Best practice in the design of residential environments for people living with dementia and sight loss

The Research Process

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Background to project

• Age is a risk factor for sight loss
• Age is a risk factor for dementia
• Dementia can compound and complicate sight loss, as memory and understanding may become impaired
• Some forms of dementia may entail physical damage which can produce additional sight problems
• We know that design can help people live better with each condition
• But research on design for the combination of conditions had not been done
Aims of the project

• To review the research on design for people with dementia and people with sight loss to assemble and assess evidence base.

• To develop a new set of evidence-based design guidelines, drawing on research evidence and stakeholder engagement (people with dementia and sight loss and people who support and care for them, expert informants).
Methods: Overview

- Systematic Literature Review
- Consultations with:
  - People living with sight loss and/or dementia
  - A panel of key informants
- Development of guidelines based on evidence from literature review and consultations
- Survey to confirm validity of guidelines
Project results

- Guidelines bring together the research evidence from the literature and the findings from the consultations.

- 33 pieces of literature fully reviewed
- 8 key informants
- 6 people with sight loss and dementia
- 13 people with sight loss
- 8 care home staff
- 2 sight loss day centre staff

- The outputs of the project were then developed so that users can approach them at different levels and through different medium according to their needs.
The Guidelines

– Suggestions based on findings from the different phases of research

– Focus on the person and their individual needs and rights, and emphasise ways in which independence can be promoted and capacity supported

– Acknowledge the limitations of the evidence base and emphasise the importance of discussion between people with sight loss and dementia, support workers and carers before making changes

Also included:

– Points for further consideration when thinking about the design of residential environments for people with sight loss and dementia
The Guidelines (2)

• Grouped into seven categories based on findings from literature review and initial consultations:

  » Colour and contrast
  » Lighting
  » Fixtures and fixings
  » Kitchens
  » Bathrooms
  » Entrances and Exits
  » Outdoor Spaces
Different formats of Guidelines

» Printed Version of Guidelines

» Audio Version of Guidelines

» Braille Version of Guidelines

» Web-based Resource – to be demonstrated
Accessing the Web-based resource

1. Go to DSDC homepage
2. Mouse over ‘Design’ to see drop-down menu
3. Click on ‘Good Practice Guidelines’ at bottom

http://dementia.stir.ac.uk/design/good-practice-design-dementia-and-sight-loss
Main landing page

Scroll down the page to access download buttons and guideline categories.
Category landing page

Introduction and guidelines as in printed version

Explanation of tick system

Entrances and exits

Good design of entrances and exits is important for people with sight loss and dementia. With good design of both internal and external entrances and exits, people with dementia and sight loss will be able to move easily between rooms and to enter and leave buildings freely. Some guidelines in this section relate mainly to care homes, e.g. advice about emergency exits, but most are applicable to both individual homes and shared residential accommodation.

What do the ticks mean?

- ✔️ ✔️ ✔️ helps or is of benefit to most people
- ✔️ ✔️ ✔️ helps or is of benefit to some people
- ✔️ helps or is of benefit in specific circumstances
- ❓ means that this aspect of design needs to be considered carefully before being adopted
Category landing page  
Research evidence section

Literature review summary and bibliographic details of publications

Summary findings by participant group and Selected quotes

Research evidence

Our expert interviewees said

- People with sight loss and dementia might benefit from high contrast door frames
- In care homes, different coloured bedroom doors might replicate those of previous home doors and help people to find their way around

People with dementia and with sight loss and their carers taking part in interviews and focus groups told us

- Using contrasting colours for doors and door frames can help these features stand out
- Yellow bathroom doors can be seen more easily
- In rooms with insufficient light, it can be difficult to see where the doors are
- Motion sensor lighting outdoors can be infuriating if sensors are too sensitive and set off by wildlife

The survey found

- Out of 86 people who answered questions on this section, 77% thought that guidelines on lighting would be ‘very helpful’ and a further 22% thought they would be ‘helpful’
- When people were asked to either agree, disagree or say that they were unsure about a series of statements, the highest levels of agreement were in relation to: need to have door thresholds flush
Thank you for listening

http://dementia.stir.ac.uk/design/good-practice-design-dementia-and-sight-loss

Any questions?
Contact a.m.bowes@stir.ac.uk

Publications:


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