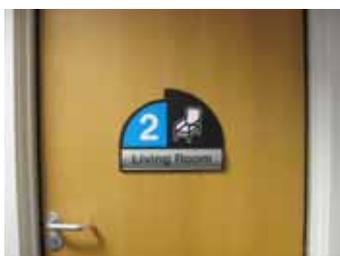


# Lounge

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For most people the lounge creates an opportunity for individual or collective activities. Traditionally in British homes the lounge is an area where most people spend their time watching television, listen to music, read and entertain. It is also for many the place where meals are eaten, which demonstrates the versatility of such a room. There is much debate about whether separate or combined functions are beneficial to those with cognitive and sensory impairments such as dementia.

- Has it been difficult to locate this space?



The living room door should be highlighted through the use of a widened door opening, with either glazed doors or glazed panels in the door, to enable views prior to committing themselves to entering the space.

- What strikes you first?

It is important particularly in a room that is larger and of combined use, to be partitioned into smaller areas, either through half walls or folding partitions. This is because too much visual clutter can cause excess visual stimulation that can cause a lapse of concentration and agitation.

- Is there a focal point, a fireplace?

A focal point like a fireplace can be effective in not only providing an alternative focus to the television but by creating an area of heat and movement to congregate around, which for older generations may trigger older memories, as well as a place to put familiar ornaments.

- How is the seating arranged?

Seating should ideally be arranged in small groups in various styles of seating, to allow for a variation of seating heights to suit all.

- Is there an opportunity to re-arrange the furniture?

Walkways should be made clear, with any sharp cornered furniture either removed or padded.

- What activities happen in this room?

Sitting rooms can be split into two groups, those that are combined with other activities (such as dining, craft, kitchenette) and those that are exclusively sitting rooms. Combined rooms benefit by being flexible and offer many social opportunities either through active participation or by just observing. Separate functioning rooms however offer a quiet space.

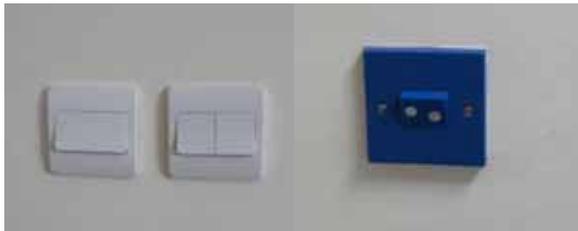
- Can you find what you are looking for to participate in an activity?

- Is there enough light for specific activities?

There should be a variety of lighting which can be controlled to produce suitable lighting for a range of activities, such as reading, writing, sitting and eating (if the dining space is included).

- Where are the light switches?

- Do you know how to use them?



Light fittings should be in a familiar style and they should contrast against the background.

- Is the light coming from the window causing glare?

As the eye ages there is overall blur to vision, this can cause sensitivity to intense light that can cause problems with glare. There are two types of glare, direct and indirect. Direct glare is caused from instances such as direct sunlight through a window or from an un-shielded light bulb. Indirect glare is caused from intense light reflecting off adjacent surfaces, such as that surrounding a window, or from a ceiling with reflective paint. Glare can cause much distress, agitation and disorientation; therefore to reduce this affect translucent materials should be used at windows, which allow views out whilst diffusing the light. Slatted blinds, particularly those in metal materials, should be avoided as they cause distinctive shadows that can be confusing. Glare can also be caused at night when light hits a window creating a mirror of reflected image; this can be distressing therefore it is important to cover windows with opaque coverings at night.

- What are the noise levels like?

Presbycusis is a condition that the aging ear may be affected by. It is the condition that decreases upper range hearing. This situation is found more

difficult when there is background noise, making participating in conversations more challenging. This can be supported through the use of sound absorbing materials, such as acoustics ceiling tiles or through carpets, furniture materials and window dressings.

- Would you be surprised to find a television in this space
- Who decides what is on the television?



The approach to television watching should be carefully considered. There can be a conflicting approach to the kind of atmosphere if televisions are left on without thought, the room is no longer a quiet space, and the noise of the television may cause agitation. Careful selection of television programs enables meaningful watching whilst respecting the need for a quiet space.

- What do you do if you want to find a quiet sitting space?



An interesting approach to quiet spaces can be found through the use of quiet sitting areas that are divided off the main sitting area. These areas can be small enough for just one or two people, creating a space where the individual can seek solace, particularly if they have become distressed in the public space.

- When you touch the materials in this room, how do they feel?

Tactile furnishings can create an interesting space with the use of various textures and colours, accessible from a range of locations.

- Are there objects in the room that interest you, are they familiar?

As disorientation of time, place and identity can occur with some cognitive impairments it is important to enforce identity through the reinforcement of self in familiar objects, these include ornaments, memorabilia and family photographs. Photographs of the particular individual are also important, both from the past and from present events.

■ Does any aspect of the décor confuse you?

Clutter should be reduced to create a cohesive space, objects of particular interest should be made clearly visible and accessible, through either open shelving, glass fronted units or through cupboards which have signs.

■ Are there any patterns/colours that make you feel disorientated.

Environments which are ambiguous or perceived as abstract, evoke negative responses from those who cannot interpret their meanings. Patterns can often be a source of confusion with those with visual depth perception deficits, especially when encountered on floor finishes. This does not however suggest that pattern should be altogether eliminated; on the contrary pattern can assist in creating a homelike warm atmosphere. Patterns should seek not to be abstract but of familiar interpretation. The colours should be soft with contrasting colours creating the background and foreground.

■ What does the view from the window tell you about the place?  
Is it important to access the garden from this room?



As mentioned in the 'garden' section, access to the garden from the ground floor living area is preferable, as views out will cue individuals to use outdoor areas whilst allowing them to enjoy the activities within the garden. When the living area is located on a floor above, efforts should be made to provide a balcony, by which fresh air and opportunity to sit are made, with the necessary safety precautions.