

Dementia Friendly Hospitals from a Universal Design Approach

Design Guidelines 2018

Funded by:
HRB Health Research Board

Supported by:
HE Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte Health Service Executive

National Dementia Office

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NDA National Design Authority

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The **Dementia Friendly Hospital Guidelines from a Universal Design Approach** provide detailed guidance in relation to dementia specific design issues and the Universal Design (UD) of acute hospitals in Ireland. For many patients, the hospital is challenging due to the busy, unfamiliar, and stressful nature of the environment. For a person with dementia the hospital experience can be exacerbated by cognitive impairment and behavioural or psychological symptoms, and can therefore prove to be a frightening, distressing, and disorientating place.

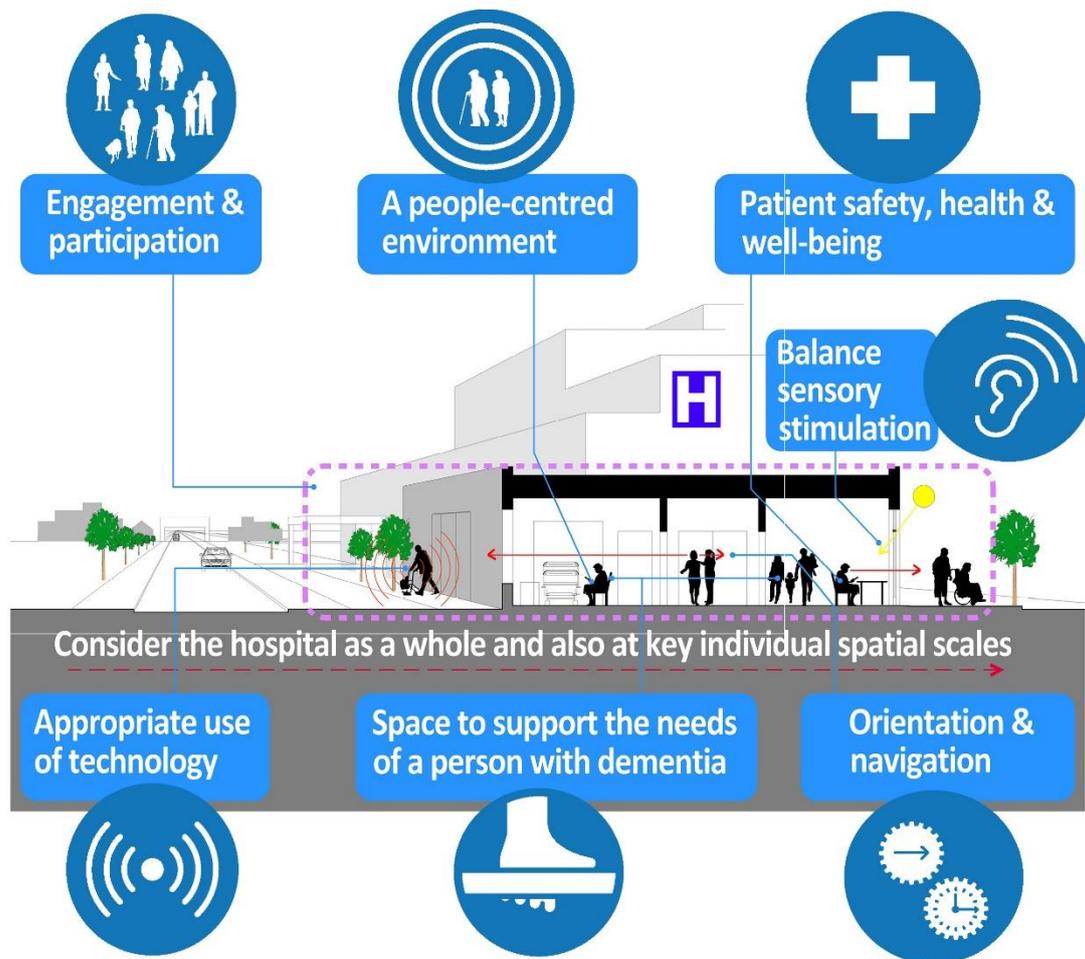
In response to these issues, research funded by the HRB has been completed to investigate dementia friendly design for acute care public hospitals. This has examined how the physical hospital environment might provide a better experience for people with dementia, and how hospitals can be Universally Designed to enable family members and carers to provide support for the person with dementia throughout their visit to the hospital.

This research underpins these guidelines to provide detailed guidance in relation to dementia specific design issues and the UD of dementia friendly hospitals. This guidance will raise awareness about designing for dementia and highlight the benefits of adopting a UD approach to ensure that hospitals support all people regardless of age, size ability or disability. In this context, these design guidelines can be used for the design of new build, extensions and the retrofit of existing hospitals to ensure that:

- Hospitals are supportive, therapeutic and healing spaces for all people.
- Hospitals support families, visitors and staff as well as the person with dementia.
- Cost effective practical solutions will promote independence and address safety concerns.

- The well-being of the person with dementia and their families will be enhanced.

According to the Principal Investigator of the research project, Prof. Desmond O’Neill, “one of the most significant societal advances in recent decades has been a stronger sense of our shared humanity and intertwined narratives with those among us living with dementia. Rather than being othered into a two-dimensional and grim label from which our collective gaze was averted, particularly in terms of the design and function of our hospitals, we now are beginning to appreciate that including the world view and perspectives of those of us living with dementia is an imperative for the future design of all health care facilities.”



Research Team and Project Partners

The Principal Investigator for this research is Prof. Desmond O’Neill (TCD and Tallaght Hospital) and the research and guidelines were completed by TrinityHaus, TCD and Tallaght Hospital, in collaboration with Centre for Excellence in Universal Design at the National Disability Authority, Health Services Executive Estates, Alzheimer’s Society of Ireland, Irish Dementia Working Group, O’Connell Mahon Architects, the National Dementia Office, the Dementia Services Information and Development Centre, St. James’s Hospital, Mercy University Hospital Cork, and Connolly Hospital Dublin.

The Launch of the Dementia Friendly Hospital Guidelines will take place from 10:00-12:00 on June 21, 2018, at the Centre for Excellence Universal Design National Disability Authority (Location: 25 Clyde Road, Dublin 4). Incorporating dementia-friendly design into routine practice is an idea whose time has come, and in this we are encouraged by the words of Victor Hugo: “Mightier than marching armies is the force of an idea whose time has come”.