

Meeting the needs of older people in the design of hospital settings:

KeyRecommendations

Basic design layout

- Establish a clear intuitive wayfinding strategy that is robust enough to accept future additions or alterations to the building. Circulation routes should conform to a readable pattern which is duplicated throughout the building and the exterior spaces. Different zones should be clearly identifiable.
- Provide windows giving views, daylight and ventilation to spaces where people spend time (wards, waiting areas) and circulation routes.
- Provide level or gently ramped routes inside and outside at least 1.8m wide that are safe, non-slip and well lit.
- Travel routes should not compromise patient's dignity and privacy. There should be separate routes and waiting areas to general services such as visual imaging for in-patients and out-patients.
- Limit walking distances. Provide resting areas at 30m intervals along routes.
- Ensure doors contrast in colour and tone to surrounding walls.
- Provide shading devices, accessible by users, for windows.
- Place signage and notice boards at eye level (between 1.4 – 1.6m above ground).
- Use non-reflective material on notice boards, notices and signage.
- Place localized lighting at desk areas, service counters, sinks and mirrors, reading areas, and at notice boards.
- Include induction loops and speech enhancement systems at service desk areas and areas where discussions may occur.
- Provide support rails around toilets, wash basins and showers.
- Ensure toilet seat covers and support rails contrast in colour and tone to background surfaces.
- Sinks should have easy-to-use handles, such as lever or cross tap handles, and hot and cold taps should be clearly differentiated.
- Ensure door handles are lever or "d" shape

New buildings and improvements to existing buildings.

- Ensure that changes in layout do not destroy the wayfinding strategy.
- Continuous hand-rails, circular or with rounded edges, should be provided along both sides of all routes. Hand-rails should contrast in colour to background wall and other surrounding surfaces.
- Provide resting areas along pedestrian travel and circulation routes
- Ensure floor and wall surfaces are non-reflective.
- Use colour, contrasting tone and textures to identify different zones of the building.

Day to day management of the space

- Include art/plants/flowers in waiting areas and bed areas.
- Avoid a proliferation of notices. Notices should be on notice boards, in large print with non-reflective surfaces.
- Allow space in seating areas for integrated placement of wheelchairs.
- Ensure there are no obstacles or tripping hazards on routes below eye level.
- Avoid using high gloss cleaning products on floor and wall surfaces.

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