



Research Insights

We examined thousands of papers while conducting our literature review into the impact of home design and adaptation on the lives of older people.

We found that most studies focused on three broad topics:

- Preventing and detecting falls and addressing older peoples' fear of falling.
- The use of light, the effect of light on sleep, and older peoples' circadian rhythms.
- The use of technology, including suitability for the task, reliability, and whether older people were able and willing to use it.

Importantly- many of these studies only explored issues from the point of view of researchers or industry professionals rather than the older people who had direct experience of needing or using adaptations!

DesHCA's April 2022 Update

The start of 2022 has been an exciting time for the DesHCA project, with many research activities beginning to recruit and collect new data about how home design and adaptations can support older people to live as they would like to for longer.

The Work Package Two team have started working with participants to learn more about their experiences of living at home and what changes they think could help them live comfortably as they age.

The practice pilot for our home ~~activity~~ ssensing activity is ongoing. This involves several team members installing the activity sensors in their own homes as part of a trial run to make sure that the devices were working perfectly before installing them in the homes of older people. This is also allowing the team to learn more about their own homes, including how long they tend to spend in each room, as well as how temperature and air quality in different parts of their home change throughout the day.

Work is also underway to arrange our ethnographic activity. This will involve team members spending time shadowing professionals in different architectural and design businesses, to understand how the design and production process functions in real time, in the real world, and how this impacts supportive design.

2022 is shaping up to be an exciting year, with lots of opportunities to learn more about peoples' thoughts on the role of supportive design in helping older people to live well at home for longer.

Learning from Secondary Data



While it's important for DesHCA to talk directly to older people and professionals about supportive home design and adaptations, we could not make evidence-based recommendations without using larger, representative, population-level datasets.

The quantitative team at DesHCA have been using data collected by the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing (ELSA) to understand how older people in England have adapted their homes. Some of our findings include:

Over 90% of individuals who installed home adaptations reported bathroom adaptations. This included making changes to the type of shower, the use of bath or shower seats, and installing equipment to make going to the toilet easier.

Most home adaptations being installed by adults in the UK are designed to help with mobility issues. There is limited information about the kinds of adaptations used to support people who are living with conditions that impact their thinking or cognition.

This raises important questions about how we should improve practice to better support people living with cognitive change.

Our Next Steps

May 2022

Hosting two Knowledge Exchange Events: one exploring the views of older people on adaptations, and another with professionals about the costs and benefits of supportive design.

May 2022

Ethnographic work exploring the real-world processes behind designing, building, and maintaining supportive homes begins.

June 2022

The DesHCA team present our findings at the Alzheimer's Disease International Conference.

Activities Recruiting Now

Several of DesHCA's activities are now open and actively seeking participants! If you are over the age of 55 and living in the UK, the research team would love to hear from you.

There will be many opportunities for people to take part between now and the end of the project in 2024. Right now, the team is looking for people who would be interested in:

- Making a "creative map" of their home to express what they like, or dislike, about their home and what home means to them. This involves using creative methods like taking photographs, drawing pictures, or making a collage to create a map of their home, then discussing the map during an interview with a member of the research team.
- Using the IRIDIS app individually or alongside member of the research team to learn about how the principles of dementia friendly design could be applied to their home to help support someone living with cognitive change.
- Taking part in one of DesHCA's Virtual Reality workshops to give feedback on our ideas about the future of supportive home design in the UK.

To find out more about the *Designing Homes for Healthy Cognitive Ageing (DesHCA) Project*, visit our website at www.DesHCA.stir.ac.uk or email the team at DesHCAresearch@stir.ac.uk