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Case study: House of Memories at National Museums Liverpool

Website: <http://houseofmemories.co.uk/>

Twitter: [@house_memories](https://twitter.com/house_memories)

House of Memories is a programme aimed at supporting people living with dementia, and their families and carers. It has been a highly successful programme winning a number of awards and gaining high-level political support.

Read about the programme below and consider how well the museum, with its expertise in 'looking after memories' complements the existing work of the healthcare sector. Note also how the museum has used digital technology to extend the reach of the programme.

In the next Step we will hear from people who have directly benefited from this project.

At National Museums Liverpool we recognise that to acknowledge and understand an individual's personal history and memory is of great value and significance, especially for people living with dementia.



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House of Memories is a flagship project which represents an integral part of National Museum Liverpool's social inclusion mission. Created in 2012, the programme has connected more than 10,000 participants (from the health and social care sector) with an innovative dementia awareness /museum collection experience that

promotes the need and value for compassion, respect and dignity in care.

Museums are experts at looking after memories and *House of Memories* has been designed to provide dementia awareness knowledge and understanding of how information about a person's history and life experience can be a valuable tool for positive communication. Activities include an interactive training day, access to a free object loan service and a memory app.

- **The Training Day** uses powerful stories through film, and practical, interactive experiences to introduce basic knowledge about the various forms of dementia. It explores the challenges faced by families and those diagnosed from early stage to progressive dementia. There are two strands for professional carers and a 'half-day workshop for family carers.
- **Suitcase of Memories** is designed to encourage conversation using objects, memorabilia and photographs. Each suitcase contains multi-sensory items for people with different levels of sensory communication, including items to stimulate smell, hearing, movement and taste:
 - African-Caribbean heritage resource
 - Irish heritage resource
 - Primary schools intergenerational resource
 - Maritime Seafarers heritage
 - Lesbian, Gay, Transgender heritage
 - Natural habitat - explore the world outside your window
 - 'Feast on Art'
 - The Armed Forces – an army suitcase, and a navy suitcase
 - Liverpool Chinese community memories

- **My House of Memories** is a digital memory resource for iPads and other tablets and is the first of its kind anywhere in the world. The product was co-created by National Museums Liverpool and people living with dementia. When a person downloads the app they can access a wide range of content linked to Liverpool and of wider UK interest. The memory time line is 1920 -1980 and allows people to browse objects from across the decades; brought to life with music and film to prompt discussion and reminiscence about every day memories and events (e.g. school life, sport, food and transport). The App can be personalised for individual and multiple use to save objects to their own digital memory tree. Advice and information is included for family, health and social care supporters.



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New Developments for 2017

National Museums Liverpool's ambition for House of Memories is boundless and our next step is to tailor the training days, suitcase

and app capabilities to connect with the wider community supporting people living with dementia.

During 2017 we plan to develop the following programme strands and resources:

- **New App content** will provide a more diverse choice of objects for people living with dementia. A new 'About Me' section will enable people to upload their own objects and memories.
- **Acute Care** hospital based 'train the trainer' model to enable organisations to cascade the training to more staff
- House of Memories website and product range to support the health care sector and family audiences
- **Veterans Programme** – we will explore further opportunities to engage Veterans living with dementia, their families and Armed Forces Charities, to capture memories and tell their stories through new digital content.
- **Minnesota Historical Society** we have secured development funding to develop a model for the US museum sector.
- **When I was Little** will encourage primary school children to think about their family history and the memories of grandparents and older relatives.
- **Happy Older People Network (HOP)** is a network linking cultural organisations across the region with isolated older people, to improve their happiness and wellbeing through active engagement with Liverpool's arts and cultural organisations (e.g. dance, drama, music, craft and arts).

We are also exploring research funding with John Moores University to explore the positive impact of *House of Memories* delivered across the whole health economy.

Recognition 2014 - 2017

- Winner, National Institute of Adult Continuing Education 2014
- Highly Commended, Alzheimer's Society's Dementia Friendly Awards 2014
- Winner, Museums and Heritage Awards 2014 - national educational initiative
- Winner, Innovate Dementia European Award (The World Health and Design Forum 2014)
- Winner, Excellent Smart Health Innovation Award 2015, (Think Dementia Conference)
- Winner, Alzheimer's Society's Dementia Friendly Awards 2015
- Winner Northern Lights Dementia Awards 2017, Living Well category, awarded for our Train the Trainer pilot programme

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