



On the ward

Lighting, signage and wayfinding

This audit module is designed to look at lighting, signage and wayfinding in a ward.

Wayfinding refers to all the ways in which people orientate themselves in a space and navigate their way from place to place. Older people need more wayfinding aids to assist orientation in a space and they need to be more obvious.

The audit module is designed to be used when you have some resources available. Most suggestions would take some budget and/or timeframe to implement. Please note – there is a separate lighting, signage and wayfinding audit module designed to be used when you have a small budget and short timeframe. Neither are intended for major refurbishments or new builds.

There are separate audit modules available for wayfinding throughout the whole hospital facility. You may also find some questions regarding signage and wayfinding in the ward module on communal spaces.

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

This audit module contains 19 questions. It 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 room or bed bay, please print a new copy of this module and complete the audit again for the new location.



Name _____ Date _____

Hospital _____

Ward/location _____

Lighting

1. Does lighting provide good visibility during the day?

Yes - *Correct* - Natural light is preferred. Artificial lighting should be bright enough to mimic daylight, however should minimise glare. Full spectrum electric lighting that mimics daylight (e.g. T5 and T8 fluorescent tubes) is ideal for increasing visibility within spaces; this assists with wayfinding.

No - Natural light is preferred. Artificial lighting should be bright enough to mimic daylight, however should minimise glare. Full spectrum electric lighting that mimics daylight (e.g. T5 and T8 fluorescent tubes) is ideal for increasing visibility within spaces; this assists with wayfinding. Consider installing suitable or additional lighting, adjusting shades and shutters and arranging furnishings to allow glare-free light to enter spaces. Make sure there is sufficient lightning for night toileting.

N/A

Notes

2. Is lighting sufficient for safe navigation at night?

Yes - *Correct* - This is important for safety and promotes independence, especially for night toileting. Nightlights should be outside bathrooms and light switches should be visible in the dark.

No - This is important for safety and promotes independence, especially for night toileting. Nightlights should be installed outside bathrooms, ideally 300mm from the floor. Light switches should also be visible in the dark, preferably by being illuminated. If this is not possible consider using glow in the dark paint or stickers to highlight light switches.

N/A

Notes



3. Is there an even level of light throughout the ward?

- Yes** - *Correct* - Varied light and low levels of light can be difficult for older people to negotiate; it can create confusion or a falls risk.

- No** - Varied light and low levels of light can be difficult for older people to negotiate; it can create confusion or a falls risk. Consider changing the lighting and adjusting shutters to create an even level of light throughout the ward.

- N/A**

Notes

4. Does each patient have a personal light source available, such as a reading lamp near the bed, which they can control?

- Yes** - *Correct* - Control over personal lighting is important for comfort and sense of control.

- No** - Control over personal lighting is important for comfort and sense of control. Consider installing a reading light for each bed.

- N/A**

Notes

5. Is there a source of natural light/daylight in the ward area?

- Yes** - *Correct* - Daylight is ideal for increasing visibility within spaces. Access to natural light also has benefits for improving mood, orientating patients to the time of day/night and general wellbeing.

- No** - Daylight is ideal for increasing visibility within spaces. Access to natural light also has benefits for improving mood, orientating patients to the time of day/night and general wellbeing. Adjust shutters, screens and furnishings to allow daylight to enter spaces without glare, and consider using light coloured shelves around windows to reflect and increase light. Allow patients to access areas where they can experience daylight.

- N/A**

**Notes**

Signage

6. Are there clear signs to identify the ward area, with directions for where to go with enquiries?

- Yes - Correct** - Visitors may not recognise the ward if it is not clearly signposted, and feel unsure where to go on arriving to the ward. Signs help orientate patients and visitors and make them feel welcome.
- No** - Visitors may not recognise the ward if it is not clearly signposted, and feel unsure where to go on arriving to the ward. Signs help orientate patients and visitors and make them feel welcome.
- N/A**

Notes

7. Are there signs on the floor and that can be seen from seated eye level as well as at standing eye level?

- Yes - Correct** - Older people and people with dementia may look down when walking rather than straight ahead and alternative locations of signs can assist them to navigate. People in wheelchairs or seated have an eye level lower than a person standing.
- No** - Older people and people with dementia may look down when walking rather than straight ahead and alternative locations of signs can assist them to navigate. People in wheelchairs or seated have an eye level lower than a person standing. Consider placing signs at different heights to maximise their chance of being easily seen.
- N/A**

Notes



8. Do signs display the minimum amount of information for clarity?

- Yes** - *Correct* - Cluttered signs can make it difficult to understand what of the information is necessary.
- No** - Cluttered signs can make it difficult to understand what of the information is necessary. Try to ensure there is not too much information on one sign – consider if anything can be removed from the sign without altering the meaning or clarity, or replacing the sign if necessary.
- N/A**

Notes

9. Are there clear signs showing the location of toilets and other amenities?

- Yes** - *Correct* - Signs should be at entry points, exit points and throughout the ward, as well as the rooms themselves. Signs should follow the same size and clarity guidelines as other hospital signage to cater for visitors with visual, cognitive and mobility impairments.
- No** - Signs should be at entry points, exit points and throughout the ward, as well as the rooms themselves. Signs should follow the same size and clarity guidelines as other hospital signage to cater for visitors with visual, cognitive and mobility impairments.
- N/A**

Notes

10. Are signs in large font with good contrast between background and text?

- Yes** - *Correct* - Using a clear, large font and a contrast of colours will increase the clarity of signs.
- No** - The font size should be at least 16 mm high on small signs and at least 40 mm high on larger signs. Helvetica is the recommended font, or if unavailable another clear, simple sans serif font such as Arial. Signs should use capitals and lower case letters. Using all capitals is not recommended. Make sure the contrast of colours enhances the visibility of the text.
- N/A**



Notes

11. Do all signs include both text and icons?

- Yes** - *Correct* - Signs using a combination of text and icons are the easiest to interpret.

- No** - Signs using a combination of text and icons are the easiest to interpret. Icons should be clear, simple and obviously represent their meaning. Use universal symbols wherever possible (e.g. use the International Symbol of Access in areas accessible by wheelchair, include a picture of a toilet on a toilet sign).

- N/A**

Notes

12. Are tactile, braille or audible signs available?

- Yes** - *Correct* - Providing signs that use non-visual cues can assist wayfinding for people who experience visual impairment. Ensure that tactile, braille and audible signs meet national standards. Tactile letters should be raised 1 mm.

- No** - Providing signs that use non-visual cues can assist wayfinding for people who experience visual impairment. Ensure that tactile, braille and audible signs meet national standards. Tactile letters should be raised 1 mm.

- N/A**

Notes



13. Are signs in different languages provided?

- Yes** - *Correct* - Providing signs in different languages ensures that culturally and linguistically diverse patients can navigate spaces.
- No** - Providing signs in different languages ensures that culturally and linguistically diverse patients can navigate spaces. Provide signs that display information in relevant/common community languages for your patient group, in addition to English.
- N/A**

Notes

14. Is a consistent design applied to signage throughout the ward?

- Yes** - *Correct* - Using signs that are simple and consistent in their design makes them easier to use.
- No** - Using signs that are simple and consistent in their design makes them easier to use.
- N/A**

Notes

Wayfinding

15. Are wayfinding cues (e.g. direction and information signs) distinct from decorative elements?

- Yes** - *Correct* - Signs and other wayfinding cues should be obvious and stand out from decoration such as patterns, paint colours, furnishings and artworks. This increases visibility of the wayfinding cues and decreases confusion when navigating spaces.
- No** - Signs and other wayfinding cues should be obvious and stand out from decoration such as patterns, paint colours, furnishings and artworks. This increases visibility of wayfinding cues and decreases confusion when navigating spaces. Consider moving decorations to improve the visibility of wayfinding cues.



N/A

Notes

16. 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

17. Are contrasting colours used to distinguish features, such as handrails, and surfaces in the ward?

Yes - *Correct* - Features that contrast in colour to the wall are easier to see and use independently.

No - Features that contrast in colour to the wall are easier to see and use independently. Paint features in a colour that contrasts to wall surfaces or highlight them with stickers or coloured tape.

N/A

Notes



18. Are paint colours and furniture colours used to increase visibility and ease of navigation?

- Yes - Correct** - Using contrasting paint colours to distinguish surfaces makes them easier to see. For example, paint walls in a single light colour that contrasts with floor coverings. Furnishings that contrast in colour with surfaces can be more easily distinguished.
- No** - Using contrasting paint colours to distinguish surfaces makes them easier to see. For example, paint walls in a single light colour that contrasts with floor coverings. Furnishings that contrast in colour with surfaces can be more easily distinguished.
- N/A**

Notes

19. 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. 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
