



ADULT THERAPY DEPARTMENT REDEVELOPMENT EVALUATION SUMMARY

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The evaluation in numbers:

18

staff surveys completed

30

patients interviewed

15

Light level measurements

94%

of staff said the look and feel of the new department was either better or much better than the old

95%

of staff agreed that the new artwork improved the look and feel of the department

324%

increase in light levels in the new waiting area compared to old

24%

increase in people rating the space as very good via a feedback terminal



The challenge

2024 saw the start of a project to redevelop and expand the hospital's Day Surgery Unit, a busy department that previously treated around 7,000 patients a year. This redevelopment was a response to the urgent need to expand surgical capacity, to cut waiting times for patients and offer flexibility and sustainability to meet future growth and changes in service demand.

To create the additional space needed for this expansion, the adjoining Adult Therapy Department, which hosts a range of outpatient services delivered by 50-60 staff members, was required to move from the ground floor of the building to a new space on the lower-ground floor.

The new space presented challenges for staff experience, including a lack of access to natural light and fresh air. The mitigation of these concerns was essential for the continued engagement of the clinical team, and to ensure a smooth transition to the new environment.

The project

Through weekly meetings across six months, the CW+ Arts Team was able to consult with staff on some of these environmental challenges, addressing concerns through the introduction of aesthetic elements including bespoke ceiling lightboxes and new artwork. These consultations resulted in new art and photography commissions for the space, by Clare Halifax and Lily Bertrand-Webb respectively, enabled by over £75k of CW+ support.

The results

To understand the impact of this project, CW+ undertook an evaluation that included a staff survey, short patient interviews, responses to a 'smiley face' feedback terminal, and measurements of light levels. These results were presented back to a group of staff members from the department in a participatory analysis session, in which they were invited to respond to the data and give further insights.

The environment overall

Despite the challenges outlined above, the look and feel of the new space was rated positively by both staff and patients. **94% of staff survey respondents rated the quality of the new space as good or very good**, and the same number said **the look and feel of the new department was either better or much better than the old**. Following the project, there was **an increase of 24% in those rating the space as very good** on the feedback terminal, as shown below. Patient comments included that the new department felt **brighter** and **more positive**, while one staff member commented that the space was a 'nicer environment to wait in, and be treated in'.



					
Before	18%	4%	5%	14%	59%
After	3%	1%	4%	10%	83%

Staff were more likely to describe the space as feeling **professional** and **modern**, while patients most often mentioned the impression of cleanliness and tidiness.

'It's clean, it's bright, it's light, it's welcoming.' Patient (post-refurbishment)

'It is up to date, colour coordinated and feels clean and smart.' Member of staff (post-refurbishment)

The emphasis of staff on the professional look of the space suggests they see the space as representing them and their work, with some mentioning taking pride in bringing patients to the new space.

'I feel proud to bring patients into the department because it looks clean and nice.' Member of staff (post-refurbishment)

'I feel proud of the space whereas before the space looked tired.' Member of staff (post-refurbishment)

Connection to the outside world

One of the defining features of this project was the move from a ground-floor space to a lower-ground-floor space, reducing access to exterior windows and natural light. An objective of the artwork and lightbox design was to mitigate against the feeling of being underground by providing a link to the outside world, and several patients commented that this was effective.

'The old space felt like a basement, even though it was on the ground floor. This feels like the ground floor, even though it's in the basement!' Patient (post-refurbishment)

Several patients commented that the lightboxes were effective in giving the impression of looking at the sky, and that this created a natural and relaxing feel to the space. About the new artwork, one staff member wrote: 'Clare Halifax took our brief and provided exceptional pieces of art – I love that they connect with areas around that we can all recognise.'



Improved light

A common theme from both patients and staff was that the new environment felt brighter. One patient described how the new environment felt '**less dark and dingy**', while another said the new space was refreshing as 'you expect hospitals to be dark and gloomy'. Staff comments included how patients 'like the **cheerful environment** that is bright'. This is a significant outcome given the move of the department to the lower-ground floor.

Light level measurements taken before and after the move to the new department show that brightness has increased in most areas – in particular in the waiting area, which saw an **increase of over 300%**. In the participatory analysis meeting, staff members also reflected how the tone and colour of the light had improved, and how they felt the light was now **less fatiguing** than in the old space. They also commented that individual colleagues each had their own preferences for lighting levels, and that individualised control over the lighting has given an **enhanced sense of personalisation** and control to their working spaces.

Artwork and lightboxes

There were many reflections on the new artwork and lightboxes that are situated throughout the new department, and these were overwhelmingly positive. One staff survey respondent described the artwork as '**transformational**', while another said of the lightboxes, 'sometimes I just gaze at them and **they bring joy**'. Patients described them as '**relaxing**' and '**beautiful**', adding colour and a sense of nature to the space. One patient described how they listened to calming music while looking at them to create **a sense of peace**.

The impact

Of the 30 patients that were interviewed, 10 specifically mentioned observing a positive impact from the change in environment. Several described the space as '**comforting**' or '**peaceful**', while another said that in comparison to the old space it was now '**more uplifting, less depressing**'. A particularly interesting insight from one patient was how the change had given them a '**more positive mindset**' for their rehab sessions.



Before and after: entrance corridor



Before and after: therapy gym





More broadly, many patients described the importance of high-quality built environments in hospitals. Of particular note was a suggestion from some that environments could have an impact on their motivation to attend an appointment:

'If it wasn't as nice, you might not want to come.' Patient (post-refurbishment)

'If it's grimy and like a dungeon, I'm not coming!' Patient (post-refurbishment)

Patients also commented on the impact that environments could have on wellbeing, and the importance of creating spaces that are peaceful and controlled.

'Even if you can see what is going on for someone physically, you don't know what's going on mentally, so it's important to create an ambience that is comfortable.' Patient (post-refurbishment)

'It helps with your recovery and your mindset.' Patient (post-refurbishment)

These themes were also echoed by some comments from the staff survey:

'The design and environment set the expectations and tone of therapist-patient interactions. Because the tone is professional and friendly, patients can be more relaxed in therapy sessions. Not just relaxed for the therapy, but also relaxed in the knowledge that they are getting top-notch care.' Member of staff (post-refurbishment)

'How a person feels in a space contributes to their mood, and thus their perception of any care received.' Member of staff (post-refurbishment)

One staff member wrote in a survey response that the lightboxes may have helped to relax a patient who hyperventilated, and in the participatory analysis meeting one clinician commented that their patients had found the lightboxes helpful during uncomfortable treatments. Staff also reported a range of positive impacts on their own wellbeing following the change in their working environment, including improved mental wellbeing and job satisfaction:

'More space and decoration helps with mental health.' Member of staff (post-refurbishment)

'I feel my room space has had a very positive effect and I can work more efficiently.' Member of staff (post-refurbishment)

'Working clinically feels calmer and more conducive to the work I undertake.' Member of staff (post-refurbishment)

'I feel more appreciated as a clinician because someone cared enough to make the environment look nice.' Member of staff (post-refurbishment)



Conclusion

The move and redevelopment of the Adult Therapies Centre at Chelsea and Westminster Hospital have resulted in a space that feels professional, clean and welcoming, and the potential challenges of moving to the lower-ground floor have been mitigated by the addition of newly commissioned artwork and ceiling lightboxes. The Arts Team at CW+ played an important part in this, not only with funding and coordinating the production of the new artwork commissions, but also by supporting staff through consultation.

Positive impacts of the new environment reported by staff included feeling more appreciated, feeling calmer and working more efficiently. Furthermore, some patients commented on the impact of the environment on mental wellbeing and their motivation to attend appointments. This suggests that the importance of environmental enhancements in addressing major challenges across the NHS should not be underestimated, and that dedicated arts teams are well placed to deliver these.

Since the Adult Therapy Department project finished, the staff have remained engaged with CW+, fundraising over £1,500 for the charity through bake sales and participation in the Fulham 10k run.

