

# Dementia Design Checklist (Revised)

<b>Date of survey</b>	
<b>IDEA Services branch</b>	
<b>Address of building</b>	
<b>Purpose and use of the building (ie group home, home-based day service, vocational centre)</b>	
<b>Names and positions of people carrying out the survey</b>	

## Acknowledgements

The original version of the Dementia Design Checklist was developed through a collaboration between Health Facilities Scotland and The Dementia Services Development Centre at the University of Stirling, Scotland.

Thanks are given to these organisations for their original work and for their endorsement for adaptations to be made.

## Introduction

This document is part of a Design Audit and Survey Toolkit intended for use across a range of property types. It was initially developed for use in Scotland in health-care premises where people with dementia are likely to attend as patients or visitors, including rest homes and hospital-care facilities.

It has been adapted for use in group homes and other settings managed by IDEA Services in New Zealand. In these instances it should be used in conjunction with the following IHC documents:

- Property Suitability Assessment (PTY0010) (if there is concern that a current property is unsuitable)
- Preliminary Property Assessment (PTY0003) (if a new property is being considered for people who have dementia).

It could also be used by families and individuals who want to assess their own homes.

The Checklist is designed to allow a preliminary assessment of an existing building to determine its suitability for use by people with dementia and is a prompt for relevant improvements. It is also a helpful briefing tool for new buildings.

The Checklist has been set out to include all the rooms and areas that form part of a typical support environment. A systematic approach to evaluating design proposals and existing facilities can be taken. Every building is different and the Checklist can be adapted for different settings. The Checklist also uses the concept of 'inclusive' design, which tries to ensure that the built environment does not present insurmountable barriers to those who use it. Properly considered and designed facilities will benefit everyone, including people who use wheelchairs and walking aids or have other types of impairment, older people and families.

## Using the Checklist

Before completing the Checklist, the function and use of the building should be fully understood so that the specific requirements of the users are known and can be taken into account, particularly if it is necessary to assess the feasibility of making alterations to an existing building.

The Checklist has been structured with a section on general design principles at the beginning. This provides a valuable basis for use as a briefing tool for designers of new facilities.

## Outcomes of the survey

The outcomes of the survey will need to be prioritised and actioned as is reasonable and within financial means, in conjunction with the building owner. The best and most effective changes may be possible with minimal spending, while others will have a substantial cost – these significant changes may not always be possible.

General principles		Yes/No	Comments
<b>1. Layout and general design</b>			
1.1	Is the building layout open plan to increase the ability of staff to monitor service users easily?		
1.2	Are personal belongings and photos used to stimulate memory and identity?		
1.3	Are ramp surfaces slip resistant but still allow a shuffling gait?		
1.4	Do steps have a non-slip surface?		
1.5	Are handrails provided at steps and ramps?		
1.6	Are doorways wide enough to allow wheelchair access (minimum 860mm) and potentially hospital bed movement (minimum 1100mm) in some rooms?		
1.7	Do doors open against walls into the various rooms, providing good clues to the rooms' use and giving immediate views of the rooms and their contents?		
<b>Decor</b>			
1.8	Are contrasting colours used to aid visibility, eg skirting boards in colours that contrast with wall and floor finishes?		
1.9	Is the floor covering plain and in contrast with the walls and furniture?		
1.10	Are changes of flooring material similar in appearance and finished to avoid confusion, especially at thresholds to new areas.		
1.11	Are non-carpeted floors matt rather than shiny, to prevent a high degree of reflection?		
1.12	Are changes in floor finish flush to prevent trip hazards or confusion for service users, especially at thresholds to new areas, eg toilets and bedrooms?		
1.13	Is the decor of the rooms age appropriate and culturally sensitive?		

### Fixtures, fittings and loose furniture

1.14	Do furnishings and decoration help to provide a non-institutional environment?		
1.15	Are all furnishing fabrics plain or simple in design (with no representations of real-life objects)?		
1.16	Do furniture design and layout enable rather than restrain people?		
1.17	Is technology used to support people in their independence and personal activities?		
1.18	Are door handles easy to use (levers rather than knobs), comfortable and contrasting in colour with the walls?		
1.19	Are handrails easy to use, with clear safety features to indicate where they end, eg knobs or a different colour?		
1.20	Are mirrors easily covered or removable?		

### Safety and security

1.21	Are controls for heating and cooling tamper-proof?		
1.22	Are windows generally able to be opened, but have restrictors to limit opening?		
1.23	Is there adequate storage space for equipment, eg hoists when not in use?		
1.24	Is there adequate heating (with any wood burners or gas heaters adequately screened)?		
1.25	Is the use of mats avoided to prevent trips and falls?		
1.26	Is there adequate secure storage for medication, folders and other medical supplies?		

### Lighting

1.27	Do all areas have good levels of both natural and artificial lighting supplemented by more localised lighting (illuminance of 150 lux general room lighting, 50 lux in ancillary rooms)?		
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2	Exterior	Yes/No	Comments
<b>Layout and general design</b>			
2.1	Is adequate designated parking available for people with reduced mobility?		
2.2	Is there a sheltered unloading area for people to disembark from vehicles (high enough for use by vehicles with hoists)?		
2.3	Is the approach to the building level, or easily graded, and relatively even and free of kerbs?		
2.4	Are the main entrances to the building level and without steps or non-negotiable thresholds?		
2.5	Are handrails provided at steps and ramps?		
2.6	Is external lighting evenly distributed to avoid pools of bright light and deep shadow?		
2.7	Is any exterior fencing difficult to clamber over, while allowing views outside the property?		
2.8	Is there strategic use of planting to help guide people away from exit areas that they should not use?		
<b>Way-finding</b>			
2.9	Is the environment safe and secure?		
2.10	Is there easy access to safe outdoor spaces from the building, eg garden, terrace, patio or deck?		
2.11	Are there steep slopes or other barriers within the outdoor area?		
2.12	Are handrails provided at steps or gradients?		
2.13	Is there a level, non-slip, hard-surfaced patio that allows for shuffling gait?		
2.14	Is there a path in the garden that is wheelchair accessible and returns users to the beginning?		
2.15	Are there resting areas in the garden, some with protection from direct sunlight and wind?		

2.16	Are there areas created in the garden to provide a sense of moving from one space to another, eg a trellised gate?		
2.17	Are accessible outdoor areas easily visible to staff from inside the building?		
<b>Fixtures, features and outdoor furniture</b>			
2.18	Are there familiar garden objects such as tools, washing lines, wooden seats, bird tables and greenhouses within easy view and access?		
2.19	Is the garden attractive with a range of year-round planting offering a range of stimulation to the senses?		
2.20	Is the garden well maintained?		
2.21	Are there adequate storage facilities for garden tools and other outdoor equipment?		
<b>3 Entrance area</b>			
3.1	Is there adequate lighting to the drive/parking area and at the main entrance?		
3.2	Is the entrance area bright and evenly lit with maximum use of natural light?		
3.3	Are hallways bright and well lit?		
3.4	Is there good access for those with physical or mobility problems, including wheelchair users?		
<b>Way-finding</b>			
3.5	Are there landmark objects such as memorabilia and artwork to aid way-finding?		
3.6	Is there contrast in colour between signs and background mounts?		
3.7	Are signs fixed to the doors to which they refer, rather than adjacent wall spaces?		
3.8	Are signs placed at an appropriate height? The centre of the sign for optimum placement should be approximately 1200mm from the base of the door or the floor.		

<b>Decor</b>			
3.9	Is the entrance area welcoming, well lit and friendly?		
3.10	Are there comfortable handrails to give both physical assistance and a sense of direction/distance?		
<b>4</b>	<b>Lounge/Day room</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Layout and general design</b>			
4.1	Is the focus of the room something other than a television?		
4.2	Are window sills low enough to be able to see out from a sitting position?		
4.3	Do windows provide easily controllable ventilation and avoid direct draughts at sitting level?		
4.4	Is the room made recognisable through features such as a television, radio, comfortable seats, easy chairs, and coffee table?		
<b>Fixtures, fittings and loose furniture</b>			
4.5	Does the layout incorporate fittings and furniture that will encourage interaction?		
4.6	Is there a range of furniture suitable for the needs of all: chairs of different heights/depths and colours that contrast with the surroundings?		
<b>5</b>	<b>Dining room/kitchen</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Layout and general design</b>			
5.1	Is there adequate cupboard and bench space?		
5.2	Are worktops and sinks, etc at suitable heights for all users, including wheelchair users and those with reduced mobility?		
5.3	Does the design allow people to participate in kitchen chores?		
5.4	Is the kitchen counter visible from various vantage points?		

Decor			
5.5	Is the dining room made recognisable by features such as a dining table and upright chairs, with easy access to the kitchen?		
Fixtures, fittings and loose furniture			
5.6	Do sideboards/dressers encourage service users to assist in table setting and clearing?		
5.7	Is there adequate secure storage space for all medication, folders and other medical supplies?		
5.8	Are tables suitable for wheelchair users?		
5.9	Are chairs of an appropriate design and are sliders used for ease of moving?		
Safety and security			
5.10	Are non-slip floors used for areas where there is a hard finish?		
6	Meaningful activity	Yes/No	Comments
Layout and general design			
6.1	Are there facilities for art and craft activities, for both individuals and groups?		
6.2	Is there adequate storage space for craft supplies and equipment?		
6.3	Are there facilities and sufficient space for general recreational activities, for both individuals and groups?		
6.4	Is there easy and visible access to outside spaces, with facilities for service users to engage in light gardening and other activities?		
Safety and security			
6.5	Is a secure area available to store tools, chemicals and other materials if needed?		



7	Bedrooms	Yes/No	Comments
<b>Layout and general design</b>			
7.1	Is an individual's room personalised and identifiable?		
7.2	Does the furniture layout allow for ease of movement and wheelchair access?		
7.3	Do some of the rooms have external doors with easy egress for a 'hospital' beds or wheelchairs?		
<b>Way-finding</b>			
7.4	On exiting a bedroom to a hall, has the placement of a door directly opposite been avoided?		
7.5	Does every bedroom door have a visual sign identifiable by the occupant?		
<b>Decor</b>			
7.6	Are bed cover patterns plain/un-patterned?		
7.7	Are chair covers in a contrasting colour to other finishes?		
7.8	Is there appropriate accessible clothes storage, which displays or partly displays the contents?		
7.9	Is there a display space for personal memorabilia?		
<b>Lighting and heating</b>			
7.10	Can bedside lights be controlled automatically when touched?		
7.11	Can light switch controls be easily reached by a person in their bed?		
7.12	Are heaters thermostatically controlled to manage the temperature?		

8 Toilets/Bathrooms		Yes/No	Comments
<b>Layout and general design</b>			
8.1	Is there adequate space for transfers from wheelchairs or hoists, especially when two carers are required?		
8.2	If not en-suite, are the toilets well located and fully accessible to areas where service users will generally be?		
<b>Decor</b>			
8.3	Are the wall linings and floors home-like in appearance?		
8.4	Is the toilet floor the same colour as other floor surfaces that adjoin it?		
8.5	Are the colours of the toilet pan and seat in contrast to the floor and the wall to which they are fitted?		
8.6	Does the toilet roll holder contrast in colour to the background wall finish? If not, is the toilet roll a contrasting colour?		
8.7	Is the toilet roll holder within easy reach of the toilet position and of a traditional design?		
8.8	Are taps traditional in appearance, eg crosshead, and simple to operate with clear indications of 'hot' and 'cold'?		
8.9	Are grabrails comfortable to grip and do they contrast in colour or tone with the tiles and background wall/floor?		
8.10	Is there plenty of shelving for toiletries?		
8.11	Are there hooks to hang clothing on?		
8.12	Are there discrete storage spaces available for bulk items such as incontinence pads?		
8.13	Is the floor finish non-slip to prevent potential accidents when moving from wet areas to dry?		
<b>Lighting in en-suites</b>			
8.14	In en-suites off bedrooms, is there low-level lighting operating overnight to improve visibility without disturbing sleep, or another arrangement, eg a movement sensor?		

Way-finding			
8.15	Do bathrooms and toilets have adequate visual signage?		
8.16	Are service users able to see what is in a room clearly when they open the door (balanced with privacy considerations)?		
Fixtures, fittings and loose furniture			
8.17	If there is a walk-in shower area, does the flooring or shower tray blend into the overall colour scheme of the floor yet contrast with the walls and furniture?		
8.18	Are grabrails comfortable to grip and do they contrast in colour and tone with the tiles and background walls/floors?		
Lighting			
8.19	Does the room have a good level of natural light (if there is a window) and general lighting, with supplementary local lighting if a mirror is utilised?		
8.20	Does the heating adequately warm the room?		
9	Laundry	Yes/No	Comments
Layout and general design			
9.1	Is there adequate space for soaking buckets?		
9.2	Is there adequate storage space for supplies like catheter bags and colostomy products?		
9.3	Is there adequate bench space?		
9.4	Is there a sluice?		
9.5	Is there a flexible hose attached to the sink for allowing the rinsing of soiled items?		
9.6	Is there adequate storage space for cleaning products etc?		
9.7	Is there adequate storage space for mops, brooms etc?		