



## Dementia Village – avant-garde care for the elderly

Many experts concur that the lives of dementia patients are considerably enhanced and lengthened with a basic understanding and affinity with the sufferers themselves. A village in Amsterdam called Hogeway – affectionately known as “Dementia Village”– adheres to this theory in droves.

The village offers patients an environment that reflects a normal, independent and happy life: equipped with individual apartment homes, supermarkets, restaurants, hairdresser and cinema – that are all discreetly staffed by plain-clothed caregivers. Recognising walking as highly therapeutic for dementia patients, but absent-minded wandering as a potential hazard, the outside perimeters of the extensive grounds are manned by staff who gently guide drifting residents back into the safety of the village. It has around 150 inhabitants, who are reportedly more relaxed and content than those confined to more sterile environments. It is this heightened state of inner calm that in turn calls for far less medication.

Hogeway is designed as a cheaper and more conducive alternative for patients who require 24 hour home care, but would struggle to afford it. There is no deceit here: the patients are openly informed of the village’s purpose and workings, and then left to safely slip back into a world of blissful ignorance. Not only does the village recognise people’s right to live out their days with dignity and respect, it also takes a significant burden off the sufferers’ relatives, who understandably want to avoid consigning their loved ones to a regular care home. It is widely hoped that this exemplary template for more wholesome elderly care will be adopted around the globe.

