



DEMENTIA FRIENDLY

# Sector Specific: Environment Guidance

## **Dementia friendly environment checklist**

Where possible your business premises should be as dementia friendly and inclusive as possible. Below is a checklist. This list is not exhaustive so don't be put off if you cannot tick them all. If possible, speak to people living with dementia and ask them how they find your premises.

### **Quiet space**

- Do you have a quiet space for someone who might be feeling anxious or confused? A few minutes with a supportive person might be all that's needed.

### **Signage**

- Are signs clear, in bold face with good contrast between text and background?
- Is there a contrast between the sign and the surface it is mounted on? This will allow the person to recognise it as a sign.
- Are the signs fixed to the doors they refer to? They should not be on adjacent surfaces if at all possible.
- Are signs at eye level and well-lit?
- Are signs clear images or icons?
- Are signs placed at key decision points for someone who is at the building/area for the first time?
- Are signs for toilets and exits clear? These are particularly important.
- Are glass doors clearly marked?
- Is information clearly displayed on public facing notice boards?
- Do you have analogue clocks displaying the date and time?

### **Lighting**

*Good lighting can prevent falls and other accidents for people with dementia. Low lighting may impact what someone can or cannot see and add to any confusion.*

- Are entrances well-lit and make as much use of natural light as possible? Avoid using areas with bright light or deep shadows.
- Is there extra lighting by stairs and toilet areas?

### **Flooring**

*Ideally flooring will be smooth, matt, and level without reflections.*

- Are floors matt in colour without reflections and deep shadows? Reflections can cause confusion.
- Are carpets plain in colour without bold patterns? Plain surfaces are easier as patterns can cause problems for people with perceptual problems.
- Are changes in floor finish flush rather than stepped? Changes in floor surfaces can cause some confusion due to perceptual problems. If there is a step at the same time you also introduce a trip hazard.

### **Changing rooms and toilets**

- Do you have a unisex changing room (where applicable) where a carer or partner can help if the person needs help with their clothes?

- Do you have a unisex toilet or other facilities which would allow someone to have assistance without causing them or other users embarrassment?
- Are toilet seats a contrasting colour to the walls?
- Are the rest of the toilets colour contrasting?

### **Seating**

- Do you have a seating area where people are waiting? This can be a big help.
- Does your seating look like seating? People with dementia will find this easier (for example a wooden bench would be preferable to an abstract, metal, Z-shaped bench).
- Do you have wheelchairs (or reasonable alternatives) provided and placed near entrances for ease of use?

### **Navigation**

- Do you have landmarks around the building to help people navigate? Research shows that people with dementia use “landmarks” to navigate their way around, both inside and outside. The more attractive and interesting the landmark (which could be a painting, or a plant) the easier it is to use it as a landmark.
- Do you have a sensory map for people attending your buildings?

You should be aiming for as many as possible to ensure your environment is dementia friendly.

**For a specific audit of your environment please contact the SDAA to arrange a meeting.**

This is just the start of making your environment dementia friendly for the next steps contact us at [sdaa@ageuksheffield.org.uk](mailto:sdaa@ageuksheffield.org.uk).

*SDAA acknowledges the Alzheimer's Society for the Dementia Friendly Environment Checklist which we have adapted.*

## **Day Centres and Lunch Clubs**

The following should also be considered when ensuring your environment is dementia friendly

### **The Prepared Environment within Day Centres or Lunch Clubs**

- Does the room feel familiar and welcoming?
- Are there focus points within the room that are personal to members? This will help for topics of conversation and will engage people as they walk within the room.
- Is there space to walk around the premises if someone does not want to sit?
- Is the room at a comfortable temperature? If not, could you provide blankets?
- Are areas free from clutter? This can help the person with dementia to find what they need for themselves.
- Does the room encourage people with dementia to engage with activities independently. For example, are books or puzzles out and ready for people to engage with themselves? Are there prompts in the room that encourage members to try an activity?

### **Day Centre Seating**

- Is their appropriate seating? Is this comfortable, supportive and dignified.
- Does your seating contrast with the colour of the floor?

### **Arriving at the building**

- Is there disabled access into the building?
- Is there parking nearby or a easily accessible drop off point?

Additional score        /10  
Sheffield Dementia Action Alliance

## **Churches**

This dementia friendly checklist encourages churches to consider the barriers for someone with dementia and what changes would make the environment more dementia friendly and inclusive. Small changes can make a big impact. If possible, speak to people living with dementia or their family carers and ask them what would make a difference to their experience. What may be appropriate for one person living with dementia may not be for another.

Below is a checklist and points to consider. Not every suggestion will be right for every Church. Don't be put off if you cannot tick them all - they are areas to work towards.

### **Arriving at the building**

- During open times does the Church look open? If your doors are closed, is there clear signage to show how to get into the building?
- Is there disabled access into the Church?
- Is there parking nearby or a easily accessible drop off point?

### **Signage**

- Are signs placed at key decision points for someone who is at the building/area for the first time?
- Are signs for toilets and exits clear? These are particularly important.
- Are signs clear, in bold face with good contrast between text and background?
- Is there a contrast between the sign and the surface it is mounted on? This will allow the person to recognise it as a sign.
- Are the signs fixed to the doors they refer to? They should not be on adjacent surfaces if at all possible.
- Are signs at eye level (or just below eye level) and well-lit?
- Are signs clear images or icons?

### **Lighting**

Good lighting can prevent falls and other accidents for people with dementia. Low lighting may impact what someone can or cannot see and add to any confusion. Your church might need to particularly consider lighting in the winter months or if doing evening events.

- Does your church make as much use of natural light as possible? Avoid using areas with bright light or deep shadows
- Do you have a reading lamp or other alternatives available?
- Do you cover any services that have a shiny finish? Such as cushions on pews or table clothes on tables? Older adults are particularly sensitive to glare.

### **Sound**

- Can the service be clearly heard from all areas of the Church?
- Is there a hearing loop in the Church, and are people supported and reminded to use it?

- Does everyone involved in leading the service use a microphone, and check in with the congregation at the beginning of the service that they can be heard?

### **Quiet space**

- Do you have a quiet space for someone who might be feeling anxious or confused? A few minutes with a supportive person might be all that's needed.
- Is there an area for personal and private conversations?

### **Flooring**

Ideally flooring will be smooth, matt, and level without reflections. Changes in floor surfaces can cause some confusion due to perceptual problems.

- Are floors matt in colour without reflections and deep shadows? Reflections can cause confusion.
- Are carpets plain in colour without bold patterns? Plain surfaces are easier; patterns can cause problems to people with perceptual problems.
- If your Church has steps, have you considered how to best support someone with dementia to navigate these?

### **Changing rooms and toilets**

- Do you have a changing room (where applicable) where an opposite sex carer or partner can help out if the person needs help with clothes or personal care?
- Do you have a unisex toilet or other facility which would allow someone to have assistance without causing them or other users embarrassment?
- Are toilet seats a contrasting colour to the toilet bowl, floor and walls?
- Do handrails, taps and towels that contrast with the rest of the bathroom?

### **Seating**

- Do you have a seating area where people are waiting? This can be a big help.
- Is the seating comfortable? Could you offer additional cushions.
- Does your seating contrast with the colour of the floor?

### **Other considerations**

- Is your Church at a comfortable temperature? Do you have blankets that could make areas more comfortable?
- Is there space to walk around the church if someone does not want to sit?
- Do you have a notice board to give visual information that may support someone with dementia? This may include photographs of leaders or volunteers to help with familiarity or a calendar.
- Do you display a dementia friendly sign? This will show the Church is inclusive and supportive of people with dementia.
- Do you have large print hymn books, song sheets or order of service?

Score \_\_\_\_/32

You should be aiming for as high score as possible to ensure your environment is dementia friendly.

## **GP Practices**

GP practices can play a vital role in providing initial information, advice, signposting and offering ongoing support to a person with dementia. A person's experience and the support they are offered could have an impact on how they come to terms with their diagnosis and how they prepare for the future. There is an enormous amount of commitment, time and hard work happening within GPs across Sheffield to ensure their patients affected by dementia are being supported in the best way, and we want to celebrate this. This care and support will make a difference to a person's quality of life, wellbeing and health.

### **How to be more dementia friendly?**

Small changes can have a big impact and often do not require significant time or financial resource. Here are some ideas for where to start...

**1. Connect patients to their local dementia link worker**

Across the City there are People Keeping Well (PKW) partnership organisations. Every PKW has a dementia link worker that supports people in their local area with dementia. They help people to access group and activities, refer to other services, offer ongoing support and a point of contact. Refer your patient by completing a DAS referral form.

**2. Arrange an awareness session for all staff**

**3. Add dementia friendly signage within your building**

**4. Look at the physical environment and complete a dementia friendly checklist**

To make it even easier for you SDAA can come and complete this for you & make recommendations.

**5. Remind patients of appointments via text or phone call, this will reduce missed and repeat appointments**

**6. Invite Dementia Advice Service (DAS) to your next team meeting**

We would like to introduce ourselves and update you on what's happening across Sheffield, how we can support you as a practice, your team, and your patients with dementia. We know your team are very busy so they can join for as much or as little of your team meeting. As a professional who comes into contact with people living with dementia you can contact free information, advice and training.

## 7. **Share DAS contact details with colleagues**

Your team can contact DAS with any non-medical enquiry relating to a patient, carer or even colleague. For example, you might want to know where to find details of a dementia friendly group, have questions about respite options or want advice around conducting telephone appointments with someone with dementia.

### **The Dementia Advice Sheffield (DAS) has two elements:**

1. Through a referral from a professional DAS **connects people with dementia to their local People Keeping Well Partner**. Their named dementia link worker will contact the person within 2 weeks and give them details of groups, services and advice of interest e.g. lunch clubs or a carers centre referral. Their link worker will be a point of contact. If the person does not need any support at the time, they will be in touch for 6-monthly welfare calls. Please email [dementiaadvice@ageuksheffield.org.uk](mailto:dementiaadvice@ageuksheffield.org.uk) if you require copies of the referral form and patient leaflet.
2. DAS provides **information, advice and training services for professionals** working with people with dementia. Any professional, such as a GP, a nurse or a receptionist can contact DAS for non-clinical guidance.



## **Shows and Screenings**

Many of us enjoy a trip to the cinema, theatre or concert and having a dementia diagnosis should not be a barrier. Supportive and accessible performances mean people with dementia and their supporters feel comfortable, understood and empowered.

There are many benefits of staging dementia friendly performances and having dementia friendly screenings. This includes developing the skills of staff, showing your audience members affected by dementia that they are valued and demonstrates an organisation's commitment to being more inclusive. It helps people affected by dementia to stay connected and active in their community. It is not just important for your local community but it can also bring economic benefits to your venue too.

If you are a venue or organisation and wants your shows & screenings to be inclusive, you could consider:

- **Reviewing your environment**  
Reviewing your environment will help you to consider what changes you could make that would make it more inclusive for people with dementia. You can access the SDAA dementia friendly environment checklist in our handbook or contact the SDAA for a specific audit of your environment.
- **Staff awareness & Training**  
The more awareness and understanding of dementia staff and volunteers have, the better service they can provide. The welcome, friendliness and understanding of staff have a big impact.
- **Pre-show/screening welcome**  
This could be a fantastic way to create a welcoming, relaxed and inclusive atmosphere. It could be an opportunity to highlight key staff and let people know it is OK if they need to leave their seats and move around. You could also show where the toilets are and share any other key information about your venue and the screening.
- **Dementia friendly signage**  
Contrasting and clear signage within the building will help direct people to the toilet, entrance/exit, café or to where they will be watching their performance.
- **A quiet space or area**
- **Creating a relaxed environment**  
To avoid people feeling rushed and to reduce any anxiety, you might open the house/screening earlier to give people more time to find their seats. Equally at the end you might give people more time to leave their seats.

- **Lighting**

It might be an option to keep the lights up slightly in case people need to move from their seats. This could reduce tripping hazards.

- Share **Dementia Advice Sheffield (DAS)** contact details with colleagues and staff.

If you or your team have an query or want advice or information around supporting a person with dementia at your show/screenings then please contact the SDAA.

- **Promoting Dementia Friendly shows/screenings**

Share upcoming shows with the SDAA to put in the **Dementia News**. If creating leaflets and posters use contrasting colours, display key information only and keep it clear. A member of your team could attend SDAA regular members workshops and inform other SDAA members of upcoming events.

The theatre, cinema and concerts can bring a great sense of enjoyment and wellbeing. Support to access and visit these venues can keep people engaged in something they are interested in and in their wider community.

If you would like further information or advice on dementia friendly shows and screenings then do get in touch.

**Further resources:**

[Dementia Friendly Screenings: A guide for cinemas](#)

[Dementia Friendly Screenings: Guidance for cinemas](#)

[Dementia Friendly Performances](#)

