

# Carers Newsletter



At the time of publication Wired Carers Centre is closed and staff are working from home, we just wanted to remind you that during this difficult time of Covid-19 restrictions, Wired is still running a service for all carers to ensure that you feel supported.

You can speak to a carer's support worker, who will be able to offer you advice and information on any issue affecting you and your loved one. We can offer you emotional support if you feel that you need to talk because you are anxious or overwhelmed. We can speak to you on the phone or you can contact us via email. We are happy to contact you using video call apps.

All our staff are here to make sure that you and the person you care for feel a little less isolated. We have nearly 3,000 people registered with us in Warrington for support and we will continue to do our very best during this period.

Carers - please click the 'W' below to tell us about your concerns and support needs during this period of Coronavirus/Covid-19 emergency government restrictions and we will contact you to see how we can help



We are updating daily a [Covid-19 carers advice and information page](#) on our website, you can access it [HERE](#). We also update our Facebook regularly, link [HERE](#)

You can find out up to date information about our services and as the Covid 19 lockdown restrictions ease, we'll be pleased to let you know when we can re-open the Centre—watch this [space](#)

Welcome to our **BUMPER** issue of our Carers September-November Newsletter (all 11 pages!)—there's lots to read, including carer's stories, technological support for carers, flu vaccinations and Disability Awareness Day. We hope you enjoy it, if you would like to write a piece for the next edition, please phone 01925 633492 or email [wcsadmin1@wired.me.uk](mailto:wcsadmin1@wired.me.uk).

**WIRED** are an independent charity, offering confidential, non judgemental support and advice to both young and adult carers. Our services include:

- ◆ **EMOTIONAL SUPPORT**
- ◆ **COUNSELLING SERVICE**
- ◆ **DROP IN/SUPPORT GROUPS**
- ◆ **SIGNPOSTING AND REFERRAL SERVICE**
- ◆ **SUPPORT AND ADVICE IF YOU OR THE PERSON YOU CARE FOR GO INTO HOSPITAL**
- ◆ **FREE LIVEWIRE LEISURE PASS**
- ◆ **EMERGENCY CARD—A 24hr RAPID RESPONSE MESSAGING SERVICE**
- ◆ **QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER**
- ◆ **COMPLEMENTARY THERAPIES**
- ◆ **YOUNG CARERS SERVICE**

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



The flu vaccination programme in the UK will be massively expanded this winter to help the NHS cope with the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. If you are eligible for a free annual flu vaccination, please speak to GP receptionists for more information about clinic dates. Clinics will begin in late September.

If you are eligible for a shingles or pneumonia vaccination you will be invited in by letter.

#### Flu update

You may have heard the news about this year's flu vaccine campaign. This year will be a TOUGH year for GP practices delivering flu vaccines.

#### Why?

- They are still geared up for another Covid-19 rise.
- They will be doing vaccinations in PPE meaning changes between patients and cleans of the environment between patients.
- All that PPE has to be ordered, stored, shared out, restocked, disposed of.
- They need to maintain social distancing between patients, so no more crowded waiting rooms with a lovely catch up from others in your community.
- Social distancing means they have to make innovative use of our buildings, with one way in, one way out. Where that's not possible, practices may look to hold clinics in community centres, town halls, health hubs etc.
- A change of venue would mean notifying CQC, arranging cold chain (to keep the vaccines cold), and LOTS of planning.
- The additional group of people means lots more vaccines needed: practices order the vaccine a year ahead, so we now need to rely on NHSE / Public Health England to supply additional stock.
- Everything takes longer: PPE, cleaning, social distancing. So a clinic for 300 people which used to be done in 3 hours could now

take 3 times longer.

- The staff that deliver the vaccines, and the administrators who support them in the clinics are already working flat out during the week, and now face the prospect of working additional long shifts at the weekends.
- It's unlikely practices will be able to run open clinics this year where patients can just turn up, so practices need to set up some kind of appointment system.

The number of housebound patients has increased with some patients still needing to shield, and home visits for them take much longer and are much more risky for the staff.



Many practices are running on reduced work force as they have shielding staff, or staff who cannot see patients face to face due to their own risks.

#### Message from GP Surgeries:-

*Thank you for reading this far. You may ask what is the point of this post? The main point is we found out this information the same time as you did, and although we have lots of ideas, there is still lots we need to work out, so please don't ask to book in yet!*

*We WILL let you know by text, Facebook, website or letter what the plan is.*

*It WILL be very different this year.*

*We WILL do our best as we always do.*

*We are grateful for your support- please do share as every practice is in the same position.*



# Carers UK - Carers and technology

There's a whole world of technology that could help make life as a carer easier. Simple devices and apps can help someone live independently for longer or give you peace of mind when you can't be around.



Many of us use technology in our everyday lives, but seven out of ten people don't think of technology when it comes to caring. Why not use it to help you take care of your loved one? You could set up one or two devices or applications, or even a larger system that is connected to you and other carers.

*"Technology allows me to keep working and gives Matthew some choices in a life where 99% of his day is out of his control," Niki*

[Download CarersUK booklet for more information](#)

Whether you're worried about your mum getting lost or need help with your husband's medication management, there are tech solutions that could help take the stress out of caring.



Technology could help you:

- Be more efficient
- Reduce unplanned visits or hospitalisation
- Take some of the worry out of caring
- Give you and the person you care for more independence.

## Coming out of lockdown

For many of us, the gradual easing of lockdown brings longed-for opportunities (even if at a social distance) – to see friends, play sports, resume contact with family in 'real space' or get back to work that we value.



But for many of us, even the happy, much anticipated changes can be difficult.

For many others the prospect of coming out of lockdown when debate is still live about the science supporting it can be a real worry. This may especially apply to those more vulnerable to the virus and those of us caring for them, we may also have our own health conditions. Please go to our website or link [here](#), to read some tips and on getting back to our new normal.

# Disability Awareness Day



Due to Government restrictions on holding large gatherings of people, as part of the COVID-19 social distancing rules, Warrington Disability Partnership were faced with the decision to re-schedule Disability Awareness Day (DAD 2020) from 12 July until 27 September. Sadly, as the restrictions are still in place, they have been forced to take the hard decision to cancel this year's live event.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, WDP have continued to receive queries from thousands of disabled people, carers and their families desperate for information, advice and guidance on mobility and independent living products and support services. In response, they have decided to develop an online virtual event, one that will be fully interactive and based on the DAD event attended by over 22,000 people each year.

Dave Thompson MBVE DL, Event Co-ordinator and CEO at WDP said, DAD-Virtual will go ahead on Sunday 25 October via a dedicated website [www.dadvirtual.org.uk](http://www.dadvirtual.org.uk) that is currently in development. Dave also said, this year's event will launch a week of complimentary events including a range of online workshops and seminars that will be held via Zoom, from Monday 26<sup>th</sup> till Friday 30<sup>th</sup>.

Dave and his team filmed a video at Walton Gardens that will be used to introduce people to the virtual event. During the video he explains that the online DAD will be as authentic as possible, incorporating the sights, sounds and experience of DAD live. It will provide a high quality, fully interactive, alternative way for exhibitors to provide the diverse range of information, advice and guidance about their products and support services that our regular visitors have come to expect. It will also allow us to reach out to more people for whom DAD will be a new experience.

Visitors will be able to explore the event site, and each exhibition stand will include, a short video introducing the organisation, as well as other promotional videos of their products and or services. Each exhibition stand will carry branded virtual pop up banners with links to their website and social media platforms. Visitors will be able to download promotional materials, leaflets and flyers, via PDF files.

Visitors on the day will be able to interact with the exhibitors via live chat and or emails. Visitors to the

charity exhibition stands can make a donation via a virtual collection bucket linked to an online site such as Justgiving.

The live chat facility will be available on the day between 10am and 4pm, afterwards, visitors will be able to communicate via email. The website will remain available until next year's live event on Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> July 2021, which will be a big year for the organisers, as it will be their 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of DAD and the 30<sup>th</sup> year for the charity WDP.

The exhibition areas will be complimented by usual DAD attractions including a performing arts marquee, featuring some of the UK's leading disability artists including the nationally recognised ELLA Performance Group who last year received their Queens Award for Voluntary Services live on stage at DAD.

A sports zone, will showcase organisations that offer a wide range of inclusive sports and hobbies including; wheelchair basketball, physical disability and learning disability rugby league, adapted scuba diving, martial arts, and more.

Visitors will find a short video with some of our main arena entertainers from past events. The site plan will allow visitors to take a look at the Walton Gardens Zoo, Heritage Yard, Walton Hall and recently renovated Orangery and Greenhouses.

The website is still under construction, so please visit regularly to see how it develops.

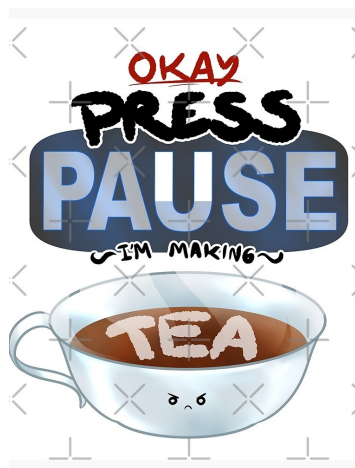
**Wired Carers Services will be there on our virtual stand.**



Virtual marquee

# Join us for Tea breaks at 10am

tea & chat  
via Zoom



10am–12noon Fridays;  
18th September,  
16th October,  
20th November  
Hope to see you then



For more information and Zoom  
login details please ring 01925 633492  
or email [wcsadmin1@wired.me.uk](mailto:wcsadmin1@wired.me.uk)

## How to use Zoom video chat

Zoom is a great way to stay connected with friends, family, and people you can't meet up with in person using a computer, laptop, smartphone or tablet. It allows you to call or video chat a person or a group of people.

[CLICK HERE](#) to download Zoom instructions in easyread format.



## Thursday 26 November 2020

The theme for Carers Rights Day 2020 has not yet been announced.

Wired Carers services usually run a live event at our Centre—unfortunately it won't be possible this year, our intention is to run a virtual event, please keep upto date by checking our website for more information.

**Carers Rights Day 2019 took place on Thursday November 21, with the theme of "Helping you find your way"**

Figures released for Carers Rights Day show two thirds of UK adults can expect to care unpaid for a loved one in their lifetime. Whilst women are taking on caring responsibilities a decade earlier than men. [View the full press release here.](#)

[READ THE FULL REPORT](#)

### About Carers Rights Day



Whether you are a new carer or have been caring for someone for a while, we believe that it's important that you understand your rights and are able to access the support that is available to you as soon as you need it. Each year, Carers Rights Day helps us:

- ensure carers are aware of their rights
- let carers know where to get help and support
- raise awareness of the needs of carers.

For Carers Rights Day 2019, we joined together with organisations from across the UK to help carers in their local communities find their way. Whether they were struggling with navigating a maze of health and social services, looking for places to access information, or finding they need extra support to cope with the pressures of caring.

**A CARERS STORY—at Wired Adult Carers Services, we are privileged to hear and support carers in some-times life-changing caring roles they take on. The bravery, stoicism and ability to ‘just get on with it’ amazes us all everyday—one of our carers put pen to paper to share her story, she said it helped. We hope her story helps everyone who reads it too.**

I have always loved caring – hence my career as a nurse for 36 years. I retired in 2016 and my husband and I were just getting used to our leisure time together, but this was brought to an abrupt end in 2018 when my husband sustained a spinal injury resulting in tetraplegia.

My initial relief that he had survived his accident led onto bereavement of what our life was previously, horror of what our life was going to be in the future and how would I cope with the change.

I can clearly remember the “hollowed out body” feeling as I drove away from the hospital that first night. I felt total despair, hopelessness and grief that seemed to come from a place so deep in my body that it physically shook me as I cried. But I had to go home and see to our dogs, the household chores, myself and be well for my husband - so I went through the motions and this enabled me to carry on.

Apart from the excellent support of my siblings, my saving grace was ensuring that I got involved in all aspects of my husbands’ care and rehabilitation. The hospital routine was a comfort to me as I had experienced it as a nurse. I continue to have routines at home now that still comfort me and allow me to keep ahead of my jobs to cope with inevitable disasters!

Throughout the hospital and rehabilitation stay— my husband and I worked with the staff to prepare us for discharge home after 4 months- or so we thought. Once home we inevitably felt more relaxed as we had our privacy back but my realisation of having to be a carer, a wife, a dog owner, a household owner, a driver, a cook, a cleaner and a

counsellor made the first five months absolutely fraught. I was so tired and emotionally friable. I seemed to be on the edge of crying all the time. I couldn’t cope with things outside of my routines and I genuinely thought I couldn’t manage this in the long-term.

That in itself was a stressor as I didn’t want anyone else coming in and caring for my husband.

Little by little things are improving. I was referred to a local carers group who contacted Social Services who completed a carers assessment and I

received money to help me employ a cleaner. This was so helpful to reduce my responsibilities and give me time for myself. My husband and I also started to change some of his care. This made both of our lives more enjoyable, made us feel as though we were taking back control again and made us stronger as a couple. We discussed the changes at our hospital appointments.

A huge stressor was my husbands GP surgery. We suffered their poor service for two months before we made a complaint and changed GP’s. We have never regretted this.

Even though my husband suffers with tetraplegia, he has limited movement in all his limbs. He has now passed a driving assessment so that he is the designated driver so reducing the jobs I am responsible for.

Holidays have been hard work for me as I have to do everything except the driving. This includes packing all the cases, the car, moving everything once at the destination then repeating this process when we come home. I am exhausted following this. Our home, garden and my husbands garage/ workshop are set out as

we like it now so any holiday destination has a lot to live up to. Following the accident - as individuals and as a couple we have had times of great emotional breakdown. At times we couldn’t support each other as we usually would as we were both grieving. It feels like two people drowning, holding onto each other but not able to help the one person you want to. We have learned that these periods do occur and we allow ourselves to go through them and not fight them - to help the healing process.

Initially leisure time together was reduced until we received an NHS electric chair. This helped to some degree but we have since invested in an off- road 4x4 wheelchair. It is amazing and allows us to go to all sorts of places – narrow, rigid gates being one of the main obstacles. The actual physical care of my husband hasn’t phased me at all except for my initial tiredness. As his strength and confidence has increased – he is able to help more with his care and household jobs. This has helped us both physically and psychologically.

Intimacy has changed between us, but it has been fun to see what works for us now! As a couple, this accident and my role as carer has been a challenging time in our marriage: but we have never faltered in our love or respect for each other. We are honest about and articulate our needs, feelings and gripes to clear the air. This allows us to improve the situation and move on. We would never have wished for this accident to happen to us, but now it has we intend to live a full and long life together.

# Owning a pet whilst caring

My husband and I have owned dogs for over 30 years now. But I did not appreciate their worth until my husband had a spinal injury resulting in tetraplegia, a hospital admission for 4 months and then discharge home with me as his carer. We were out with the dogs on the day of his accident and once he was taken away in the ambulance I had to consider the dogs and get them home safely and fed before I could go to the hospital. That time away from the immediate trauma of the accident was harrowing but calmed me enough to be safe driving to the hospital. Once we had the diagnosis of C3&4 spinal injury and my husband was transferred to high dependency until his operation- I was "wiped out" emotionally grieving the loss of our previous life, in terror of our future life and trepidation of how I would cope. The fact that once I was home the dogs needed care without me having to explain anything to them began the realisation of their importance of keeping me psychologically stable



for the whole of this process and even now. The activity of having the dogs company on dark winter morning walks

meant that I had to get up and dress to see to their needs and being outside in nature, in all weathers was so therapeutic. I was able to cry and scream

with them and they would stay by my side until I calmed down.



I took them to the hospital and found walks, this was excellent time away from the hospital and all it's implications of care.

The first time the dogs saw my husband at the hospital – the larger dog seemed to know not to jump up and they provided my husband with a look at home life even in hospital. I even stayed at the hospital over Christmas and New Year with the dogs. It was so good to be near my husband but have the dogs as some normality in that strange situation.

One family member kindly asked if they could look after the dogs for me while my husband was in hospital but the thought of going back to an empty house with nothing to get up early for was too much and I gently declined saying that the dogs were my saving grace.

The process of stroking and brushing them has kept my blood pressure down.

Once my husband was home - I carried on with the morning dog routine but I was too scared to be away from my husband for too long until we both got used to the timings of care. The dogs did not reproach me for having shorter walks initially.

Now we have an off road 4x4 wheelchair and the dogs love being with us out and about.

Having the company of my dogs keeps my mind occupied with things other than me and my 'jobs', for me that is priceless.

## WISE WORDS...

**Be grateful** for the good things in your life.

**Love** something that make you feel good.

Seek **help**.

**Celebrate** what you can.

Get a **hobby**.

**Pace** yourself and take control where you can.

Be **honest** but **kind**.

**Embrace** your loved ones.

**Embrace and celebrate yourself as a carer.**

**Caring** is a hard but privileged role,

**And** one that may be

**Restrictive** but good for the soul.

**Express** yourself by finding your 'fun',

**Stay** sane, supported and face to the sun!

*Pages 6 & 7 written by  
Jane*

# The Kindness Diary: What I celebrate as a young adult carer

**The Kindness Diary is part of an ongoing series celebrating the things young people are doing to be kind (both big and small). This month features the story of Rosario, a young adult carer.**

Hi I'm Rosario, I help care for my mum who suffers from mental illness. I have recently finished studying for Social Policy Masters at university in York. I want other young adult carers to feel the goals they want to achieve are possible and that they aren't alone. Family always comes first for me.

## **Caring for someone with a mental health condition**

My mum's illness has made us closer. My role as a carer can be subtle and might include alerting my dad or a mental health professional to changes in my mum's behaviour or mood to support her. It requires a non-judgemental attitude and understanding of how much reassurance and support helps in different instances. I am passionate about raising awareness, specifically about being a carer for someone with mental illness, as I feel it's not discussed enough in society.

Being a young adult carer has helped me to develop my emotional and inner life and understanding of other people. I care for my mum, who suffers from Schizophrenia and Bipolar. Her illness has made me realise that people's differences need to be accepted and celebrated, including my own. My experience as a carer has also helped me judge people less and be aware that they could be going through difficulties that may not be obvious to others.

## **We need to open up about mental health**

I feel society puts too much of an emphasis on presenting a perfect facade and would love to see people opening up about mental health more. On visiting my mum in a psychiatric hospital, she and the patients didn't behave in a 'normal' way. However, I witnessed greater kindness and humour than in my day-to-

day-life. This experience has given me the drive to want to help de-stigmatise mental illness and reduce ignorance about it, to help those suffering as well as to help their loved ones feel less alone. This article is one of the first steps on this journey!

## **The best things about being a young adult carer**

Although being a young carer poses its challenges, I feel lucky to have the learning opportunities that arise from my situation. Being a young adult carer has definitely taught me to be determined. Despite hiccups with university and in my personal life, I have bounced back! If my mum can keep going despite her illness, so can I. My friends often come to me for a listening ear when they have problems and call me sensitive and kind. I feel that this is partly something I have developed due to my mum's illness. Often, I will be on the lookout for slight changes in mood and behaviour, and one of my main ways of caring for her is providing emotional support.

Something I celebrate is that despite going to a uni, where people often came from privileged backgrounds, I was independent and single-minded in getting there. I never had anyone drive me hundreds of miles up the country with expensive kitchen appliances on my arrival and my parents weren't able to attend my graduation, but I did these things myself.





# The Kindness Diary: What I celebrate as a young adult carer

At times I've felt like I haven't made the most of my opportunities, but now I realise everyone has a different timeline and it's helpful to myself and others to be honest about this, and about the fact I've done things in my own way; with the circumstances I've had, this is an achievement. A positive of being a carer as a young adult is meeting support workers at my local Carers Centre. They have helped me feel like someone cares. Being a carer has given me the ability to be independent, but that has also meant an unwillingness to ask for help. This has begun to change recently though. Being involved with the charity has helped to give me a space to be more open about my situation. I hardly spoke about it to anyone before and feel confident in my personal life to share it now. I have learnt about other young carers' experiences and I would like to help other young people see the positives and feel proud of their dedication.

## How to find support as a young carer or young adult carer

Find support from other carers by joining [The Mix's young carer group chats](#).

Read The Mix's article to find [tips on managing your money as a young carer](#).

Read The Mix's guide to [caring for someone with a mental health condition](#).

Get specialist help and support for young carers and young adult carers from the [Carers Trust](#). [Carers Trust](#) is a major charity for, with and about carers. They work to improve support, services and recognition for anyone living with the challenges of unpaid caring.

[Carers UK](#) equips carers with practical help and advice. Meet others in the same position and get the support you need by joining Carers UK's online forum.

If you're under 25 and would like free confidential telephone counselling from The Mix to help you figure things out complete [this form](#) and we'll call you to arrange your first session.

Chat about this subject on our [Discussion Boards](#).



## Agencies providing advice, support and information

- **3hFund : 01892 860207, [www.3hfund.org.uk](http://www.3hfund.org.uk)**  
A charity which makes it possible for disabled people, children and adults to have a memorable and fulfilling holiday enabling the carer to have a break from caring. Can provide grants to families on a low income with a physically or mentally disabled dependant to have a modest holiday in the UK.
- **Carers Direct : 0300 123 1053 [www.nhs.uk/carersdirect](http://www.nhs.uk/carersdirect)** Free confidential Information for carers on all aspects of caring.
- **Carers UK - CarersLine : 080 8808 7777 [www.carersuk.org](http://www.carersuk.org)** Information and advice on all aspects of caring, including advice on welfare rights, benefits and community care issues. Network of offices, branches and contacts offer support to carers.
- **Carers Trust : [www.carers.org](http://www.carers.org)**  
Online support and advice for carers
- **OMEGA : 01743 245 088 [www.omega.uk.net](http://www.omega.uk.net)**  
Work with family care-givers, people nearing the end of life, bereaved, socially isolated individuals, frail and the elderly. Information and support and The Chatterbox telephone befriending service.
- **The Stroke Association : 0303 3033 100 [www.stroke.org.uk](http://www.stroke.org.uk)** Will provide information on caring for someone who has had a stroke.
- **Revitalise : 0303 303 0145 [www.revitalise.org.uk](http://www.revitalise.org.uk)**  
Vitalise is a national charity providing short breaks (respite care) for disabled people, visually impaired people and their carers.

# Easy ways to help someone with dementia make the most of their garden

relax – a large evergreen tree could work too. The more options you can offer to prevent them getting wet and cold, the more likely they are to stay outside for longer.

**Find out how to turn your garden into a safe haven that your loved one will really enjoy spending time in.** Gardens can be wonderfully therapeutic for everyone. They're a place to unwind, enjoy fresh air, sunlight and maybe do a spot of pruning or planting. There's no reason why someone with dementia can't enjoy these same simple pleasures.

## Why gardens are great

1. Gardens don't just offer a change of scenery, they also boost health. Exposure to mild sunlight provides the body with vitamin D, which can keep bones healthy and protect against diseases such as multiple sclerosis, diabetes and cancer.
2. Studies have shown that gardens (and gardening) can help beat depression and the blues, reduce stress and anxiety and lower blood pressure.
3. Gardens that stimulate all the senses (known as sensory gardens) are particularly beneficial to someone with dementia. For example, being able to see, smell, or touch a favourite flower or plants can contribute greatly to emotional wellbeing.

## Your garden checklist

- 1) Are gates and fences safe and secure?
- 2) Is there somewhere to shelter?
- 3) Are there things to do if they want to be busy?
- 4) Is there a pathway to stroll around?
- 5) Does it stimulate the senses?

**1. Are gates and fences secure? Why:** First things first, if you're going to be encouraging the person you're caring for to potter around in the garden you need to make sure they're safe, especially if they're prone to wandering.

– Fix holes in fences and fit gates at the bottom of the garden with a key so you have the choice to lock them if necessary.

– If you're still worried about them getting lost, you could place shrubs in front of the garden gate to hide it from obvious view.



**2. Is there somewhere to shelter? Why:** Don't let the unpredictable UK weather spoil or limit the amount of time the person you're caring for can spend in the garden. Whilst nobody wants to sit outside in the pouring rain, a bit of drizzle or a cool breeze doesn't have to mean going back inside if there's a sheltered area

If you can, consider installing a small wooden gazebo to provide shelter from the elements, as well as a place to

**3. Is there plenty to do? Why:** Whilst some people are happy to sit and admire their garden, others (especially those who used to be very keen gardeners) will want to keep busy, and could become very frustrated and agitated if they discover everything's been done for them!



– Weeding and planting are great activities, as they provide a sense of purpose and satisfaction. If they struggle to bend over or kneel, raised flower beds are a good idea. If they're physically fit enough, consider other activities such as raking up leaves, digging and mowing the lawn

**4. Is there a pathway to stroll around? Many people with dementia enjoy to walk 'with purpose' but can become frustrated and confused if they keep losing their way.**



Creating a simple path that winds around the garden is a great way to help them enjoy their walk without getting stressed.

– If the garden path is in the shape of a loop, they can simply follow it round

and end up where they started. A path can be created using flowerbeds, freestanding plant pots and trellis archways.

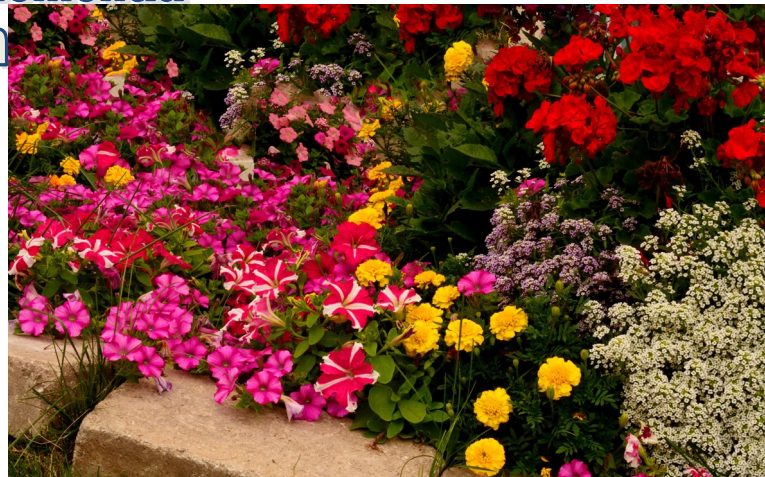
– Make sure there is enough support along the way for them to stay safe and rest if they want to. For example, place a garden bench near the pathway so they can sit down, and make sure steps are safe and have rails if necessary.

# Easy ways to help someone with dementia make the most of their garden

**5. Does it stimulate the senses?** Gardens which appeal to all five senses can be hugely enjoyable and stimulating. Visual appeal of favourite plants and flowers is pretty obvious, but consider smells, sounds, touch and taste too.

**Consider:**

- Smell: Plant flower and plants with distinctive scents such as roses, lavender or mint. Scent can be a very powerful tool for reminiscence therapy and may trigger some very happy memories.
- Touch: Flowers and plants that have fuzzy or textured leaves can be satisfying to touch or stroke, but watch out for those with spines or thorns.
- Sound: Listening to a wind chime, or plants and grasses moving in the breeze, can be very calming. Consider planting nectar producing plants to encourage birds into your garden and install a bird bath too.



- Taste: Edible plants that are easy to grow in the garden can be very satisfying and a great sensory experience. Go for soft fruits such as strawberries and blackberries or herbs that can be picked and served for dinner.

Remember to only plant shrubs and flowers that are safe to eat (even if they're not designed to be eaten) just in case the person your caring for gets mixed up.

# Update from Carers U-Knitted

Although our Carers U-knitted Group have been unable to meet face to face at The Centre for sometime, they have kept in touch and very busy knitting and crocheting.

In spite of their caring roles sometimes being extremely hard at this time, members have made some pram blankets in mosaic crochet, others have been busy sewing, making masks, bunting, shopping bags and baby bags that have been kitted out with wet wipes and nappies. There has been crocheting too, some Wallace and Gromit figures are fabulous. They've been making wreaths, for babies, Halloween and Christmas, it's never too early!

The Volunteers who run the group have been working with with representatives from Nationwide



Building Society, who have been making Twiddlemuffs (for dementia patients at the hospital), and they have been given quite a stash of wool and

accessories to continue and are going to have a go at hats for the homeless next.



Since last July the group have managed to raise quite a lot of money for Noddfa (the retreat for carers in Wales the group and Wired carers regularly visited, they are really going to need it as they have been closed all this time).

There's been a successful living room window showroom selling knitted items. The word got round the neighbourhood!

Because of lockdown the group haven't been able to support any of the charities they normally do as they are not able to take any donations.

Five of the group met last Monday, they had hoped to sit in a garden, unfortunately the heavens opened and they had to go indoors, managing to keep to the social distancing rule and had a wonderful few hours catching up, so much nicer face to face rather than on a screen.

**Carers U-knitted want to let everyone know they are thinking of them and hope everyone is keeping well.**

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