



BRIDGES
Dementia Network+

October 2026 Newsletter



Welcome to the October 2026 newsletter for BRIDGES for Dementia Network+, where we focus on moving technology beyond simple monitoring to truly empower independent living. This issue covers the highlights from our second Ideas and Innovation Workshop, an exploration of Andy Burnham’s proritisation of Dementia research and some updates from our partner, Dementia UK.

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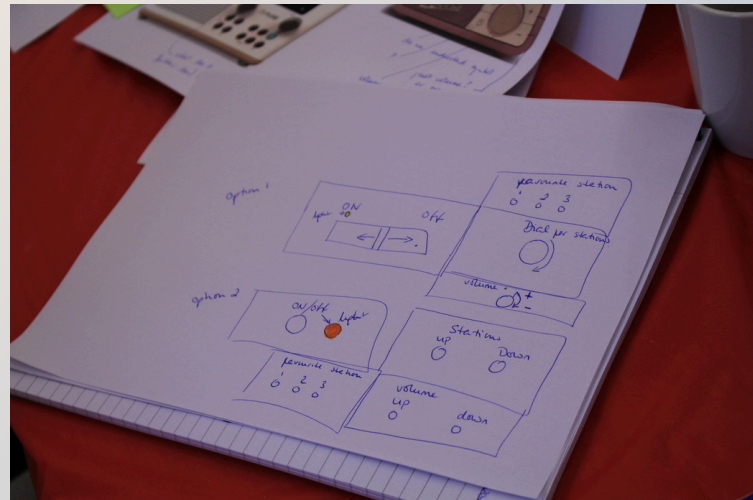
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Our Second Ideas and Innovation Workshop: Arts, Sport and Culture

On October the 5th, we held our second Ideas and Innovation Workshop at the Friends' Meeting House in Manchester. Bringing together people living with dementia, care partners, creative professionals, technologists, and researchers, the day focused on a powerful theme: how arts, culture, sport, and technology can combine to support everyday independence.

To start the day with some networking and inspire creativity, participants took part in a partnered portrait drawing activity. Following this, attendees participated in a range of interactive activities.



- Retro Radios: Exploring everyday technology through radios from different decades to discuss accessibility.
- Prototyping On/Off Switches: Creating sketches and plasticine models to design intuitive physical controls.



- Topic Discussions: Exploring how art, sport, and culture foster identity and independence.
- Video & Reflection: Discussing how technology can empower people living with dementia rather than just monitor them.

Every sketch, prototype, and idea generated during these activities was added to our central Ideas Board, capturing a rich collection of community-driven insight and inspiration.



BRIDGES Network+ would like to extend a warm thank you to everyone who joined us in Manchester and shared their insights, creativity, and lived experience to make the day a success. To find out about any more upcoming events, visit our [Events](#) page.



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FUNDING CALL UPDATE

The BRIDGES for Dementia Network+ is currently reviewing applications for small, early-stage projects focused on improving indoor and outdoor spaces for people living with dementia. The decision will be announced by the **end of November 2026**.

Following our second Ideas and Innovation Workshop, we will soon be announcing a funding call for projects focussing on arts, sport and culture.



To stay up to date on our funding calls, guidelines and how to apply, click the link [here](#).

Andy Burnham to Make Dementia Research a National Priority

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Prime Minister Andy Burnham has pledged £48 million towards an industry partnership to facilitate dementia research and treatment. This investment will support The BARBARA Alliance, its flagship programme aimed at easing the process for participants willing to take part in studies and connecting researchers to them.

Michelle Dyson CB, CEO of Alzheimer's Society, said:

“This is a significant moment for dementia research and we welcome the Prime Minister’s ambition for the UK to lead the world in discovering new treatments to beat dementia.”

The announcement follows calls from the Alzheimer’s Society and leading health experts - including former national cancer director Professor Sir Mike Richards and Baroness Louise Casey - urging the government to implement significant progression in dementia care.



With his father having passed away from Alzheimer’s earlier this year, Burnham has had firsthand experience of how the disease can disrupt the lives of those living with it.

This national focus on transforming dementia care sits at the heart of our work. While medical research explores future treatments, BRIDGES Network+ focuses on co-designing accessible technologies with lived experience experts to transform daily environments and support everyday independence.

Partner Highlights

Take On a Running Challenge for Dementia UK

Looking for your next physical challenge? Dementia UK has teamed up with Run For Charity to offer hundreds of running events across the UK from November 2026 through December 2027. Whether you're looking for a standard distance, a scenic trail run, a triathlon, or an obstacle course, there is an event suited for every fitness level across all regions.

How It Works:

Choose Your Event: Browse nationwide running challenges on the Run For Charity website and select the distance and location right for you.

Register: Secure your place and select Dementia UK as your chosen charity. There is no minimum fundraising target - simply raise what you can!

Get Supported: Once registered, you will receive a dedicated fundraising pack, a running top, and ongoing support to help you reach your goals.

Why Your Support Matters

Every three minutes, someone in the UK develops dementia. The funds raised directly support specialist Admiral Nurses, ensuring families receive expert guidance when they need it most.

£25: Pays for a carer to receive an hour of one-to-one advice on the free Helpline.

£250: Funds a full day of face-to-face appointments for families living with young onset dementia.

£557: Pays for two Admiral Nurses to staff the Helpline on Sundays when other local services are closed.

£1,250: Funds an Admiral Nurse for a whole week in a community with limited local dementia services.

Partner Highlights

Recordings from Dementia UK's 2026 Summer School available to view

From July 7-10, Dementia UK ran its free annual summer school, with the objective of developing practice and knowledge of dementia care. Open to all health and social care practitioners, including students, volunteer sector and allied professionals, topics covered included:

- The family experience of dementia
- Hearing loss
- LGBTQ+ Stories in Dementia Care
- Lewy Body Dementia
- The stigma of young onset dementia
- Transcultural dementia care
- Parkinson's disease and cognition
- Promoting intimacy in dementia care
- Frontotemporal dementia
- Risks in the home
- Tips from dementia carers

Dementia UK has made recordings from the sessions, which can be accessed in a playlist **[here](#)**. Each topic is delivered by an admiral nurse and other experts.

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.