

Care Homes Safe Environment Tool

This tool can be used to reduce the risk of falls, by introducing simple environmental checks and giving suggestions of actions you can take to ensure a safe environment is maintained.

Care Home Environmental Falls Risk Checklist

Care Home / Unit: _____ Date of Completion: _____

Name/ Job Title of Staff member completing Checklist: _____

Area	Yes	No	N/A	Comments / Actions
General Environment (all areas?)				
Are Floor and mats in good condition?	☐	☐	☐	
Are Thresholds level?	☐	☐	☐	
Changes in floor level clearly highlighted.	☐	☐	☐	
Is there adequate lighting day and night?	☐	☐	☐	
All lights working?	☐	☐	☐	
Clear colour contrast between walls and floors?	☐	☐	☐	
Are there any items obstructing moving space?	☐	☐	☐	
Are freestanding plastic storage units in use?	☐	☐	☐	
Are the Window Blind adjusters secured on cleats?	☐	☐	☐	
Are any curtains trailing on the floor?	☐	☐	☐	
Are all alarm cords freely accessible from floor level?	☐	☐	☐	
Do any Fireplaces have a protruding hearth?	☐	☐	☐	
Are footstools/ portable tables stored out of footfall when not in use?	☐	☐	☐	
Are non-resident rooms secured when not in use:	☐	☐	☐	
sluice/ hazard/ linen/ storeroom?	☐	☐	☐	
If the Care Home is using flip down cinema seats- are the seats in good condition and easy to sit on?	☐	☐	☐	
External Entrance				
Are walkways/ramps and steps free from defects?	☐	☐	☐	
Free from slip/trip hazards?	☐	☐	☐	
Are handrails provided?	☐	☐	☐	
All furnishings stable and secure?	☐	☐	☐	
External Vestibule Area				
Are Handrails secure and unobstructed?	☐	☐	☐	
Any step edges are non-slip and clearly visible?	☐	☐	☐	
All furnishings stable and secure?	☐	☐	☐	

Area cont.	Yes	No	N/A	Comments / Actions
Corridors and Circulation Area				
Wide enough for two people?	☐	☐	☐	
Handrails secure and unobstructed?	☐	☐	☐	
Any corridor furniture is stable/ safe?	☐	☐	☐	
Fire extinguishers are appropriately secured.	☐	☐	☐	
Corridor doors are open on fire retainer magnets connected to fire alarm.	☐	☐	☐	
Are Handrails?				
Handrails secure and unobstructed?	☐	☐	☐	
Contrasting colour to wall?	☐	☐	☐	
Cover all corridors, inclines, and stairs?	☐	☐	☐	
Communal Areas (lounge and dining)				
All furniture stable and well positioned.	☐	☐	☐	
Is there a variety of seating heights/ types of seating?	☐	☐	☐	
Does seating have bilateral armrests?	☐	☐	☐	
Can residents sit / stand safely settees/ recliners?	☐	☐	☐	
Cables positioned safely.	☐	☐	☐	
Floor free from spillages?	☐	☐	☐	
En-suites / Bathrooms / Shower Rooms				
Contrasting colour of grabrails/ toilet seats?	☐	☐	☐	
Grabrails secure and easily accessible?	☐	☐	☐	
Is a toilet surround in place? Is it in good condition?	☐	☐	☐	
Shower chairs/ commode chairs are safe and have seat belts/ safety bars?	☐	☐	☐	
Bath seats/ powered bath chairs stored within bath?	☐	☐	☐	
Are all alarm cords freely accessible from floor level?	☐	☐	☐	
Does bathroom have unnecessary items stored?	☐	☐	☐	
If yes- what items do not need to be there?	☐	☐	☐	
Duty Rooms / Staff Stations				
Contrasting colour of walls/flooring	☐	☐	☐	
Swivel chairs are not accessible to residents	☐	☐	☐	

Area	Yes	No	N/A	Comments / Actions
Stairs, Ramps and Lifts				
Consistent step height?	☐	☐	☐	
Visible and non-slip stair edging?	☐	☐	☐	
Handrails secure and unobstructed?	☐	☐	☐	
Is Lift Threshold level?	☐	☐	☐	
Floor and Lift contrast is clear?	☐	☐	☐	
Signage / Orientation				
Words and pictures used to identify all rooms?	☐	☐	☐	
Bedrooms				
Furniture flush with walls?	☐	☐	☐	
Furniture in good condition?	☐	☐	☐	
Is Bed positioned against wall?	☐	☐	☐	
Trailing wires secured?	☐	☐	☐	
Overbed tables and footstools are safe to use?	☐	☐	☐	
Items of furniture positioned close together to reduce entrapment / increase manoeuvring space?	☐	☐	☐	
All furniture is stable and safe.	☐	☐	☐	
Is there suitable seating suitable for resident?	☐	☐	☐	
Does seating have bilateral armrests?	☐	☐	☐	
Equipment and Good Practice				
Are all alarm/ alert systems in good working order?	☐	☐	☐	
Are Walking aids all checked and in well maintained?	☐	☐	☐	
Ferrules (rubber stoppers) in good condition?	☐	☐	☐	
Wheelchairs fit for purpose?	☐	☐	☐	
Footplates used or risk assessed?	☐	☐	☐	
Residents at Substantial Risk of Falls				
have a bedroom nearest duty room or where night staff are present?	☐	☐	☐	
Are encouraged into a central observable area (lounges/ communal areas) during the day?	☐	☐	☐	

Areas of Good Practice: _____

Actions Required (Responsible person & timescale): _____

Staff signature of Completion: _____ **Date:** _____

Review Due: _____

Care Home Environmental Hazard Advice

'Find a fault, report a fault' - it is your responsibility to report any faults/issues to the Care Home management team.

Hazard	Good practice/ Action
Flooring	
Carpets/vinyl/ mats etc, all areas . Worn/loose threads/ bubbled vinyl/uneven defects.	Report worn, loose, uneven or bubbled flooring. Support/supervise residents until defects rectified and on uneven surfaces/ changes in floor coverings. Carpets should be low pile. Communal bathroom/ toilet/dining areas should be non-slip vinyl. Avoid patterned or shiny flooring.
Threshold uneven and catching on footwear/ walking aids.	Highlight raised thresholds or level changes. Residents may need extra support to safely negotiate the external/ internal door thresholds.
Spills.	Clean spills immediately, adhering to standard infection control precautions and local policies. Use a wet floor sign and remove it once dry.
Lighting (all areas)	
Inadequate lighting day or night/ faulty lighting/ harsh or flickering lighting (can cause distress).	Report any lighting faults/issues. Ensure all areas are well lit. Consider additional lighting, if needed. Consider night lights in bedrooms/en-suites, if required. Reduce glare and strong shadows.
Colour of walls / flooring (all areas)	
Poor colour contrast (walls and floors look too similar).	Use contrasting wall/floor colours to visually highlight difference for easier navigation in environment.
Handrails (all areas)	
Loose at wall/ excessive movement.	Report faulty rails. Provide extra support/ supervision where rails are faulty.
Obstructions	Remove any obstructions.
Poor contrasting colour to wall /rails blend into wall colour.	Use contrasting colours so rails are easy to see.
Handrails missing at areas of inclines/stairs or Handrails missing in part of the corridor.	Report missing rails. Provide extra support and supervision where rails missing. Consider installing handrail at missing areas, if required and it is safe/beneficial to do so.

Hazard	Good practice/ Action
Manoeuvring space (all areas)	
Limited manoeuvring space for the use of walking aids/resident and staff assisting them.	Ideally, there should be space so that 2 people can easily pass each other with walking aids. Rearrange furniture to allow space for accessibility (e.g. for walking aids/staff). Remove any obstacles. Increase support/supervision, if space limited.
Freestanding plastic storage units	
Freestanding plastic storage units	Replace with sturdy or wall mounted ones. Can tip over if leant on. Can be pulled over.
Curtain/blinds (all areas)	
Curtains trailing on the floor.	Ensure curtains/ window coverings do not create a trip hazard.
Blind adjusters (e.g. blind cords) not secured.	Secure all blinds with appropriate safety devices to reduce strangulation/entanglement/ trip risk.
Alarm cords (all areas)	
Tied up/broken/ missing alarm cords.	Report any faulty/missing alarm cords. Ensure all alarm cords are hanging freely. Cords must be reachable from the floor.
Fireplaces	
Hearth/ mantelpiece/fireplace sticking out.	Use contrasting fireplace colour. Reposition furniture so tripping hazard is minimised. Remove fireplace, if needed.
Footstools/portable tables	
(e.g. over bed and over chair tables, folding tables).	Ensure that they do not cause an obstruction. Can be a potential topple/ collapse risk if leant or sat on. Store outwith footfall when not in use.
Non-residents rooms	
(e.g. sluice/chemical/hazard/electrical/ hazard/ linen/ storerooms/ offices/ duty rooms/ hairdresser rooms/ staff rooms/staff stations etc) and rooms used for storage.	Keep rooms locked when not staffed.
Poor colour contrast of wall/flooring.	Use contrasting colours, where possible.
Residents accessing swivel chairs.	Keep swivel seating away from residents.
Cinema type seating	
(e.g. Pullman/ floor fixed/ self- tipping/ flip down seats/cinema type recliners).	Check condition. Report any faults. Ensure space for seating transfers. Supervise/support residents, especially when reclined.

Hazard	Good practice/ Action
External entrances/immediate surroundings	
effective or missing walkway/step/ramp/handrail. lip/trip risks (e.g. uneven paving, moss, obstacles etc). Lighting faulty/insufficient during night/day.	It is your responsibility to report any faults/defects or missing handrails. Report any defects. Provide extra support/supervision. All steps/ramps should have handrails present. Report uneven paths/paving and provide extra support/supervision. Remove moss and obstacles. Report or remove any slip/trip risks. Increase support/supervision of residents. Report faulty/missing lighting. Add extra lighting, if required.
External vestibule area	
Handrail not secure/not free from obstruction. Poorly marked steps/step edges not clearly defined. Furnishings not stable/secure	Remove obstructions. Report loose handrail. Residents may require increased support and supervision. Report unclear step edges. Residents may require increased support and supervision. Report and replace with stable/secure furnishings. Residents may require increased support and supervision.
Corridors, circulation areas and communal areas (e.g. dining and lounge areas)	
Handrails not secure in parts / Handrails obstructed in parts (e.g. items stored on handrails items blocking access). Unsteady/unsafe furniture. Fire extinguishers not in appropriate/safe casing. Areas not wide enough for 2 people pass each other with walking aids/narrow corridors/limited room for using walking aids.	Remove obstructions. Report loose handrails. Residents may require increased support and supervision. Refer handrail section above. Report and replace unsteady/unsafe furniture. Residents may need extra support and supervision. Remove unnecessary furniture. Report fire extinguishers. Ensure fire extinguishers safely mounted and stored. Rearrange furniture for maximising manoeuvring space. Remove unnecessary furniture. Residents may need extra support and supervision.

Corridors, circulation areas and communal areas (e.g. dining and lounge areas) cont.

There is no variety of heights/widths/type of seating.
There are settees/recliners.

Corridor doors open but not on fire retainer magnets/swing arm connected to fire alarm.

Loose or trailing cables/flexes/wires.

Ensure a variety of seating to meet resident need.
Ensure all seating has arm rests for safe transfers.
Ensure seating is stable and that residents can sit down/stand up from them safely.
Avoid access to residents using swivel seating due to seat instability/unsafe transfers.
Residents may need increased support/supervision.

Corridor fire doors should be self-closing/close automatically in case of fire/loss of power – never wedge them open. They can be held open by an electromagnetic hold-open/door closer device or 'swing free' arm. A 'swing-free' arm which allows the door leaf to work independently. The automatic closing of doors could cause a resident to fall - precautions should be taken to avoid falls/injury.
Support residents with doors, if needed.

Secure or remove trailing wires/cables/flexes.
Use trunking to cover cabling or using cable clips, where possible.

En-suites/bathrooms/shower rooms

Poor colour contrast on grab rails/toilet seats.
Grab rails not reachable if sat on the toilet/in shower/in bath.

Grab rail/ toilet seat not secure or in poor condition.

Toilet surround is in poor condition or unsteady.

Shower chair/commode chair has faulty or missing seat belt/ safety bar, is in poor condition or wheels/castors/brakes not working.

Bath seat/powered bath chair not stored within bath when not in use.

Alarm cord not within reach if a resident is lying on the floor.

Area being used for storage.

Use contrasting colours to increase visibility.

Report poorly placed or broken rails. Residents may need increased support and supervision.

Report unsafe grab bar/toilet seat. Residents may need increased support and supervision.

Report and remove unsafe toilet surround. Replace toilet surround. Residents may need increased support and supervision.

Report any faults/missing parts/ unsafe equipment. Remove broken/unsafe equipment from use. Residents may need increased support and supervision.

Store bath seats inside bath when not in use to maximise manoeuvring space and to reduce the risk of residents using it unsupervised.

Alarm cord must be reachable from the floor.

Keep area clear for safe manoeuvring.
Remove unnecessary items. If unable to remove excess items, keep room locked when not in use. Residents may need increased support and supervision.

Hazard	Good practice/ Action
Stairs/ramps/ lifts	
Stairs/ramps/ lifts. Inconsistent step heights/ internal ramp. Poorly marked steps, stair edges are not obvious/ are not non-slip Insufficient handrails/ handrails not accessible or are loose. Threshold is uneven/lift does not stop level with floor landing. Contrast between flooring and lift is not clearly defined.	Ensure residents using stairs/ramps have an appropriate risk assessment and safety measures in place. Use keypads/locked doors / alternative measures, if needed. Use of child safety gates are not advised as they are not robust enough for use with adults. Report any faults/poorly marked steps/step edges. Ensure stair edges are square, clearly visible and non-slip. Ensure ramp slope suitable for residents. Ensure access to appropriate handrails on steps/ramps. Residents may need increased support and supervision. Report any faulty/missing handrails. See handrails section above. Report uneven lift thresholds/lift not stopping level with floor landings. Ensure colour contrast between flooring and lift. Residents may need increased support and supervision.
Signage/orientation	
Resident/visitors find it challenging to navigate/ can't find their way.	Use clear signage to identify all rooms. Place signage at eye level. Use words and pictures on a contrasting background colour.
Bedrooms	
Furniture positioned with protruding edges or positioned at an angle. Gaps between furniture. Furniture in poor condition/unsteady/unsafe. Loose or trailing cables/flexes/wires. Overbed tables/ foot stools/ folding tables present.	Placing furniture 'flush' against walls minimises potential impact edges and maximise manoeuvring space. Place furniture (e.g. wardrobe, drawers, shelves) close together to reduce risk of gaps creating entrapment/ injury risk. Remove unsafe items and replace with stable/ safe/ good condition furniture. Secure or remove trailing wires/cables/flexes. Use trunking to cover cabling or clip securely. Ensure safe to use as can be unstable if leant on/sat on. Ensure that they do not cause an obstruction. Store outwith footfall when not in use.

Bedrooms cont.

Seating in poor condition or not suitable for resident/ doesn't have bilateral armrests.

Locate bedroom close to duty room/where staff are stationed to allow speedy responses. Keep essential items within easy resident reach (e.g. nurse call buzzer, TV remote etc). **Remove** any unnecessary clutter/hazards. Consider the use of appropriate telecare/ falls alarm system when the resident is in the bedroom (e.g. movement sensors, bed/chair occupancy sensors, falls detectors, floor pressure mats). Ensure these are in good working order prior to each use. Encourage time in supervised communal areas, if appropriate.

Mobility aid (e.g. wheelchairs, sticks, Zimmer's, 3 and 4 wheeled walking frames)

Walking aid in poor condition/ felt to be inappropriate.

Do NOT use faulty walking aids/wheelchairs!

Seek physio review if aids unsuitable or replacement aid is required. Replace rubber stoppers (ferrules) when circular treads are worn. Ensure all mobility aids are clean, dry, well maintained and fit for purpose.

Brakes/wheel locks not working properly.

Report faults. Resident may need increased support and supervision. Always use brakes/wheel locks when transferring or when stationary.

Wheelchair foot plates not in use.
Wheelchair foot plates not working properly/missing.

Ensure foot plates are in use. Document reasons if footplates are intentionally not in use. Check that footplates are secure and that the locking mechanism is working to prevent accidental detachment. Report faults/missing parts. Use another wheelchair with foot plates. Residents may need increased support and supervision.

Falls alarm/alert system

Not working.

Report faults. Residents will need increased support and supervision. **Replace** with a working system. Check alarm/system is in good working order prior to every use and regularly risk assess safety and effectiveness of equipment.

Further information on environment

NHS Scotland/ Care Inspectorate 'Managing Falls and Fractures for Older People in Care Homes' resource pack which provides more comprehensive advice on how to manage falls risk within your Care Home. <http://www.careinspectorate.com/images/documents/2737/2016/Falls-and-fractures-new-resource-low-res.pdf>

[Care Home collaborative](#) website (falls resources)