

dementia adventure®

## Wood if we could -

Enabling groups to benefit  
from visiting woods

**VisitWoods.org.uk**









# Wood if we could

A practical guide to leading group adventures and visits to woodland



## Acknowledgements

The authors of this guide (Neil Mapes and Tony Vale) would like to express their deep appreciation to the people living with dementia, their families and the activity co-ordinators and care home managers who took part in this project.

This guide has been collaboratively produced after carefully listening to the participants of the workshops and the woodland adventure.

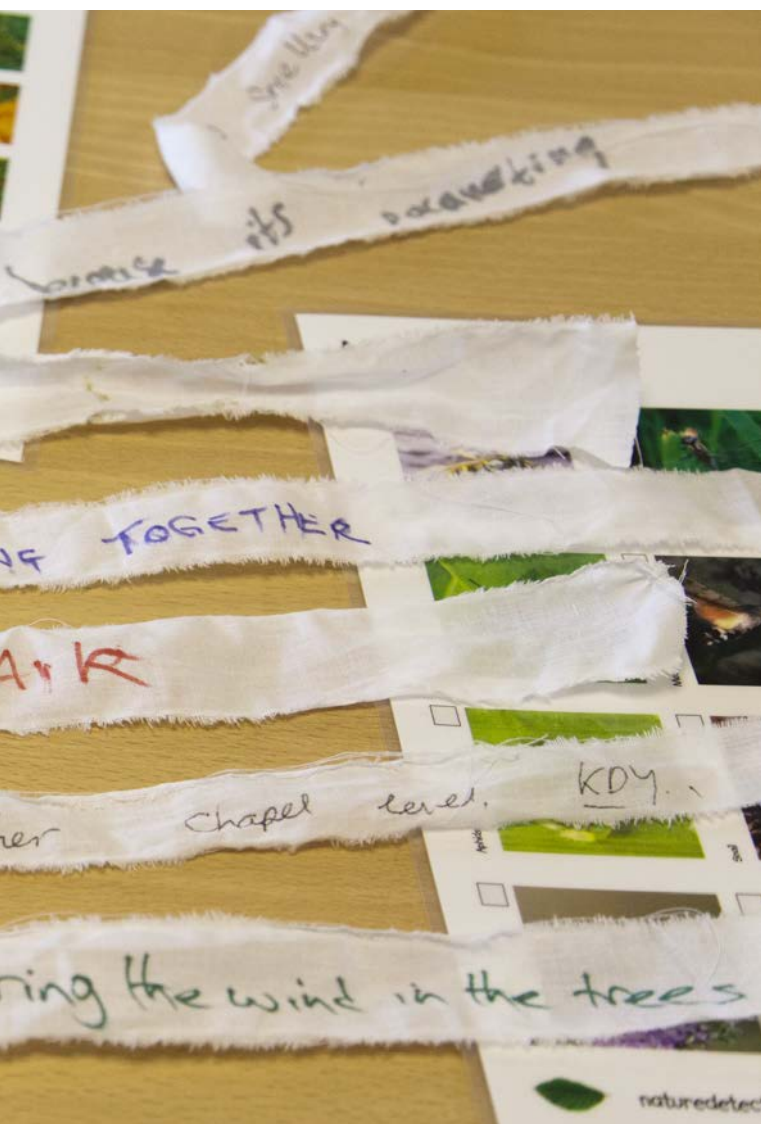
The practical nature of this guide is a testament to the willingness and interest of these individuals and groups who have shown that it is possible to enable people living with dementia to get out and enjoy the benefits of woodland.

We would also like to thank Gayle Wharton and Gail Graham from the VisitWoods team at the Woodland Trust who have fully supported this project with both energy and careful consideration.

We would additionally like to thank Gayle Wharton for supporting the woodland adventure in person which took place during Dementia Awareness week in May 2012 and to Gail Graham for her expertise in commenting on and helping to revise drafts of this guide.



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The result of a partnership between the VisitWoods team at the Woodland Trust, Dementia Adventure CIC, and Tony Vale at Activity Team, this guide builds on the successful pilot project which Dementia Adventure led in 2011. This pilot was called “Wandering in the Woods”. The report, which outlines the physical, social and emotional benefits of woodland visits for people living with dementia, along with the three supporting films, is available at [www.dementiaadventure.co.uk](http://www.dementiaadventure.co.uk).

VisitWoods, Dementia Adventure and Activity Team shared a vision that it is possible for people living with dementia to safely and enjoyably benefit from visiting woodland. The reality for many people living with dementia in care settings is that they often have little or no access to woodland. At the same time there are some extremely committed staff and family members who are successfully enabling small groups of residents to get out into nature. We all strongly felt that there are solutions and practical resources, which if collated and shared, would lead to more people living with dementia in care settings to benefit from visiting woodland, as well as other natural spaces.

## About this guide

This enabling, informative and practical guide is aimed at older people and people living with dementia, who can often find themselves excluded from participating in or enjoying activity out in woodland. This adaptable and engaging resource helps to:

- Provide inspiration and information to enjoy woodland activity
- Outline the benefits of woodland activities
- Reduce the perceptions of barriers to accessing woodland
- Increase confidence in accessing woodland by sharing solutions to common barriers
- Share resources to help group leaders to visit woods
- Provides inspiration and resources to help group leaders plan visits to other green space/natural settings

The guide is also available online and the authors welcome feedback, comments and other helpful resources which we can share to keep this work relevant and up to date.

# Introduction and background



## Who is this guide for?

Anyone who belongs to a group which is made up of older people, people living with dementia or disabled people sharing activities together. It is especially aimed at those individuals in formal or informal leadership roles within these social groups, for example activity co-ordinators and care home managers. This guide is also intended to be used by people in informal leadership roles who are living and working in settings that are not formally 'health and social care' organisations.

## How to use the guide

After outlining the background to the project, this guide details the perceived barriers and everyday solutions to getting people living with dementia out into woods. It then details the information needed **before you go**, before moving onto **exploring the wood** and **sharing your visit**. Towards the end there is a list of useful resources, focusing in particular on nature-based resources, as well as **group leader templates** which can be downloaded and used as practice resources for enabling group adventures to take place. You may want to use this guide from start to finish or simply go straight to the section of most interest to you.



## Why Woods?

Woods are a fantastic, low cost resource for leisure and health but they're sometimes overlooked when we're planning a day out. Over half of us live within 4 km of a wood. There are over 11,500 woods in the UK which welcome visitors, and [www.visitwoods.org.uk](http://www.visitwoods.org.uk) makes it easier than ever to find somewhere new to explore.

Woods offer something for everyone. No two places are the same and visiting woods is a real breath of fresh air if you usually spend most of your time or meet indoors. Spending time outdoors together is a great way to get your group talking, sharing experiences and memories.

Research shows spending time in and taking activity in green spaces is great for our physical health, mental health and general well-being. Woods specifically offer us space to:

- relax away from noise and stress
- spend quality time together with friends or family
- exercise at our own pace
- connect with nature
- try new activities
- indulge all of our senses
- enjoy our hobbies somewhere new
- be ourselves

Woods are different every time we visit. Each season brings different wildlife, plants, sounds, and sensations – a real feast for the senses. For a shady spot on a hot day or a scenic trail for a winter stroll, woods are ideal. For people looking to try something new, [www.visitwoods.org.uk](http://www.visitwoods.org.uk) helps different groups to find places suited to their needs.



Photo credit: Dementia Adventure



## Why Dementia and the care home sector?

As human beings we all have a basic fundamental need for connection and contact with nature. We believe a regular connection to nature is an essential element of what it means to live well. Trees and woodland environments enable a connection with nature that is emotional, practical and is deeply ingrained in our collective history. At the same time many of these valuable environments, including our native woodland, are under threat and many older people in particular can find it difficult to access or fully benefit from the benefits of woods and being around trees.

People living with dementia in care settings could perhaps be one of the groups in our society most in need of what woodland offers, namely space for stimulation, contemplation and restoration.

We chose to focus this project specifically on people living with dementia living in care settings. Our working assumption was that if we can enable people living with dementia living in care settings to get into woods, arguably some of the most excluded people in our society, then what we learn from this will help a range of individuals and groups who may find it difficult to get out into woodland. The information contained in this guide is specifically aimed at people living with dementia in care settings and woodland activity in particular, however most of the information and resources are equally applicable to enabling groups of people to access a range of natural spaces.

## Benefits of visiting woods

There is an increasing bank of evidence which informs us that nature is good for us. Additionally there are a number of organisations and researchers who have evidenced why being active out in nature is particularly beneficial for people living with dementia. Dementia Adventure gathered this evidence in February 2011 in a report called *"Living with dementia and connecting with nature – looking back and stepping forwards, exploring the benefits of green exercise for people living with dementia."* This report was then followed up by Dementia Adventure in the VisitWoods pilot project completed in July 2011, in partnership with Caring Homes called *"Wandering in the Woods."* Both of these reports and the accompanying films are available at [www.dementiaadventure.co.uk](http://www.dementiaadventure.co.uk). The evidence gathered in these reports showed that there are significant potential physical, social and emotional benefits for people living with dementia in care settings getting out into woodland, including:

### Physical benefits:

- Improved sleep
- Improved dietary intake
- Increased verbal communication

### Emotional benefits:

- Mood enhancement
- Stronger sense of self
- Having more control

### Social benefits:

- Sense of belonging
- Community presence and activity
- Co-incidental positive social encounters

Dementia Adventure convened two separate workshops with activity co-ordinators, care home managers and family carers as part of this work. 38 people participated in the workshops. We asked people to identify the barriers of getting their residents out in woodland and identify the potential solutions to overcoming these barriers. We gathered information using a questionnaire as well as in small focus groups within the workshops. We found that there were little if no consistent barriers across the members of the group. For example, for some members access to transport was a major barrier, for others this was not a barrier at all because they had their own bus. The availability of staff and volunteers to support outings was the only barrier which had any amount of consensus but again some homes reported having no difficulty with this. The identified barriers and solutions which emerged are summarised below:

## Identifying barriers

- Accessible facilities at woodland (e.g. accessible toilets) – particularly for wheelchair users, rest areas and suitable benches (not picnic benches), suitable pathways
- Activities – things to do in the woodland
- Availability of family carers and volunteers
- Availability of staff to support the adventure
- Capacity of residents
- Concerns about the behaviour of group members while out
- Funding
- Medical and health concerns
- No mobile phone service – for emergencies
- Parking – near to facilities and features of woodland
- Transport – access and reliability (including drivers)
- Weather

# Barriers and solutions to getting out into woodland





Photo credit: Jo Hanley

## Identifying Solutions – overcoming barriers: What works?

- Ask people not on shift to volunteer or pay them extra time
- Conduct a risk assessment and carry out an exploratory visit – be prepared for all eventualities, research what is available at the woodland, plan ahead, phone ahead to double check on or near the day, ensure first aider is present, plan a route to take through the woodland
- Equipment e.g. mobile phones, umbrellas, blankets, wheelchair capes and covers
- Feeding the ducks and other animal based activities
- Fundraising and family contributing funds and transport
- Have one person 'in charge' of the walk
- Involve family and friends – ask for help e.g. from relative support groups
- Public transport or taxis
- Realistic assessment of what residents are able to do, manage expectations, know your residents well (e.g. life stories)
- Sharing of transport e.g. community mini buses
- Spread information about the best places to go and things to do while there
- Start with small groups which are more manageable
- Take a picnic lunch and drinks so food timings and location is flexible
- Visiting places with indoor facilities e.g. garden centre



A good woodland experience for people living dementia starts with prior planning and research. *"Plan for the unexpected"* came up as a phrase both during the workshops and on the adventure which took place as part of this project. We can prepare ourselves and others before we go to the woodland for the adventure. We encourage people to adopt a 'team' approach to their prior planning, starting with forming the adventure team who will lead and support the adventure outing.

## Forming the adventure team

Consider who is going to be on your team. What will their involvement be in planning and carrying out the adventure? How will the team work together before you go out? Which people do you know who've an interest or passion in the great outdoors? These questions and more can be considered when forming your team, you may want to include some or all of the following before you go:

- Activity co-ordinator and care home manager
- Community volunteers
- Family carers
- Supportive local organisations
- Other staff from the care home (on and/or off duty)
- People living with dementia
- Venue/woodland location staff and volunteers

# Before you go



## Preparing for the adventure

*"Prior planning and preparation prevents poor performance."*

The quote above is adapted from a military adage. Your adventure need not feel like a military operation but there are various operational tasks which need careful consideration. Follow these logical steps and add in your own tasks to create your own preparation list:

- Identify woodland location using [www.visitwoods.org.uk](http://www.visitwoods.org.uk) – carry out desk based research of the location and the facilities on offer
- Carry out a site visit, collect maps of the venue showing different walk routes, locations and facilities. Take photos to show others later, to inspire them to take part and as 'recognition points' and landmarks on the adventure
- Carry out a risk benefit assessment (see below)
- Establish a relationship with staff/volunteers on site – can they help on the day to identify trees and flowers or help in some other way? Ask them about potential dates to avoid or link up with, depending on the season and their planned events
- Ask the venue if they have a promotional DVD or online film or photographic resources you can use to inspire people about the visit. Films of previous woodland adventures are freely available on [www.dementiaadventure.co.uk](http://www.dementiaadventure.co.uk) and the **Dementia Adventure YouTube channel**
- Check out the variety of existing resources and activities on offer at the venue and see if they are suitable for your group – most 'educational' material is aimed at children but a lot can be adapted and made age relevant for people living with dementia.
- Agree an activity project or projects (covering before, during and after the visit)
- Research and action resource needs (advice, materials, etc.)
- Contact other groups or organisations in the area to see who would like to share the experience
- Cost the trip
- Confirm date of visit well in advance
- Arrange a meeting with staff, residents and family carers/volunteers to ensure they know what to expect to see, hear, touch and smell on the day – show them maps and photos from your recce visit and plan a walk together.
- Plan the trip well in advance (with the proviso that it may be subject to last minute changes), considering the impact of residents and staff who remain in the care home whilst the adventure is taking place. Can they be involved in some way or be on the list of attendees next time?
- Invite any accompanying family carers and off duty staff colleagues with an interest in nature and wildlife to bring any equipment they might have (binoculars, guide books, etc.)
- Could you go if it was wet or there was bad weather? Think about what extra equipment you might need (e.g. rain covers, blankets, umbrellas, spare rain coats) and what else might be available on site if it does rain. Plan nature activities which can be carried out indoors if needed.

## Places to visit

VisitWoods and their key partners are a great place to start when looking for local places for your group to visit. You may also want to ask people living with dementia, their families and the staff in the care home about the places they have a personal connection with and have visited in the past. Perhaps there is a privately owned green space or nature area you could enable your group to visit. For publicly accessible woodland, parks and reserves please check out the various organisations websites listed in Useful Resources on page 18.

## Trip Tip:

If there is an entry charge ask the venue about group discounts. Your group may be classified as an 'educational' group and qualify for a substantial discount. Often this discount applies to multiple sites. Many venues will not charge for carers or family supporters if you tell them about your group and the reason for your visit.

## Woodland selection

In enabling people living with dementia to get out of care homes and visit woodland, we have found the following criteria reliable in ensuring that you choose the best woodland for your group. Please add to and amend these criteria to suit your group:

- The woodland is listed on the **VisitWoods.org.uk** website
- Within a 45 minute minibus journey
- Disabled parking close to facilities
- Accessible toilets
- Accessible (wheelchair-friendly) paths
- Suitable and sufficient seating out in the woodland
- Inside spaces for indoor nature activity (wet weather alternatives)
- Woodland and green spaces on offer
- Catering or café facilities
- Undercover areas (in addition to natural tree cover)
- Beautiful location to spend a day out in nature
- Information boards on what you can see, smell and touch
- Availability of venue staff/volunteers to help as nature spotters/guides



## How to get there

It is likely that the availability of transport will be a significant factor in whether you are able to arrange a group adventure outing to a local woodland or green space. Participants of the workshops generated some creative solutions to this problem, although one solution will not necessarily work as effectively every time. Here are some possible sources of transport for your group:

- Company-owned minibus (shared with other homes in the group)
- Staff cars (check insurance cover)
- Family carers' cars
- Shared transport with other care homes in the area
- Community transport (e.g. Dial a Ride, etc.)
- Local authority transport (e.g. Adult Social Services)
- Voluntary organisations (e.g. Age UK, Older people community groups, faith-based groups etc.)
- Schools and colleges
- Volunteer driver schemes
- Private minibus and taxi hire companies

## Trip Tip:

Link up with care homes in your area to share information and resources. Often there is spare capacity and availability of resources within the care homes in a given village, town or area.

## Sources of funding

Costing any trip is vital in the planning and preparation of an outing. There are various ways the costs can be funded and met. Once again, participants in the workshops showed great creativity and resourcefulness when funding outings, common sources of funding can include:

- Residents' activity fund or similar internally accessible funds within organisations
- Friends groups
- Individual residents and/or family carers
- Community funding (in association with qualifying groups)
- Local awards and grants

If your group does not have access to a formal fundraiser, or have experience of raising funds for outings then try asking for information and advice from other care homes and voluntary groups in your area.



Photo credit: Dementia Adventure

## What to do when you are there

A visit to woodland can simply be an opportunity to explore in an unstructured way which can be fun and challenging. However, it can be helpful to think of themes or activities for your time in the woodland, as well as nature activities which can be conducted indoors as well as outdoors. Activities can include scheduling time for a walk, making the most of multi-sensory activities or enabling reminiscence or creative art out in nature. Here are some suggestions for what to consider doing when you are in the woodland.



Photo credit: Gayle Wharton

- Are there scheduled guided walks or activities your group could join?
- Ask if a member of the gardening staff is available to explain what is on show or to identify plants. If not, use identification guides (see page 18) and individual's knowledge from your group to help identify plants and trees and discuss their importance.
- Devise timings for your activity plan (e.g. you may want to start with a picnic lunch and allow an hour for a short walk after lunch)
- Note sightings of trees, flowers, birds, animals (including types of dog) as potential topics for discussion and activity. For example, do people have personal connections or memories of certain trees or birds, such as elm trees or blackbirds.
- Photograph trees, bees, birds, butterflies and insects, for a subsequent nature display.
- Collect natural items (but not growing flowers or items from trees) as materials for an artwork or nature collage to be made back at the care home.
- Make memory sticks – collect a stick and tie pieces of nature to form a memory stick to take home
- Nature noughts and crosses – draw up a grid using sticks, get people to answer questions and place a circular leaf or a sticks in a cross each time they answer a question correctly

## Exploring the wood



## Resources on the day

There are various practical resources which you can take with you on the day to help your adventure be engaging, social and fun. These include:

- **Nature swatches** – the woodland trust produces handy pocket sized nature identification swatches. These feature, for example, common trees, wild flowers, fungi and butterflies that you are likely to encounter on your adventures. These can be purchased cheaply and directly through [www.woodlandtrust.org.uk](http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk)
- **Activity sheets** – you can design your own nature quiz or nature spotting game or adapt one of the hundreds of downloadable resources available at [www.naturedetectives.org.uk](http://www.naturedetectives.org.uk) – these resources and activity sheets are aimed specifically at children but can be made age relevant with some creativity and adaptation.
- **Nature identification guides** – As well as the swatches, it can be helpful to have a nature identification book – a detailed guide of the trees and flowers on view. We have found individuals can be fascinated by an individual element of nature and want to know more detail about it. This is where field guides are invaluable. The RSPB guides, the British Dragonfly Society resources and the Usbourne Spotter Guides all came as recommended resources from the workshops. (see Useful Resources on page 18)
- **Technology** – photographic and video cameras are cheaper and easier to use than ever and help capture the adventure experience. Please be mindful of consent when photographing, filming and sharing images of individuals out in nature.
- **Art and craft material** – various materials can be used to form the basis of nature based activities. Small sheets of paper can be used for bark rubbings, large sheets of paper for group collages. Pieces of material, pens, crayons, blu-tac, sellotape, stickers and ties can all be used to help make artwork either in or outdoors. You are only limited by your own creativity and how many art supplies you can access and afford. Art work, whether created on the day, or after the event can be used to demonstrate to others the significance and the impact of the day.
- **Links to future local events and walks** – there may be individuals in your group who so enjoy the adventure they want to return to a particular place or to take part in another local nature event or local nature walk. You can find out about future local events from the venue staff and plan to link up with these in the future. You can also plan to join up with other walking groups such as Walking for Health (see Useful Resources) or charity walks which often take place in beautiful nature spaces.

## Recording the day

There are various things you can do as a group to capture and record the day and the experience of your group out in the woodland. This can be helpful for reflection and reminiscence but also for future planning and for measuring the impact of the adventure.

You might consider:

- Photographing people out in nature
- Capturing people's thoughts about the experience on video camera
- Recording what people say on a voice recorder (either on a smart phone or a special device)
- Capturing people's views about the experience on flip chart paper using stickers and pens to gauge people's interests
- Collecting natural souvenirs (e.g. pine cones, leaves and grasses) as a natural physical reminder to take home from the day and to contribute to any artwork to be created after the day

The VisitWoods team have produced over 20 detailed access guides as well as a range of guides specifically aimed at disabled groups who are interested in creating and sharing a multi-media record of their woodland experience. The Woodland Discovery Pack is available on the VisitWoods website under the take part tab/groups. The pack contains a wealth of information including how to take the best photos and video, information and consent forms to use with your group and press release templates for sharing your adventure in the local press.

## Sharing your visit

Once you have returned from your woodland adventure there are a number of things you can do to share the experience of your visit.

- Go online and contribute comments and images to [www.visitwoods.org.uk](http://www.visitwoods.org.uk)
- Print your photos or create a slideshow to show other residents in the care home, family members and friends of your group
- Share information with staff in your organisation and in other partner organisations about what worked well to help build confidence to enable more adventures to happen
- Edit and make your own short film and create a 'movie' night and discussion about the experience
- Create artwork as a group or as individuals using the "natural souvenirs" – talk to the woodland venue or a local art venue about exhibiting the artwork publicly
- Write a press release for sharing a good news story with the local press
- Write up the experience as a 'case study' for sharing in internal and external reports, websites and publications and conferences to spread good practice

### Example case study: Dementia Adventure and VisitWoods May 23rd 2012

On May 23rd 2012, as part of this project with VisitWoods, Dementia Adventure organised a woodland event at Hylands Park in Chelmsford. 89 people attended the 2 hour long walk, to mark dementia awareness week and celebrate and share



a woodland adventure together. We were bathed in sunshine in the largest outdoor gathering of people living with dementia that Dementia Adventure has organised to date. Many of the care homes who participated in the workshops for this project brought residents, family members supported the day and participants ranged from 2-98 years old, all out in force to spread the message that to get out into nature and be around trees is a basic human need. The film from the event can be seen by searching dementia adventure on [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)

#### Quotes from care home staff:

- *"It was a lovely day, I felt quite emotional."*
- *"It was nice for the residents to be with so many people."*
- *"A resident was able to identify trees and flowers. I didn't know what they were."*
- *"We don't usually get much response from the resident but he seemed to come alive on this visit."*
- *"One resident said he had an overwhelming sense of camaraderie, a sense of belonging."*
- *"The residents enjoyed the sensory stimulation."*
- *"Family carers were able to enjoy the visit without the stress of having to look after their loved one."*
- *"Residents loved seeing and stroking the dogs in the park."*

#### From family carers:

- *"You could see the residents were enjoying it."*
- *"It was mum as I always knew her, I had her back with me again."*
- *"I'd like to do more visits of this kind."*

#### Quote from Care Home Manager and workshop participant:

*"We will use the information contained in this leader's guide as a basis for all external trips."*



We have compiled a list of websites and useful resources here, many of which are referred to in the text of this guide and/or were recommended during the workshop. All contain useful information for planning and delivering a nature based adventure:

- British dragonfly society – spotter guides [www.british-dragonflies.org.uk](http://www.british-dragonflies.org.uk)
- Country parks and nature reserves [www.naturalengland.org.uk](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk)
- Dementia Adventure films and reports [www.dementiaadventure.co.uk](http://www.dementiaadventure.co.uk)
- Forestry Commission [www.forestry.gov.uk](http://www.forestry.gov.uk)
- Municipal parks (Search your local authority website)
- National Association for Providers of Activities for Older People [www.napa-activities.co.uk](http://www.napa-activities.co.uk)
- National Trust venues [www.nationaltrust.org.uk](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk)
- Nature's calendar activity resources [www.naturescalendar.org.uk](http://www.naturescalendar.org.uk)
- RSPB reserves (with Visitor Centres) and spotter guides [www.rspb.org.uk](http://www.rspb.org.uk)
- Usborne spotters guides and cards [www.usborne.com](http://www.usborne.com)
- VisitWoods home page [www.visitwoods.org.uk](http://www.visitwoods.org.uk)
- VisitWoods photo, video, audio trail packs [www.phototrails.org.uk](http://www.phototrails.org.uk)
- VisitWoods tree/leaf identification sheets [www.naturedetectives.org.uk](http://www.naturedetectives.org.uk)
- Walking for health (Ramblers) [www.walkingforhealth.org.uk](http://www.walkingforhealth.org.uk)
- Wildlife Trust sites [www.wildlifetrusts.org](http://www.wildlifetrusts.org)
- Woodland Trust – nature swatches and more [www.woodlandtrust.org.uk](http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk)

# Useful resources





We are pleased to share here three resources which have consistently been in demand since Dementia Adventure and VisitWoods began organising woodland adventures for people living with dementia, these are:

1. [Criteria for woodland selection](#)
2. [Risk/benefit assessment tool](#)
3. [Adventure checklist](#)

## Template: Criteria for woodland selection

In enabling people living with dementia to get out of care homes and visit woodland we have found the following criteria reliable in ensuring you choose the best woodland for your group. Please add to and amend this criteria list to suit your group:

- ☐ The woodland is listed on the [VisitWoods.org.uk](http://VisitWoods.org.uk) website
- ☐ Within a 45 minute minibus journey
- ☐ Disabled parking close to facilities
- ☐ Accessible toilets
- ☐ Accessible (wheelchair-friendly) paths
- ☐ Suitable and sufficient seating out in the woodland
- ☐ Inside spaces for indoor nature activity (wet weather alternatives)
- ☐ Woodland and green spaces on offer
- ☐ Catering or café facilities
- ☐ Undercover areas (in addition to natural tree cover)
- ☐ Beautiful location to spend a day out in nature
- ☐ Information boards on what you can see, smell and touch
- ☐ Availability of venue staff/volunteers to help as nature spotters/guides
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐

# Group leader templates

## Template: Risk Benefit Assessment tool

Dementia Adventure promotes a positive risk taking approach. Risk taking is part of the definition of Adventure. It is helpful when planning a visit to a woodland (or any nature space) to look at the benefits as well as the risks of the activity. By balancing the potential benefits with the risks and explaining how you will mitigate the risks and ensure the benefits a successful adventure can be planned in woodland locations.

## Trip Tip:

Carry out an exploratory visit of the woodland you are on planning on visiting with your group. Identify the potential hazards, who may be at risk there and how. How likely are people to come to harm, and what might be the severity of the harm?

Then identify the potential benefits, thinking about physical, emotional and social benefits to people in your group. You may want to score the risks and benefits and conclude if the anticipated benefits outweigh the potential risks or not. This template is adapted from Dementia Adventure's comprehensive risk/benefit assessment process and documentation. For more information and training on risk/benefit, please see the training section of the Dementia Adventure website.





## Template: Adventure checklist

### What to take on the day

- ☐ Do you have a first aider in your group?  
Have you checked the first aid facilities and mobile phone coverage at the venue in advance?
- ☐ First aid kit
- ☐ Mobile phones (fully charged)
- ☐ 'Mobile' mobile phone charger (particularly for smart phones prone to running out of charge)
- ☐ Emergency contact numbers – including primary person at venue and back at the organisational HQ to contact for support if something goes wrong
- ☐ Two way radios (optional solution if mobile reception is poor)
- ☐ Blankets
- ☐ Umbrellas, rain jackets and capes
- ☐ Suitable footwear
- ☐ Food and drink
- ☐ Camera and video camera for recording imagery (fully charged)
- ☐ Spare camera battery
- ☐ Radar key for disabled toilet access in some locations
- ☐ Maps and venue documentation
- ☐ Risk benefit assessment form
- ☐ Insurance cover
- ☐ Nature identification/spotter guides/swatches
- ☐ Art and craft materials
- ☐ Your group 'kitty' for buying refreshments if needed
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐



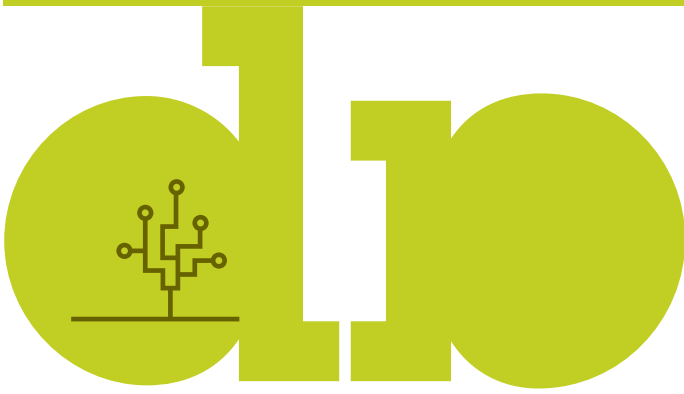
## About the Authors

**Neil Mapes** is the founder and director of Dementia Adventure CIC. He is a Clore Social Fellow and in 2012 successfully completed the inaugural Clore Social Leadership Programme. Neil was recently selected by an expert panel of judges at NESTA and the Observer newspaper as one of "Britain's New Radicals" – 50 innovative people and organisations changing Britain for the better. Neil has a background in clinical psychology and dementia advocacy and also has experience of leading adventure travel holidays in Europe, Asia minor and South America. Since 1994, he has built up his reputation as an innovator with numerous projects and initiatives benefitting people living with dementia. For more on Neil's past and current work please look for him on [www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com)

**Tony Vale** has been involved in older people care for varying periods over the last 25 years. More recently, he has focused on the needs of care home residents (including those with dementia) and their family carers. He jointly managed the Care Quality Commission funded "Experts by Experience" programme for Age UK and subsequently joined a national care home provider as a Community Liaison Officer. He established **Activity Team** in 2011, to offer a therapeutic activity support service to care home providers and as an independent consultant, working with Dementia Adventure in a community engagement role. For more information about this service, please visit [www.activityteam.org](http://www.activityteam.org)



## About the organisations



## Dementia Adventure Community Interest Company (CIC)

**Dementia Adventure** CIC is a multi-award winning social enterprise specialising in connecting people living with dementia with nature and a sense of adventure. Dementia Adventure is based in Essex but works nationally and has an international following. We provide training, research, and consultancy services – all with nature in mind. Income from these activities, donations and grant funding means we can provide award winning Dementia Adventures from park walks to sailing holidays.

Since founding Dementia Adventure in 2009 with Lucy Harding, Neil Mapes and Dementia Adventure have been recognised with the following awards and honours (in chronological order):

- UnLtd social entrepreneur award – Millennium award 2010
- Visiting Fellow with University of Essex – 2010-11
- Social Vision UK 2011 – outright winner by public vote
- Acorn Awards finalist 2011
- Clore Social Fellowship 2010-2012
- Britain's New Radicals 2012
- Chelmsford Grand Award 2012 – outright winner by public vote
- International Dementia Excellence Award June 2012 – outright winner "Risky Business" category, voted by expert panel

## Activity Team

Activity Team is an organisation which brings together individuals with skills in providing therapeutic activities for older people in care homes, including those with dementia. The focus is on the activity elements of the arts, music, gardening, wildlife and nature appreciation, reminiscence and animals.

The organisation was set up and is led by Tony Vale, the co-author of this publication.

The VisitWoods project fits perfectly with Activity Team's ethos of enhancing the lives of older people in care homes (and their family carers) by assisting care home providers to deliver therapeutic activities for their residents and supporting providers to pro-actively engage with the local community.





## VisitWoods

**VisitWoods.org.uk** is the only UK website where you can find almost all of the woods in the UK you are welcome to visit, no matter who owns them. This website is part of a wider VisitWoods project which aims to inspire people to discover woods and the many benefits they have to offer. VisitWoods is a partnership project, led by the Woodland Trust which receives funding from Natural England (through their Access to Nature programme, part of the Big Lottery Fund Changing Spaces programme).

## The Woodland Trust

**The Woodland Trust** is the UK's leading woodland conservation charity with a vision to see a country rich in native woods and trees enjoyed and valued enjoyed by everyone. It aims to:

- plant more native trees
- protect native woods, trees and their wildlife
- inspire everyone to enjoy and value woods and trees.











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Published March 2013

Designed & Printed by Cowgum 01245 423123

