Case Study

Dementia friendly sports clubs and venues

How we involve people?

Informing | Engaging | Co-creation | Co-production | Consulting

What did we do?

People affected by dementia have been instrumental in the development of new dementia friendly initiatives for sports clubs and venues. Led by the Strategic Change team, there has been a concerted effort to focus on lived experience and being person-centred.

We began the project by creating of a steering group. We brought together like-minded people affected by dementia with interests in a variety of sports. The intention of the group was to share experience, skills, and knowledge to help inform the development of the project. The group met monthly on-line /face to face.

With a steering group formed, they, and further people affected by dementia, were embedded into the development of new projects. These were:
o a dementia friendly guidance publication for sports clubs and venues.
o a training programme for frontline staff at sports clubs, venues, and events.
o the development of assessment tools for auditing sports clubs and venues.
o the creation of a dementia friendly template for flagship national stadia.

What difference did involvement make?

By involving people affected by dementia we made our projects relevant, accessible, and acceptable for both them and our wider audience.
By taking the time to share people's lived experience and being involved in project creation, this added credibility to our recommendations. Because of this, sports clubs and venues involved have understood the benefits of implementing involvement in their dementia projects.
By involving people at each stage and being as iterative, we could eliminate our own biases and open new possibilities in each project.

What did we learn?

Embrace facilitation and do not be afraid to take risks. Use set questions to drive conversation, but let tangents develop and keep it open-ended. You never know when a pearl of wisdom will come up that changes your whole approach.
Communicate openly, honestly, and often. Give options for how you, and they, can do this and ask for feedback on how you are doing.
Manage your boundaries. make sure people understand your ‘open hours’, as they can be very enthusiastic.
Don’t look for excuses for people affected by dementia to not get involved.

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As part of our Help and Hope strategy people affected by dementia are offered opportunities to have their voice heard, helping to shape and influence the work of Alzheimer’s Society.

Alzheimer’s Society