

From the Director of Health Estates

Philip McClay



BY EMAIL

To: HSC Trusts Chief Executives

For info:
Capital Development Leads
Heads of Estates

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Related Document
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Dear Colleagues,

INCLUSIVE DESIGN GUIDANCE FOR HEALTHCARE FACILITY DESIGN

SUMMARY

The purpose of this letter is to inform you of the publication of DESIGNING HOMES FOR ALL: An Inclusive Design Guide to Support People Living with Cognitive and Sensory Impairment. This guidance has been added to the Estates publications registry as relevant guidance (<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/estates-and-facilities-publications>)

The guidance is available via the link [Designing Homes for all](#).

ACTION

Chief Executives are asked to:

- Disseminate this circular to all relevant staff, including capital teams, project sponsors and estates leads.
- Ensure that the principles and recommendations of this design guide are considered during the design development process of all new healthcare facilities and building refurbishment projects within your estate where relevant and proportionate to the scope of the project.
- Ensure project teams demonstrate how the guidance has been considered and applied, where applicable, throughout the planning, design and development of healthcare facilities.

BACKGROUND

This guidance promotes an inclusive design approach to optimise environments for people living with cognitive, sensory and physical impairments. While developed primarily for housing, the document recognises that its underlying principles are

equally applicable to public buildings, healthcare environments and other residential and care settings, supporting wellbeing, dignity, independence and inclusion.

Designing Homes for All is underpinned by three key design foundations, optimising sensory load, reducing design complexity and providing access to nature. These foundations are supported by wider inclusive design principles including safety, dignity, independence, orientation, legibility and wayfinding, visual access, adaptability, access to nature, and community connection. The guidance promotes environments that are intuitive and easy to navigate, helping to reduce confusion, anxiety and barriers to access while supporting wellbeing, dignity, independence and inclusion.

This guidance should be considered alongside other statutory requirements, Health Building Notes (HBNs) and Health Technical Memoranda (HTMs). The Department considers inclusive design a fundamental component of creating safe, accessible, person-centred and sustainable healthcare environments supporting independence and wellbeing, while enhancing the experience of patients, service users, visitors and staff.

ENQUIRIES

Should you have any queries regarding the content of this letter, please contact:

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Yours sincerely



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cc

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