

Portable music players for dementia

Playlist for Life is often asked by people with dementia or their carers to recommend a music player. We conducted in-depth usability research on three commonly available MP3 players which showed that each could be recommended with confidence to people with dementia.

The testers



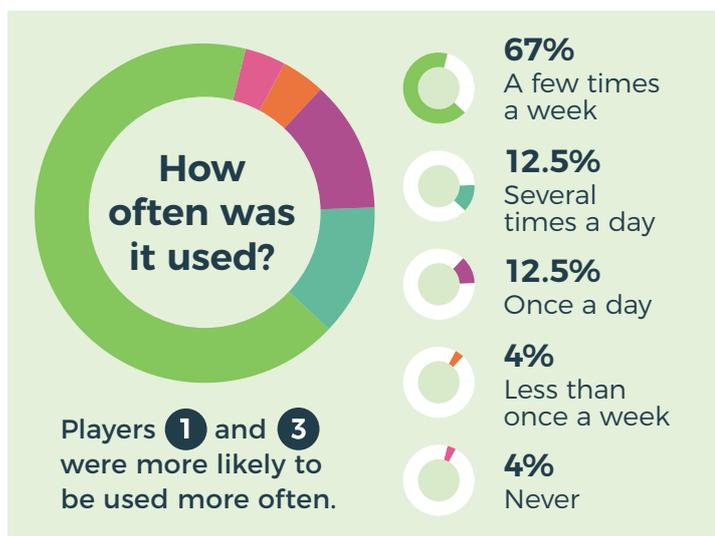
All but one of the 29 testers were supported by a family carer who also took part in feedback.

The players

- 1 **Bush 4GB MP3 Player**
Argos • Under £15*
- 2 **Bush 8GB MP3 Player With Display**
Argos • Under £30*
- 3 **Solo USB Personal Audio MP3 Player**
Kings Access Technology • Under £50*

*Prices correct at April 2020

Using the players



Did you have to check the instruction sheet regularly?



How much support was needed from a carer?

Results were similar across all players.



How easy was it to find specific songs?

Results were similar across all players.



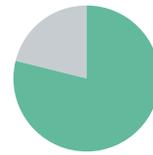
Design of the players

How easy was it to understand what each button did?



People using players 1 & 3 were slightly more likely to report quite easy or very easy.

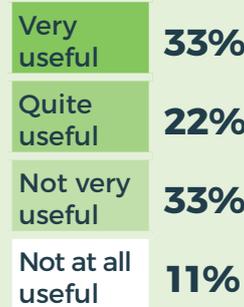
Most people found the on/off switch on players 1 & 2 difficult to use.



79% thought the button size was 'just right'
21% thought the buttons were 'too small'

Screen

How useful was the screen?



How easy was the text to read?

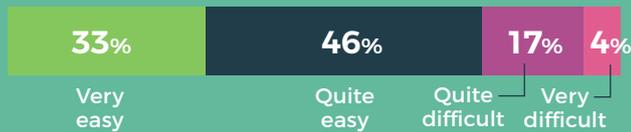


Other equipment

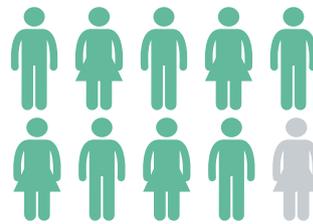
How easy was it to recharge the player?



How easy was it to use the headphones?

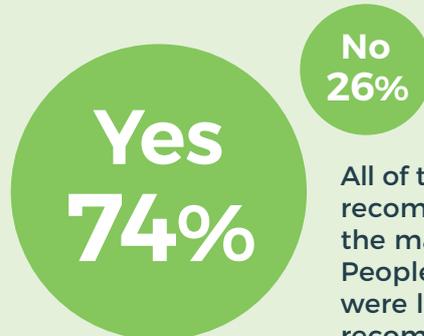


People using player 1 reported the most difficulty charging it. This possibly reflected the stage of their dementia as the charging process was identical to player 2.



9 out of 10 people with dementia reacted positively to the music on their player.

Recommendations



All of the players were recommended by the majority of users. People using player 2 were less likely to recommend it.

Conclusions



All players can be recommended to people living with dementia.



Player 2 was more suitable for those who already use technology and are at an earlier stage of dementia.



More testing and guidance will be necessary around adding songs to players.



Players 1 & 3 were the simplest and most likely to be used.



Carer support will usually be essential to successful use.