

Creating a dementia friendly environment

For many with dementia the environment (both internal and external), has a significant impact on their ability to access everyday activities. There are a number of small changes that can be considered to improve accessibility. Please use the information below as a guide to make your organisation more accessible for people with dementia.

Entrances

- Entrances should be clearly visible.
- Gates and doors should require no more than 2kg of pressure to open them.
- For disabled access doors the push button should be immediately obvious.
- Ensure that glass doors are clearly marked.

Signage

- Signs should be clear, in a bold typeface.
- There should be a contrast between the sign and the surface it is mounted on.
- Signs should be fixed to the doors they refer to - not on adjacent surfaces.
- Signs should be at eye level and well-lit.
- The use of highly stylised or abstract images or icons as representations on signage should be avoided.
- Think about placing signs at key decision points for someone who is trying to navigate your premises for the first time.
- Signs for exits are particularly important.
- Ensure that any temporary external signage like sandwich boards do not obscure bollards or other street furniture that a person with dementia may use to navigate the street with.

Lighting

- Areas should be well lit, so everything around them can be seen clearly.
- Pools of bright light and deep shadows should be avoided.
- As much natural light as possible.

Flooring

- Flooring should be plain, non-shiny and non-slip.
- Bold patterns on carpets, curtains or wallpaper can cause perceptual problems.
- The floor finish should be flush rather than stepped, as changes to floor surfaces can cause confusion.

Quiet Area

- Create a quiet space within your organization for someone who may be feeling anxious or confused to recover sufficiently to complete a task and maintain independence.

Seating

- In larger premises a seating area, especially in areas where people are waiting, can be a big help.
- People with dementia prefer seating that looks like seating, for example a wooden bench rather than an abstract metal Z-shaped bench.

Layout

- Keep the environment free from clutter.
- The space should be arranged with a clear and obvious passageway.

Navigation

- People with dementia use 'landmarks', for example a painting or tree, to navigate their way around, both inside and outside. The more attractive and interesting the landmark the easier it is to use.