



On the ward

Communal spaces

This audit module is designed to look at the communal spaces of a ward – the ward entrance, hallway areas, any shared spaces and wayfinding around the ward.

Some suggestions would take some budget and/or timeframe to implement, while some may be able to be changed quickly and with minimal budget. It is not intended for major refurbishments or new builds.

You may use this audit module on its own or as part of a broader audit of other parts of the ward.

This audit module contains 16 questions and will take approximately 20 – 30 minutes to complete.

Some questions may be relevant in some rooms/wards but not in others. Where questions are not relevant, there is an option to select 'not applicable', however please complete as many questions as possible to conduct a thorough audit.

A notes section is provided underneath each question to record any additional information or prompts for action that you identify while carrying out the audit.

Information, recommendations and suggested strategies to address any issues are provided below each question.

When you have completed the audit, please keep it for your reference. You may wish to use it to create your own action list, or to use the information to educate staff about the role of the environment in patient care.

If you want to audit more than one ward area, please print a new copy of this module and complete the audit again for the new location.



Name _____ Date _____

Hospital _____

Ward/location _____

Entrance, hallway and communal spaces

1. Is the entrance area free of barrier and clutter?

- Yes** - *Correct* - Keeping areas free of clutter helps to support older adult independence, promotes mobility and reduces the risk of injury.
- No** - Ensure that all equipment and supplies are stored in convenient locations as the removal of clutter helps to support independence, promotes mobility and reduces the risk of injury.
- N/A**

Notes

2. Are the hallways free of barriers and clutter?

- Yes** - *Correct* - Keeping areas free of clutter helps to support independence, promotes mobility and reduces the risk of injury.
- No** - Ensure that all equipment and supplies are stored in convenient locations as the removal of clutter helps to support independence, promotes mobility and reduces the risk of injury.
- N/A**

Notes

3. Are all handrails accessible (i.e. nothing is stored in front of or under them)?

- Yes** - *Correct* - Keeping areas near handrails free of clutter helps to ensure that they are accessible which supports independence, promotes mobility and reduces the risk of injury.



No - Keeping areas near handrails free of clutter helps to ensure that they are accessible which supports independence, promotes mobility and reduces the risk of injury.

N/A

Notes

4. Is there a separate space available and used for storage of furniture and equipment not in current use?

Yes - *Correct* - A separate, well organised storage space reduces barriers and clutter in other areas of the ward.

No - A separate, well organised storage space reduces barriers and clutter in other areas of the ward. The storage space should be easy to access by staff and centrally located, but away from areas patients and visitors frequent and away from thoroughfares.

N/A

Notes

5. Are all areas where patients are not to enter (for example, drug rooms, cleaners' cupboards and storerooms) kept locked?

Yes - *Correct* - This is for patient and visitor safety.

No - This is important for patient and visitor safety.

N/A

Notes



6. Are staff noticeboards located in staff only areas and non-communal areas?

- Yes** - *Correct* - Too much visual information can be confusing for older patients and visitors and make it harder for them to locate the relevant information such as wayfinding signs.
- No** - Too much visual information can be confusing for older patients and visitors and make it harder for them to locate the relevant information such as wayfinding signs. Relocate staff noticeboards from communal areas to staff only areas to reduce confusion.
- N/A**

Notes

7. Are doors to areas where patients are not to enter disguised, for example by being painted the same colour as the surrounding wall?

- Yes** - *Correct* - Disguising doors makes them less likely for people to want to enter them. This is especially true for people with dementia.
- No** - Disguising doors makes them less likely for people to want to enter them. This is especially true for people with dementia. Consider repainting doors to match surrounding walls. If it is not possible to disguise them, don't draw attention to them. Avoid using signs, and if signs must be used, make them as discreet as possible.
- N/A**

Notes

8. Are all glass panels, such as glass doors and large windows, marked for visibility?

- Yes** - *Correct* - This is for patient and visitor safety, to ensure the panel is recognised as glass.
- No** - This is for patient and visitor safety, to ensure the panel is recognised as glass. Consider using stickers or coloured tape at standing and seated eye level.
- N/A**



Notes

9. Are 'wet floor' signs readily available and used promptly in the event of a spillage?

- Yes** - *Correct* - This is for patient and visitor safety. A spillage may not be seen unless clearly marked. Ensure that the sign is removed once the surface is clean and dry to avoid confusion and to remove a trip hazard.

- No** - This is for patient and visitor safety. A spillage may not be seen unless clearly marked. Ensure that the sign is removed once the surface is clean and dry to avoid confusion and to remove a trip hazard.

- N/A**

Notes

10. Are there groups of chairs provided and arranged in small circles?

- Yes** - *Correct* - Providing seating for small groups allows patients and visitors to interact and socialise. Arranging them in small circles provides more opportunities to socialise than if arranged in lines.

- No** - Providing seating for small groups, in a suitable communal area, allows patients and visitors to interact and socialise which is important for social/emotional wellbeing. Arranging them in small circles provides more opportunities to socialise than if arranged in lines.

- N/A**

Notes



11. Do you provide opportunities to engage in activities or social interaction in communal spaces?

- Yes** - *Correct* - This supports movement and engagement with others.
- No** - This supports movement and engagement with others. Consider designating a space for communal activities. These activities could include creating a communal space to eat, clustering chairs around tables with magazines or allowing access to gardens. Allow people to move past these areas of activity and interest so they can stop and engage as they travel.
- N/A**

Notes

12. If there is a view to outside, is it able to be seen by patients if they wish?

- Yes** - *Correct* - Views of nature and outdoor spaces have been shown to reduce stress in patients and can assist with orientation. Ensure curtains or blinds are open as appropriate and reposition seating to allow patients to see outside.
- No** - Views of nature and outdoor spaces have been shown to reduce stress in patients and can assist with orientation. Consider setting up a seating area near views of outdoors areas, and then ensure curtains or blinds are open as appropriate.
- N/A**

Notes

Wayfinding and orientation

13. Are there clear signs showing the way to reception/nurses station at all points of entry (if it is not immediately visible)?

- Yes** - *Correct* - Visitors may not recognise reception or the nurses station if it is not clearly signposted.



No - Visitors may not recognise reception or the nurses station if it is not clearly signposted and it is important that people know where to go to access staff.

N/A

Notes

14. Are there pictures on the walls?

Yes - Correct - Pictures can assist orientation and wayfinding (as landmarks). They are also aesthetically pleasing. Pictures of nature have been shown to be the most pleasing and have been shown to reduce stress, fatigue and pain.

No - Pictures can assist orientation and wayfinding (as landmarks). They are also aesthetically pleasing. Pictures of nature have been shown to be the most pleasing and have been shown to reduce stress, fatigue and pain.

N/A

Notes

15. Are there clear signs showing the location of public toilets, waiting rooms and other public amenities like kitchenettes?

Yes - Correct - The location of areas visitors may need to access should be clearly signposted, with signs provided at entrances, reception areas and throughout the ward, as well as the rooms themselves. Signs should follow the same size and clarity guidelines as other ward signage to cater for visitors with visual, cognitive and mobility impairments.

No - The location of areas visitors may need to access should be clearly signposted, with signs provided at entrances, reception areas and throughout the ward, as well as the rooms themselves. Signs should follow the same size and clarity guidelines as other ward signage to cater for visitors with visual, cognitive and mobility impairments.

N/A

Notes



16. Are signs provided in high profile areas where patients are likely to use them?

- Yes - Correct** - Signs should be placed in expected locations where they are likely to be used.

- No** - Signs should be placed in expected locations where they are likely to be used. Ensure that there are frequent and obvious signs to indicate information services, toilets, and entry and exit points. Try to position signs in areas where people can take in the information without being rushed (e.g. in locations where people can pause without holding up foot traffic).

- N/A**

Notes
