



**DesHCA**  
DESIGNING HOMES FOR  
HEALTHY COGNITIVE AGEING



**DESIGNING FOR A LIFETIME**

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**AGE INCLUSIVE HOME  
CHECKLIST**

## ABOUT THIS CHECKLIST



Running between March 2021 and February 2024, the Designing Homes for Healthy Cognitive Ageing project collected insights from over 700 people and established datasets to identify realistic, sustainable, and scalable solutions that could help people improve their homes, and their lives, as they grew older.

This checklist and the “Designing for a Lifetime” booklet which accompanies it are two of DesHCA’s legacy resources, designed to transform the results of our research into real-world tools that anyone could use to create a more supportive and age inclusive home.

It's important to think of this checklist as a starting point for your journey into age-inclusive design rather than the finish line because there is no such thing as a “perfect” age-inclusive home. People’s needs and desires change throughout their life, so it may be that a kitchen that worked for us at 30, or 50, or 70, doesn’t work for you today. That is as it should be. Use this list to help you think about some of the ways to make your home continue to work for you while still showcasing your own sense of style, and refer back to it whenever you think about renovating your home or moving house.

You can learn more about the DesHCA project and resources by visiting [www.deshca.co.uk](http://www.deshca.co.uk). Email us at [DesHCAResearch@stir.ac.uk](mailto:DesHCAResearch@stir.ac.uk) to share how you’ve used our resources. And if you’d like to learn even more about dementia-friendly design from our colleagues at the Dementia Services Development Center, then visit [www.dementia.stir.ac.uk](http://www.dementia.stir.ac.uk).

## Approach & Front Door

- Distinct features setting this home apart from neighbours' (e.g. door colour, clear numbering, fence colour).
- Reliable access to parking nearby.
- Clear route to front door.
- Clear contrast between door handle and door.
- Step-free entrance, or stepped entrance with rail to provide support.
- Canopy over door to provide protection in poor weather.
- Motion activated light for nighttime visibility.
- Area around door has plenty of open, transparent, or labelled storage near to the door for storing shoes, keys, jackets, walking aids etc.
- Space for letterbox cage to reduce bending and risk of trips or falls.
- Window or door makes it easy to check weather or identify visitors without opening the door.
- Doorbell can be heard easily throughout the home.
- Sturdy seating with arms to support taking shoes on or off.

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# Livingroom


 Curtains are easy to open and close to promote natural light and reduce reflections at night.


 Plenty of open or clear fronted storage to reduce clutter.


 Space for hobbies, with additional lighting or storage where needed.


 Furniture is arranged to promote communication, so people can be seen and heard while speaking.


 Seating is sturdy, with arms to support people when sitting down and getting up.


 There are spaces to place cups, glasses, phones etc so they can be reached easily when seated.


 Clear colour contrast between wall, floor, and door.


 Patterns used sparingly, and in places that are easy to change (e.g. cushion covers).


 Daylight isn't blocked by internal or external objects (e.g. stuck curtains, trees, ivy).

 Multiple light sources to provide overall & spot lighting (e.g. ceiling light with lamps).

 Floor is clear of trip hazards and easy to navigate.

 Furniture is stable and sturdy enough to support leaning.

 There are plenty of plug sockets, installed at knee height or higher to reduce bending.

 Good sound insulation, with limited noise from shared walls, neighbours, or traffic.

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# Kitchen

- Space to keep frequently used items on the countertop for easy access.
- Plenty of storage to reduce clutter and promote clear organisation.
- Cupboards doors are clear, see through, or labelled to make contents easy to find.
- Storage is easy to access, i.e. pull-down shelves in high cupboards, pull-out floors in low cupboards.
- Appliances are at waist height, with simple, with controls that are clear, high-contrast, and easy to use.
- Taps are clearly marked showing hot and cold, and easy to use with soapy hands.
- Plates and crockery provide contrast for food served (i.e. dark or bold coloured plates to make pale foods easier to see etc.)

- Clear colour contrast between wall, floor, and door.
- Countertops and flooring are plain, patterns are used sparingly elsewhere, in places that are easy to change.
- Daylight isn't blocked by internal or external objects (e.g. stuck curtains, trees, ivy).
- Multiple light sources to provide overall & spot lighting (e.g. ceiling light with under cabinet lights).
- Floor is clear of trip hazards and easy to navigate.
- Furniture is stable and sturdy enough to support leaning.
- There are plenty of plug sockets in easily accessible locations.
- Good sound insulation, with limited noise from shared walls, neighbours, or traffic.

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## Bathrooms

- Thick, draught-proof curtains to reduce draughts and early morning light.
- Long curtains, carpets, or acoustic panels to absorb unwanted sound.
- Soft light source to support nighttime wayfinding to bathroom etc.
- Clear fronted drawers and wardrobes for easy visibility.
- Labels or pictures added to doors and storage where needed.
- Dressing aids and accessories stored in obvious locations close to relevant clothing items.
- Comfortable chair, desk, or other private space to relax.
- Clear colour contrast between wall, floor, and door.
- Patterns used sparingly, and in places that are easy to change (e.g. cushion covers).
- Daylight isn't blocked by internal or external objects (e.g. stuck curtains, trees, ivy).
- Multiple light sources to provide overall & spot lighting (e.g. ceiling light with lamps).
- Floor is clear of trip hazards and easy to navigate.
- Furniture is stable and sturdy enough to support leaning.
- There are plenty of plug sockets, installed at knee height or higher to reduce bending.

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- Good sound insulation, with limited noise from shared walls, neighbours, or traffic.

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## Bathrooms

- Space to keep frequently used items on the countertop for easy access.
- Plenty of clearly labelled, transparent, or open storage to support access and reduce clutter and while maintaining privacy.
- Grab bars are installed in strategic locations such as near the toilet, shower, or bath to provide support and reduce the risk of falls.
- The colour of the toilet seat provides clear contrast between toilet seat, toilet bowl, and floor.
- Toilet paper can be reached easily, without stretching to twisting, when sat on the toilet.
- Taps and shower controls are clearly marked with hot and cold, and easy to use with soapy hands.
- Clear colour contrast between wall, floor, door and fixtures.
- Patterns used sparingly, and in places that are easy to change.
- Daylight isn't blocked by internal or external objects (e.g. stuck blinds, trees, ivy).
- Multiple light sources to provide overall & spot lighting.
- Flooring is non-slip and clear of trip hazards.
- Furniture, including rails and chairs are stable and sturdy.
- Good sound insulation, with limited noise from shared walls, neighbours, or traffic.

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# Stairs

- Stairs are straight, with minimal twists or turns.
- Stairs are a consistent height and width.
- Room to install a stairlift if needed.
- Power socket at the top or bottom of the stairs to support a stair lift if needed.
- There is handrail or banister on both sides of the stairs.
- Handrails and banisters are textured and easy to grip securely.
- Steps have a nosing strip, or bar at the edge of the step in a colour that clearly contrasts with the rest of the step.
- Clear colour contrast between wall, floor, and door.
- Daylight isn't blocked by internal or external objects (e.g. stuck curtains, trees, ivy).
- Multiple light sources to provide overall & spot lighting (e.g. lights at the top and bottom of stairs, with extra lights as needed).
- Floor non-slip, clear of trip hazards and easy to navigate.
- Patterns used sparingly, and in places that are easy to change (e.g. pictures).
- Good sound insulation, with limited noise from shared walls, neighbours, or traffic.

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# Garden

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Garden is easy to access, with firm, anti-slip, well-drained ground.



Sturdy, easy-to-grip handrails at steps, stairs, or ramps.



Plenty of sturdy seating, with the option to be in the sun or the shade.



Chairs and benches have strong arms that can be used to help people sit and stand.



Clear colour contrast between the door and the wall of the house.



Door can be seen clearly from anywhere in the garden.



Easy-to-access storage for outdoor and gardening equipment.



Space for hobbies and tasks (e.g. raised beds for gardening, bird feeders, space to dry laundry).

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## A FINAL WORD



We hope you found this checklist useful, and that it has helped you begin to imagine the different ways you can transform your home into a supportive, age-inclusive space that is as unique as you are.

The principles used to create this checklist were drawn from findings of the Designing Homes for Healthy Cognitive Ageing research project and our collaboration with our colleagues at the Dementia Services Development Centre. If you are interested in learning more about age supportive or dementia friendly design, you can visit our websites at [www.deshca.co.uk](http://www.deshca.co.uk) and [www.dementia.stir.ac.uk](http://www.dementia.stir.ac.uk).

Finally, this checklist would not exist without people like you reaching out to let us know the kind of resources they needed. Please contact us at [DeshcaResearch@stir.ac.uk](mailto:DeshcaResearch@stir.ac.uk) to let us know how you've used these resources, whether they've been useful, and if you have any suggestions for the future.

**THIS CHECKLIST WAS  
PRODUCED BY**



**DesHCA**  
DESIGNING HOMES FOR  
HEALTHY COGNITIVE AGEING



**Healthy Ageing Challenge**  
Social, Behavioral and  
Design Research

**UNIVERSITY of  
STIRLING**

