

Dementia and Everyday Life

#1: The Newspaper



Improving
Dementia Care
ESRC • NIHR



You can find out more about living with dementia by contacting:

The Alzheimer Society on the National Dementia Helpline:
0300 222 11 22

Or by going to the website: <https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/>

Age UK on 0800 055 6112

Or by going to the website: <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/>

The NHS has produced a Dementia Guide that is available on its website:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/dementia/about/>

About this booklet

This booklet has been produced from a research project investigating how neighbourhoods can support people living with dementia. Called 'Neighbourhoods: Our People, Our Places', the research has taken place across Greater Manchester (England), the Forth Valley (Scotland), and Ostergötland (Sweden). The research has been interested in finding out how people living with dementia and their families experience their neighbourhoods. It has been exploring the ways that neighbourhoods have potential for enabling people living with dementia to live independently in their local communities. It has also been looking at the types of challenges people face day to day. This booklet depicts some of the stories told to the research team by people living with dementia in Greater Manchester.

We have aimed to have a collaborative approach, working alongside people living with dementia and their care partners. People living with dementia have been involved at various stages of the research development, including input into the research methods and information materials. A number of people living with dementia worked with us as research participants and advisors throughout the study.

We are finding ways to tell the stories from the research in creative ways. Many of our collaborators, particularly those living with dementia, wanted a way of telling their stories in an illustrative form that is less reliant on text to share information and key messages.

About the authors

This booklet has been created by Dominique Brouwers in collaboration with researchers and participants in the ESRC/NIHR Neighbourhoods: Our People, Our Places study.

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A note on authorship

We would also like to thank others who have acted in the capacity of advisor but who have chosen not to be named here.

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The Newspaper

Here we share Lily's story which brings together examples shared by a number of our participants. Lily was diagnosed with vascular dementia five years ago. Now in her early 80s, Lily is a social person who enjoys 'looking out' for others. She leads a fulfilling life amongst her friends and family and has become involved in different dementia support and campaigning groups. Several times a week she uses her local shops that are a short walk from her home. She is now recognized by, and recognises, shopkeepers and other local residents as she goes about her regular walks. On her trips to the shops she often collects a newspaper for another older neighbour in her block of flats who is less able to get out. Lily's access to her neighbourhood is supported through the relationships she has built over the years with her neighbours, local shop keepers, dog walkers and other familiar strangers who she stops to chat with on her walks to the shops.

Living with dementia brings challenges. Sometimes it can be difficult to be out and about when living with dementia. Some days, familiar places may look unfamiliar. It can be difficult to get on with everyday activities. Remembering what you have gone to the shop for, or finding the right money can be challenging. Positive connections and little acts of kindness by others can make these challenges less difficult. For instance, being recognised in the local area, the patience and gentle support of people who work in local shops and services. Along with being seen by familiar faces on the street can help relieve the worries associated with becoming disorientated.

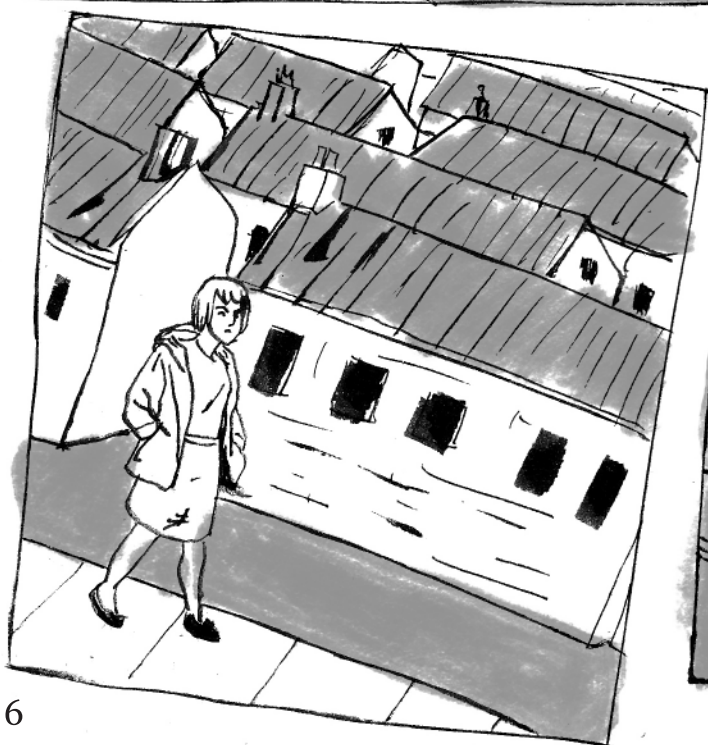
People living with dementia are still able to support others and offer kindness. It shows how familiarity and connections with others can help someone feel orientated and a little safer. So too, can people living with dementia play a role in maintaining the social life of local places, undertaking small acts of kindness themselves for neighbours and friends.

We hope that this story helps you to think about how people living with dementia can remain active locally and consider how supporting others can make neighbourhoods inclusive and safe for everyone.

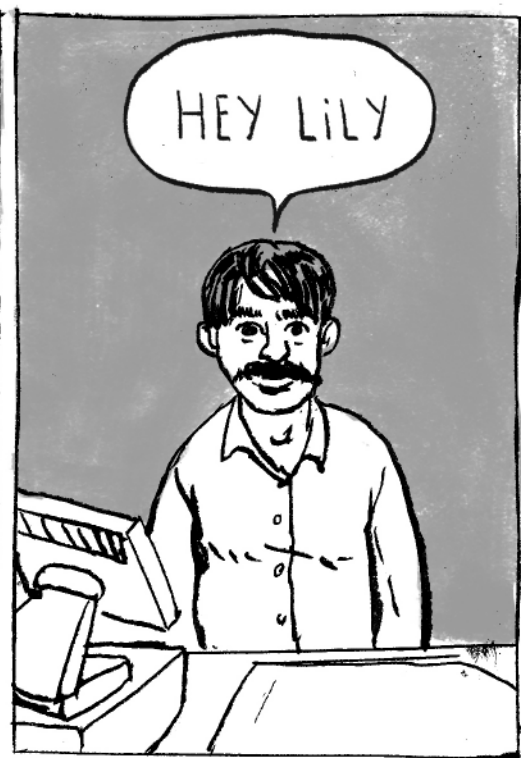
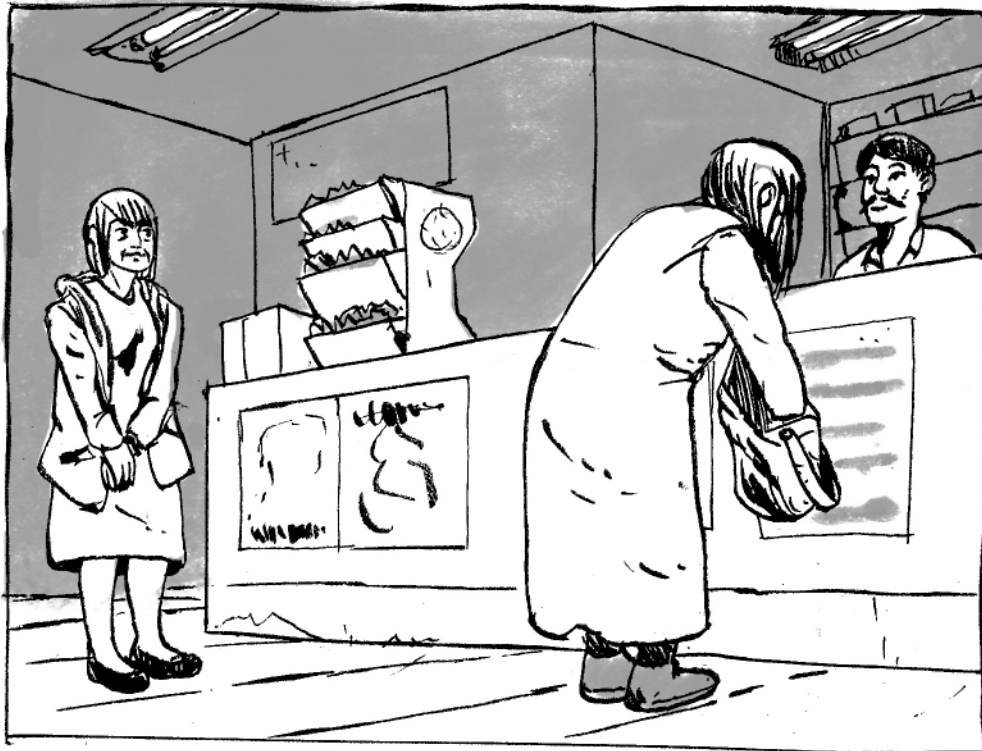
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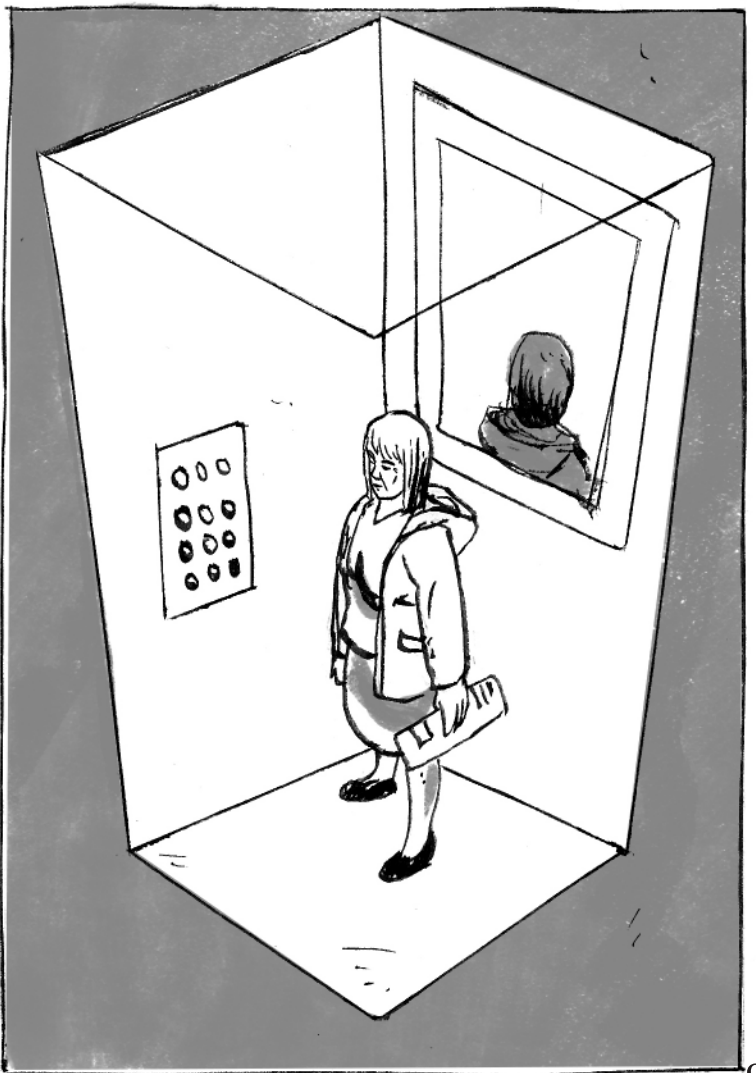


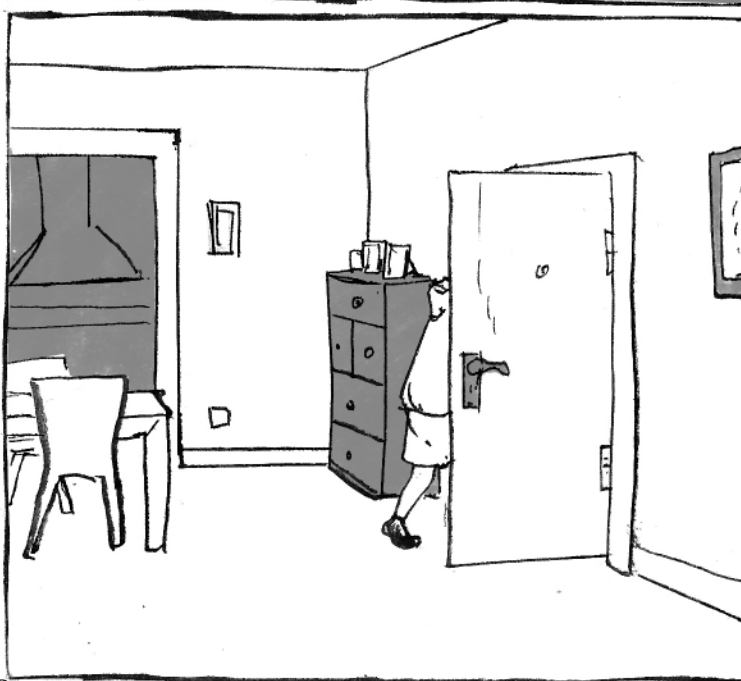
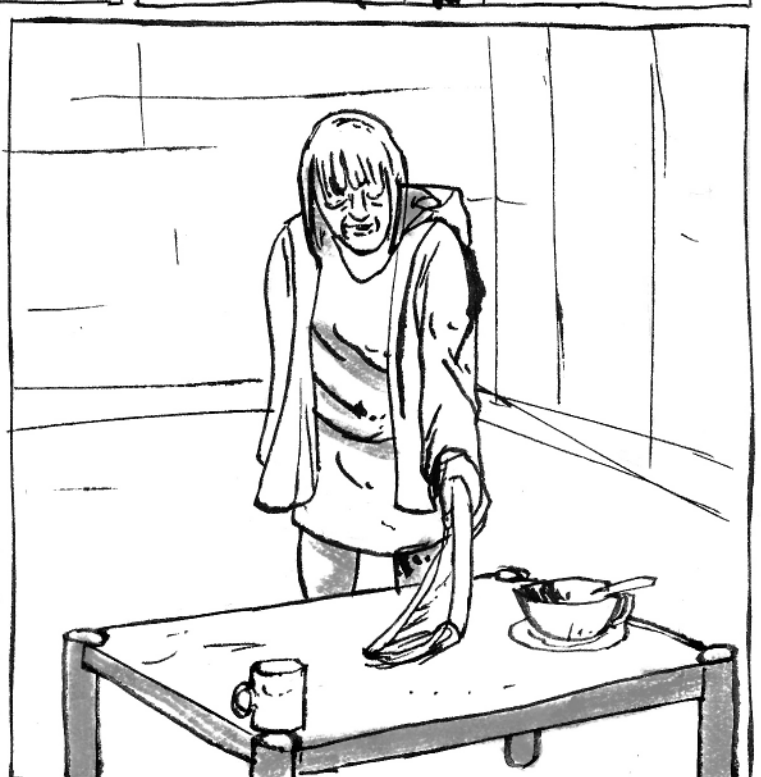


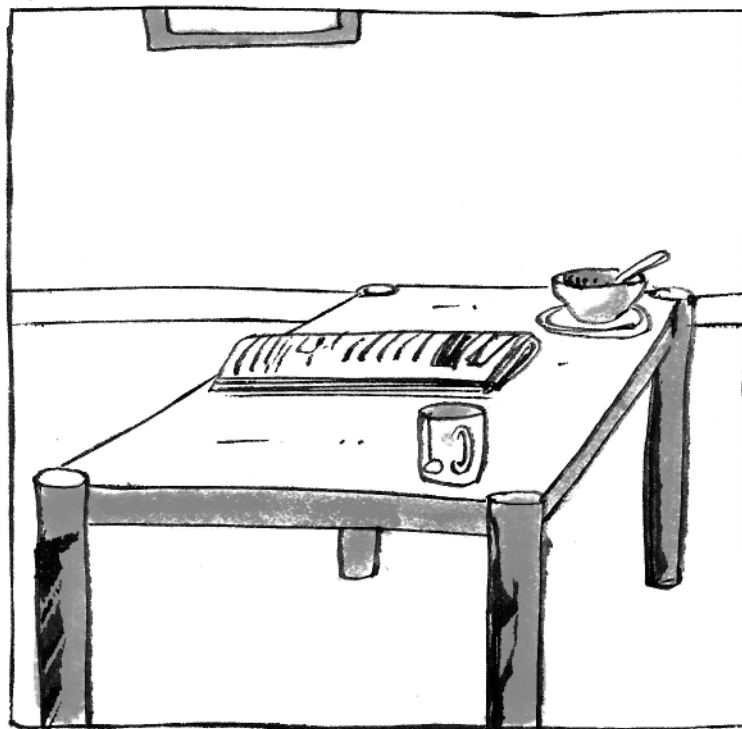
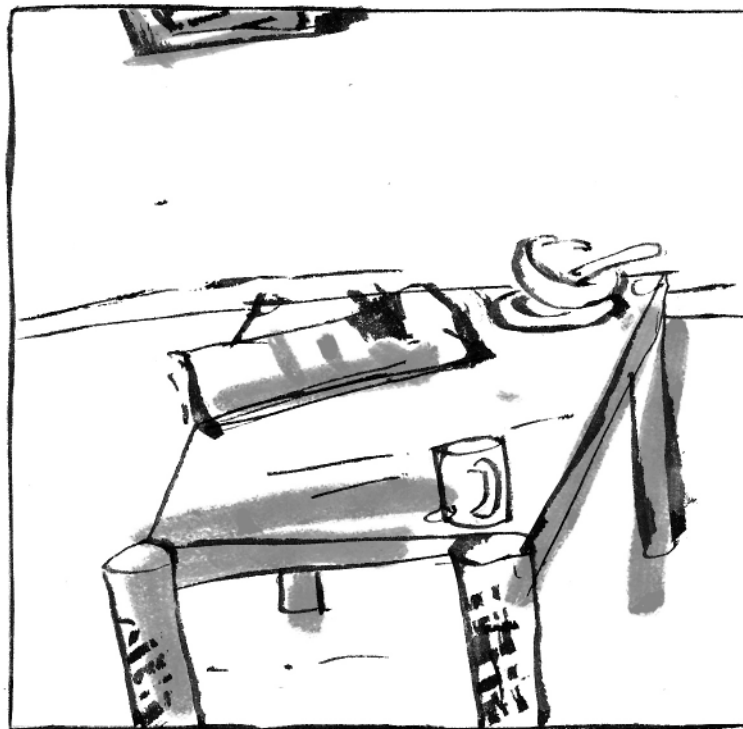












Dementia Support Day to Day

People living with dementia can feel vulnerable as their condition progresses and they increasingly rely on other people to do things for them and with them. It is important that people who have dementia feel reassured and supported, while retaining some level of independence. Local places can play a role in this.

There is currently no known cure for the condition and although some symptoms are common to many people with dementia, each person's experience of living with dementia and how they cope with it will be different. These ideas and suggestions will not suit everybody, and they are small in scale and scope. They have been suggested to us by people who are living with dementia or supporting others with the condition as helpful ways of keeping as independent as possible.

Try to stay connected. Neighbourhoods are about people as well as places. Local relationships can provide important everyday support as well as assistance in times of need. Neighbours can be a useful point of call, from taking out rubbish to keeping an eye on someone.



Local businesses and services can help maintain a sense of being connected. Sometimes it can help to carry a card to let others know that you have dementia. You can find more information here:

alzheimers.org.uk/get-support/publications-and-fact-sheets/helpcards

Neighbourhood routines.

Try to keep up habits and routines to stay connected locally. These might be regular dog-walks, visiting the same cafés, regularly attending a dementia support groups, or even a short walk along a familiar route. These help you to become recognized locally



and to create a sense of belonging. Regularly visiting local shops such as the bakers or newsagents can foster friendly local relationships. Attending local dementia groups can be an important way to stay connected, to create new routines and to meet new people. Local businesses can help customers feel welcome, providing assistance with money, making purchases, or just by being patient or letting someone sit for a while on their premises.

Little acts of kindness.

Kindness helps people to feel connected, cared for and give something back. Acts of kindness are often carried out without comment and enable people to continue to live independently. People living with dementia can reciprocate support and play their own role in supporting the social life of local places.



Try to continue to contribute to your own neighbourhoods, visit local shops, keep an eye out in your street, and continue to care for other family members, friends, or pets in whatever ways you can.

Staying in.

If you are less able to get out and about it is still possible to enjoy connections to others through visitors to your home. Sometimes hearing the sounds of the neighbourhood, or the feeling of sunshine through the window can be just as important.

Neighbours popping by, a chat over the garden fence or a conversation with a delivery person all have a part to play. Being able to see and hear the goings on can help. Sitting in the front garden or near a window are small ways in which people can feel more connected to others.



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