

Facility audit

Outpatient and waiting areas

This audit module is designed to look at outpatient and other designated patient waiting areas.

Some suggestions for improvement 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 facility. We suggest completing it with the other facility audits to enhance your understanding of how to improve the environment for older people.

This audit module contains 13 questions and will take approximately 15 – 20 minutes to complete.

Some questions may not be relevant. Where this is the case, 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 location, please print a new copy of this module and complete the audit again for the new location.

HEAT – Hospital Environment Audit Tool

Name	Date
Hospital	
Additional information	

Outpatient and waiting areas

1. Are waiting and outpatient areas immediately evident and accessible on arrival from different entry points to the hospital?

Yes - *Correct* - This assists with orientation and wayfinding.

No - Ensure signage to waiting/outpatient areas is immediately evident and clear, to assist with orientation and wayfinding. Consider how easy it is to access the waiting area/outpatients from reception and other entry points of the hospital, plus other information points and key areas.

□ N/A

Notes

2. Are waiting rooms and outpatient areas comfortable and easy to navigate?

Yes - *Correct* - Patients can spend long periods of time in hospital waiting areas. It is important that patients, carers and families feel comfortable. Provide adequate seating, make sure that signs and directions are clear, ensure that water, food and accessible toilets are available nearby and that patients can access help if they need it.

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□ N/A

Notes



Yes - *Correct* - Patients should be able to clearly identify where to seek help and information when they are waiting for appointments or accessing outpatient services.

No - Patients should be able to clearly identify where to seek help and information when they are waiting for appointments or accessing outpatient services. Consider changing signage to increase clarity.

□ N/A

Notes

4. Is the system used for queuing and registration clear, easy to understand, with detailed instructions provided, and are staff members also available to provide help to navigate the system?

Yes - *Correct* - Queuing and registration systems that use numbered tickets, computer registration, touch screens/ipads, TV screen or overhead announcements may be difficult for older people to use. Ensure the system is accessible to patients experiencing language barriers, visual or hearing difficulties, and that further assistance is available by staff/volunteers to overcome difficulties.

No - Queuing and registration systems that use numbered tickets, computer registration, touch screens/ipads, TV screen or overhead announcements may be difficult for older people to use. Consider using a system that is accessible to patients experiencing language barriers, visual or hearing difficulties. Ensure that further assistance is available by staff/volunteers to overcome difficulties.

□ N/A

Notes

5. Can patients in waiting areas, including outpatient areas, easily access help and information? This can include accessing help for care needs such as toileting and communication.

Yes - *Correct* - Patients may need assistance while waiting in designated areas or accessing outpatient services, particularly if the wait is prolonged. They should be able to ask for help easily and relay private information without being overheard.

No - Patients may need assistance while waiting or accessing outpatient services, particularly if the wait is prolonged. They should be able to ask for help easily and relay private information without being overheard. Consider signs that make it clear where and how to access help. Also consider designating areas for private discussions near waiting or outpatient spaces.

□ N/A

Notes

6. Is there access to food, drinks, toilets and a telephone (including a taxi phone) in outpatient and other waiting areas?

Yes - *Correct* - Patients may spend a long time in waiting areas and should be able to access food, drinks, toilets, and communication services while they wait. Make sure that there are facilities nearby and supply clear direction on how to access them.

No - Patients may spend a long time in waiting areas and should be able to access food, drinks, toilets, and communication services while they wait. Make sure that there are facilities nearby and supply clear direction on how to access them.

□ N/A

Notes

7.	Do	designated	waiting	and	outpatient	areas	provide	sufficient	space	to	allow
	pati	ents/visitors	to ask fo	r dire	ctions and s	speak to	staff wit	hout being	heard by	y ot	hers?

	Yes - Correct - Designing for interactions to occur without being overheard promotes privacy and
dignit	ty.

No - Designing for interactions to occur without being overheard promotes privacy and dignity.

□ N/A

Notes

8. Are maps, including "you are here" maps, and large font informational handouts available in waiting areas?

Yes - *Correct* - Having information that can be easily read and taken promotes independent orientation and assists wayfinding. These should use consistent visual themes with signage throughout the facility (i.e. colour, icons, fonts etc.).

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□ N/A

Notes

9. Is the lighting bright, even, soft and well diffused? This applies whether natural light or artificial light is used.

Yes - *Correct* - Natural light is preferred. Artificial lighting should be bright enough to mimic daylight, however should minimise glare. Use of full spectrum lights, such as type T5 and type T8 fluorescent tubes, or soft lights is recommended.

In areas of too much daylight / glare, consider installing exterior shading devices, glazing or other methods to reduce glare from direct sunlight, especially in staff work areas and patient care areas. In areas where daylight is insufficient, consider using light coloured shelves placed around the window to reflect light and increase the depth of sunlight penetration into deeper areas.

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10. Are patients reminded to bring their own gait aid (e.g. walking stick, walking frame) to appointments?

Yes - *Correct* - Ensure that appointment letters contain a reminder to patients to bring their own gait aid (e.g. walking stick, walking frame) to appointments. Distances within facilities are often further than anticipated.

No - Ensure that appointment letters contain a reminder to patients to bring their own gait aid (e.g. walking stick, walking frame) to appointments. Distances within facilities are often further than anticipated.

	N/A
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Notes

11. Are wheelchairs, as well as gait aids, available in waiting and outpatient areas for patients?

Yes - *Correct* - Wheelchairs should be available so patients and visitors can more easily navigate the facility. Gait aids should also be provided for those who have not brought their own. Distances within facilities are often further than anticipated.

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□ N/A

Notes

12. Are hearing amplifiers, pressure reduction furniture and lumbar support cushions available in outpatient and waiting areas?

Yes - *Correct* - This enhances the quality of communication and comfort of patients, families and carers.

No - Consider providing this equipment to enhance the quality of communication and comfort of patients, families and carers. If it's not possible to provide the equipment in all waiting and outpatient areas, speciality equipment should be on hand and provided when needed.

□ N/A

Notes

13. Are height adjustable treatment tables and blanket warmers accessible in outpatient areas?

Yes - *Correct* - Outpatient areas need height adjustable equipment and other equipment to improve safety and comfort for patients with mobility restrictions.

No - Outpatient areas need height adjustable equipment and other equipment to improve safety and comfort for patients with mobility restrictions.

□ N/A

Notes