



ENLIVEN 2nd Knowledge Exchange Forum, 19th October 2022

Fun and enjoyment: the visitor experience for people living with dementia

The second ENLIVEN Knowledge Exchange Forum took place online on 19th October. We came together to discuss how different people experience fun and enjoyment when visiting tourist attractions and nature-based sites, and to learn more about how these spaces can be responsive to different needs. The team were grateful to everyone who came along and shared their ideas and experiences.

Attendees consisted of people living with dementia and their carers and supporters, businesses and other organisations who provide nature-based activities, tourist venues and representatives from the ENLIVEN team (see below for list of organisations present).

The agenda consisted of two inspirational presentations: the first from Sally Stratton (Learning Manager) and Claire Leighton (Community Development Manager) at Strawberry Hill House and Garden, and the second from Kim Klug (Community Partnerships Manager) at Historic Royal Palaces.

These were interspersed with open discussion sessions, facilitated by Steve Milton (Innovations in Dementia). The event was chaired by Professor Stephen Page (University of Hertfordshire, ENLIVEN Co-Investigator).

Presentation 1: Strawberry Hill House and Garden

Sally Stratton and Claire Leighton

Sally and Claire gave a short talk introducing SHH's 'feel good garden' which endeavours to create a 'safe and non-judgement environment in a calm and beautiful setting.' Sally and Claire described their work to create an environment that 'encourages people to leave their troubles at the gate' and facilitate diverse forms of sociability.

Presentation 2: Historic Royal Palaces

Kim Klug

Kim provided an overview of the Sensory Palaces sessions run by HRP. She discussed aspirations to develop trails and guides that do not require the same level of facilitation as the Sensory Palace initiatives, empowering participants to navigate and experience the environment in accordance with their own pace, rhythm and interests.

Key points and themes from the discussions included the importance of:

- Engaging the senses (sights, sounds, smells and touch);
- The value of both active and passive forms of provision to support wellbeing – e.g., ‘being there,’ ‘being together’ and the satisfaction and sense of achievement that comes from trying something new;
- Being alert to the needs and experiences of those in a caring, supporting or companionship role;
- The importance of clear information and greater specificity regarding what dementia friendly provision actually means; this is an important part in alleviating the pre-visit labour that goes into preparing carers, supporters and older people living with cognitive impairment to benefit from getting out;
- The challenge of organisational risk aversion and competing organisational priorities;
- The importance of putting in place structures and processes that place the voices and perspectives of older people living with cognitive impairment and end-users at the heart of decision making.

Partner organisations represented:

Historic Royal Palaces

Strawberry Hill House and Garden

Disabled Ramblers

Kew Gardens

Lost Gardens of Heligan

Historic England

10 people living with dementia and supporters/carers attended.

10 ENLIVEN project team members also attended.

We were pleased to facilitate making connections between our PPIE (Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement) participants and businesses in attendance and support following these up after the event.