

Dementia Friendly Capital Fund and was awarded £100,000. In August 2013 staff approached the Veolia North Thames Trust, which provided an additional £120,000, enabling the vision to take shape.

And, on 13 January this year, a turf-cutting ceremony was held to start the construction of a new dementia-friendly garden at Thurrock Community Hospital

The purpose-built, therapeutic, eco-friendly garden space has been designed specifically for people with dementia. It incorporates circular paths with safety surfaces and seating areas, all surrounded by secure fencing with flowers and shrubs planted to attract wildlife. The garden provides a variety of experiences for visitors, patients and carers including a multisensory garden, a gardening area for those wishing to participate, the Four Seasons Cabin for meetings and refreshments, and a handstand where entertainment can be staged.

Dee Susans, ward manager, said: "The aim is to provide a stimulating, interesting and secure garden so that anyone in the area can bring a relative or friend suffering from dementia to enjoy the garden and know that they will be completely safe."

The judges added: "The redesign of the garden has involved the local community as well as people with dementia and their carers, all of whom will be able to benefit from the rejuvenated space. The thoughtfully-designed space will encourage walking and gardening activities as well as providing sheltered seating spaces."

★ **The Hillingdon Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust for Beaconsfield East Ward sensory garden**

Described by the judges as 'an excellent example of innovation in garden design within an acute hospital environment', the fragrant and vibrant new sensory garden forms the centrepiece of the



dementia-friendly refurbishment of Beaconsfield East Ward at Hillingdon Hospital.

Using a grant from the Department of Health's Dementia Friendly Capital Fund, the focus for the pilot scheme was to create an environment that enhances the patient and carer experience through the provision of quiet and stimulating spaces inside and outside the ward.

Each area was designed to promote a sense of wellbeing, encouraging dignity and familiarity, while observing independence and security. The reconfiguration enabled the ward team to continue to specialise in rehabilitation and the garden has opened up a wealth of new therapy and nurturing opportunities with its looped pathway, sheltered seating areas, planters, and large terrace.

During the consultation process with staff, service users and their families, the last bed bay and side room of the ward were identified as a 'tender care' area. This instigated a palliative care approach for the design of the last side room with the addition of a private courtyard garden, separate from the main garden, where patients and loved ones can enjoy

some fresh air in privacy.

The main garden itself is split across two levels - the upper terrace and the lower garden - which are connected via a wide ramp and staircase. Views out to the landscape are now considered to be an essential part of a healthy holistic environment and upon arrival on the ward there are direct sightlines through to the space. The bed bays and dayroom also have glazed doors with lowered thresholds and open directly onto the upper terrace.

A sheltered seating area has been created under a sail-like structure outside the day room on the upper terrace while planters line the bed bay openings to add interest to the views from patients' beds.

Flowering and espalier fruit trees have been incorporated, together with traditional garden plants and raised beds intended for therapeutic use.

Designed for low maintenance and including an irrigation system, the garden is lit at night via daylight sensors, while the decorative open-topped fence provides safe containment within sight of the nursing staff.

The judges said: "The design has been specifically tailored to the needs of patients with dementia and cognitive problems and their visitors. We particularly liked the inclusion of a private garden for palliative care patients."

**ALSO CONSIDERED**

- ★ **York Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust for its cancer care garden and walkway**
- ★ **Fira Landscape for Kirkwood Hospice garden**
- ★ **Manchester Mental Health and Social Care Trust sensory gardens for dementia patients**

South Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust for Cherry Tree Garden, Thurrock Community Hospital, left; The Hillingdon Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust for Beaconsfield East Ward sensory garden, top



**Best Internal Environment**

This award recognises an outstanding therapeutic space that enhances the overall experience of patients, staff and visitors through an effective approach to interior design

**WINNER**

★ **The Hillingdon Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Beaconsfield East Ward**

A fusion of colour, art, sensory features and new social spaces distinguish the transformation of Beaconsfield East Ward at Hillingdon Hospital.

The 20-bed rehabilitation ward is aimed at older people, some of whom may have dementia or other forms of cognitive impairment.

Using a grant received from Department of Health's Dementia Friendly Capital Fund, the focus for the pilot scheme was to create a dementia-friendly environment that enhances the patient and carer experience through the provision of quiet and stimulating spaces both inside and outside the ward.

Refurbished areas include the bed bays, single rooms, an assisted shower room, staff base, reception, sensory room, occupational therapy kitchen and dayroom, all designed to complement the new sensory garden with its looped pathway and shaded seating areas.

There is new lighting for visual acuity, anti-slip cushioned flooring to prevent falls, clear pictogram signage, and co-ordinated furnishings.

Visitors are met by a front-of-house receptionist and there is an open-plan day/dining room and therapy kitchen. These areas have created new rehabilitation opportunities for social dining, breakfast clubs, group exercise classes, and sing-a-longs.

From the reception, visitors can clearly identify the staff base with its double-height, brightly-lit artwork and warm red colour theme.

The sensory room is tailored to suit older adults with comfortable seating, fibre optic strings and multimedia equipment to provide visual and auditory stimulation. It also provides a safe, non-clinical venue where patients and carers can meet with clinical teams and local support groups.

With views out to the garden, each four-bed bay and single room has its own feature colour - green, purple, magenta or blue - which is emphasised by co-ordinated furnishings. The bed bay colours are sequenced to ensure the middle bays can suit either male or female patients depending on the needs



The Hillingdon Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Beaconsfield East Ward, above and top

The well-spaced four bed bays now open out to the garden with lowered thresholds to aid access.

The judges said: "This is an exemplar; a very comprehensive ward refurbishment to meet the needs of frail elderly people and those with dementia. We particularly liked the use of colour and art to help with wayfinding, the provision of social space for patients and relatives, and the way the design has thoughtfully connected the internal and external environments."

**HIGHLY COMMENDED**

★ **Kier Group for the Teenage Cancer Trust, Southampton General Hospital**

"The enthusiastic involvement of young



Kier Group for the Teenage Cancer Trust, Southampton General Hospital