



## Putting dementia care at the heart of design

Western Health and Social Care Services – Waterside Hospital

### The challenge

A dementia design audit was carried out on the dementia ward in Waterside Hospital and a number of areas were identified as problematic.

Patients found it difficult to understand and navigate the ward which affected their functioning, behavior and independence. Ward staff reported that the physical environment was contributing to patients' confusion and agitation. Incidents of aggression were regularly recorded on DATIX (incident reporting system).

Patients also had limited access to therapeutic interventions. This was affecting their recovery, rehabilitation and timely discharge from hospital. This meant that length of stays were significant.

### What was done

Older People's Mental Health Services drew up a business case and capital funding was secured for the refurbishment of the dementia ward and the construction of a therapeutic hub. The following action was taken:

- A steering group was set up in September 2013 comprising the architect, trust estates department, management and ward staff.
- A dementia design audit was conducted to identify areas needing improvement and best practice for dementia design.
- The ward and the therapeutic hub were designed in line with best practice in dementia design with sufficient rooms to provide a range of therapeutic interventions.

Work began in December 2013 and completed in June 2014. The official opening took place on 1 October 2014.

The ward has numerous bedrooms, a living room area, dining room and kitchen. The therapeutic hub has an activity and a therapy room, relaxation room, clinic room, a resource library and an external therapeutic garden and courtyard. Programmes for patients and carers living in the

community are also provided in the therapeutic hub.

Hub staff include an occupational therapist, nurse and nursing assistant.

## Results

The Western Health and Social Care Trust now has a modern purpose built, dementia ward and therapeutic hub in Waterside Hospital.

The environment is much more dementia friendly and provides more opportunities for therapeutic interventions, helping to improve patient experience and enhance care.