

Environmental Assessment Tool: Is your clinic dementia friendly?



University
of Worcester

Association for
Dementia Studies



The Royal College of
Chiropractors



Introduction

The Royal College of Chiropractors commissioned the University of Worcester to support the development of this environmental assessment tool.

It is based on the Enhancing the Healing Environment (EHE) assessment tools developed by The King's Fund to assist health and care organisations in developing more supportive design for people with dementia. Since 2015 this work has now been taken forward by The Association for Dementia Studies, University of Worcester.

Chiropractic clinics

The proportion of people with cognitive problems and dementia accessing health care staff including chiropractors is increasing. If the clinic environment is designed to be dementia friendly it can significantly improve the experience for people with dementia by reducing agitation and maximising their independence and engagement in their care. Dementia friendly design is likely to assist everybody who uses the clinic to read and navigate the building.

The term 'clinic' has been used to cover the wide range of buildings from which chiropractic services are delivered many of which have been

converted rather than purpose built. It includes premises used by sole practitioners as well as larger clinics where there may be a multidisciplinary team providing a range of health and care services.

The tool focuses only on areas of the clinic that are accessible by patients and visitors. It does not provide a comprehensive guide to caring for people living with dementia. For further information please see accompanying *Introduction to Dementia Friendly Design* guidance.

The environmental assessment tool has been designed to be practical and easy to use. It focuses on those aspects of the physical environment known to impact on people with dementia. It assesses both the physical environment (such as floor coverings and use of paint colours) and the way that the environment encourages people to behave and interact.

How to use the assessment tool

The assessment tool can be used by a single individual but involving others who have a different perspective, for example; practice managers or clinic receptionists, people living with dementia or their carers, or colleagues, can offer valuable opportunities for gaining different views on the care environment and how to improve it.

Date

.....

Clinic

.....

Assessed by

.....

The assessment tool contains seven sections and a set of questions to prompt discussions and should be completed in full. To avoid repetition issues such as lighting and flooring are covered in one of the sections although they apply to the whole of the clinic building. It will therefore be important to walk round all the areas of the clinic accessed by patients and carers before completing the tool.

You are asked to indicate if the question has been 'Fully met' or you feel that there is 'Room for improvement'. If any of the questions are not relevant they should be marked as not applicable N/A. For example if the clinic is located in an office block it is unlikely to provide outside space and only large multidisciplinary clinics are likely to use electronic check-in systems. If for any reason it will not be possible for you to make adaptations to a particular area please note this in the free text section at the bottom of the page.

A summary sheet has been provided at the end of the assessment tool which should help pinpoint the areas that might be considered for initial improvement. You may also wish to record possible staff training needs arising from conducting the assessment. The King's Fund's overarching design principles for dementia friendly design, which have formed the basis of the tool, are reproduced at the end of the tool.

How the tool was developed

The King's Fund tools were developed in collaboration with NHS organisations. They were informed by research evidence, best practice and over 300 survey responses from those that had used the tools in practice. This tool has been developed with and tested by Members of The Royal College of Chiropractors in a range of clinic settings.

Each of the sections draws on research evidence in dementia friendly design to develop a rationale for effecting change in care environments. These rationales also address the visuospatial problems often associated with dementia.

For further details go to <https://www.worc.ac.uk/discover/ads-enhancing-the-healing-programme.html>

1 The environment promotes meaningful interaction between patients, their families and staff

Rationale

Being unable to find the entrance and/or reception desk can cause anxiety. Patients need clear advice about how to let staff know that they have arrived and where they should wait. Uncared for and unwelcoming spaces can provoke concerns in patients and their relatives about standards of care. The arrangement of furniture provides clues as to the purpose of the space. Seating that enables carers to sit alongside the people they are accompanying will reduce agitation and older people are likely to need chairs with arms.

Questions

Please indicate fully met, room for improvement or N/A for each question

	Fully met	Room for improvement	N/A
A. Does the approach to the clinic look and feel welcoming?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B. Is the entrance well signed and easy to find?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C. Are any steps even and clearly highlighted?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D. Is there a ramp with handrails and is it clear of obstacles/articles which may cause confusion e.g. bicycles?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E. Does the clinic give a good first impression i.e. is it well lit, clean, tidy and cared for?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
F. Is there an obvious reception desk or are clear instructions given to patients on arrival?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
G. If there are separate reception areas for some services, are these easy to see and clearly signed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
H. Are seating/waiting areas obvious?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I. Is there a choice of seating provided including chairs with arms?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
J. Is there space for those accompanying patients to sit with them?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please give examples of good practice/areas of concern:

2 The environment promotes well-being

Rationale

Older people need higher light levels and people with dementia may interpret shadows or dark areas including dark door mats as holes in the floor or different levels and avoid or try to step over them. Appropriate artworks can provide interest while waiting. Views and access to nature promote well-being. Planting should be colourful and non-toxic.

Questions

Please indicate fully met, room for improvement or N/A for each question

	Fully met	Room for improvement	N/A
A. Is the level of light comfortable and appropriate?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B. Is the lighting even e.g. without pools of light and/or dark areas, stripes or shadows which could be confusing and disorientating?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C. Is there good natural light?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D. Is there good colour contrast between the chairs and the flooring?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E. Are artworks provided to provide interest while waiting?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
F. Are views of nature maximised e.g. by having low windows so people can see out from a seated position?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
G. Is there access to pleasant, safe outside space e.g. garden, courtyard, or terrace?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
H. Has any internal or external planting been chosen to be non-toxic and to provide interest throughout the seasons?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please give examples of good practice/areas of concern:

3 The environment encourages active engagement of people with dementia in their care

Rationale

People with dementia can become very anxious in unfamiliar environments but being able to have their carer with them throughout is likely to be reassuring. Noisy and cluttered environments can add to confusion and anxiety. Keeping people calm will enable them to better participate in their assessment. Offering a quiet area to wait will help ease distress. Avoiding dehydration is an important part of caring for people with dementia.

Questions	Fully met	Room for improvement	N/A
Please indicate fully met, room for improvement or N/A for each question			
A. Is there a separate quieter seating/waiting area which could be used by people with dementia and their carers?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B. Are there appropriate facilities to enable a relative/carers to be present throughout the consultation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C. Are changing areas/spaces large enough to allow for wheelchairs and for assistance to be given?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D. Are alternative changing spaces offered if required?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E. Is any electronic check-in system or patient call system large enough to be seen and easy to use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
F. Have distractions been kept to a minimum?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
G. Are magazines, leaflets or books available while people are waiting?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
H. Is water freely available and independently accessible?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please give examples of good practice/areas of concern:

4 The environment promotes mobility

Rationale

Being able to walk independently is important. Good colour contrast between walls, floors and furniture will assist people with dementia to navigate the clinic. Safety can be enhanced by providing handrails and small seating areas where people can rest. People with dementia may interpret shiny floors as being wet or slippery and changes in flooring colour, for example contrasting threshold strips, as something to step over. Speckles or pebble effects in flooring could look like pieces of litter. Interesting artworks will encourage mobility as well as helping people find their way around.

Questions

Please indicate fully met, room for improvement or N/A for each question

	Fully met	Room for improvement	N/A
A. Is the flooring matt rather than shiny and in a colour that contrasts with the walls and furniture?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B. Is the flooring a consistent colour i.e. does not have speckles, pebble effects, stripes or patterns?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C. Are any threshold strips or floor mats between areas in the same colour and tone as the flooring?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D. Do the handrails contrast with the walls and can they be grasped properly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E. Are there small seating areas for people to rest along any long corridors and outside the centre?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
F. Are lift controls easy to understand and clearly visible?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
G. Does the seat of any chair lift contrast with the stair carpet so as to be seen easily?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
H. Are staircases well lit and are stair nosings in a contrasting colour to enable the edges of the steps to be clearly distinguishable?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please give examples of good practice/areas of concern:

5 The environment promotes continence and personal hygiene

Rationale

Not being able to find the toilet provokes anxiety and using the same signs and door colours to denote all toilets will help people find them more easily. Ensuring good colour contrast on sanitary fittings will make toilets and basins easier to see and use. Traditional and familiar designs will help ease anxiety and promote self-care. Being plunged into darkness if sensor lights go out can be very frightening.

Questions

Please indicate fully met, room for improvement or N/A for each question

	Fully met	Room for improvement	N/A
A. Can the signs to the toilets be seen from all areas?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B. Are toilet doors painted in a single distinctive colour and do they have the same clear signage?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C. Are the toilet seats, flush handles and rails in a colour that contrasts with the toilet walls and floor?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D. Are the toilet flushes, basins and taps of a familiar design?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E. Are the taps clearly marked as hot and cold?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
F. Are the toilet roll holders of familiar design and can they be easily reached from the toilet?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
G. Is there access to a toilet big enough to allow space for a wheelchair and carers to assist with the door closed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
H. If sensor lights have been installed do they allow sufficient time for completion of toileting?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please give examples of good practice/areas of concern:

6 The environment promotes orientation

Rationale

People with dementia are likely to become agitated in unfamiliar surroundings and providing visual clues and prompts, including accent colours and artworks of local landmarks, to help them find their way around is particularly important. Signs need to be placed at a height where they can easily be seen and should be placed on doors not beside them. Strong patterns on wall coverings or furnishings can be misinterpreted. Providing clocks and signs indicating the name and address of the clinic will help with orientation.

Questions

Please indicate fully met, room for improvement or N/A for each question

	Fully met	Room for improvement	N/A
A. Are signs of a good size and a contrasting colour and hung at a height (approximately 4 foot/1.2m) that makes viewing them easy?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B. Are any signs denoting consultation room number or name clear and easy to read?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C. Are signs placed at key decision points to assist navigation through the building?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D. Have strong patterns been avoided in wall coverings, curtains, furnishings and screens?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E. Is there a large face clock easily visible in all areas?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
F. Is there clear internal signage denoting the name of the clinic and its location?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
G. Are there points of interest and way finding clues throughout the clinic e.g. different colours or artworks used to denote each floor?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please give examples of good practice/areas of concern:

7 The environment promotes calm, safety and security

Rationale

Clutter and distractions, including notices, can cause added confusion and should be avoided. Noise can make concentration difficult and can increase anxiety. Striped or highly patterned furniture/furnishings can be distracting and confusing for people with dementia. People living with dementia may not recognise themselves in a mirror.

Questions

Please indicate fully met, room for improvement or N/A for each question

	Fully met	Room for improvement	N/A
A. Are notices kept to a minimum to avoid distraction and confusion?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B. Are spaces clutter free?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C. Has adequate space been provided for wheelchairs and pushchairs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D. Have noise absorbent surfaces been used e.g. on floors and ceilings, to aid noise reduction?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E. Is background noise e.g. from any TVs or screens been kept to a minimum?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
F. Is it possible to cover or take down mirrors if necessary?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
G. Are the ways out/fire exits clearly marked and easy to see?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
H. Are all hazardous liquids and solids e.g. cleaning materials, locked away?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please give examples of good practice/areas of concern:

This summary sheet can provide an overview of the areas where improvements may be needed across the clinic environment.

You could use a ✓ or x against each element of the criterion, or a traffic light system with green to show areas that are working well, red for areas requiring immediate work and amber for areas to be tackled at a later date.

You can also use the plan of action to record how you intend to address the areas requiring work, and when those actions have been completed.

Reminder of elements

- 1 The environment promotes meaningful interaction between patients, their families and staff
- 2 The environment promotes well-being
- 3 The environment encourages active engagement of people with dementia in their care
- 4 The environment promotes mobility
- 5 The environment promotes continence and personal hygiene
- 6 The environment promotes orientation
- 7 The environment promotes calm, safety and security

Your summary

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
1										
2										
3										
4										
5										
6										
7										

Plan of action

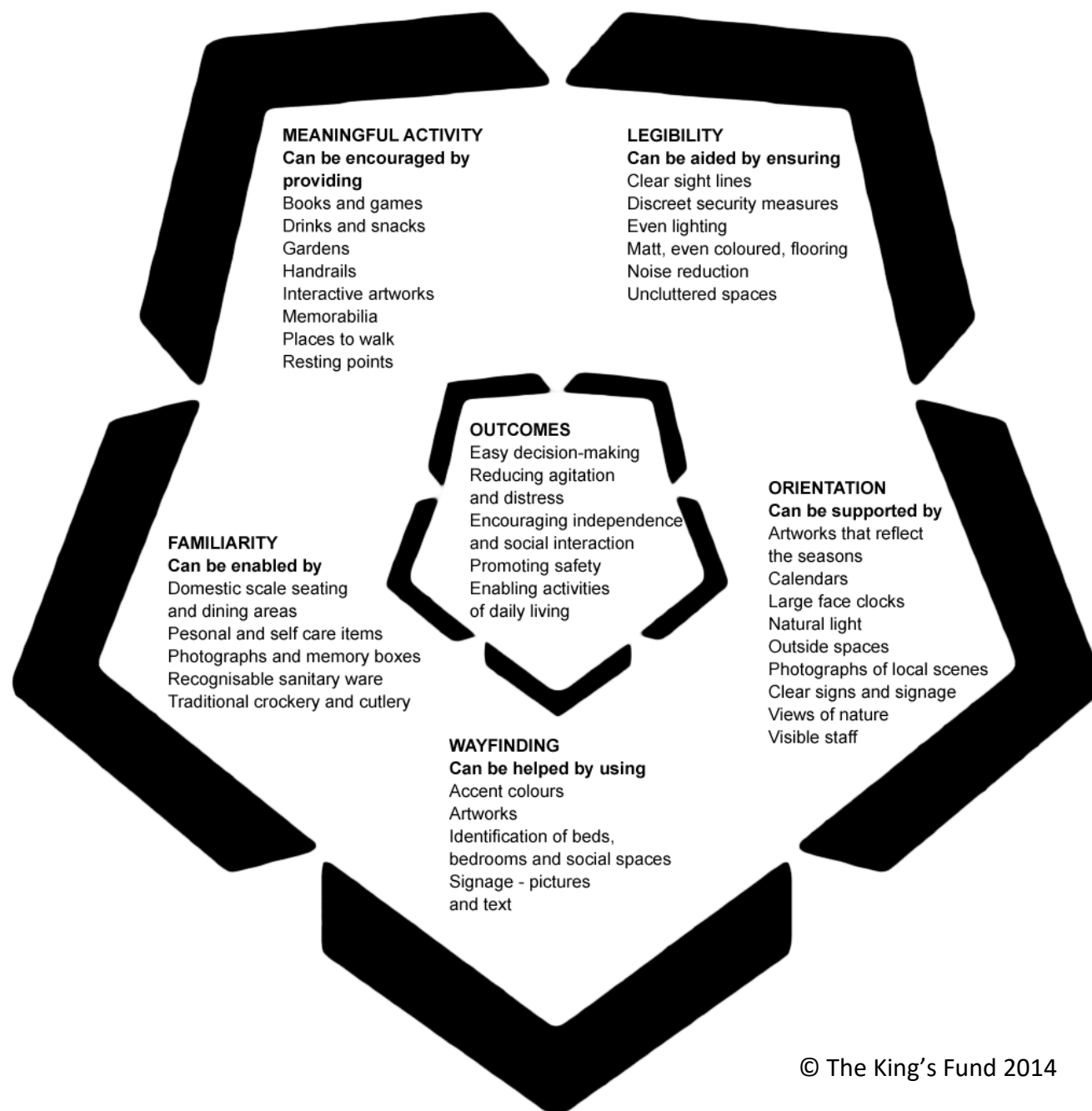
Actions	Date completed

Overarching design principles

The design principles focus on promoting well-being and independence rather than providing detailed room by room guidance. They have been developed as a result of the EHE programme and bring together best practice in creating more supportive care environments for people with cognitive problems and dementia. The principles are drawn from a number of sources, including research evidence and the learning gained from changes tested in a range of care environments.

<https://www.worc.ac.uk/discover/ads-enhancing-the-healing-programme.html>

Each of the five sections contains a list of design elements that are known to support, encourage and enable people with dementia in care settings. It is unlikely that all the elements can be addressed at the same time unless a new build or comprehensive refurbishment is being planned. However, many of the principles are simple, can be introduced with very little financial outlay and are known to be helpful in creating a more supportive physical environment for people with dementia and those that care for them.



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