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the future is safer with altro



Creating communities for all: Designing for dementia and older people

Creating communities for all

Altro have worked in the healthcare sector for over 60 years and we understand the importance of environment, particularly in the growing area of dementia care and the care of older people. We are committed to helping develop the right surroundings for people with dementia and have worked with experts to do so. We can offer guidance and design choice, whether you are building, refurbishing or developing dementia-friendly communities, ensuring you select the flooring and wall cladding that will help maximise quality of life, and meet legal requirements. We are members of the Dementia Action Alliance and our guidance supports the design principles outlined in the Department of Health's Health Building Note 08-02, Dementia-friendly Health and Social Care Environments.

What is dementia?

The term describes a host of conditions associated with the gradual deterioration of the brain's functions. These can include problems with reasoning and communication, speed of thinking, comprehension, mental agility, memory loss and feelings of anxiety, depression or anger. Its causes are various brain diseases, the most well-known being Alzheimer's which accounts for 62% of those with dementia. Dementia is not simply part of the ageing process; it can be caused by changes to the brain structure and gradual damage to the brain cells.

Dementia and perception

The effects of dementia vary from person to person but there are common strands including disorientation, confusion, anxiety and memory loss.

Loss of visual perception beyond the normal process of ageing is a common symptom. Any combination of the effects below can make moving from one room to another harder, making a fall more likely. The effects can be lessened, or heightened, by the choice of flooring and wall cladding.

- Less ability to discriminate textures
- Shiny surfaces appearing wet
- Patterned surfaces causing illusions
- Dark surfaces and shadows appearing to be holes
- Less ability to see depth and contrast
- Difficulty identifying and describing different objects
- Difficulty seeing in 3D – rooms appearing flat



Having safe, familiar surroundings that can be navigated easily reduces the impact of some dementia symptoms, helping to avoid stress and prevent slips or falls. Dementia friendly areas can help improve quality of life and the safety of residents and visitors. Focussing on simple design principles can maximise resident independence, reinforce personal identity and enhance confidence. A non-clinical, homely look can make a big difference to everyone.



Altro Whiterock Satins
Malva

LRV: 68



Altro Wood Safety
Washed Oak

LRV: 38

The UK perspective

Dementia 2015: Aiming higher to transform lives, a study published by Alzheimer's Society, reports that the number of people with dementia in the UK has reached 850,000.

Assuming no public health intervention, this number will be over 2 million by 2051. The report puts the cost of caring for people with dementia in the UK at £26.3 billion.

The impact of dementia on health and residential care

In the UK, 38% of the people with dementia live in residential care or nursing homes and up to 70% of care home residents in the UK have dementia or significant memory loss.

It is estimated that the primary residence of at least 8,500 people is a hospital. A 2009 report by Alzheimer's Society put the number of hospital beds occupied by people with dementia at 25%, a figure that it likely to have increased.

The figures show how vital it is for hospital and care homes to have dementia friendly surroundings, easing the effect of symptoms for those affected and helping to make their care easier for staff.

Slip resistance for life

Safety flooring is a must have in a care home or hospital environment, but it's not always easy to choose the most appropriate one. It should have a Pendulum Test Value (PTV) of ≥ 36 which offers a one in a million chance of slipping for the lifetime of the flooring. Durability is important too: Think about scuffing and other damage that can be caused by wheelchairs, walking sticks or other walking aids, and choose flooring that is up to the task.

For wet environments, consider Altro Aquarius™, our flooring that prevents slips in both bare feet and shoes, protecting residents at their most vulnerable and carers while working.

All our safety flooring maintains its slip resistance for its entire life cycle; not all safety flooring does this. Altro safety flooring also comes with a guarantee of between 10 and 20 years, and lifetime sustained slip resistance of up to 25 years. Our safety flooring also contains Altro Easyclean™ technology, making cleaning easier and more effective, helping the flooring perform as it should and retain its appearance. Developing a cleaning regime using the right equipment and detergent for the job will make this a simple process. We offer guidance plus downloadable cleaning guides on our website.

Designing for dementia and older people at a glance

- Use slip-resistant flooring
- Use matt, sparkle-free flooring
- Always choose flooring with a Pendulum Test Value (PTV) of ≥ 36 , which offers a one in a million chance of slipping for the lifetime of the flooring. All Altro safety flooring does this but this isn't the case for all safety flooring
- In wet environments, avoid overly textured flooring that could hurt sensitive bare feet
- Avoid steps, or the misperception of steps due to reflections or patterns, in general areas that those with dementia may negotiate alone
- Use flooring and wall solutions to create a calm, welcoming, homely appearance
- Use art to aid familiarity and help with way-finding as well as making people feel welcome, offering a pleasant and enjoyable stay
- Ensure the Light Reflectance Value (LRV) of walls, flooring, and any other critical surfaces, differs by at least 30 points
- Consider just a few colours in one area to avoid creating confusing surroundings
- Ensure the colours of walls, doors, floors and ceilings contrast to demark them. Unless trying to conceal an entrance, for example, to a service corridor or kitchen
- Consider a hygienic, impervious system such as Altro Aquarius and Altro Whiterock Satins for wet environments, or Altro Stronghold 30 and Altro Whiterock White or Altro Whiterock Satins for kitchens.

Bedroom

Altro Wood Safety Farmhouse Oak
LRV 38

Can feature bedhead in
Altro Whiterock Satins Citron
LRV 80

Ensuite bathroom

Altro Aquarius Vole
LRV 43

Altro Whiterock Satins Linen
LRV 83

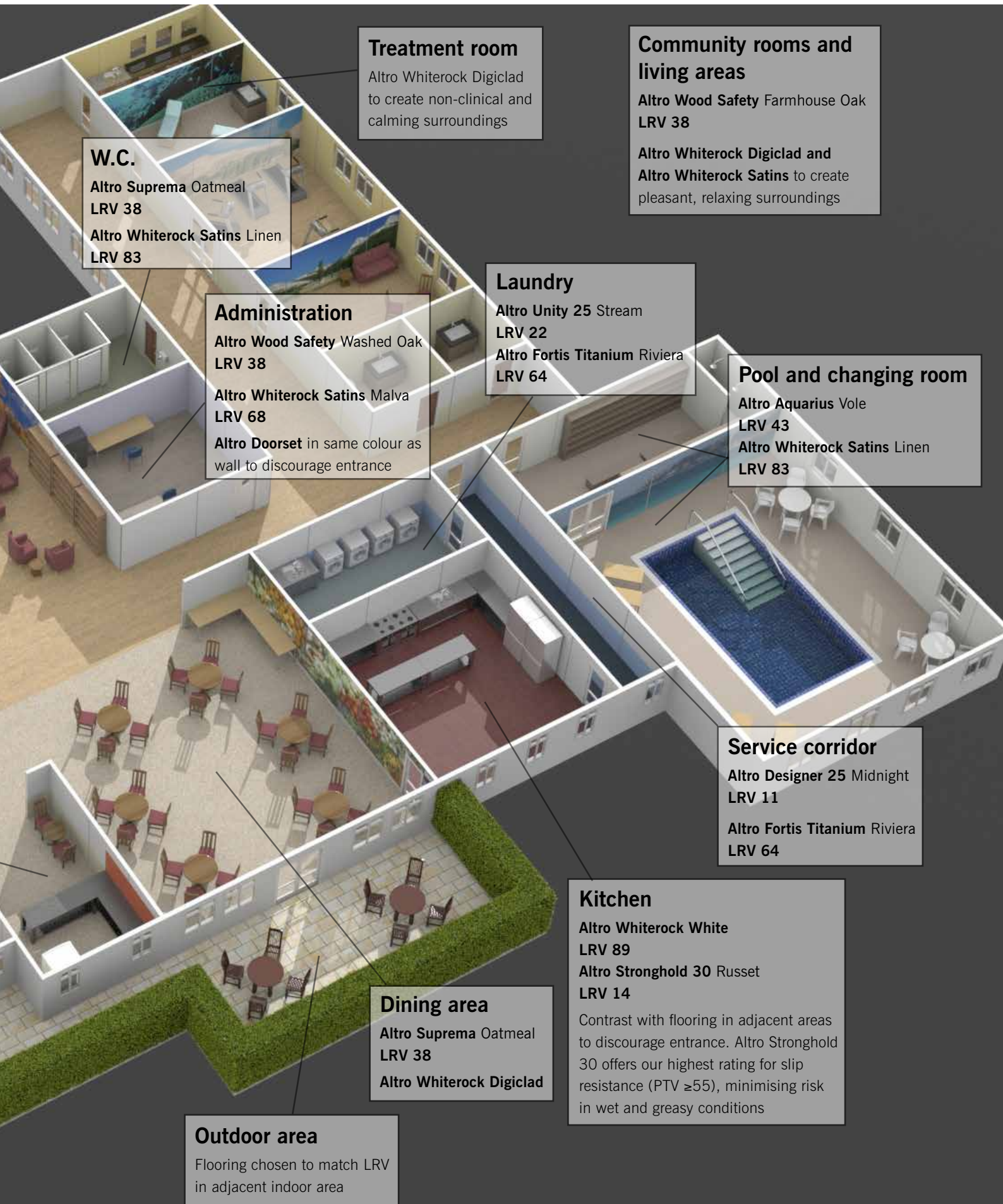
Corridor

Altro Whiterock Digiclad
Help with way-finding
and familiarity

Activity area

Altro Suprema Oatmeal
LRV 38

Altro Whiterock Splashbacks
Juicy Lucy
LRV 20



Treatment room

Altro Whiterock Digiclad to create non-clinical and calming surroundings

Community rooms and living areas

Altro Wood Safety Farmhouse Oak LRV 38

Altro Whiterock Digiclad and Altro Whiterock Satins to create pleasant, relaxing surroundings

W.C.

Altro Suprema Oatmeal LRV 38
Altro Whiterock Satins Linen LRV 83

Administration

Altro Wood Safety Washed Oak LRV 38
Altro Whiterock Satins Malva LRV 68
Altro Doorset in same colour as wall to discourage entrance

Laundry

Altro Unity 25 Stream LRV 22
Altro Fortis Titanium Riviera LRV 64

Pool and changing room

Altro Aquarius Vole LRV 43
Altro Whiterock Satins Linen LRV 83

Service corridor

Altro Designer 25 Midnight LRV 11
Altro Fortis Titanium Riviera LRV 64

Kitchen

Altro Whiterock White LRV 89
Altro Stronghold 30 Russet LRV 14

Contrast with flooring in adjacent areas to discourage entrance. Altro Stronghold 30 offers our highest rating for slip resistance (PTV ≥55), minimising risk in wet and greasy conditions

Dining area

Altro Suprema Oatmeal LRV 38
Altro Whiterock Digiclad

Outdoor area

Flooring chosen to match LRV in adjacent indoor area



It is essential to carry out an assessment to identify the key areas where those with dementia and their carers might be at risk. The floor plan on pages 4 and 5 offer some guidance on which Altro solutions are most appropriate in particular areas. The recommended shades are examples of combinations that work well but there are many more options. Please contact us directly to discuss your project in detail.

Creative and protective walling

Altro wall cladding protects walls from impact damage, provides a durable canvas for artwork and can greatly help with way-finding. Using different colours to theme different areas or to surround door frames can help patients to identify where they are. Using Altro Whiterock DigiClad™, which is created by reproducing a photographic image or vector art onto Altro Whiterock wall cladding, is a great way of creating familiar points and a welcoming, rather than clinical, feel. Using images to help way-finding and to create non-clinical environments is recommended within HBN 08-02.

If hygiene is paramount, choose from the Altro Whiterock range. If wall protection, rather than hygiene, is the main requirement, consider the Altro Fortis™ system.

Altro Fortis wall, door and corner protection helps keeps surfaces looking good, protecting them from the damage caused by feet, bags and wheeled traffic. Its lightly textured surface camouflages scuffs, plus it's easy to clean.

With Altro Whiterock DigiClad you can create unique, stunning artworks with exceptional durability. It features photographic images of your choice, protected by hard-coat technology which provides scratch-resistance. These images can be chosen to appeal to residents, from local landscapes to popular culture and can be both aesthetic and functional.

It can be used to cover entire walls, creating large, impactful areas, or in smaller areas to create interest and make the environment appear less clinical. It can also help with way-finding for example, using food images in a dining room to help recollection and familiarity.

Altro Whiterock DigiClad is an ideal solution for creating appropriate surroundings for those with dementia, and older people.

To ensure you achieve the right LRV when designing with Altro Whiterock DigiClad, please speak with your Altro consultant who will be able to help.

Visit the **'dementia'** section of our website for more information.

The role colour plays

Colour plays an important role when designing for older people or those with dementia. It affects both mood and way-finding. Contrast sensitivity is a common visual issue; making clear, high-level contrast one of the most important factors.

What works?

As eyes age, it is harder to perceive saturation of colour so they appear less vivid. Red and yellow shades are easier to identify than blue and greens so these are ideal in the areas that will be used most. Strong colours have most impact as they are best remembered.

Colours may be incorporated into way-finding and orientation, triggering the memory and helping to create familiarity but it's important to remember that not everyone sees colour the same way, so this should be combined with other visual signs such as art or other landmarks where possible.

The importance of Light Reflectance Values

Subtle differences between floors, walls, steps and doorways can cause enough uncertainty to result in a fall. While colour choice is important here, it is the amount of light reflected from surfaces that is the main factor in a person's ability to identify different surfaces. Light Reflectance Values (LRVs) are the best way to measure contrast. Every material has an LRV marked out of 100 points. To meet requirements, there should be at least a 30 point variance in LRVs between adjacent surfaces such as floors and walls. Since the Equality Act of 2010, this is a legal requirement.

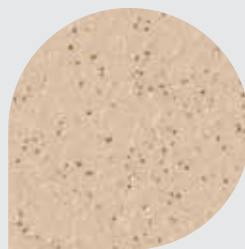
Our flooring and wall cladding are available in many shades but, importantly, we offer a wide variety of LRVs which ensures there is choice whether choosing solutions to contrast with, or match, existing decor, or installing both new flooring and wall cladding. The LRV for each of our solutions is available on our website and on all our product sample cards.

To those with dementia, highly polished, shiny flooring can appear to be wet, causing uncertainty and confusion; instead flooring should be matt. We also recommend flooring that is sparkle-free and without a heavy pattern as these can cause distraction or look like something to pick up, which could result in a fall.

Flooring that supports confident, safe movement

Using flooring shades with similar LRVs can encourage movement from one room to another; conversely, placing very different LRVs and colours next to each can discourage movement in areas. This is ideal for exits, kitchens and clean rooms.

For example, Altro Unity™ in Arena (LRV: 41) could be installed in a dining room, with Altro Stronghold™ 30 in Velvet (LRV: 8) could be used in an adjacent kitchen. The difference in LRV is more than 30 points, and the shades contrast, making it clearer that it's a different room.



Altro Unity 25
Arena

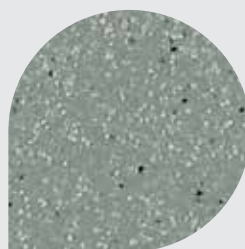
LRV: 41



Altro Stronghold 30
Velvet

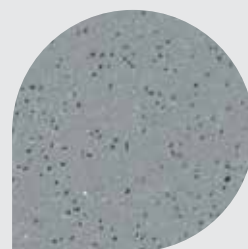
LRV: 8

To encourage people to walk from one room to another without hesitation, using the same shade of flooring works well. We offer a number of shades that are available in different products, ensuring the most appropriate slip resistance for each room; for example, to move from a ward into bathrooms and ensembles, Altro Suprema™ Wolf combines with Altro Aquarius™ Walrus.



Altro Suprema
Wolf

LRV: 29



Altro Aquarius
Walrus

LRV: 29

Lee Bushell, Warrington Hospital's Estates Officer Capital Projects

Warrington's Forget Me Not ward has been designed to look different to a typical ward. The needs of patients with dementia are very specific. Our aim was to cater to these absolutely in the creation of the new ward, and provide a calm and relaxing environment for care using the latest design principles, colour and light.

"We chose Altro Wood Safety and Altro Aquarius flooring for the new ward because we have used them both at Warrington Hospital before with great success, so I knew they would be the right choice for this project. Altro Wood Safety has been installed throughout the ward and public areas. Its timber-look design is warm and familiar, which is a key issue for patient wellbeing. Plus of course it provides slip-resistance underfoot for the patients. The benefit of Altro Aquarius is that it's safe underfoot in wet areas with both bare feet and shoes, so for an environment where staff wearing shoes will be assisting patients with bare feet, it's ideal. Overall, this is a real success story."



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