Designing public buildings to be dementia friendly

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Topic: Design and Technology

DESIGNING PUBLIC BUILDINGS TO BE DEMENTIA FRIENDLY

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Objectives:

To raise awareness of the importance of designing public buildings that are dementia friendly.

To provide advice on how to make public buildings dementia friendly.

Outline

Until recently, designing for people living with dementia has focused primarily on designing residential aged care settings and improving the design of a person’s home. The goal has been to design or modify environments so that a person can continue to live meaningfully. These are vital and important endeavours. However, if a person is to truly live a meaningful life, it needs to be recognised that he or she also needs to be able to engage in the wider community. It is essential that a person is able to continue to do the things that have always been an important part of their life, such as going down the street, doing the shopping, paying a bill, or collecting a library book.

This paper will focus on the design of public buildings. It will consider ways in which public buildings can be designed to be dementia friendly and how existing settings can be modified and improved. Case studies of public settings will be used to highlight the issues facing a person with dementia. Attention will be paid to a person’s arrival, their entry, and the route to their destination (such as a council office, a supermarket, a bank or a library).

Key principles of designing for people living with dementia have been used with great success to design living environments for people with dementia. The application of these principles in the design of public buildings will be discussed, as well as the role they have to play in creating dementia friendly communities.

Disclosure of Interest: None Declared

Keywords: case studies, design, design principles, public buildings