

Dementia ward refurbishments

Danielle Wilde, the trust's dementia lead, explains that: "People with dementia need something different from a regular hospital ward. Our main priority is to diagnose and treat our patients. For a person with dementia, however, their main priority is about establishing where they are, who we are and what we are going to do. And so our main challenge is to build a world in which we can communicate with them and build a relationship.

With this in mind, the Royal Free Hospital's 10 North and 8 West wards have undergone extensive refurbishment work, designed to improve the care of our dementia patients. The imagery on the wards' walls will be used to stimulate memories and conversations and help patients, particularly those with dementia, to feel more relaxed during their stay on a busy acute hospital ward.

8 West ward has been decorated to transport patients and visitors to the seaside; a theme inspired by feedback from patients and relatives on the ward. Images of iconic British seaside towns line one side of the ward; beach huts signpost patient rooms and bays; and along another corridor, a reminiscent boardwalk mural has been created complete with an ice-cream van and gift shop. It also includes a theatre space for live performances by actors, musicians and poets. The "Royal Free Theatre" is the first in situ theatre space on an NHS ward and was opened in January 2019.

10 North ward has been decorated to transport patients and visitors back to Hampstead High Street in the 1970s. The corridor walls show headlines from the past and the ward is equipped with a post box, bus stop and a working hair salon, so patients can experience familiar settings during their recovery. The patient day room has been transformed into a living-dining room complete with a fireplace, dining tables and a TV playing hit films from the 60's and 70's.