



DESIGN & DIGNITY

Guidelines for hospital Family Rooms



**Excerpt from the Design & Dignity Stylebook
July 2014**



Family Rooms

Design & Dignity Guidelines for Family Rooms

These guidelines were developed by the Irish Hospice Foundation and have been adopted by the HSE for all new hospital building and refurbishment projects.



Purpose of Family Rooms within Acute Areas

Carefully designed family rooms enable staff to support patient and families in a respectful and sensitive manner and offer families a quiet, private space in the midst of the busy ward/clinical care area.

It is not appropriate for families of patients at end of life to sit in corridors or an open plan waiting area or for bad news to be broken in public spaces.

All ward and clinical areas supporting patients at end of life should have a dedicated family room.

Family rooms should provide:

1. A dedicated and private space for patients and families
2. Overnight accommodation within the ward where a family member could rest overnight or for a couple of hours if their relative is dying.
3. A kitchenette area including a kettle, fridge, toaster and microwave

Location

The family room should be located within the ward itself or as close to the ward as possible. Toilets for relatives should be provided on or near each ward.

Signage

- The ward family rooms should be clearly signposted
- The entrance / corridor to the family room should be clearly sign posted
- Suitable vacant/ engaged signage should be used at the doors to the rooms
- It is not appropriate to use the end-of-life symbol to identify family rooms within a ward area.

Aesthetic, Physical and Sensory Environment

- The room should feel homelike and calm
- Finishes should be carefully chosen to soften the acoustic of the room
- Finishes should be of high quality and durable but have a non-clinical, domestic feel
- Art-work and decorative wall finishes are a vital addition to the room and should be carefully considered to ensure they keep in line with the style of the room
- Each family room should have an unique beautiful feature as a focal point to the room
- Nature themes and plants should be carefully considered

Guidelines for Family Rooms

Family Room

- **Size:** Family rooms need to be large enough to enable family meetings and accommodate a minimum of 8 people seated at any one time
- The room should be easily accessible by wheelchair users
- A storage area for bedding and extra chairs should be designed within the room
- The room should have a toilet and a shower for relatives staying overnight
- A refreshment basket of toothbrush, toothpaste and towels should be available
- Rooms should have natural light and access to fresh air and have pleasant views to the outside
- To distinguish or 'separate' the room from the remainder of the ward the furniture and furnishings selected should be 'different' from the clinical nature of the rest of the ward furniture
- Sofas should be used where possible
- A high quality easily adaptable sofa bed should also be available
- A small kitchenette should be provided within the room for preparing light meals or hot drinks and include a sink with drinkable water, a kettle, a fridge, a toaster and a microwave.
- There should not be a charge for using these refreshment facilities
- Blinds should be installed
- TV and reading material should be available
- Flooring - colours and finishes should be familiar looking and acoustics should be taken into consideration
- Family room should be accessible for people with physical and cognitive impairments

Lighting:

- The lighting should help to create a calm and soothing atmosphere
- Lighting should be controllable from within the room (i.e. dimmers). High quality fixtures, such as stainless steel light switches, should be considered

Doors:

- Doors and ironmongery should be of high quality
- Glass vision panels in doors, if required, should be fitted with controllable blinds or privacy glass.

Artwork

- Artwork can have a calming and stress reducing affect if correctly chosen
- An evidence based approach to artwork selection should be followed
- Nature art such as serene nature scenes and landscapes, photography, glass art and sculpture should be considered.
- Abstract, surreal or ambiguous art should be avoided.

Room Names

- Careful consideration should be given to the naming of the rooms
- Agreement should be reached among staff
- Names with religious connotations should be avoided to avoid upset for people of different faiths or beliefs
- Terms such the 'breaking bad news room' should be avoided at all times

Appendix: Family Room Assessment Tool

This tool is designed to assist hospitals to assess the standard of family rooms in line with the Design & Dignity Guidelines. **These Guidelines have been adopted by the HSE for all new building and refurbishment projects.**

Name of ward	
Speciality	
No of patient beds	
No of single rooms	

Design & Dignity Criteria	Weighted score	Assessment score	Comments
There is a family room available	1		
Family room is located within the ward itself or as close to the ward as possible	1		
Family room is clearly signposted	1		
Suitable vacant/engaged signage is used at the door to the room	1		
Family room can accommodate 8 people comfortably	3		
Family room has sofa bed/sleepover facilities	3		
Family room has kitchenette including kettle, fridge, toaster, microwave	3		
Room maintains privacy	2		
TV is available	1		
Room contains high quality furniture (including sofas) in good condition	3		
Family room contains suitable art-work which enhances the environment	3		
Lighting fixtures are controllable	1		
Family room has access to a toilet and shower	1		
Family room has access to natural light	2		
Family room is accessible to patients & families at all times	1		
Family room is painted / decorated which makes it warm and welcoming	3		
Total	30		

Summary of assessment	
Overall Score (out of 30)	
Summary of shortfalls	



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