



**AAZTEC**  
HEALTH

Guide to creating  
**dementia-friendly**  
bathrooms



This guide summarises best practice design advice for creating dementia-friendly bathrooms and en-suites. Aaztec can help all those involved in dementia care including healthcare professionals, specifiers and contractors, relatives and carers to create a safe and therapeutic environment.

A dementia-friendly bathroom includes some simple design features that can help people with dementia carry out every-day tasks, improving their safety and preserving their independence.

Creating dementia-friendly bathrooms in accommodation for the elderly is increasingly important as our aging population grows and Dementia becomes much more prevalent in our society. The bathroom can be one of the most challenging and confusing places for a person with dementia and what was once a comfortable and familiar environment, can become frightening and cause upset, frustration and a reluctance to use the bathroom.

Therefore, implementing some key design features to promote safety and familiarity can make this a comfortable space and create more of a pleasant experience.



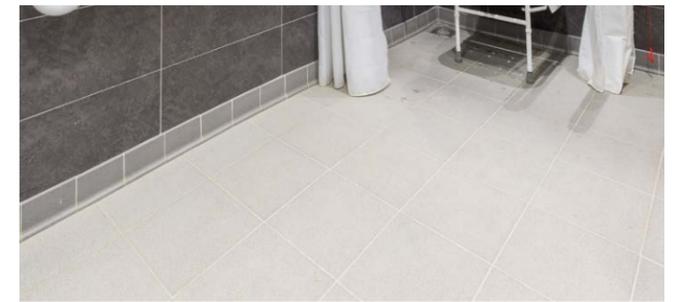
## TOILETS AND BASINS

- People with dementia are twice as likely to fall as others in their age group and so it is important to avoid sharp edges on any product in the bathroom. Our specially designed vanity units with curved edges combat this issue and avoid sharp corners that can cause injury.
- A solid grade laminate base vanity unit not only hides pipework preventing scalding, but is also extremely robust and built to withstand extreme use in challenging environments.
- A contrasting solid surface top ensures an easy to clean product and one that is aesthetically pleasing and homely.
- A white basin moulded into a solid surface top ensures no sharp corners and no silicone sealant joints to harbour mould or bacteria.
- A back-to-wall (BTW) toilet pan can sit flush against the vanity unit panel, offering a hygienic and easy-to-clean solution with the cistern and pipework hidden in the unit. Add a contrasting colour toilet seat so that the user can easily locate it.
- Choosing familiar looking, traditional tap controls and toilet flush levels can also make someone with dementia feel more comfortable rather than installing sensor-operated, modern devices. These can be cross-head-taps or lever operated for those with limited dexterity.
- Flood-proof plugs, like Magiplugs, that pop-up if the basin overfills are a good preventative measure in case short term memory loss means the user forgets to turn the taps off.
- Ensure enough space to accommodate a toothbrush mug, toothpaste and other familiar bathroom items.



## FLOORING

- Ensuring that the floor is a single colour can stop a person with dementia assuming that a change in colour means a step up or a step down.
- Dark flooring can also be perceived as a hole making the user reluctant to step into the bathroom, therefore a light colour with no fleck is ideal for this environment. Non-slip safety flooring is recommended as the safest solution and can also reduce the need for bath mats that can be a trip-hazard.

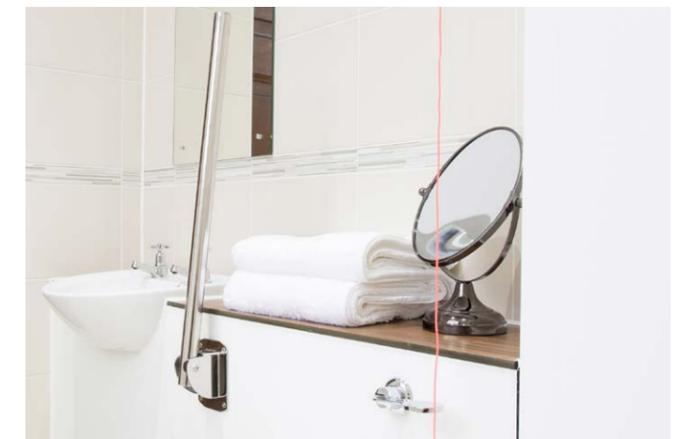


## SHOWERS

- Thermostatic taps and showers as well as low surface temperature radiators and underfloor heating can help protect dementia sufferers who are more vulnerable to scalding.
- Again, choosing a shower that is easy to use and has familiar controls helps to avoid confusion and alleviate a potentially daunting task. It helps if a user can see where the water is coming from and if they can control its flow as skin can become hyper-sensitive.
- Short term memory loss and forgetfulness can lead to a risk of flooding in the bathroom. Selecting a shower that automatically turns off after 30 minutes can help to prevent this situation.
- If shower screens or shower curtains feature, frosted glass to avoid reflections and breathable, safety shower curtains are both recommended.

## OTHER

- Using open shelves to display products and cue personal hygiene tasks are a great alternative to cupboards where items are not always easily found and where open doors can cause head injury.
- In some cases, mirrors should be capable of being covered as for some people with dementia, the reflection of their own face can frighten them as they may not recognise themselves or believe another person is in the bathroom with them. Our shelf/mirror unit allows the mirror to be covered with sliding doors and hidden locks.
- White tiles can be seen as being clinical and not homely. Add accent colours or choose wall panels as a popular way to replace tiles and decorated walls with a hard wearing and waterproof surface that's hygienic and easy to clean.



## SENSES – quick tips

**SIGHT** – use contrasting colours to distinguish between surfaces and appliances

**SPATIAL AWARENESS/DIZZINESS/RISK OF FALLING** – no sharp edges on bathroom furniture or exposed pipework to avoid injury and scalding

**MEMORY LOSS** – install anti-flood plug devices and use open shelving so personal hygiene products are easily accessed

**RETRO MEMORY** – traditional fixings are familiar and provide comfort

**GENERAL CONFUSION** – no mirrored surfaces to avoid frightening and confusing reflections

# DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY VANITY UNIT

The bathroom can be one of the most challenging and confusing places for a person with dementia and what was once a comfortable and familiar environment can become frightening and cause distress. Our vanity unit overcomes challenges, combining key design features to promote safety, familiarity and helps to create a more pleasant, independent, hygienic experience.

