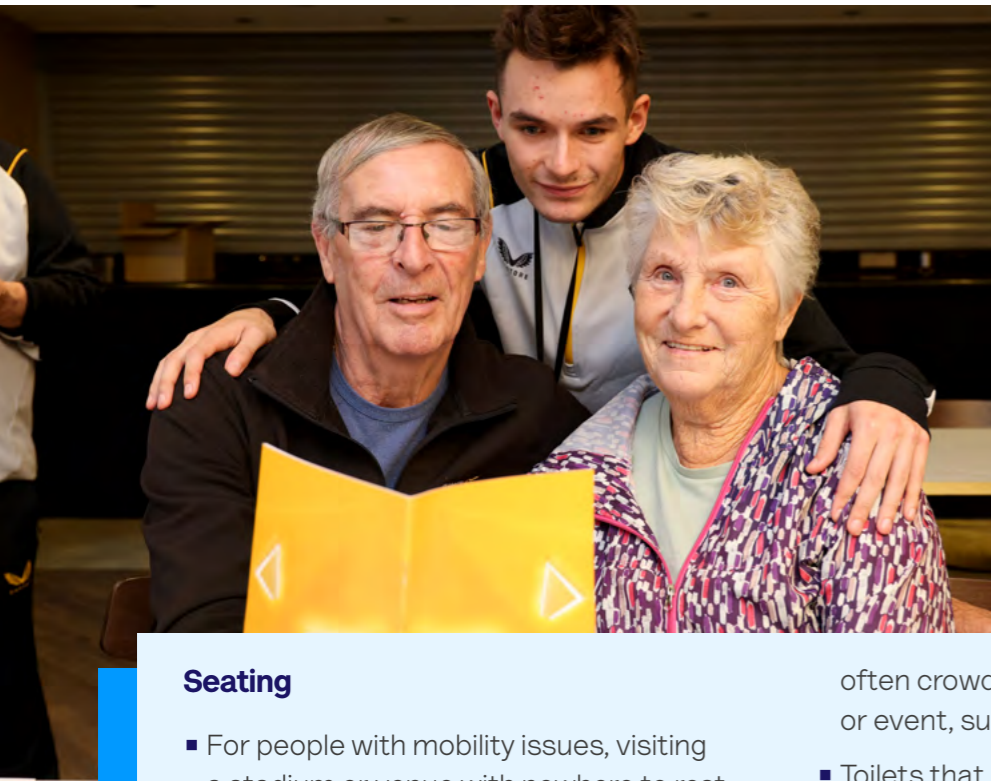
Flooring and stairs

- Be mindful that changes in floor surfaces can be confusing for people with perception difficulties such as posterior cortical atrophy (PCA), a type of dementia. Patterned surfaces can be disorientating and reflections on floors can cause confusion by producing glare.
- Stairways can cause a variety of challenges for people with dementia, particularly if they have issues with depth perception. They may need to take their time and could require additional physical support, such as handrails, so they can feel safe moving up or down stairs.

- Contrasting colours can help show directions around a concourse or enclosure. Colours like yellow and red can be used to help people with dementia navigate flooring and stairs.

Navigation

- As stadiums and venues vary between small and intricate to large and complex, having up-to-date and clearly displayed maps is essential to help people with dementia find where they need to go.
- Research shows that some people with dementia use 'landmarks' such as a clock or plant to find their way around. Displaying interesting and memorable items may help people with dementia who use landmarks to navigate.
- Using fewer colours, or non-contrasting colours, is a useful way to de-emphasise features that aren't for public access like storerooms or staff hospitality areas. This could reduce the chance of confusing people with dementia.



Seating

- For people with mobility issues, visiting a stadium or venue with nowhere to rest can be daunting. A lack of seating around the stadium or venue, other than allocated seats, is a common physical barrier.
- Bespoke seating can sometimes be designed to look like something else, such as an abstract shape or a rock. This can be confusing for people affected by dementia, and may leave them thinking there's no place to take a breather.
- Depending on their symptoms, sitting in the crowd at a match or event can be disorientating for people affected by dementia. Recommended seating for people affected by dementia needs to have clear exit routes with good access to toilets and other facilities.

Toilets

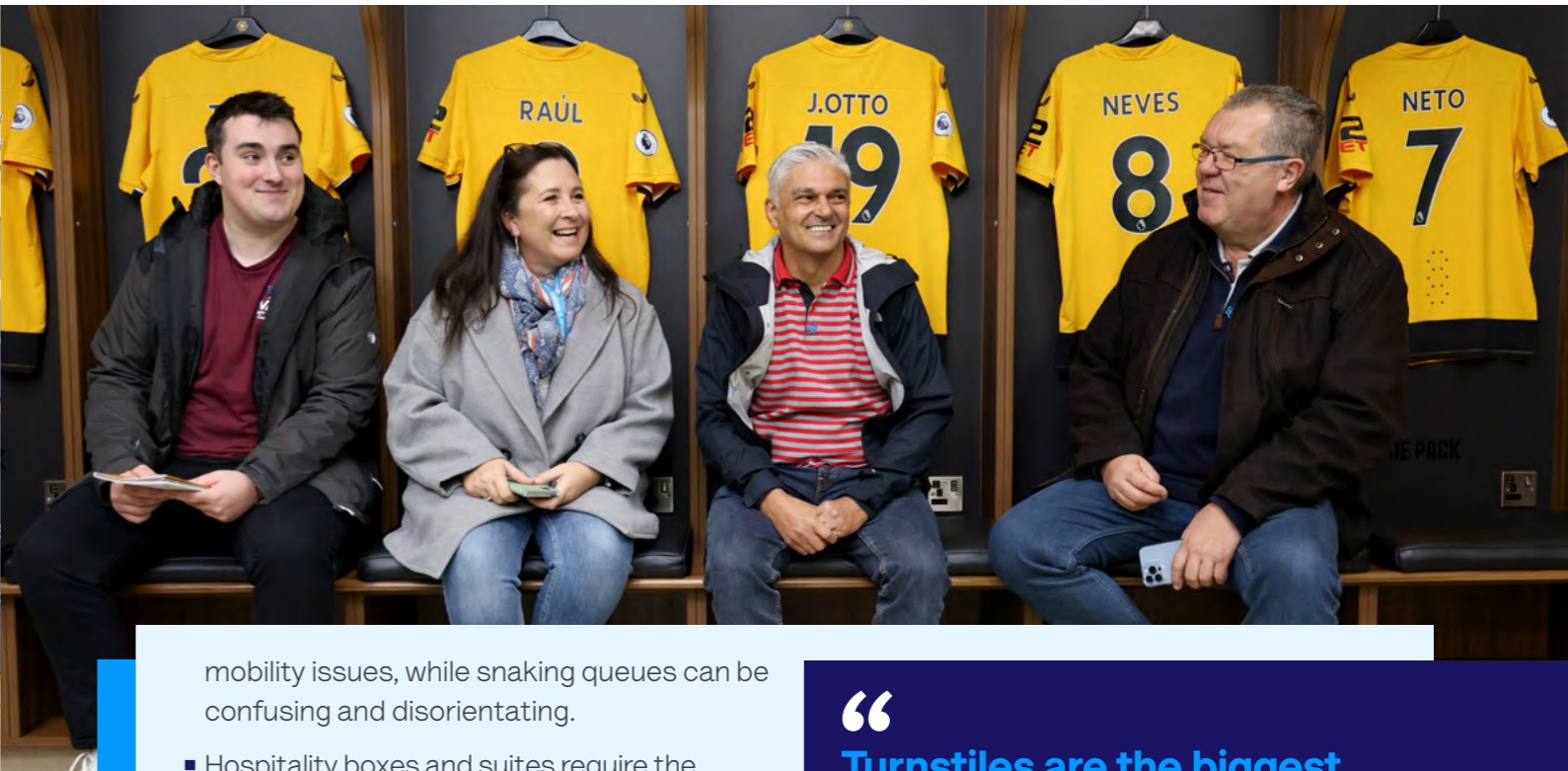
- Toilets can be disorientating for people living with dementia. The number of doors can make leaving feel confusing. Toilets are

often crowded at key moments in a match or event, such as half-time or breaks in play.

- Toilets that are not clearly signed can cause avoidable distress. Installing clear signage and 'way out' signs can provide reassurance for people living with dementia.
- One common concern for people affected by dementia at stadiums and venues is a lack of unisex toilets or facilities. For a carer, unisex toilets can be crucial for helping the person they care for go to the toilet or change with assistance and dignity.

Retail and hospitality

- People with dementia may need extra help to recognise coins, understand card payment methods, or to use the right amount of money to make a payment. Contactless payments can be especially confusing.
- Queuing creates a challenge for people affected by dementia, particularly during crowded times when buying food and drink. Standing can be difficult for people with



mobility issues, while snaking queues can be confusing and disorientating.

- Hospitality boxes and suites require the same thought as other rooms for people with dementia. Challenges include whether they have step-free access, reflective surfaces, signage, and the readability of menus. Ensuring there is clear signage on hospitality boxes which indicate the way in and out is crucial, as well as minimising reflective surfaces, and having menus in larger fonts.

Lighting

- People living with dementia may get confused about what they are looking at in poorly lit locations around a stadium or venue. They may see a shadow as a change in level or a hole in the floor, or reflections in glass surfaces could be interpreted as someone looking at them.
- Improving the lighting in toilets and stairwells is an important way to help people living with dementia get around your club or venue.

“ Turnstiles are the biggest challenge we encountered as a family. It's one of the few moments where you truly feel out of control – you on one side, the person you are caring for on the other. My father had a memory lapse and walked off into a crowd while I was going through. In that moment, I felt completely helpless.

Carer for a person with dementia

Checklist

Dementia friendly 'sofa-to-seat'

There are several steps your club or venue can take to improve accessibility and find solutions for the challenges faced by people affected by dementia. When thinking about the 'sofa-to-seat' process you should:

- **develop a user-friendly website**
- **make ticketing straightforward**
- **improve the journey to your club or venue**
- **review the physical environment**

Develop a user-friendly website

- Use clear navigation to help people understand where they are on the website and how to move to the next webpage.
- List details about services available for people affected by dementia. Separate this section from physical disability information to avoid confusion.
- Write concisely using simple language but without being patronising. Remember you are writing for an adult audience.
- Lay out text in one column where possible to make it easier to read.
- Avoid italics and capital letter and use an open-source sans-serif font, such as the one we have used in this guide.
- Visit the following guide for more detailed information on developing websites for people affected by dementia: [Creating websites for people with dementia](#)

Make ticketing straightforward

- Offer a Carer's or Companion Ticket for people affected by dementia. Remember, some people with dementia will not qualify for specific benefits, so the process to obtain this should be flexible.
- Offer a dementia friendly telephone support line or equivalent to make wait times manageable for those who want to book by phone.
- Ensure your ticketing staff have completed our bespoke frontline staff training so they can support fans with dementia who prefer to buy tickets face-to-face. You can find out more about these options in our **'People: Awareness training and supporting staff'** section on **page 19**.
- Offer printed information and ensure there is an option to access it in person, via the club shop or ticket window, or by post.
- Check that information is available in different formats and languages that meet the needs of your local community. Dementia is a condition that affects everyone.

Improve the journey to your club or venue

- Provide clear information about how to travel to the venue via public and private transport on your website.
- Clearly display details about accessible or disabled parking for those travelling by car, including the distance and route to the club. Make access flexible, not all people with dementia qualify for a blue badge.
- Make sure people affected with dementia are given additional accessibility information about your venue when purchasing a ticket. Offer this to people both online and in person.
- Provide an accessible map of the club on your website, or include it within an access guide. Mark all important landmarks, such as parking, routes from stations, or entrances.
- Offer a meet and greet service for people affected by dementia, allocating a member of staff to support them on their trip to your stadium or venue.
- Create quiet or flexible queuing lanes to offer streamlined access into the stadium or venue, or at retail locations.
- Promote the use of non-visible disability schemes, such as the Sunflower Lanyard, or develop your own optional scheme. This could be a wristband,

badge, stamp on tickets, or lanyard. Make sure staff are aware of the scheme and how to support people using it.

- Meet regularly with your Disabled Supporters Groups to promote information and identify supporters who may need additional support getting to your club or venue.

Review the physical environment

Quiet Space

- Identify a location in the stadium or venue which could act as a quiet space for supporters. Examples could include a meeting room with a view of the match or event, a converted hospitality box acting as a safe space, or a bespoke inclusion and sensory room.
- Locate this space close to accessible facilities, such as entrances, toilets or changing spaces.
- Advertise and promote the space as openly available for people affected by dementia.
- Raise staff awareness of the space so they can support or escort supporters who need to use the space at a matchday or event.

Signage

- Avoid using block capitals and use pictures as well as text.
- Where possible, attach signs to doors to indicate what's inside. Position them at eye level and make sure they are in well-lit places. For example, put clear signage on any glass doors when entering hospitality boxes
- Place signs at key navigation points to help people who are trying to navigate your stadium or venue for the first time. For example, near the reception or ticket office.

Entrance

- Have a separate turnstile-free accessible entrance for people with cognitive conditions and promote this during matchdays and events.
- Ensure the entrances into your stadium or venue are well-lit. If the venue is mainly outdoors, try to use as much natural light as possible.
- Avoid harsh lighting which can cause glare and deep shadows which could cause issues for people with depth perception issues.

Flooring and stairs

- Reduce the number of reflective surfaces and clearly label any glass doors or partitions.
- Recommend priority seating on the lower level of the stadium close to exits. Ensure they are near accessible facilities and minimise the use of stairs.
- Avoid bold patterns on floors and stairs, and ensure that stairways have supportive railings or handrails.
- Use colour around stairs and flooring to help navigation, highlight routes, or alert people to key areas.

Navigation

- Use recognisable landmarks at your venue, such as statues or gates, to help with navigation on maps, visual guides, or ticketing information. For example, 'the accessible entrance is next to the main gate'.
- Highlight your key landmarks, accessible entrances, and amenities like accessible toilets on maps and directions, and ensure they are both well signposted and lit for maximum visibility.
- Ensure maps, instructions or access guides are available in various formats online and offline.

Seating

- Include additional seating around your stadium or venue to assist people with mobility issues, such as in hallways or close to the toilets.
- Make your seating easy to find and recognise. This will make it easier for people with dementia to find a place to take a breather.
- Clearly label seats with numbers that contrast with the colour of the seat.
- If you have met with a supporter with dementia in advance, mark their seat with non-invasive, subtle signage such as sticker of your club logo to help them find it.

Toilets

- Provide a unisex accessible toilet or changing space facility, this way people can be assisted by a carer of a different gender without feeling embarrassed.
- Ensure the entrances and exits to your toilets are clearly labelled.

- Select toilet seats in a colour that contrasts with the walls and the rest of the toilet.
- Ensure that door locks and taps are easy to use for a person with limited dexterity.

Retail and hospitality

- Check that signs at counters and hospitality boxes are easy to read and in a clear location. Ensure menus are in large print and available in easy read formats.
- Clearly mark where a queue begins and ends, using clear signage where possible. While barriers can help, arranging them in a clear way will help people with dementia find their way.
- Create a separate accessible queuing lane for people with disabilities to streamline this process.
- Signpost payment methods clearly. Make sure your selected methods don't alienate people who may be less confident using a digital card machine. Staff should be prepared to help with counting money or providing support.

Ensure to conduct your own matchday or event, website, and process audits with people affected by dementia to identify specific needs and maximise the benefits.

Case studies

The following section includes case studies from sports clubs and organisations that have developed matchday initiatives, assessed facilities, or have made dementia friendly changes to improve the 'sofa-to-seat' experience.

Everyone with dementia is different and is affected by their condition in different ways. This means what works for some people might not work for others. Including a variety of initiatives will help your club or venue meet the needs of as many people with dementia as possible.

Featured Case Studies

- Wolves
- Brighton and Hove Albion FC
- The Racecourse Association
- Surrey County Cricket Club
- Wrexham AFC
- Swansea City FC



Case study: Wolves

Background

Wolves offer a personalised approach to matchdays based on the individual needs of fans affected by dementia. The initiatives on offer were developed by their Disability Access Officer in response to a fan with early-onset dementia who struggled to locate his seat because they 'all looked the same'.

What has been done?

Personalised Matchday Packages

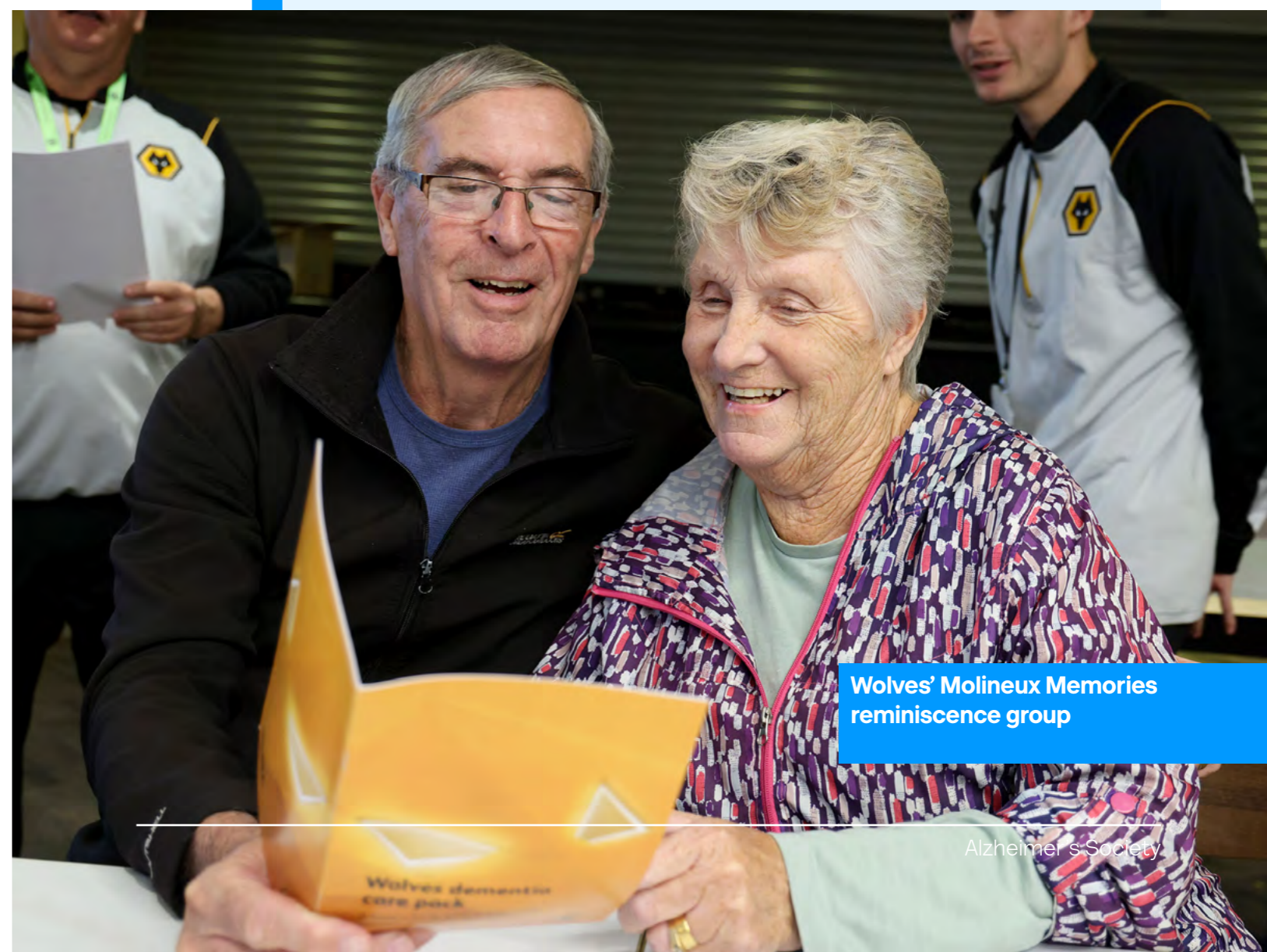
Tailored matchday care packages are provided to Wolverhampton supporters affected by dementia. These packages include:

- a personalised map with bullet point directions to guide the supporter to their seat. The map includes how to enter the stadium and the easiest route to get around the concourse
- personalised booking assistance for supporters who can't remember their booking history – this includes sending a tailored booking sheet which provides the supporter with extra details on when seats have been booked and for which games
- large, easy to spot 'Wolves' logo stickers placed on the seats of supporters affected by dementia to help identify their seat – the club also contacts supporters who sit nearby to make them aware of the sticker and ask them not to remove it
- providing a wristband for each supporter with contact details for the club Disability Access Officer in case they need extra support on matchdays
- providing a leaflet for visiting fans which is personalised to each team – this ensures away supporters with dementia can find the accessible amenities and have a good experience at the game
- working in partnership with the Wolves Community Foundation to link attendees to their 'Molineux Memories' reminiscence groups. This partnership is also working to help fans currently attending the group tap into the personalised matchday packages.

Disabled Supporter Information

Wolves provide a high standard of accessibility information on their website to help people affected by dementia find everything they need before a matchday. Examples include:

- an Access Guide is available to help disabled supporters plan their journey to Molineux Stadium – the guide is available in easy read formats and gives information on facilities and services available for disabled supporters, including people living with dementia
- stadium Access Map detailing where supporters can find the five accessible entrances into the stadium at each stand – this includes brief information on the support available at each entrance
- further links to AccessAble, a website providing lots of detail on all accessible facilities at Molineux Stadium – this includes parking, the Megastore, the Museum, and the Ticket Office
- video guides for the Sensory Room, Away Supporters, and a visual map for supporters with dementia to use around the stadium.



Wolves' Molineux Memories
reminiscence group



Case study: Brighton and Hove Albion FC

Background

Brighton and Hove Albion FC has been concentrating its efforts on further developing the stadium's accessibility. This includes an emphasis on supporting individuals with hidden disabilities, including people with dementia.

What has been done?

Inclusion Room

The Club have funded a unique space known as the Inclusion Room in the AMEX Stadium. The room provides supporters with non-visible disabilities with a safe place to watch football. Brighton made a conscious effort to use language that demonstrates the room can be used by anyone, of any age, with any disability.

Features of the room include:

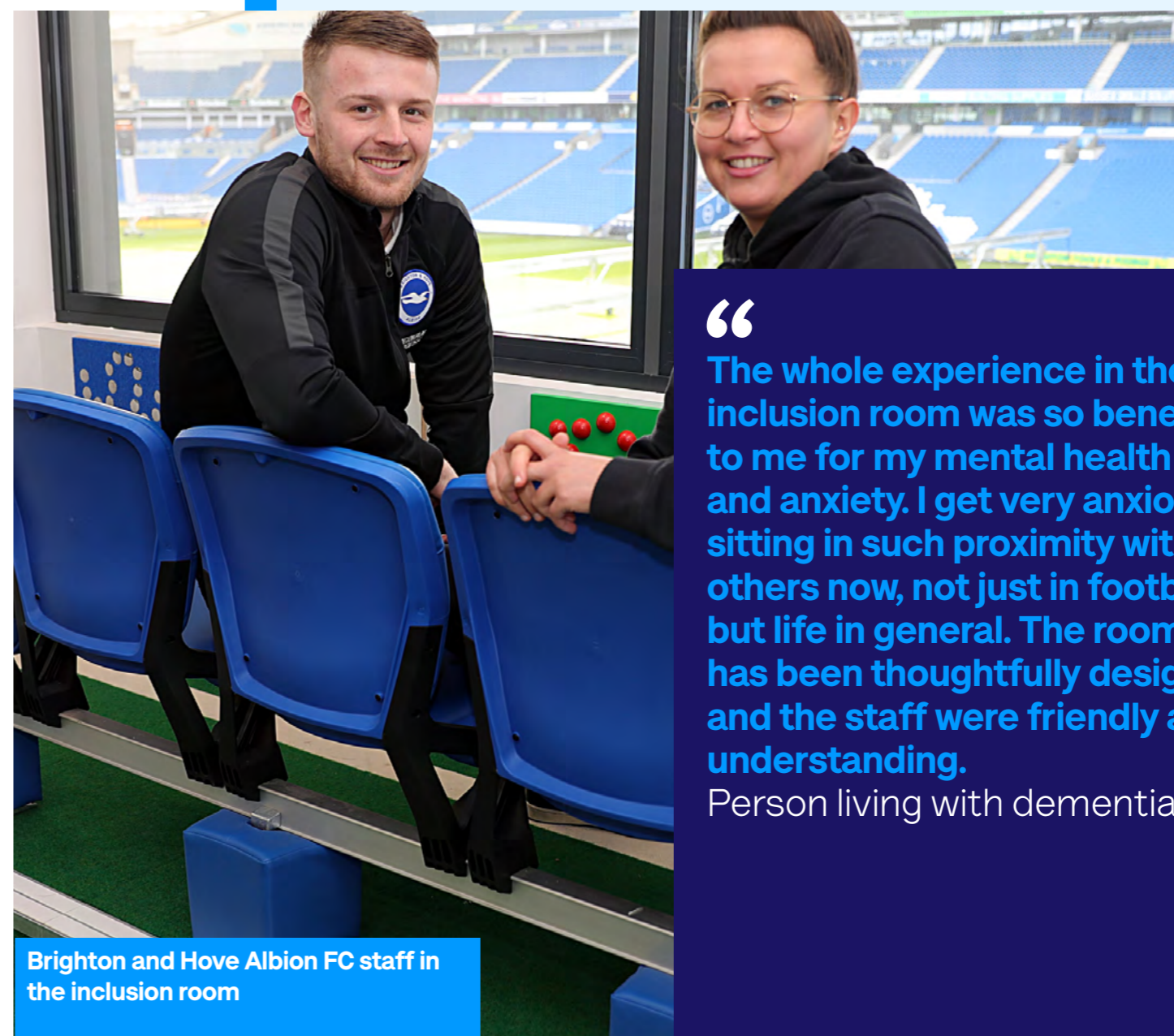
- The front section of the room includes a seating deck with six replica stadium seats inside and six more seats outside the front window to create a stadium-like atmosphere for participants.
- The middle section features additional sensory equipment.
- The back section of the room acts as a 'quiet space' for supporters who may feel overwhelmed and need a moment to themselves.
- People can switch between sections as they wish, creating security and independence to enjoy matchdays as they see fit.
- The room is available for all ages and conditions, including people affected by dementia, autism, and epilepsy.
- The room acts as a stepping stone on a supporter's matchday journey. The option to sit in the room or outside the room gives supporters affected by dementia the control to decide what suits them in the moment.

Carer's Ticket

The Club also offer an additional ticket to supporters who may not be able to attend without a carer to support them.

Features include:

- The ticket is free if supporters can provide appropriate documentation.
- If the applicant doesn't qualify for their disability criteria, a form can be completed by the applicant's GP to confirm their eligibility for a carer's ticket.
- The carer's ticket remains in the name of the disabled supporter so that anyone can assist them to a match.



Brighton and Hove Albion FC staff in the inclusion room

“

The whole experience in the inclusion room was so beneficial to me for my mental health and anxiety. I get very anxious sitting in such proximity with others now, not just in football, but life in general. The room has been thoughtfully designed and the staff were friendly and understanding.

Person living with dementia



Case study: The Racecourse Association

Background

The Racecourse Association is the trade association for British racecourses. The organisation represents the views of 59 British racecourse members across horseracing and sport more widely. It has been working to improve accessibility for customers, demonstrating the value of auditing and assessing facilities for people affected by dementia.

What has been done?

In 2019, the organisation gained an in-depth analysis of their customer experiences across racecourses through a detailed audit which covered:

- pre-arrival and ticketing
- arrival on course
- pre-racing experience
- the racecourse
- catering, bars and toilets
- post-raceday and departure.

With support from the Racing Foundation and British racecourses, the Racecourse Association commissioned a racecourse accessibility project. Working with LiveTourism and Level Playing Field, this project explores the design of the racecourses and the on-course experience of racegoers with accessibility requirements. Further audits are being conducted over three years at all 59 member racecourses.



The audit uncovered several trends where long-term adjustments will improve the experiences people affected by dementia. These include:

- Raceday staff reported feeling unsure about how to approach people with disabilities and how to use appropriate language.
- Awareness about racecourse facilities, such as the locations of quiet spaces and accessible toilets, varied from staff member to staff member.
- Facilities are not always maintained during raceday, such as muddy floors in the accessible toilets.
- Accessible viewing platforms are misused and accessible parking is not managed.

The areas identified are being used to consider what can be done to make horse racing a more attractive day out for people with access requirements. This includes ongoing work with Alzheimer's Society to consider how to address these concerns from the perspective of people affected by dementia.



Case study: Surrey County Cricket Club



“
I can't remember when my husband last went to a sports stadium, probably 25 years ago as going out is very difficult. Coming to Surrey Cricket, he has felt safe, secure, and well looked after. I don't think we could have come were it not for the superb way this has been made available.

Carer for a person living with dementia

Background

Surrey County Cricket club are committed to creating an accessible experience for people affected by dementia at The Kia Oval. The club worked in partnership with Alzheimer's Society to offer tailored matchday experiences for supporters, as well as promoting accessible options at the club.

What has been done?

Non-Visible Disability Wristbands

The club worked in close partnership with their Disabled Supporters Association to provide high quality facilities which meet the needs of all supporters with dementia visiting the ground. An example of this is the creation of an accessibility wristband, introduced in 2018.

The wristband:

- helps fans who need assistance to introduce themselves to trained club staff who can support them at all local and international matchdays through the summer
- is optional for supporters with a non-visible disability, giving people the choice to identify.
- includes the contact details for the club Accessibility Liaison Officer on it, allowing people to contact them if they need assistance, or in case of an emergency
- is free of charge, with no additional documentation needed, and can be collected in person from the ticket office or posted.

Other accessible features offered by the club include:

- carer and Companion Tickets are available free of charge for those accompanying a person affected by dementia or with a disability
- accessible parking available for blue badge holders, but with the option for flexibility for those people with dementia who don't qualify
- personalised services offered by the club Accessibility Liaison Officer who will assist with bookings, meet and greet on arrival and departure and provide additional assistance if needed
- 100 accessible seats in a shaded viewing area, accessed by an accessible lift and with a dedicated accessible toilet
- disability ambassadors located across the ground with bespoke purple lanyards who are trained in disability and dementia awareness.



Case study: Wrexham AFC

Background

Wrexham AFC have made a significant commitment to making the club inclusive and accessible for people affected by dementia. Several changes have been made at their home stadium, The Racecourse Ground, to make it as dementia friendly as possible.

What has been done?

Fans affected by dementia are welcome to sit anywhere within the Racecourse Ground. However, most of the dementia friendly changes have been made in the club's newest stand, the Macron Stand. This has included:

- working in partnership with local Alzheimer's Society services to conduct a physical environment audit of the wider stadium
- painting the Macron Stand steps yellow with black nosing to create contrast and make stairways easier to navigate
- adapting toilets to improve accessibility, including painting the back of toilet systems and behind the sinks red – this creates a contrast between the white toilet and sink
- a quiet zone and sensory room in the stand for supporters with sensory issues, including supporters living with dementia
- stewards have received Dementia Friends information sessions as well as wider disability awareness training – this is maintained by the club Disability Liaison Officer
- offering a waiter/waitress service for supporters with dementia – supporters can purchase food and drink pitch side, and their order is brought to them instead of having to wait in the concourse
- an accessible entrance into the Macron Stand which is promoted for people affected by dementia – this allows access into the stadium without using turnstiles.



“

Changes made may seem a small cosmetic difference to some, but to supporters living with dementia these changes make such a big difference. I'm proud of the work Wrexham has done to be more dementia friendly, and I am proud to be involved in that work moving forward.

Person living with dementia



Case study: Swansea City AFC

Background

Swansea City have taken a person-centred approach to making physical environment changes at the Swansea.com Stadium. Their long-term ambition is to become as accessible and inclusive for people affected by dementia as possible.

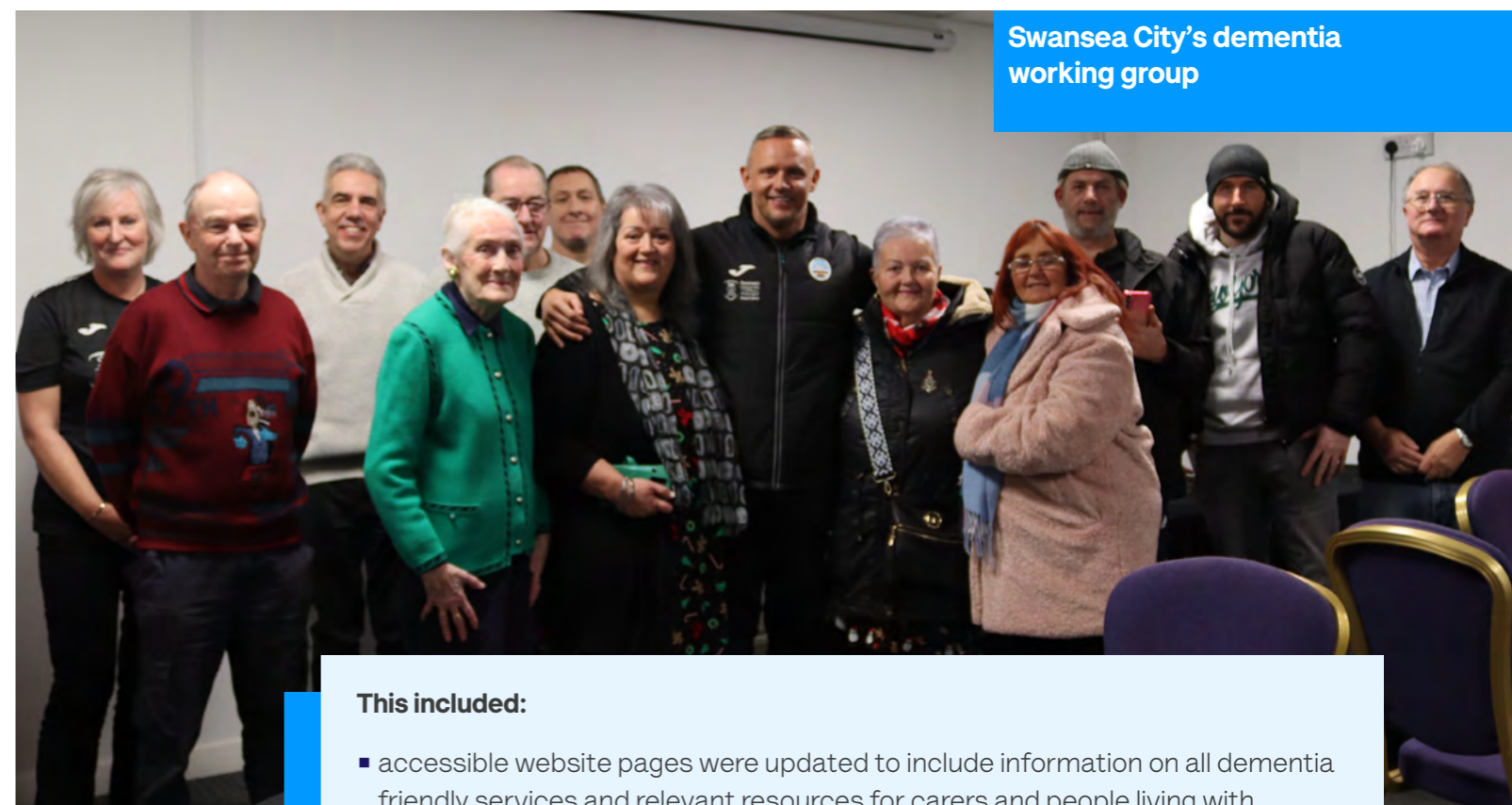
What has been done?

Dementia Friendly Swansea City Project

To reach their dementia-friendly goals, Swansea City gathered feedback about potential challenges for people affected by dementia at the Swansea.com Stadium.

To do this, the club did the following:

- a working group consisting of fans living with dementia and their carers was set up. Supporters affected by dementia were found through the club's social media channels and website, the Swansea City AFC Disabled Supporters Association, and Alzheimer's Society
- a consultation session with the working group was held. They were introduced to the club's partnership with Alzheimer's Society Cymru, their objectives, and why they wanted fans to get involved
- they encouraged the group to provide feedback on their experience at Swansea City, the challenges they face around the stadium and what improvements they'd like to see
- they asked members of the group to complete website and matchday assessments at two home games, highlighting the positives and areas for improvement
- the club developed an action plan in response to the working group feedback and made significant changes to make access easier for people affected by dementia.



This included:

- accessible website pages were updated to include information on all dementia friendly services and relevant resources for carers and people living with dementia
- reviewed signage across the stadium to identify what could be reasonably changed
- earplugs provided by Disability Liaison Stewards to help reduce noise at home games
- people affected by dementia were given permission to bring their own drinks into the stadium
- all Disability Liaison Stewards and Ticket Office staff became Dementia Friends – plans have been made to involve customer-facing staff in sessions over the coming months
- introducing an Inclusion and Sensory Room, both are available for use by people affected by dementia – the Inclusion Room acts as a quiet space for supporters who feel overwhelmed
- seating that is close to the inclusion room and suitable for supporters with dementia is recommended during the ticketing process.

Working with Alzheimer's Society

There are several ways your club or venue can work together with Alzheimer's Society to make the live sport sector better for people affected by dementia

Working in partnership

Partnering with Alzheimer's Society is an exciting way to link our work with your organisation's long-term objectives. We can work with you to develop an extensive programme of fundraising, events and involvement opportunities that will motivate and inspire your staff by harnessing their expertise and skillsets. Partnerships such as this can also demonstrate to your supporters and the local community that you are committed to supporting people affected by dementia.

For more information about partnering with Alzheimer's Society visit the Corporate Partnerships page on our website or contact: strategicchange@alzheimers.org.uk

Consultancy opportunities

Alzheimer's Society can work with large stadiums or independent national sporting venues to provide a bespoke, in-depth, multi-year consultancy service to help you become dementia friendly. Suitable for those wishing to become industry leaders, venues that hold large-scale events, or large stadiums, Alzheimer's Society can help you identify long-term changes which fit the structure and business model of your venue beyond the scope offered within this guidance.

For more information about Consultancy Opportunities, contact strategicchange@alzheimers.org.uk

Dementia Friendly Signage

Alzheimer's Society are working in partnership with FIND Memory Care to help supply organisations with high-quality, competitively priced dementia friendly signage. FIND Memory Care can create bespoke removable or permanent dementia friendly signage for your club or venue which meets both industry standards and sport-specific guidelines. These can be created to include club or venue colours, whilst maximising accessibility for people affected by dementia.

For more information about dementia friendly signage for your sports club or venue, contact alzheimers.signage@findmemorycare.co.uk

Fundraising

Alzheimer's Society has a calendar of national events – including Memory Walk, Forget Me Not campaign, Cupcake Day, and Elf Day. Alzheimer's Society also offers challenge events which organisations and employees can get involved in.

For more information visit: www.alzheimers.org.uk/fundraise

Volunteering

Volunteering for a local Alzheimer's Society or dementia service provides organisations and their employees with a great opportunity to support their local community.

For more information about volunteering visit: www.alzheimers.org.uk/volunteer



Useful resources and organisations

Resources

A selection of documents to help you make aspects of your organisation and its work more dementia friendly

Alzheimer's Society Dementia Friendly Business Guide

Outlines how changes across your business can help to make it more inclusive for people affected by dementia. The guide includes a significant section on developing policies and initiatives to support staff carer's

<https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/get-involved/dementia-friendly-communities/making-organisations-dementia-friendly/businesses>

Alzheimer's Society Dementia and Co-Creation Guide

Outlines how to use co-creation effectively with people affected by dementia to deliver products, services, and programmes that better suit their needs

<https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/research/our-research/practical-guide-designing-products-services-people-affected-dementia>

Alzheimer's Society Dementia Friendly Sport and Physical Activity Guide

Outlines how sport and physical activity providers can train employees, adapt programming, and consider environments and processes to tackle the challenges that their members or staff affected by dementia may face

<https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/get-involved/dementia-friendly-communities/organisations/sports-physical-activity>

Choosing a dementia friendly meeting space

A factsheet produced by the DEEP network to give practical guidance on sourcing and selecting suitable meeting and event spaces when considering the needs of people with dementia

<http://dementiavoices.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/DEEP-Guide-Choosing-a-meeting-space.pdf>

Collecting the views of people with dementia

Guidance produced by the DEEP network to help organisations engage with people with dementia, so they can ensure projects, products, and services meet their needs

<http://dementiavoices.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/DEEP-Guide-Collecting-views.pdf>

Creating website for people with dementia

Guidance produced by the DEEP network to help organisations create websites for people with dementia

<https://www.dementiavoices.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/DEEP-Guide-Creating-websites.pdf>

Dementia Connect Online Directory

<https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/get-support/dementia-connect>

Alzheimer's Society online dementia services directory for anyone affected by dementia in England, Wales, or Northern Ireland. Find support in your local area

Plain English Campaign

An organisation who campaigns against gobbledegook, jargon, and misleading public information

<http://www.plainenglish.co.uk/>

Talking Point Online Community

Talking Point is a support and discussion community for anyone affected by dementia

<https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/get-support/dementia-talking-point-our-onlinecommunity>

Writing dementia friendly information

A factsheet produced by the DEEP network to give practical guidance on writing dementia friendly information

<http://dementiavoices.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/DEEP-Guide-Writing-dementia-friendly-information.pdf>

Organisations

The following organisations can offer guidance, support, or signposting:

Alzheimer's Society

Information about dementia, local Alzheimer's Society services, and resources for working closely with people affected by dementia.

www.alzheimers.org.uk

Age UK

Age UK aims to improve older life for everyone through information and advice, services, campaigns, products, training, and research.

www.ageuk.org.uk

Alzheimer Scotland

Alzheimer Scotland provides a wide range of specialist services for people with dementia and their carers in Scotland.

www.alzscot.org

Carers Trust

Carers Trust works to improve support, services, and recognition for anyone living with the challenges of caring for a family member or friend.

www.carers.org

Carers UK

Provides information and advice about caring, alongside practical and emotional support for carers.

www.carersuk.org

Dementia Friends

An Alzheimer's Society initiative to change people's perception on dementia. It aims to transform the way the nation thinks, acts and talks about the condition.

www.dementiafriends.org.uk

Dementia UK

Dementia UK provides Admiral Nurses to support families with dementia.

www.dementiauk.org

Dementia Engagement and Empowerment Project (DEEP)

DEEP engages and empowers people living with dementia to influence attitudes, services and policies that affect their lives.

www.dementiavoices.org.uk

Innovations in Dementia

Community interest company that works nationally with people with dementia, partner organisations, and professionals to develop and test projects enhancing the lives of people with dementia.

www.innovationsindementia.org.uk

Level Playing Field

Charity focused on removing the social, attitudinal, and environmental barriers faced by disabled individuals at live sports events.

www.levelplayingfield.org.uk

Local Councils

Offer information about day, residential, and homecare providers who could promote or source participants for activities. May also have Sports Development or Wellbeing Officers who can help promote your services locally.

www.gov.uk/find-your-local-council

Sporting Memories

Sporting Memories is a charity and social enterprise that helps older people to reminisce, replay and reconnect through the power of sport and physical activity.

www.sportingmemories.uk

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<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance>

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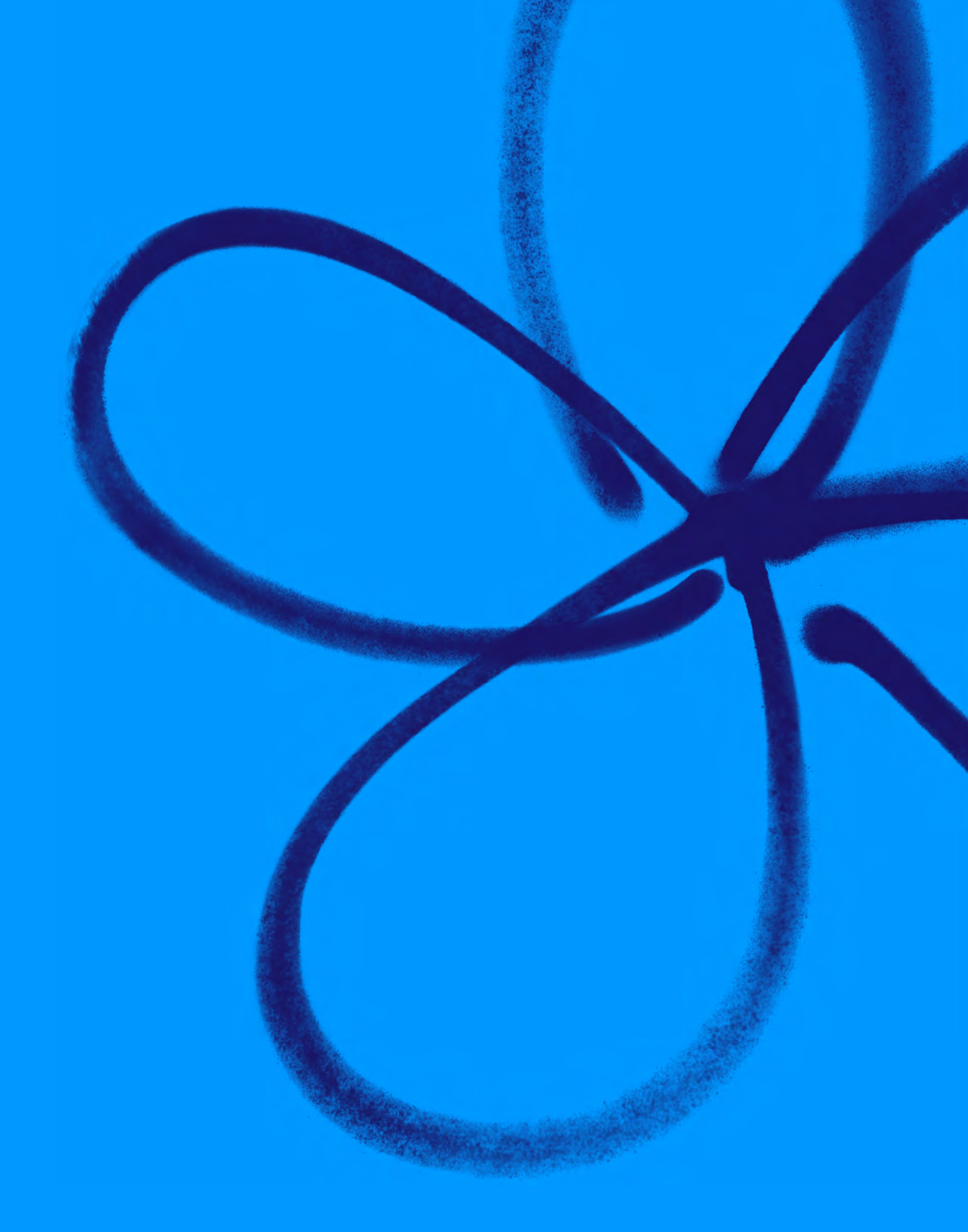
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