



Age Friendly Seating

Seating is a really important component of Age Friendly communities. Appropriate seating supports people of all ages and abilities to access their local community. Everyone appreciates an opportunity to rest, and this is particularly true for older people and people with certain impairments, whether they are physical, cognitive or sensory.

“The availability of seating areas is generally viewed as a necessary urban feature for older people: it is difficult for many older people to walk around their local area without somewhere to rest.”

World Health Organisation, Age Friendly World

If two or more seats are being provided in an open space setting, arm rests along one of the seats is advisable, as this support helps people to push themselves up from the seat.

If a rubbish bin is being provided, it should be located away from the seat in case of wasps or odour from the bin.

What is Age Friendly Seating

- Considerations for Age Friendly seating include both the specifications for the seat in terms of height and platform, and also the location of the seating.
- Arms rests and backrests on seats facilitate older people and those with reduced mobility to stand and sit.
- Perching seats with a height of 500 to 750mm are easier for some people to use and may be provided as an alternative in some locations.
- Rest points are needed along walking route, for example, between residential areas, shops and services. They are especially important if people are required to wait or queue for buses or taxis.



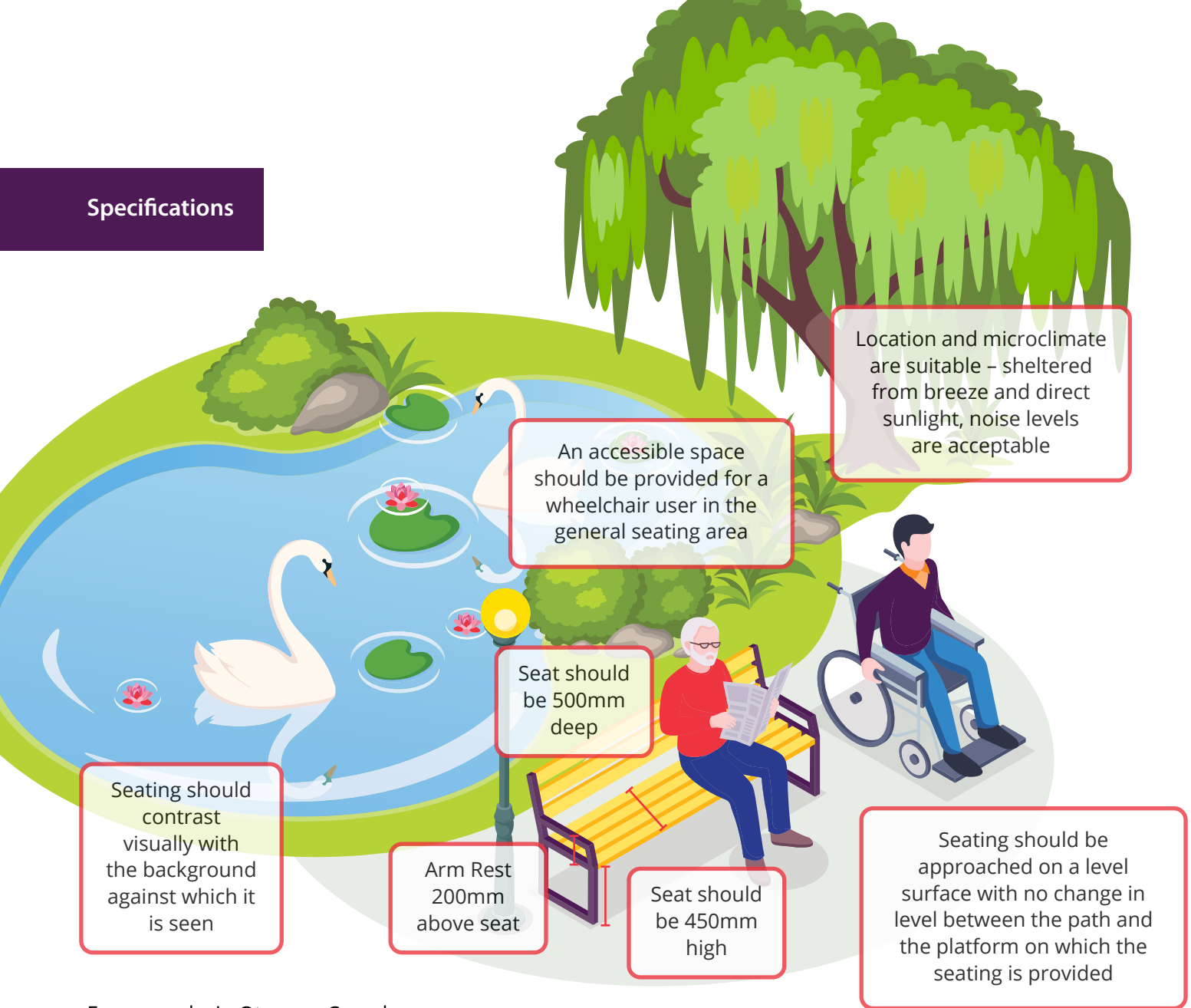
comhairle chontae na mí
meath county council

Checklist Key recommendations for Age Friendly public seating:

Technical Aspects (Please tick)

- Public seating is provided regularly particularly in areas with heavy footfall
- Seats are at least **450mm high** and a recommended **500mm wide**.
- Seating is provided at the top and bottom on an incline to facilitate rest periods
- Seating should contrast visually with the background against which it is seen
- Seats have arm rests and backrests
- Seating should be approached on a level surface with no change in level between the path and the platform on which the seating is provided
- An accessible space should be provided for a wheelchair user in the general seating area
- Location and microclimate are suitable – sheltered from breeze and direct sunlight, noise levels are acceptable

Specifications



For example, in Ottawa, Canada:

“In order to determine the most suitable locations for benches within these areas, the Infrastructure Services Department mapped amenities such as retirement and long term care residences, hospitals, shopping malls/grocery stores, and parks...placing a bench mid-way between a retirement residence and a shopping mall was considered an optimal choice of location. A list of potential bench locations was then validated with a focus group of older adults.”

References

Building for Everyone: External environment and approach 1

Age Friendly Athboy

World Report on Ageing and Health

Global Age-friendly Cities: A Guide

