



PLYMOUTH
CITY COUNCIL

CHECKLIST FOR DEMENTIA FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENTS

A briefing note for organisations



DAA Dementia
Action Alliance

Working to become
**Dementia
Friendly**



Small changes can make a big difference.

For many individuals with a dementia the environment (both internal and external), has a significant impact on their ability to continue to access everyday activities such as shopping, banking or using public transport.

There are a number of small, low cost changes that local businesses can consider to improve accessibility for individuals with dementia. Most of the suggestions are relatively low cost and are beneficial for all customers not just those with a dementia.

This list is not exhaustive and one of the best ways to assess how well people with a dementia can access the services your business provides is to ask. If you don't know anyone living with a dementia the Plymouth Branch of the Alzheimer's Society (Tel 01752 608909) may be able to visit and provide some pointers.

Entrances

- Entrances should be clearly visible and obvious.
- 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 bold face with good contrast between text and background.
- 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 stylized 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 toilets and exits (when returning from the toilet to central areas) are particularly important.
- Ensure that any temporary external signage (sandwich type boards) do not obscure bollards or other street furniture that a person with dementia may use to navigate the street with.

Lighting

- Entrances should be well-lit and makes as much use of natural light as possible.
- Pools of bright light and deep shadows should be avoided.

Flooring

- Flooring should be plain, non-shiny and non-slip.
- Bold patterns on carpets, curtains or wallpaper can cause perceptual problems to people, and so plain walls and flooring are recommended.
- Any changes in floor finish should be flush rather than stepped, as changes to floor surfaces can also cause confusion.

Quiet Area

- A space within your organisation for someone who may be feeling anxious or confused can help that individual recover sufficiently to complete the task and help 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.

Changing rooms and toilets

- Do you have a changing room (where applicable) where an opposite sex carer or partner can help out if the person needs help with their clothes? If not are staff briefed in how to meet this need sensitively.
- Do you have a unisex toilet or other facility which would allow someone to have assistance without causing them or other user's embarrassment?
- Toilet seats that are of a contrasting colour to the walls and rest of the toilet are easier to see if someone has visual problems.

Layout

- Keep the environment free of clutter.
- Arrange furniture / shop fittings to make it easy to move around, creating a clear and obvious passageway.
- Visibility - ensure products are easy to see.

Navigation

- Research shows that people with dementia use 'landmarks' to navigate their way around, both inside and outside. The more attractive and interesting the landmark (which could be a painting, or a plant) the easier it is to use as a landmark.

Other issues

- This list is not exhaustive, and there are other issues people with dementia may find challenging. Unexpected things can cause problems like reflections or reflective surfaces. Having staff who are able to adapt to meet the needs of people living with dementia can ease many environmental barriers.

Environmental checklists

For further information on the impact of design on people with dementia, you can visit the International Dementia Design Network website:

www.international-dementia-design.org/page/getting-out-and-about

There are also a number of very thorough environmental checklists (available at no cost) online which are particularly useful when considering a full review of accessibility for people with dementia.

For a full list contact the Plymouth Dementia Action Alliance Co-ordinator on 01752 305519 or

Email: pdaa@plymouth.gov.uk

Acknowledgements

Thank you to Hampshire County Council, Innovations in Dementia, the Local Government Association and Bradford Alzheimer's Society for kind permission to use and adapt the Dementia Toolkit.

