

# A Guide For... Delivering Bowls To People Living With Moderate To Advanced Dementia

This guide is based on the lessons learnt from delivering a type of bowling (New Age Bowling) in care settings. Many of the recommendations are transferrable to other types of physical activity

## WHO is the guide for?

This guide is for anyone delivering physical activities such as bowling to people living with moderate to advanced dementia in group settings (care homes, days centres etc). These are not hard and fast rules, but lessons from an evaluation of project we ran; we hope you find them useful.



## WHY physical activity?

Physical activity is good for us! An activity such as New Age Bowling can encourage movement, increase social interaction, bring about a sense of achievement, uncover unexpected abilities and liven up a room with laughter

## Lessons we learnt....

### Atmosphere

**Getting everyone involved:** Above all, make the session fun and supportive. People can be anxious about playing, so keep trying to gently encourage everyone to join in and keep trying to build confidence.

Nora, would you like to try this time?

**Challenge and competition:** Promote friendly competition, for example use a scoreboard. Also think about how you can make everyone a winner, regardless of ability, by finding small achievements to praise.

Well done! You beat your last score Alan.

Can anyone tell me what Sylvia scored?

Without putting anyone on the spot, you can also ask players to do a bit more, for example, see if anyone can tell you the score, or pick up their bowls up from the floor.

### Environment

**A suitable space:** You will need a well-lit area with minimal distractions, and enough clear space for the activity. Arrange the seating in a circle, facing in, so everyone can watch and stay focussed on the game. If possible, provide a separate quiet space away from the game for those that need it.

Is it ok if we turn the TV off?

#### Organisation:

- Make sure there are carers to look after the needs of those taking part, for example to take people to the toilet.
- Try to fit the activity into a regular routine in a familiar place.
- Plan in a break for a drink and healthy snack.
- Follow the organisation's procedures around health and safety.

We'll have a cup of tea after our next go.

### Adaptations

Work hard to make sure that everyone can have a go where safe to so, Don't overlook anyone no matter how disabled or unengaged, they might surprise you!

**Using physical aids:** This can include using a chair-back for support when standing, or a ramp for bowling where a person does not have enough strength or mobility in their arms.

Frank, would you like to stand?

**Adapting technique:** The player can bowl overarm if a wheelchair prevents underarm bowling. While many people will need to sit, encourage those that can stand **safely** to do so.

**Avoiding disorientation:** Adapt the activity to avoid disorientating the player. We found it best to move the bowling mat to the player for their go so they did not have to leave their space.

### Communication

**Verbal communication:** Learn and use the player's names. Deliver one instruction at a time and allow time for the player to understand. Clearly and respectfully repeat what you have said if needed. Make eye contact, and avoid looming over people who are sitting down.

**When words alone don't work:** Try gesturing or showing how. Demonstrate throwing the ball to the mat, or place yourself behind the bowling mat while saying 'throw the ball to me'.

**Encourage social interaction:** Get players to help each other, for example, to pass the balls to each other. Encourage everyone to clap and try to get staff, friends and relative to join in, as we found this created the most lively, fun and social sessions.

Ian, can you pass the balls to Maria?