

## **The Stirling standards for dementia-friendly design**

### **12.04.30**

These standards are written in the first person to ensure that dementia-friendly design is understood from the perspective of the person with dementia, who may have all the impairments of old age combined with the cognitive and perceptual impairments of dementia. The standards overlap in that design features have several purposes. This is a brief summary of a great deal of expertise: the details can be found in DSDC publications. It is assumed that buildings are Equality Act compliant, so only details which are important for people with dementia are listed.

#### **As a person with dementia in this building and its associated outside space:**

##### **I will feel calm and relaxed**

- The building is quiet: overstimulation from noise is very distressing for people with dementia. Noise can be reduced in numerous ways including the use of sound absorbing materials/panels.
- People with dementia often like to be able to see staff/relatives all the time.
- The building is familiar: age and culturally appropriate design is not easy given mixed populations but aiming for what was familiar sixty years ago will help. A domestic ambience is usually helpful.
- Confusing patterns in surfaces, fabrics and floor coverings have been avoided such as specks, sparkle, stripes, fruit, vegetables etc.
- Surfaces are not shiny or reflective, as these can be confusing and floors can look slippery or wet.
- Dead-end corridors in the building and paths in the garden have been avoided. These cause frustration.
- Busy entrance areas with staff coming and going should be out of sight as far as possible.
- There is somewhere quiet to go, both in the building and outdoors.
- There is a clear natural hierarchy of privacy, progressing from the most public reception areas, to the most private assisted bathroom spaces. Private spaces like bedrooms do not open inappropriately onto very public areas.

##### **I am as safe as possible (from falls)**

- There are visible handrails which are easy to grip.
- There are seats along the way and robust benches outside for resting.
- The floor/paving is a consistent colour without contrasting threshold strips.
- There is good colour / tonal contrast in the toilets (handrails, toilet seat, controls).
- Technology is available in the bedroom, e.g. turns on a light (possibly to the toilet) if someone sits up; can alert staff/relatives if someone sits up or gets out of bed.
- The general light level is very good.

##### **I am as safe as possible (from infection)**

- The toilet roll holder is easy to see and understand and is within reach.

- The soap dispenser is easy to see and understand.
- The taps are easy to understand.
- The towel dispenser is easy to see and understand.
- The toilet seat is easy to see against the floor and sanitary ware.
- The toilet/bathroom is well lit.

#### **I will be able to find my way with ease**

- There is plenty of light.
- All toilet doors are the same: easy to see and have the same clear sign.
- The layout of the building is easy to understand.
- Different rooms have different functions with plenty of cues as to the purpose of the room.
- There are high levels of visibility. This means that as far as possible people can see where they need to go since they may be unable to remember, or be able to work out, the layout.
- There is good directional signage if necessary.
- All signage combines words and a clear picture, contrasts with the background and is mounted no more than 1.2 metres from the floor.
- The door to personal space has unique features which are recognisable to each particular individual.

#### **I will be able to see as well as possible**

- There is plenty of light – both natural and artificial.
- Colour/tonal contrast is used to make things clear.

#### **I will have things to do**

- The design enables a person with dementia to continue normal routines and activities. This will include some sort of highly visible kitchen area, a shed, solid table and chairs outside; it may include a car to wash, a vegetable patch, raised beds etc. depending on the background and interests of the residents.
- There are choices about the kind of activities available. A room or separate space for activities is really helpful so that things can be left out to return to after a break. Outdoors offers a great many activity options if well designed. Good lighting is especially important for arts and crafts.
- There is a room big enough for communal activities such as concerts, shows and dancing, or showing films.
- Touch-screen and video technology can make some activities such as music and reminiscence available and controlled by people with dementia.
- There are places for visitors/guests to visit where they can make tea and coffee. There is a variety of options of places to go, a smaller room for a quiet chat or a larger room with more activity. There is something for visiting children to do.
- There is a connection with the local community so that the person with dementia can go out to normal places and it is easy for people from outside to visit.

### **I will be able to go outside when I want to**

- The door to the outside area is not locked or alarmed.
- The door handle is easy to understand.
- The outside area is visible to staff.
- The outside area is safe. The perimeter fence/balustrade needs to be difficult to climb. A fence needs to be visually concealed and a balustrade designed to avoid a sense of imprisonment.
- A safe and solid seat is visible for resting.
- For those living mainly on an upper floor, there is easy access to a safe outdoor space.

### **I will be helped to eat well**

- The dining room needs to look (and ideally smell) like a dining room to provide anticipatory cues.
- It is quiet. No more than ten people eat together. Acoustic panels absorb unavoidable noise.
- There is contrast between the table, table mats, cutlery, crockery and glassware.
- There are sufficient seats for staff/relatives to eat alongside.
- There is good lighting.

### **I will be able to sleep well**

- Noisy activities are kept well away from bedrooms.
- Nurse call systems/resident alarm systems do not make a noise.
- Doors and bins do not shut with a loud bang.
- There are thick curtains to keep out the light.
- The bed can be placed so that the toilet pan can be seen.
- There is plenty of natural light during the day.
- The window does not overlook a source of noise.
- The window cill is not so high that it impedes vision from a seated position.