

Humber NHS Foundation Trust

An outdated clinic building is transformed into a comfortable drop-in facility with a welcoming waiting area furnished with backlit glass artworks and carpet especially designed to aid wayfinding

“Everyone who enters the building comments on how nice the environment is.”

Clinical psychologist

“Having the opportunity to speak at local schools and events felt like we were really going to make a difference for people with dementia. I have really enjoyed the fundraising, and I have been moved by the kindness and generosity of local people.”

Team leader

“My involvement has given me a voice to change things for people with dementia and their carers.”

Staff nurse

The Hull Memory Clinic is based in an old community day hospital, located in a residential road of Victorian houses now primarily occupied by students and a transient population. The exterior of the building was foreboding, with locked metal bars over the windows and barbed wire on the guttering. It was not a surprise to staff that many patients who were referred for memory assessment chose not to visit the clinic, and it was very difficult to recruit reception staff.

The team came up with an idea to transform the traditional internal environment by redesigning the waiting area and large central space, to make a more comfortable drop-in facility. The area would offer easy access to multimedia information on dementia care as well as showcasing modern technologies that can support people with memory-related problems. The initial consultation focused on asking patients and relatives what they would like to see in the space. The team then drew up plans and carried out further consultation, which led to some adaptations of the draft designs.

Today, the dark, cluttered entrance and reception have been removed, and people are now greeted with a comfortable, spacious waiting area with clear views of a large, open reception desk. This allows the receptionist to see the entrance as well as the larger seating area and offers reassurance to service users while they are waiting.

The main area has been transformed using a colour palate of browns and reds. The lighting has been improved, and the design incorporates the building's structural features such as the pillars and high windows, to make them feel part of the whole. Along one wall sit a series of bespoke 'pods'. When they are closed, they look like a row of cupboards. But they open to reveal four resources: information on assistive technologies; internet access for patients and relatives to look up information; a TV screen for training and presentations; and a drinks machine.

A new carpet helps ensure intuitive wayfinding and delineates the seating area, where chairs of different heights have been placed in small clusters so that patients and visitors can select a comfortable spot.

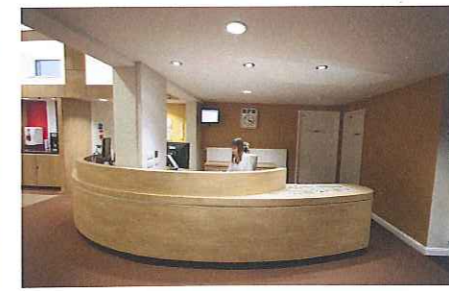
After the initial consultations, patients became involved in producing stunning glass artworks for the scheme, which are used in backlit panels between the pods and along internal windows on the opposite wall. Patients, carers and staff are continuing to contribute to a changing exhibition of artworks in a new gallery area.

The clinic rooms have also been improved, using accent colours and artworks, and the central space can also be used by community groups for meetings and training. For the first time, the service has successfully recruited permanent reception staff, and patient attendance has improved.

The team was extremely proactive in engaging the public, local groups and schools in the scheme, through a launch event, newspaper articles, local radio and fundraising activities. A result of the project, friends and relatives have formed a charity to support the ongoing work of the Memory Clinic.



Before



“One of the biggest knock-on achievements has been the forming of the Friends of The Hull Memory Clinic.

The group will continue to give the users of the clinic a voice and ensure that the feeling of ownership will continue into the future.”

Carer

“Being part of the EHE project has inspired me to become active in helping families who are affected by dementia.

Without my involvement in the EHE programme, and the support of the staff, I am sure these opportunities would not have occurred to me or that I would have had the confidence to pursue them.”

Carer