



BRIDGES
Dementia Network+

September 2026 Newsletter



Welcome to the September 2026 newsletter for BRIDGES for Dementia Network+, where we focus on moving technology beyond simple monitoring to truly empower independent living. This issue covers highlights from our first ever Annual Conference, an introduction to Katie Sandoval, the artist who will be facilitating our workshop for Art, Culture and Sport, and some insight into an upcoming webinar from the Public Policy Exchange.

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Highlights from our Annual Conference

On September 14th, the BRIDGES for Dementia Network+ brought together researchers, healthcare professionals, industry leaders, and individuals with lived experience of dementia at the VOCO in Sheffield. The annual conference focused on a single unified mission: co-designing technology to help people living with dementia lead full, independent, and connected lives.



Key Insights & Presentations

Strategic & Inclusive Design: Jo Pass (Sheffield City Council) shared strategy updates on local living and ageing well, while Gordon McCullough (RiDC) highlighted how businesses can meaningfully include people living with dementia when designing everyday products.

Technology Innovations: Attendees explored real-world applications during morning presentations and exhibition sessions, featuring physiological data capture (Milbotix), fall-prevention tools (Bide), self-powered sensors (Z-PULSE), and accessible gaming (ALJO Games).

Interactive Parallel Sessions: Afternoon workshops dived deeper into specific domains - from leveraging conversational AI and social robotics in dementia support, to hands-on experiential communication training led by Enrichment for the Elderly, and an Early Career Researcher masterclass facilitated by Innovations in Dementia.



Thank You

We extend our sincere gratitude to all of our speakers, presenters, session facilitators, and exhibitors for sharing their vital expertise and driving meaningful conversations throughout the day.

Most importantly, thank you to everyone who attended - especially those living with dementia and their carers. Your lived experience, contributions, and active participation are what make the BRIDGES Network+ co-design vision possible. We look forward to continuing this work together on upcoming research and funding initiatives.

Meet Katie Sandoval



**Facilitator for our Ideas workshop
for Arts, Culture and Sport**

Katie is an experienced artist, teacher and facilitator who loves to inspire others in developing their creativity. Her bespoke workshops are designed to be enjoyable, spark curiosity and promote human connection.

Katie's art practise features colourful landscape paintings and bold prints inspired by her early life in Mexico. Her keen interest in technology and the future, is highlighted in her painting 'Dreamforest', featuring a robotic dog emerging from a tropical jungle. She works and exhibits her work in Nottinghamshire via Backlit Studios.



Katie will be facilitating our Ideas Workshop for Arts, Culture and Sport on October 5th. To find out more and join our waiting list, click the link [here](#).





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FUNDING CALL

The BRIDGES for Dementia Network+ is 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. **The deadling for applications is 2nd October 2026.**



Timelines

- **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

To learn more about the funding call and to apply, click the link [here](#).

Partner Highlights

Public Policy Exchange Webinar: “Advancing Dementia Care: Prevention, Diagnosis, Treatment and Support!”

Date & Time: Thursday, October 8th, 2026 | 9:30 AM — 1:00 PM BST (Virtual)

Dementia affects roughly 982,000 individuals in the UK, costing £42 billion annually. To address growing service pressures, early diagnosis gaps, and care inequalities, Public Policy Exchange is hosting a morning symposium for health, social care, and local authority leaders.

Key Focus Areas:

- Policy & Frameworks: Examining national priorities under the 10-Year Health Plan and Dame Barbara Windsor Dementia Goals.
- Diagnostics & Treatment: Preparing services for emerging disease-modifying therapies, biomarker testing, and early intervention.
- Integrated Care: Strengthening coordination between NHS teams, social care, and community providers.
- Carer Support: Delivering practical pathways aligned with the Unpaid Carers Action Plan.

Who Should Participate: ICB/ICS leads, memory assessment teams, adult social care directors, primary care providers, and voluntary sector partners.

Click [here](#) to find out more and to register.

Get in Touch



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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.