



Linking Local was an 18-month project to strengthen community-based social connections. The project was designed around people affected by dementia but worked for lots of other people too.

Connecting Outdoors

We connect with our communities in lots of different ways. Sometimes it's the small things that can make a big difference to how connected we feel. A hello from a neighbour or a wave from the person in the local shop reminds us that we are part of something bigger than our own households.



People told us how important it was to be able to get outside, especially while pandemic lockdowns kept us apart from our friends and family.

"Some of the woodland paths at The Birks are a bit uneven so I stick to the pavements, I tend to see lots more people going about their day."

"Being outdoors really lifts my mood – I really missed my walking group but I kept up my afternoon stroll."

"I'm never out for long but short walks let me see other faces. A couple of short outings are better than one long one"



Having access to outdoor spaces is important to all of us but there can be some extra things to think about for people living with dementia.



Think Sensory

Some people who are living with dementia will also experience sensory changes. Different people experience these changes in different ways. Some people have said that it can make trips outdoors a bit disorientating, but with some planning they still enjoy their time in nature.

Here are some examples to consider so you can be more sensory-aware for your next trip outdoors:

"I have issues with my spatial awareness so the shadows from trees and branches can cause me difficulties. I sometimes think they are much closer than they are"

Some people find their sense of touch changing so might find changes in temperature or windy conditions unpleasant.

Reflections - Puddles and ponds can look like holes or ditches in the ground and sunlight on water can cause bright glare.

Hyperacusis is an intolerance to day-to-day background noises. "I'm more sensitive to traffic noises or spaces where there is a lot of chatter. Once I realised I was struggling with the noise I was able to plan my visits for quieter times."

These resources provide more information about some of the sensory changes that can be experienced when living with dementia:

Dementia and Sensory Challenges

<https://otbds.org/wpcontent/uploads/2021/10/Dementia-and-Sensory-Challenges.pdf>

Sensory Changes and Dementia –

Taste and Smell <https://otbds.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Sensory-Changes-and-Dementia-Booklet-Final.pdf>

