



March 2016

Newsletter No. 96

# Brain Waves

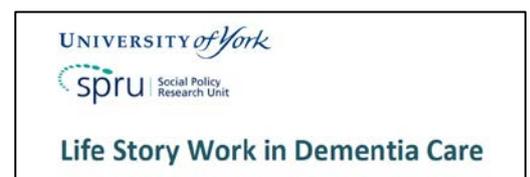
A monthly newsletter from Innovations in Dementia CIC

The aim of these newsletters is to keep people with dementia and their allies informed about the work of Innovations in Dementia Community Interest Company.

## Life story work in dementia care

We have been part of a study to investigate life story work in dementia care.

The research summary has now been published  
Read more on page 2.



In this newsletter:

Life story work in dementia care	p2
Is it nice outside? Consulting people about engaging with the natural environment	p3
Dementia Adventure holidays	p4

## Life story work in dementia care

Everybody has a life story. These are rich and varied and can be used to communicate who we are to the people around us. People with dementia sometimes need help to communicate their histories and identities, and it has been suggested that life story work could present a way for them to do this more easily.

UNIVERSITY of York  
spru Social Policy Research Unit

### Life Story Work in Dementia Care

Everybody has a life story. These are rich and varied and can be used to communicate who we are to the people around us. People with dementia sometimes need help to communicate their histories and identities, and it has been suggested that life story work could present a way for them to do this more easily.

In 2012 the Social Policy Research Unit at the University of York launched the first study of its kind to investigate life story work from first principles.

We asked:

- What is life story work?
- What is considered to be good practice in life story work in dementia care?
- How do service providers and family carers use life story work?
- Can life story work be evaluated in real world care settings?
- What are the costs of doing life story work as part of everyday care?

**Researchers**  
Kate Gridley, SPRU  
Jenni Brooks, SPRU  
Yvonne Birks, SPRU  
Kate Baxter, SPRU  
Linda Cusworth, SPRU  
Victoria Allgar, HVMS  
Gillian Parker, SPRU

**Funder**  
NIHR Health Services and Delivery Research  
PPI  
Innovations in Dementia, Dementia UK, Life Story Network

**Duration**  
July 2012 to March 2015

In 2012 the Social Policy Research Unit at the University of York launched the first study of its kind to investigate life story work from first principles. Innovations in Dementia was a partner organisation and supported people with dementia to be involved in the study.

The study asked:

- What is life story work?
- What is considered to be good practice in life story work in dementia care?
- How do service providers and family carers use life story work?
- Can life story work be evaluated in real world care settings?
- What are the costs of doing life story work as part of everyday care?

## What counts as good practice in life story work?

People writing about life story work don't agree on what counts as good practice. As there was no consensus in the literature, the study asked people with dementia, family carers and professionals with experience of life story work, what they thought was good practice.

The study ran 10 focus groups (with a total of 73 people) on this subject and came up with nine learning points that people could keep in mind when doing life story work.

For more information go to the University of York website:

<http://php.york.ac.uk/inst/spru/research/summs/life.php>

## Is it nice outside?

In March 2016 Natural England published the report **'Is it nice outside? – Consulting people living with dementia and their carers about engaging with the natural environment'**.

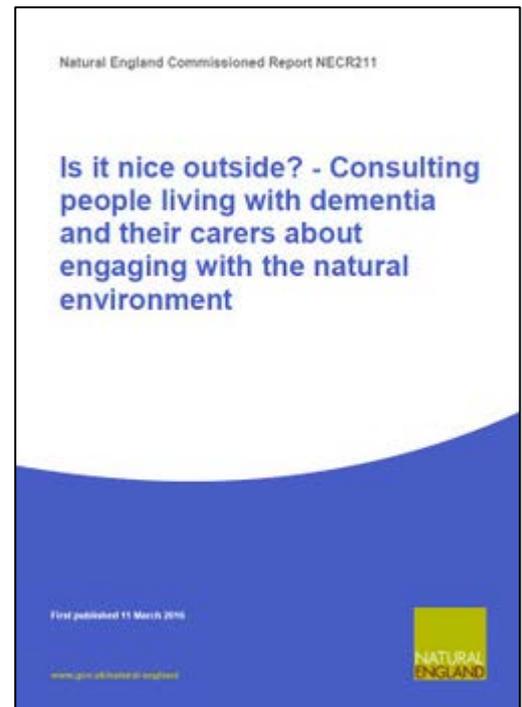
This collaborative project between Natural England, Dementia Adventure, Mental Health Foundation and Innovations in Dementia gathered insights and information directly from people living with dementia and their carers.

The report found that many people with dementia can enjoy the natural environment given the right support. Even people with dementia who have restricted mobility can enjoy nature, especially if accompanied or supported by someone who knows and understands them. People in the later stages of dementia, including those with no verbal communication, can still enjoy the natural environment, especially parks or listening to the birds and music outdoors, or slightly more ambitious activities such as community gardening or farming.

The report identified a number of factors that could help or hinder people with dementia engaging with the outdoors and outdoor activity. However, in terms of regular engagement with the outdoors and outdoor activity the evidence from the report indicated that staying local and close to home, the presence of water, walking and wildlife watching are the aspects which are likely to appeal to most people.

Download the report from the Natural England website:

<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5910641209507840>

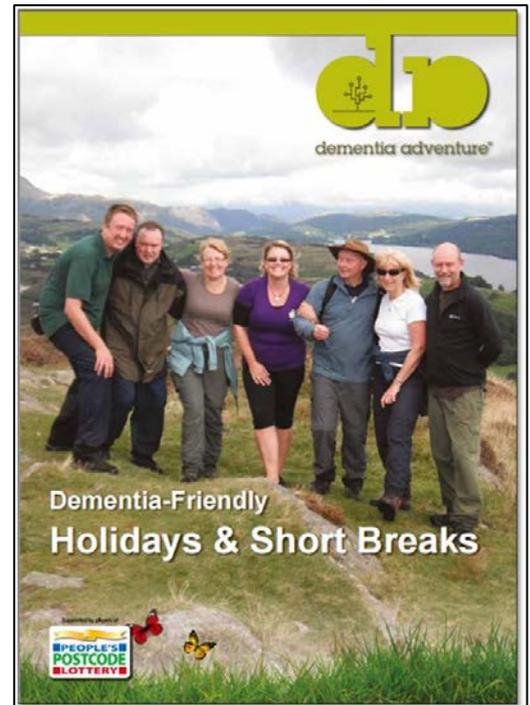


## Dementia Adventure holidays

One of the common themes from the report 'Is it nice outside?' was that people with dementia often find it good to spend time by water. Our partner organisation in the project, Dementia Adventure, offers supported group holidays which often involve time either on or next to water - such as sailing trips either in Essex or Devon or land based trips in Devon and the Lake District which both include boat trips.

For more information about Dementia Adventure holidays go to the Dementia Adventure website:

[www.dementiaadventure.co.uk/holidays](http://www.dementiaadventure.co.uk/holidays)



**Innovations  
in Dementia**

Innovations in Dementia is run by three directors – Rachael, Steve and Nada. We are a Community Interest Company. This means that any profit we make is put back into the organisation.

We do not offer services for people with dementia. Instead we work with other organisations to make sure that people with dementia can continue to take part in their communities and have active lives.

Please share your ideas, experiences and positive stories with us.

### Contact us

Email: [ideas@innovationsindementia.org.uk](mailto:ideas@innovationsindementia.org.uk). Telephone: 01392 420076

Innovations in Dementia CIC, PO Box 616, Exeter, EX1 9JB

Website: [www.myid.org.uk](http://www.myid.org.uk)

If you wish to receive (or stop receiving) copies of this newsletter email [newsletter@innovationsindementia.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@innovationsindementia.org.uk)

Registered as a community interest company No. 06046815