

# House of Memories<sup>®</sup>

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## House of Memories dementia awareness for family carers

**House of Memories dementia awareness for family carers** is a special programme aimed at supporting families, friends and community volunteers of those living with dementia.

The event includes some of the fantastic objects, archives and stories at the Newark Houses Museum. It aims to provide carers and families with new skills and resources to share with people living with dementia, contributing to their wellbeing and quality of life.

This seven-day planner has been created to give you inspiration and practical ideas for memory activities at home, and ideas for trips out.

While we want you to get the most out of this planner, we do recognise the many challenges in trying out new activities. Whether you have 15 minutes each day or a couple of hours once a week, we hope you will find something that suits you and your family, and helps you stimulate the memories of the person you care for.



# Day one

## Borrow a memory box

Groups can borrow one of our themed memory boxes. They contain objects, memorabilia and photographs to help you engage with the person you are caring for. Individuals and their carers can also explore the memory boxes at one of our museum's events.

## How to do it

The memory box is a free loan service which is available from Newarke Houses Museum for up to a week at a time.

To book your memory box please  
call 0116 225 4980  
or email [museums@leicester.gov.uk](mailto:museums@leicester.gov.uk)

## Further ideas

- Think about personal backgrounds and interests when selecting your box, we have boxes on a variety of themes.
- Why not try making your own personal memory box together?



## Day two

### Create a memory timeline

Creating a timeline is a way of gathering and representing memories using a chronological sequence. It is an activity to which anyone can contribute. It can also make a very attractive display.

### How to do it

Decide together on the kind of timeline you'd like to make. It could be general or a more personal one. Draw a horizontal line on a series of sheets of paper, or use a length of washing-line, to create your timeline.

Then mark or hang events in date order on the timeline using paper or card. Illustrate the timeline by adding photographs, maps and old newspapers.

Add personal memories from these times and also include significant events such as a wedding or birth. Copy personal photographs or memorabilia to avoid damage.

### Further ideas

- This activity can be made into something more permanent, decorating or animating a room.
- If there is space, put a table under the timeline for objects connected with dates or events.
- A memory timeline is an excellent starting point for conversation.



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## Day three

### Listen to music together

Music is a powerful tool for any reminiscence experience. It is particularly valuable for people who may respond to songs long after their ability to remember recent events has gone. This is because music is stored in the 'emotional memory' which can sometimes last longer than practical memory.

### How to do it

Creating a collection of old music is easy and can be used for both background use or to invoke a particular era or style. Explore old record collections or borrow CDs from friends and family, then spend an afternoon listening to them together. Think about an era or musical genre that means something to the person you care for, from tea dances and wartime, to punk or the 80s.

### Further ideas

- Sing-a-longs can be popular so encourage everyone to join in.
- Provide simple instruments if someone wishes to take part but doesn't like singing, or provide a space to dance!



## Day four

### Explore the My House of Memories App

The **My House of Memories App** allows you to digitally explore objects from the past and share memories together. It can be used by anyone, but has been designed for, and with, people living with dementia and their carers to use together.

#### How to do it

Download the app onto a tablet or phone from the iTunes Store or Google Play. Then browse through objects from across the decades. You can create personal profiles for different people, so that they can save their favourite objects and look at them again. Music, sound effects and videos provide a rich, multi-sensory experience and bring objects to life.

Explore the app somewhere comfortable and make sure your battery is charged. The touch screen means it is also really easy to use.

#### Further ideas

- This is a good activity to do on the move, as tablets are so portable.
- Collect your favourite objects for display in a digital memory tree, memory box or timeline.
- Read the 'Find Out More' section to watch a short film about reminiscence in action, and view top tips for memory activities you can do together.



## Day five

### Create a memory tree

A memory tree is a unique way of collecting someone's memories. You could use a simple template of a tree, but you can develop this idea further by buying or making a 3D tree, or even using a real tree in a garden space.

### How to do this

Set aside some time to work with the person you care for and find out what they would like to share about their life, and what items they keep that remind them of the past. Work together to decide how to display items and put the tree together. Use glue, tape, or tack to secure items depending on what they are.

Consider making copies of photographs and keeping originals safe and untarnished. Find a suitable wall space or area to display the finished memory tree.

### Further ideas

- Completing your memory tree doesn't mean the end of the activity. Use it as a talking point or aid to improving communication and providing stimulation. It might also bring out new memories and create new ideas for the tree.



## Day six

### Take part in a memory trail or borrow a memory bag

Visit the memory trail in Newarke Houses Museum featuring the top ten memorable objects in the museum, specifically chosen to trigger memories for older visitors.

There are also memory bags which can be used during your trip to the museum. These work particularly well with individuals and their carers.

### How to do this

Pick up a map of the memory trail when you arrive at the museum. Ask at reception for a memory bag to take with you on your museum visit. There are spaces in the museum where you can view the objects in the bags and staff will be on hand to assist you if necessary.

Visit our website for more information about what is available in the museum  
[leicester.gov.uk/museums](http://leicester.gov.uk/museums)

### Further ideas

- See what Leicester Museums has to offer. We run a range of free events and activities.
- Visit our website or pick up one of our guides to see what other exhibitions or objects may be of interest.
- You could even visit one of our other museums and galleries – they are all free!

Find out more at  
[leicester.gov.uk/museums](http://leicester.gov.uk/museums)



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# Day seven

## Create a memory box

Create a memory box full of objects, memorabilia, and photographs from the past to connect with the person you are caring for. Memory boxes encourage conversation and provide tactile experiences - they can be a great resource to help unleash and trigger memories.

## How to do this

You will need a suitcase, plastic storage box or similar container. Next, think about what to include. Some items could be special to the person, whereas others could be more general, such as maps or information linking to where they grew up. Aim for 10 items to begin with, but keep adding to your memory box over time.

Looking through the box together will help you gauge what items work well and stimulate interest, then you can look for similar objects.

## Further ideas

- Multi-sensory items work well for those with different levels of sensory communication. Think about items that stimulate smell, hearing, movement and even taste.
- Think about people's personal backgrounds when selecting objects - the places they lived, the industries they worked in, hobbies and interests, for instance.



**House of Memories dementia awareness for family carers** is led by National Museums Liverpool, and supported by the Department of Health. To find out more about House of Memories visit [liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/houseofmemories](http://liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/houseofmemories)

### **Arts and Museums Service, Leicester City**

Newarke Houses Museum and Leicester's other museums have a number of objects and activities to help you take a trip down memory lane.

Find out more at [leicester.gov.uk/museums](http://leicester.gov.uk/museums)

If you would like to speak to a member of staff in advance of your visit please call Newarke Houses Museum on 0116 225 4980.



## My House of Memories App

Designed by and for people living with dementia

"It is something we can do together."

[liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/memoryapp](http://liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/memoryapp)

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