

## What is it?

Age-friendly wayfinding and signage provides logical layouts and legible choices of visual, auditory, and tactile cues. This enables us to more confidently navigate familiar or new environments both indoors and outdoors as we age. Wayfinding is the overall experience of navigating spaces and signage refers to the specific communication tool.

## Why does it matter?

Wayfinding and signage design significantly impacts whether a journey is comfortable. Wayfinding and the location of signage is in the remit of planning departments while the content of signage requires engagement with specific operators - it is important age-friendly considerations inform both to reduce the risk of feeling confused, concerned, or unsafe.

## Age-friendly implementation considerations

- Listen to lived experiences** to learn what a diverse range of local residents, including older people, want and need from wayfinding and signage. Undertake an access audit with older people / intergenerational groups.
- Identify stakeholders** such as relevant council departments (e.g. planning, public health, environment, transport and community services departments), relevant authorities and relevant local businesses.
- Develop solutions** with residents and stakeholders to ensure wayfinding and signage is usable for all. Discuss priorities and agree improvements (e.g. set out a wayfinding / signage strategy).

- 1 Intuitive layout:** Is the layout and location of key facilities (such as entrances, reception, choice of lift/stair/ramp, landmarks, personalised features) easily identifiable, predictable, intuitive, and equitable?
- 2 Key destinations and information:** Does the signage and wayfinding direct people to key destinations like toilets, hospitals, parks, community centres, town halls? Is key, relevant information provided such as opening times, bus schedules, etc? Are street name signs easy to find?
- 3 Consistent and regular:** Is the signage style consistent and provided at key decision points, intersections, and regular intervals to give people confidence they are on track?
- 4 Multiple formats:** Is information and wayfinding provided in multiple formats so that it is accessible to people with sensory requirements, according to the principle of at least two senses: audible and/or tactile and visual? Is multi-sensory information provided where possible?
- 5 Visual communication:** Visual information is important for D/deaf and sighted people. Is the signage information clear, not shiny, in plain font, and a large enough text/symbol size based on the viewing distance? Is there visual and tonal contrast against the background, including retail fronts so they stand out from their surrounds? Is there good lighting to avoid excessive reflections, glare, and shadowing on the signage?

- 6 Graphic communication:** Are graphic signs, maps, and pictograms provided to complement text and help people whose first language is not English? Are maps, information, or directories that require a closer look provided at an accessible height with large enough visuals?
- 7 Tactile communication:** Is tactile communication provided such as embossed signage, tactile maps, Braille signage, changes in floor level and/or surface that are cane detectable, and/or tapping rails?
- 8 Audible communication and sounds:** Audio options are imperative for blind and partially sighted people. Are audible features implemented such as talking signs and simple announcement systems that provide audio descriptive wayfinding information? Do acoustics support clear interpretation of sound and speech? Are assistive listening systems provided such as induction hearing loop systems?
- 9 Non-ageist graphics and language:** Any graphics and language used should not include any references that proliferate negative ageist stereotypes. Does the wayfinding and signage use age-positive graphics and language where possible?
- 10 Maintenance:** Is the signage and wayfinding regularly maintained and updated to be legible and accurate? Is outdated signage removed? Is temporary signage located so as not to cause obstruction or clutter?

## Age-friendly wayfinding and signage: top 10 design considerations

### Further reading

- [Alzheimer's Society Dementia-friendly signage](#)
- [Age without limits age-positive icons](#)
- [RNIB tips for accessible signage and wayfinding](#)
- [Sign Design Guide+](#)
- [PAS 6463 Design for the Mind](#)
- [BS EN ISO 7010 Safety signs](#)
- [BS8300 Design of an accessible and inclusive built environment](#)

# Wayfinding and Signage

No.	Design considerations	Y/N	Issues and actions notes
<b>1 Intuitive layout</b>			
1.1	Is the layout and location of key facilities (such as entrances, reception, choice of lift/stair/ramp, landmarks, personalised features) easily identifiable, predictable, intuitive and equitable?		
<b>2 Key destinations and information</b>			
2.1	Does the signage and wayfinding direct people to key destinations like toilets, hospitals, parks, community centres, town halls, etc?		
2.2	Is key, relevant information provided such as bus schedules, opening times, etc?		
2.3	Are street names easy to find?		
<b>3 Consistent and regular</b>			
3.1	Is the signage style consistent and provided at key decision points, intersections, and regular intervals to give people confidence they are on track?		
<b>4 Multiple formats</b>			
4.1	Is information and wayfinding provided in multiple formats so that it is accessible to people with sensory requirements, according to the principle of at least two senses: audible and/or tactile and visual?		
4.2	Is multi-sensory information provided where possible?		
<b>5 Visual communication</b>			
5.1	Is the signage information clear, not shiny, in plain font, and a large enough text/symbol size based on viewing distance?		
5.2	Is there visual and tonal contrast against the background, including retail fronts, so information stands out from its surrounds?		
5.3	Is there good lighting to avoid excessive reflections, glare, and shadowing on the signage?		

No.	Design considerations	Y/N	Issues and actions notes
<b>6 Graphic communication</b>			
6.1	Are graphic signs, maps, and pictograms provided to complement text and help people whose first language is not English?		
6.2	Are maps/information/directories that require a closer look provided at an accessible height?		
<b>7 Tactile communication</b>			
7.1	Is tactile communication provided such as embossed signage, tactile maps, Braille signage, changes in floor level and/or surface, tapping rails?		
<b>8 Audible communication and sounds</b>			
8.1	Are audible features implemented such as talking signs and simple announcement systems that provide audio descriptive wayfinding information?		
8.2	Do acoustics support clear interpretation of sound and speech?		
8.3	Are assistive listening systems provided such as induction hearing loop systems?		
<b>9 Non-ageist graphics and language</b>			
9.1	Any graphics and language used should not include any references that proliferate negative ageist stereotypes. Does the wayfinding and signage use age-positive graphics and language where possible?		
<b>10 Maintenance</b>			
10.1	Is the signage and wayfinding regularly maintained and updated to be legible and accurate? Is outdated signage removed? Is temporary signage located so as not to cause obstruction or clutter?		
10.2	Is there anything else related to wayfinding and signage that needs to be added to a management and maintenance plan?		