

# 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



**29**  
people with  
dementia

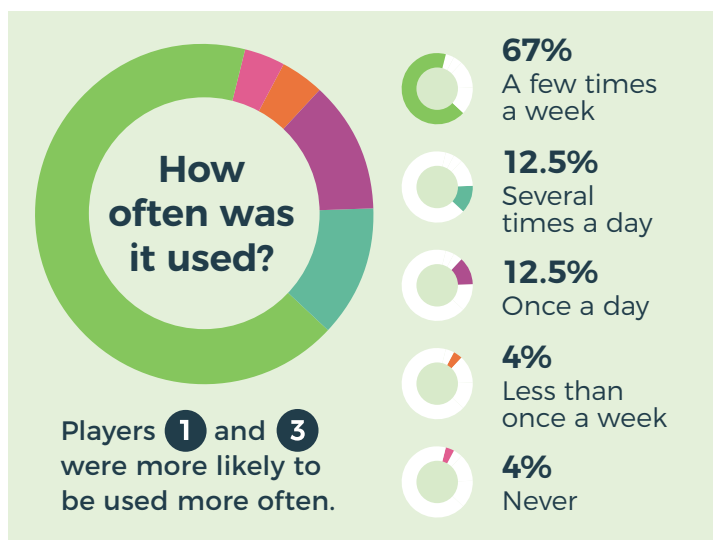
All but one of the 29 testers were supported by a family carer who also took part in feedback.

## The players

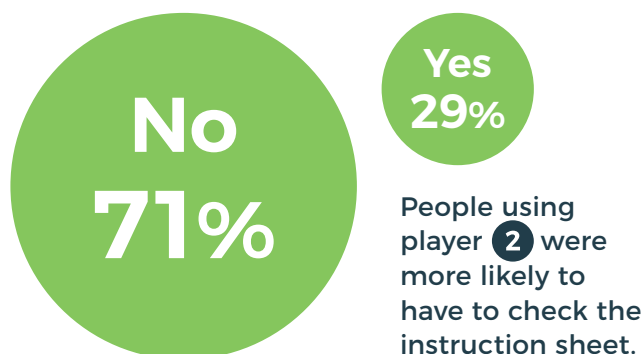
- 1** **Bush 4GB MP3 Player**  
Argos • Under £15\*
- 2** **Bush 8GB MP3 Player With Display**  
Argos • Under £30\*
- 3** **Solo USB Personal Audio MP3 Player**  
Kings Access Technology • Under £50\*

\*Prices correct at April 2020

## Using the players



## Did you have to check the instruction sheet regularly?



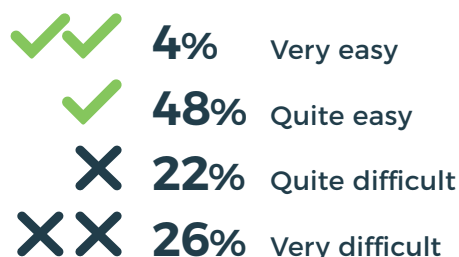
## How much support was needed from a carer?

Results were similar across all players.



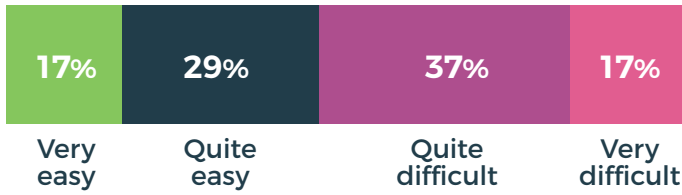
## How easy was it to find specific songs?

Results were similar across all players.



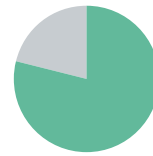
# Design of the players

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.

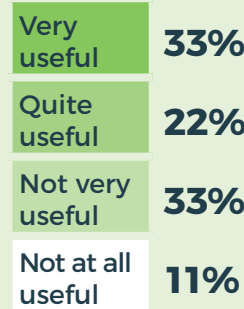
Most people found the on/off switch on players 1 & 2 difficult to use.



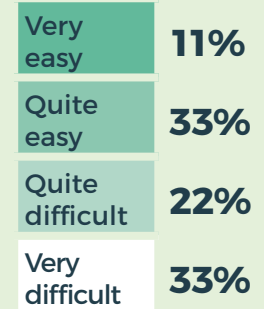
79% thought the button size was 'just right'  
21% thought the buttons were 'too small'

## Screen

How useful was the screen?



How easy was the text to read?

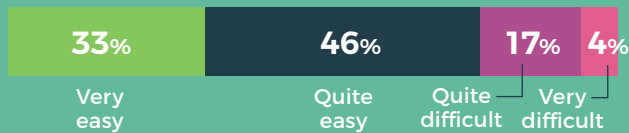


## Other equipment

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.