



BRIDGES
Dementia Network+

August 2026 Newsletter



Welcome to the August 2026 newsletter for BRIDGES for Dementia Network+, where we focus on moving technology beyond simple monitoring to truly empower independent living. In this issue, we take a deep dive into all the activities and opportunities available at our Annual Conference, how we can support you in your application for our latest funding call, and the launch of our second Ideas Workshop - this time focussing on arts, culture and sport.

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Save the date for our Annual Conference



Date: September 14th 2026

Time: 9:30am – 4:30pm

Location: Mercure Sheffield St. Paul's Hotel and Spa, 119 Norfolk St, Sheffield City Centre, Sheffield S1 2JE

To register please purchase a free ticket here.

The Morning Agenda

09:00 - 09:45 | Registration

09:45 | Welcome and introduction — *Dr. Jennifer MacRitchie, BRIDGES N+ Director*

10:00 | Sheffield City Council Strategy on Dementia: Our Next Steps — *Jo Pass (Assistant Director, Living and Ageing Well)*

10:30 | How can businesses take into account people with dementia when designing products and services? — *Gordon McCullough, CEO Research Institute for Disabled Consumers*

10:50 | Break and networking opportunity

11:10 | Panel discussion: The promise and pitfalls of technology and dementia

11:55 | Co-design in practice: How people with lived experience may influence the design of new technology — *Roger Whitham & Joseph Lindley, University of Lancaster*

12:15 | Technology presentations by attending companies

12:30 | Lunch and opportunity to view the exhibition

Early Career Researcher Masterclass

ECRs have the opportunity to present research ideas to a panel with lived experience of dementia. The panel will provide feedback from their perspective, giving you space to ask key questions. This session helps ECRs refine project ideas for future funding calls.

Places are limited to 5 Early Career Researchers.

The masterclass will be available to attend at the **BRIDGES for Dementia Network+ Annual Conference.**

Date: Monday 14 September 2026

Time: 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Location: voco Sheffield by IHG, Sheffield

Scan this QR code, or click [here](#) to register.



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Experiential Workshop on Communication

Researchers and practitioners have the opportunity to experience how dementia impacts communication. Key Takeaways:

- Learn practical, highly effective communication strategies.
- Gain actionable insights to make technological solutions and products more inclusive.
- Apply novel approaches to enhance user involvement in future research applications and activity design.

Places are limited to 20 participants.

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The Afternoon Agenda

Alongside the Early Career Researcher Masterclass and the Experiential Workshop on Communications, we will be hosting technical presentations from the wider research community.

13:30 | Digital and remote delivery of creative activities: The Culture Box project - *Victoria Tischler, University of Surrey*

13:40 | Tasty Spoon: Technology to Support Taste and Nutrition - *Christian Morgner, University of Portsmouth*

13:50 | Having a companion would be nice: Exploring Community Perspectives on Conversational Artificial Intelligence (AI) for Dementia Support - *Caitlin Illingworth, University of Sheffield*

14:10 | Senior Care: Improving Quality of Life Through Natural Language Interactions with Social Robots - *Giovanni Masala, University of Kent*

14:30 | CognoMND: Can Artificial Intelligence (AI) Help Detect Dementia in Motor Neuron Disease? - *Leslie Ing, University of Sheffield*

14:45 | Rethinking Technology Recommendation in living with dementia - *Elsie Ledger, University of Sheffield*



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FUNDING CALL

The BRIDGES for Dementia Network+ is now accepting applications for small, early-stage projects focused on improving indoor and outdoor spaces for people living with dementia. We are seeking innovative, person-centered ideas that bring together technology, design, and lived experience to tackle real-world challenges like boredom and loneliness.



Timelines

- **Deadline for applications:** 2nd October 2026
- **Funding decision:** by end of November 2026
- **Project start date:** January/February 2027
- **End date:** variable, but expected to be 6-12 months from start date

On the **17th** of **August**, from **14:00 - 14:45**, we will be holding a virtual Questions & Answer session. To register, click **here**.

To learn more about the funding call and to apply, click the link **here**.

Introducing our

Ideas Workshop for Arts, Culture and Sport

Join us for a facilitated, interactive event developing innovative ideas that harness arts, culture, sports, and technology to support people with dementia in living independently. Centering person-centered, co-produced practice, participation from those with lived experience of dementia is central to this event and all funded BRIDGES activities.

We welcome diverse backgrounds, disciplines, skills, and experiences. Bring existing ideas or develop new ones collaboratively using creative techniques - no prior artistic skill required. You will network, discuss concepts, and access mentoring from experienced researchers.

Attendance is free, but our room capacity is limited to 35 people. Lunch and refreshments will be provided. Stay tuned for the full agenda. Click [here](#) to register, find out more and stay updated.



Partner Highlights

CONSOLIDATE NetworkPlus Funding Call

The CONSOLIDATE NetworkPlus has officially launched its Feasibility Studies funding call, offering awards ranging from £50,000 to £100,000 to support innovative, cross-disciplinary approaches aimed at enhancing independence for people living with dementia.

The funding call is open exclusively to members of the CONSOLIDATE Network based at eligible UK institutions meeting EPSRC requirements. All awarded projects must be completed no later than 31 December 2027.

- Grant Value: £50k–£100k per award
- Process: Stage 1 (Expression of Interest) followed by Stage 2 (Full Application)
- Eligibility: UK-based CONSOLIDATE Network members (EPSRC eligible)
- Project Completion: By 31 December 2027

To learn more, download the required documents, or submit your Expression of Interest, visit the **CONSOLIDATE Funding Page**.

Get in Touch



<https://uk.linkedin.com/company/bridges-network-plus>



<https://bridgesfordementia.org>



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<https://bsky.app/profile/bridgesfordementia.bsky.social>

BRIDGES for Dementia Network+ develops technologies that empower people living with dementia to lead full, independent lives. Led by the University of Sheffield, our interdisciplinary network brings together researchers, community partners, and people with lived experience to ensure tools are trustworthy, inclusive, and effective.

Our Core Research Themes

- **Indoor and Outdoor Spaces:** Enhancing navigation in homes and public areas.
- **Arts, Sports, and Culture:** Supporting wellbeing and identity through creative technologies.
- **Communication:** Building AI and digital tools to keep people connected.
- **Technology Translation:** Ensuring innovations are affordable and ethically designed.

Our Commitment to Lived Experience

We co-design everything with people living with dementia and their carers. Partnering with diverse communities ensures lived experience shapes a national research agenda reflecting real needs.

BRIDGES for Dementia Network+ is funded by UKRI (EPSRC), Alzheimer's Society, and NIHR.