



Working towards creating dementia-friendly parks, outside spaces and nature reserves: development of a guide and environmental self-assessment tool

There are significant physical and social benefits of engagement with the natural environment but the estimated 982,000 people living with dementia in the UK often face personal and practical barriers to accessing outside spaces and taking part in outdoor activities. Although access to nature has long been recognised as an important contributor to people's overall health and wellbeing these barriers can be especially impactful for those living with dementia. Individuals can often struggle with confidence, navigation and uncertainty about available facilities.

The [Association for Dementia Studies](#) (ADS), University of Worcester has been awarded a grant by The National Lottery Heritage Fund to research and develop a range of practical resources and tools that can help parks, outdoor spaces and nature reserves to work towards becoming more dementia-friendly and inclusive. The £153,000 grant from the Heritage Fund will enable the University, in collaboration with Natural England and a range of leading charities and green space organisations, to develop and test a guide and environmental self-assessment tool, and develop a training video and App to improve access to outside spaces and heritage assets for people affected by dementia.

The first phase of the project is coming to an end, and many parks, outside spaces and nature reserves have been involved in testing the resources. Once finalised, the new resources will be freely available online. During the next phase of the project there will be an opportunity for sites to apply to become a case study and receive a small grant to help them make dementia-friendly improvements and to evaluate the outcomes.

ADS is grateful to all our project collaborators without whose help and support the project would not be possible.

The project collaborators are:

- Dementia Adventure
- Green Flag Award (Keep Britain Tidy)
- Greenwood Community Forest
- Natural England
- Rushcliffe Dementia Action Network
- South Nottinghamshire Place Based Partnership
- The Midlands Parks Forum
- The National Forest Company
- The National Trust.

As members of the Project Working Group, they will continue to provide general advice and support throughout the project; using their networks to disseminate information about the project; assist in the recruitment of testing sites and facilitate the testing process of the resources; promote the case study application process and contribute to the evaluation.

A Steering Group will have strategic oversight of the project to ensure that it meets its objectives and the requirements of the Heritage Fund grant. The Group will contribute to the overall project evaluation and agree the dissemination and legacy plans for the project.

Our project on 'Working towards creating dementia-friendly parks, outside spaces and nature reserves' is made possible by funding from [The National Lottery Heritage Fund](#). Thanks to National Lottery players, we will be able to develop a guide and environmental self-assessment tool to improve access to outside spaces for people affected by dementia.

Using money raised by National Lottery players, The National Lottery Heritage Fund supports projects that connect people and communities with the UK's heritage.

For further information please contact dementia@worc.ac.uk

