

Introducing cycling for day centre clients. Adapted bikes, storage and intergenerational support all made possible through local collaborations.

The Ladywell Day Centre's long-term partnership with Wheels for Wellbeing has led to the introduction of inclusive cycling and storage provision for these bikes. Adapted bicycles are used by day service clients who are living with dementia, in a large gymnasium within the day centre and in the neighbouring park, enabling access to nature.

Another partnership involves students of the Abbey Manor Pupil Referral Unit, who were already volunteering with Wheels for Wellbeing to repair these bikes. The dementia day centre's manager gave students information about dementia. A small number were then selected to support clients during bike-riding sessions, with supervision. This intergenerational work benefits both groups who were experiencing marginalisation within society: the older people with dementia, some of whom may not have had regular contact with young people, and students who benefit from feeling trusted and from enjoyable contact with older people during a fun activity.

This work was highlighted in a [news report by Channel 5 news \(see video\)](#) (which incorrectly states it is a care home rather than a day centre). The news report shows bicycles in use, interviews two young people, an older person and the day centre manager.



Still images taken from the news report video.

Considerations for day centres developing similar programmes:

Older people without dementia or with less advanced dementia attending day centres may like to be involved with bicycle maintenance. This could give them a great opportunity to share their knowledge and reinforce their sense of purpose and self-esteem.

Introducing technology in a day centre (iPads and static cycling)

After a self-assessment, Central Hill Day Service in Lambeth, improved its offer for service users who live with dementia by introducing technology such as iPads and static cycling with virtual scenery.

iPads

Service users are individually taught how to find music they remember and wish to listen to. Some choose to sing along or dance to the music. The iPads are linked to a speaker by Bluetooth. Using 'Google Earth', people can revisit places they have lived. This starts discussion and rekindles memories. The next step will be to use Facetime or Skype to enable carers to become involved.

Static cycling with virtual scenery and sound (<https://motitech.co/>)

Using a specially adapted static exercise bike and a monitor, people can 'virtually' cycle along the streets they remember, beautiful scenery or favourite holiday destinations whilst keeping fit.

Using special software in combination with an adapted bike allows people to pedal – with feet or hands – through destinations such as the Peak District or the South Downs in the UK, Niagara Falls in Canada, or even through the town in which they were raised. They can do this while listening to their favourite songs or immersed in ambient sound.

Motiview software (which originates in Norway and requires a license) is used with these **Motitech bikes**. Motitech ensures there is a video of the license holder's local area, made in cooperation with the user site.

Central Hill's service users have taken part in a global competition, and events such as **Road Worlds for Seniors**, which takes place in autumn each year.

Service users enjoy the bikes so much that they now sign up to compete against each other. Cumulative mileage for all service users is recorded. In the first two months of having the bikes, service users had cycled around 800 miles collectively.

Motitech static bikes were sourced from the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ASASS) and Sport England.

Bringing the community into day centres: local theatre group and secondary school performances as entertainment

Merton and Morden Guild attenders benefit from live theatre and musical performances. This enables them to enjoy the arts and gives them conversation material to take home ('[fresh news](#)' [1]).

- A local street opera and theatre group, [Baseless Fabric](#), performs for attenders, and does dress rehearsals (e.g. Madame Butterfly)
- A local theatre, [The Colour House](#), brings performances to attenders (e.g. pantomimes)
- A local secondary school, [Wimbledon High School](#), visits to do dress rehearsals with an audience for their big shows.

Local collaborations bringing music into day centres

Two day centres have brought music into their centres in different ways.

- The Ladywell Day Centre in Lewisham, for older people living with dementia and adults living with profound learning disabilities and complex physical needs.
- The Devonshire Dementia Day Centre in Kingston-upon-Thames.

What the research says about the impact of music

Research has found that participation in musical activities is beneficial for cognitive functioning and behaviour. The benefits for people living with dementia are both physiological and psychological.

- Listening to music, playing music, dancing and music and movement can improve cognition and depressive symptoms in older people with mild cognitive impairment or dementia [2]. Music therapy (for 6-16 weeks) has reduced depression in people living with dementia [3]. *(Physiological and cognitive impact)*
- Music helps to balance blood pressure, heart rate, respiratory rate, and hormone levels [4, 5]. *(Physiological impact)*
- Music helps to reduce mood fluctuations, depression, and behaviours such as agitation and aggression [6-8]. *(Behavioural and psychological impact)*
- Music improves communication skills, quality of life, wellbeing, memory, self-awareness, and environmental awareness (the ability to distinguish between the surroundings and moments of the day) and pain management.[4, 9, 10] It can enhance language skills, verbal and non-verbal expressions, social activity and communication, raising cognitive levels and self-awareness [6, 11]. *(Cognitive impact)*.
- Music also supports emotional wellbeing, engaging attention (reducing apathy) and improving self-esteem and communication, all of which improves behaviour that is caused by poor emotional wellbeing [12]. *(Psychological impact - emotional wellbeing)*
- Dance can benefit older people's health and wellbeing: physical, mental, and social wellbeing [13], physical function, mobility, and endurance [14]. Dance is very adaptable to different abilities [15]. It is popular across different backgrounds and cultures [16]. It does not require expensive equipment [16].

Musical performances

A staff member of the Ladywell Dementia Day Centre contacted a community jazz band inviting the musicians to use day centre space, in the dementia area, for weekly practice. This meant that day centre attenders benefited from free live music.

Case studies and inspiration: Activities in day centres

The BigHeart Band, a group of volunteers who sing in care homes, visits the Devonshire Dementia Care Home and Day Centre on a bimonthly basis, giving performances for residents and 'day guests'.

Music and movement

Professional networking led to the Ladywell Day Centre providing space for music and movement sessions run by an arts organisation. Entelechy Arts' 'Ambient Jam' sessions are for people with profound learning and physical disabilities. They agreed with the day centre to hold the sessions there which enabled the people attending it (who live with dementia or profound learning disabilities and complex physical needs) to have free access to these therapeutic activities. This collaboration benefited the day centre, its clients, and the arts organisation.

Music therapy

Nordoff Robbins is a music therapy charity that uses music to enrich the lives of people with life-limiting illnesses, disabilities or feelings of isolation. It heard about the Ladywell Day Centre and offered to provide music therapy for one day a week, for a year, free of charge.

The professional music therapist draws out people's abilities and successfully engages them in music. One older man with dementia became actively involved in drumming sessions and positively engaged with the moment; he was usually quiet and did not initiate conversation or other activities.

Working closely with the therapist in practice has enabled a transfer of skills. Staff now apply principles used in these sessions at other times which has led to increased positive engagement.

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Case studies and inspiration: Activities in day centres

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