

# **Developing Supportive Designs for People Living with Dementia**

**Sarah Waller  
Associate Specialist  
Association for Dementia Studies  
University of Worcester UK**

**Interprofessionaeller Gesundheitskongress  
Dresden  
Freitage 28 April 2017**



# Association for Dementia Studies (est. 2009)

*Developing evidence-based practical ways to help people live well with dementia*



- Multi-professional innovative research centre inclusive of people directly affected by dementia
- Education and practice development.
- PhD studentships
- Practical publications and on-line resources

# This presentation

- Background to The King's Fund's Enhancing the Healing Environment Programme
- Developing dementia friendly design in hospitals
- The projects
- Evaluation
- Environmental assessment tools
- Key lessons

# Enhancing the Healing Environment

## Programme aim

- To encourage and enable clinically led teams to work in partnership with users to influence and improve the environment in which they deliver care.

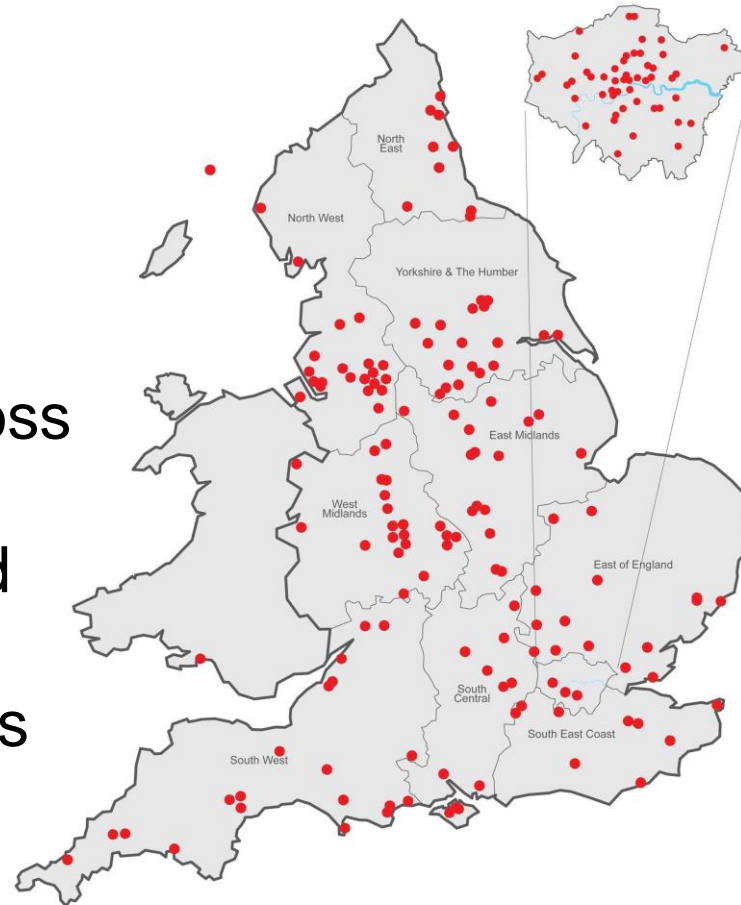
## Programme elements

- Clinically led multidisciplinary project team of 5 people including clinical, managerial, estates staff and service users
- Training and support for the whole team (18 to 24 months)
- Grant to undertake an environmental improvement

EHE programme funded  
by The King's Fund  
& The Department of  
Health

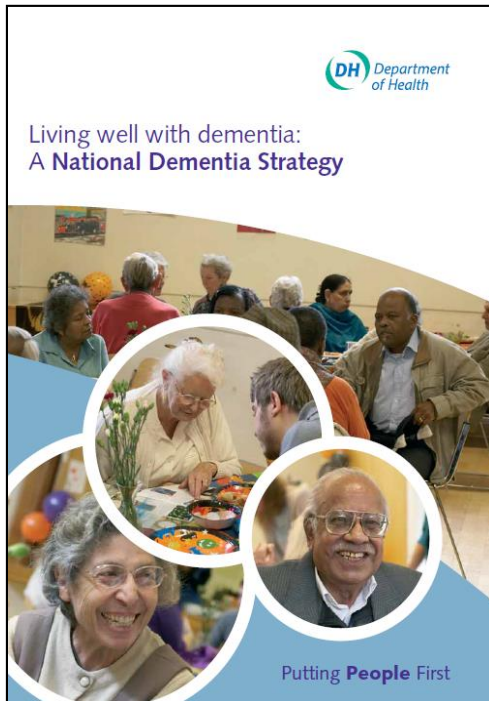
2000 – 2015

Involved 250 teams across  
England from  
acute, mental health and  
community hospitals,  
hospices and HM prisons



# 2009 a significant year

National Dementia Strategy for England launched



## Counting the cost

Caring for people with dementia on hospital wards

- Highlighted detrimental effect of hospital stays on the independence of people living with dementia.
- Estimated over 25% of patients accessing general hospital services had cognitive problems or dementia

# **The Department of Health funded a further EHE programme to support the implementation of the dementia strategy**

Developing supportive design for people with dementia  
2009 – 2012

26 hospital projects  
(acute, mental health and community hospitals)



# Why environmental design matters for people with dementia



# People with dementia are likely to:

- Be confused and agitated in unfamiliar environments
- Become distracted when faced with competing information e.g. signs and notices
- Not to be able to see things if they are the same colour as the background e.g. handrails
- Resist walking on shiny floors as they may appear wet and think shadows may represent a change in level
- Want to walk

# Findings from initial site visits



# Hospitals common issues of:

- Poor signage and lack of way-finding cues
- Poor use of colour and contrast
- Unhelpful lighting – glare and pooling
- Shiny floors
- Clutter and distractions
- Stark, unwelcoming spaces off long featureless corridors
- No personalisation of space
- Under-use of gardens and outside spaces

# What may help?

- Giving fewer choices and options
- Reducing distractions
- Peace and quiet
- Calm environments
- Appropriate/balanced stimulation
- Using memory prompts and props

# Key principles for dementia friendly design





## **OUTCOMES**

Easing decision making

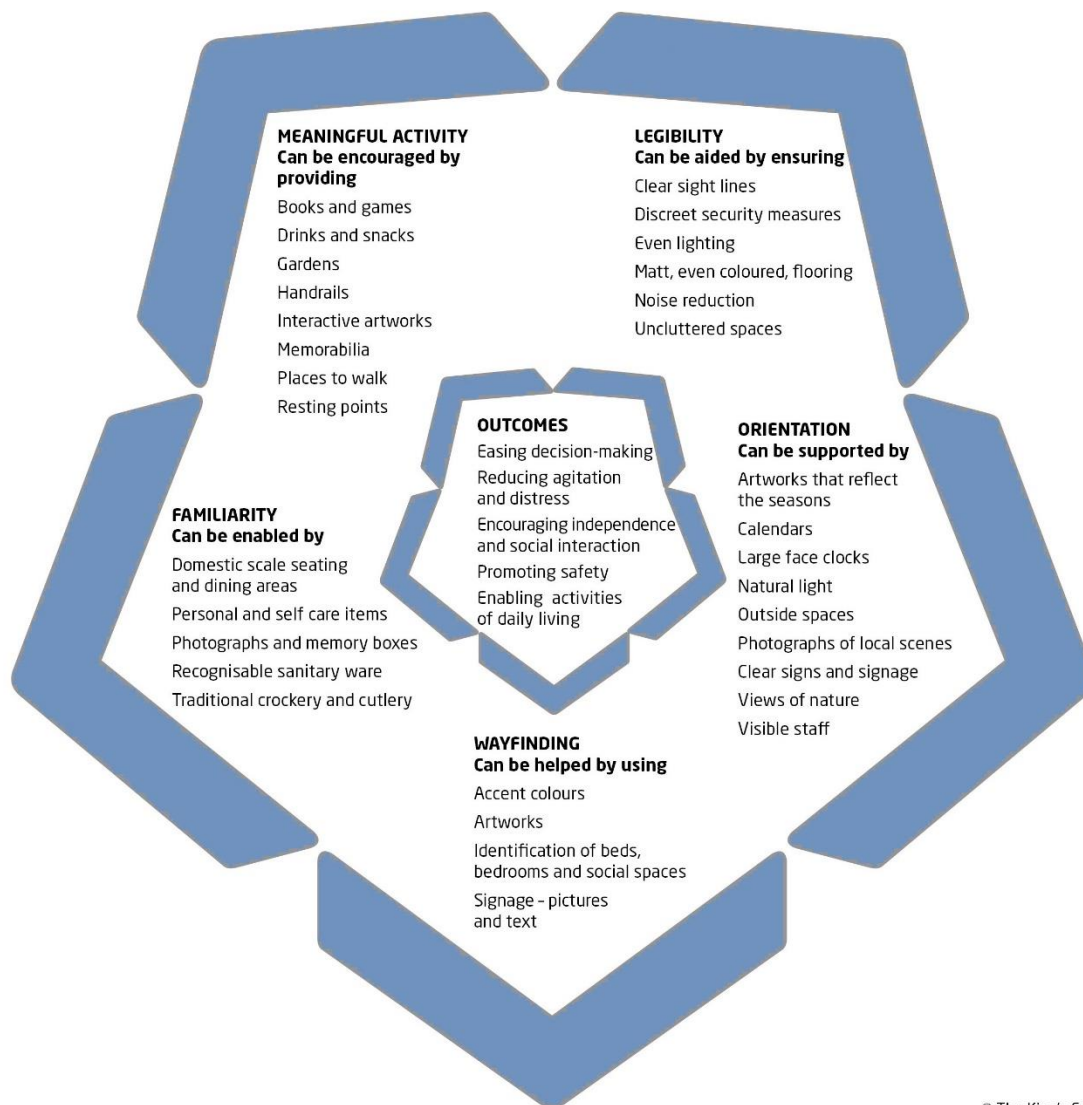
Reducing agitation  
and distress

Encouraging independence  
and social interaction

Promoting safety

Enabling activities  
of daily living

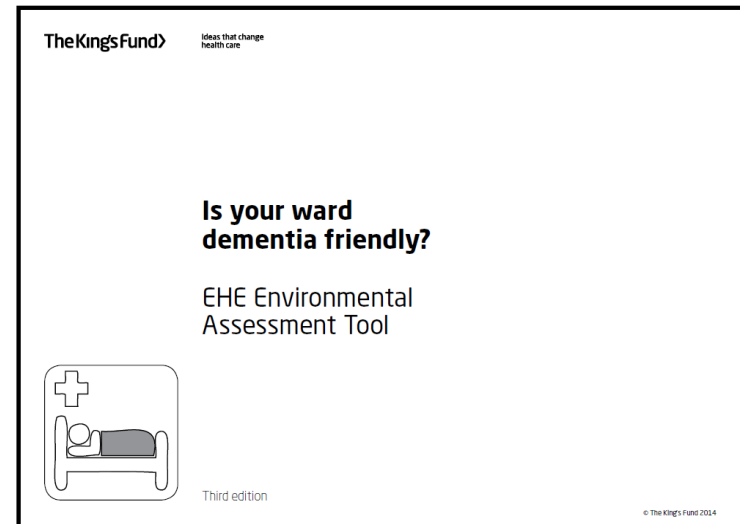
# Overarching design principles



© The King's Fund 2014

# Dementia Friendly Assessment Tools

- Designed for use by people with dementia, carers and staff
- Practical and easy to use
- Based on research evidence and best practice
- Not a pass/fail
- Can be repeated over time to demonstrate improvement



# Overarching criteria

The environment promotes

- Meaningful interaction between patients, their families and staff
- Wellbeing
- Eating and drinking
- Mobility
- Continence and independence
- Orientation
- Calm and security



### 3 The environment encourages eating and drinking

#### Rationale

Having a choice of where to eat, e.g. with others or by themselves, may encourage people to eat and drink as will the provision of nutritious drinks and snacks. For people with dementia crockery, cutlery and drinking glasses should be chosen to look familiar (hospital beakers and specially shaped plates may not be recognised). People may not be able to distinguish white food presented on a white plate so crockery needs to offer a colour contrast to food and drink.



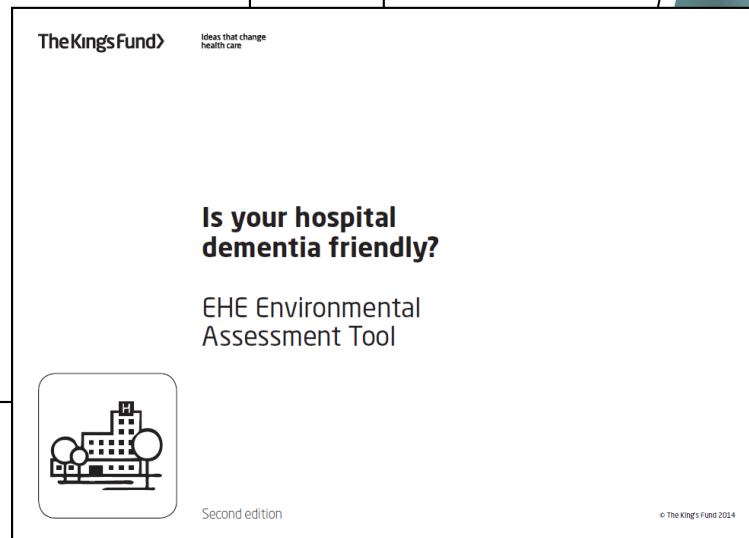
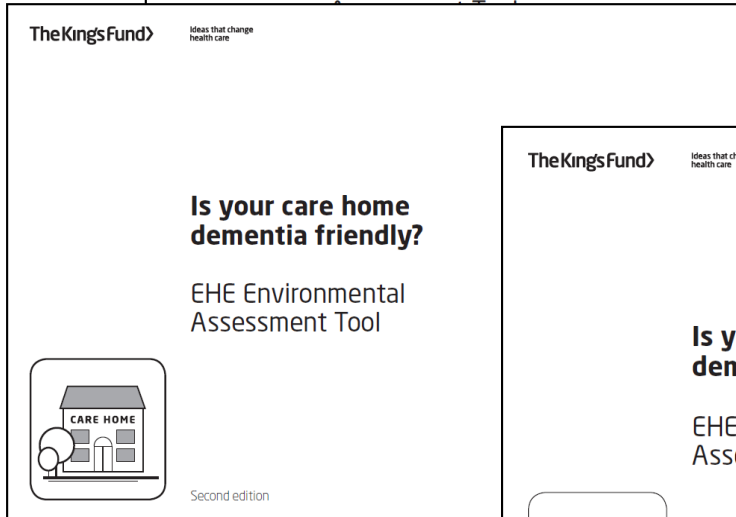
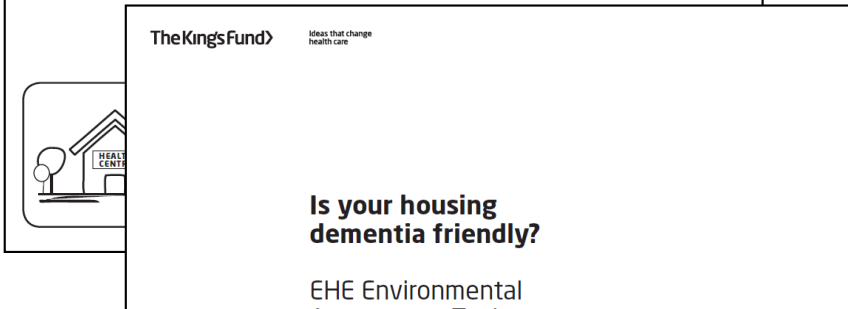
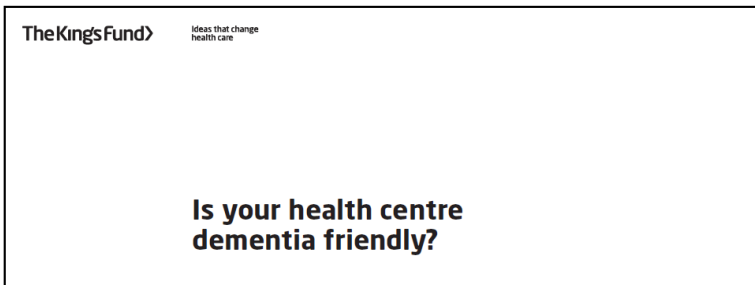
#### Questions

Please score each answer from 1 - 5  
(1=barely met, 5=totally met)

- A** Do patients and/or their relatives have constant independent access to hot and cold drinks? ☐
- B** Do patients have independent access to snacks and finger food? ☐
- C** Is the crockery and glassware of familiar design and in a distinctive colour that contrasts with tables and trays? ☐
- D** Is there somewhere for patients to eat other than by their beds? ☐
- E** Is there a space where patients can eat together? ☐
- F** Is there enough space and chairs for staff and carers to help with eating and drinking? ☐

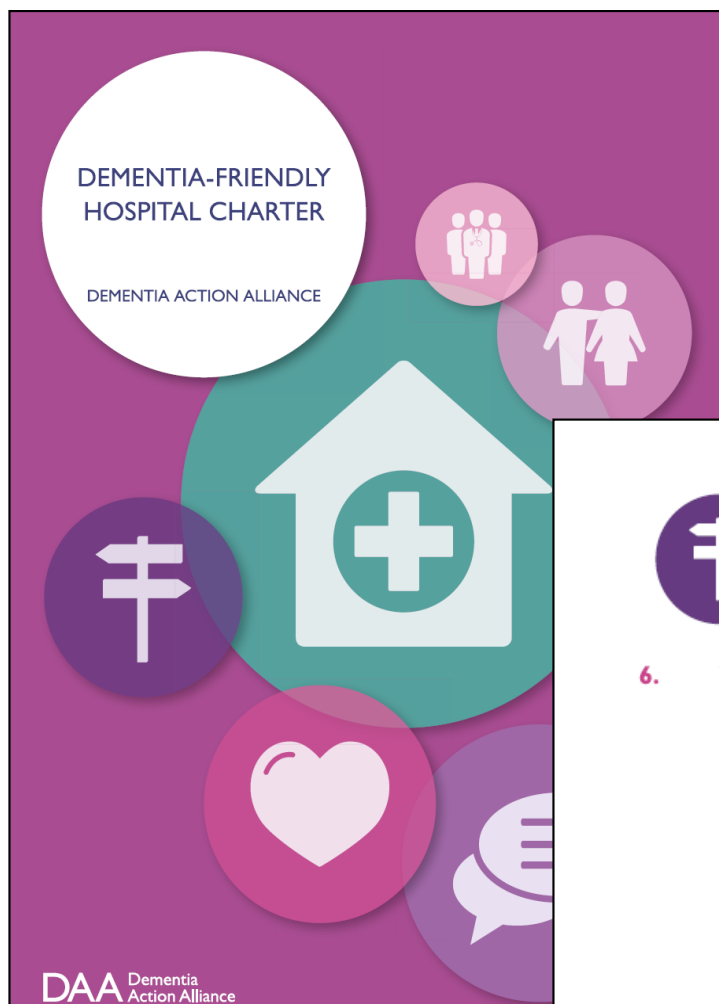
Please give examples of good practice/ areas of concern

Is your ward dementia friendly? © The King's Fund 2014



# Dementia Friendly Design remains a key national priority





It is an integral part of work to create dementia friendly hospitals

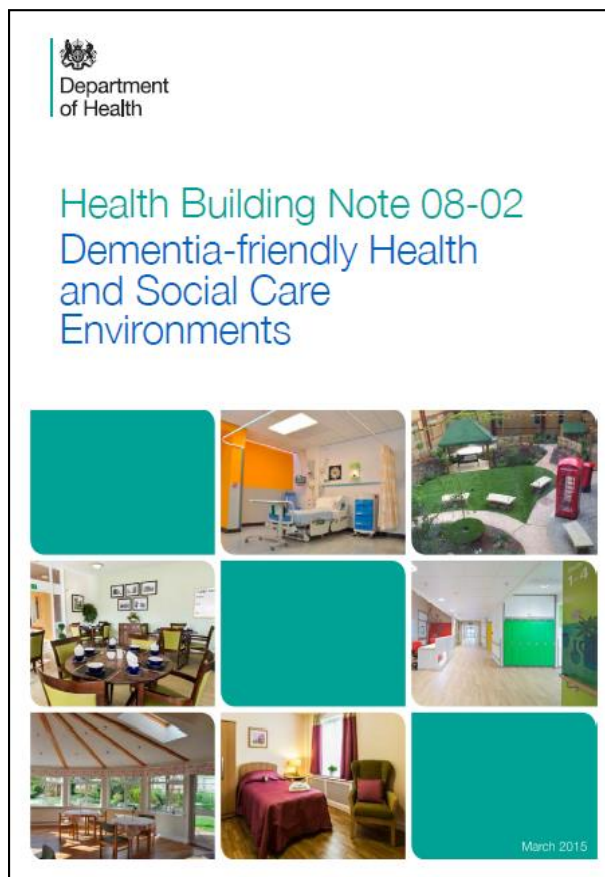


## Environment

6. **You are able to find your way around the hospital and the care environment supports your well-being and independence.**

Notes for self-assessment:

- Signage that uses pictures and text that is hung at a height where it can easily be seen
- All the toilet doors being painted a single distinctive colour and the toilet seats and rails are in a colour that contrasts with the walls and floor
- Pictures/objects and or colours are used to help people find their way around
- Seating areas are provided in wards, departments and along corridors
- Wider use of King's Fund and other environmental assessment tools



## The 2015 Health Building Note

Gives guidance on creating dementia friendly environments in hospitals, care homes and supported housing

# What has made most difference?

## Staff

### Education

- understanding of dementia
- impact of the environment
- what makes good design

leading to changes in attitudes and behaviours

## Environment

- clear sight lines and removal of distractions
- improved lighting, flooring and signage
- use of colour, aids to wayfinding and orientation (including artworks)
- familiar spaces, furniture and sanitary ware
- social spaces and age appropriate activities

# What has been most important?

- **Recognising that:**

the physical environment is an integral part of delivering person centred care

supportive design for people living with dementia is

- good design for everybody, especially older people
- common sense

- **To be effective you need:**

national policy and local exemplars

strong clinical and estates leadership working in partnership with people living with dementia and carers



*Danke*

[www.worcester.ac.uk/dementia](http://www.worcester.ac.uk/dementia)

[s.waller@worc.ac.uk](mailto:s.waller@worc.ac.uk)