



SPECIALIST APPROACH BLOSSOMS

AT WARRINGTON'S FORGET-ME-NOT
DEMENTIA UNIT

The UK's hospitals are admitting increasing numbers of elderly patients with dementia and the Government's £50 million dementia care pot recognises the urgent need to address this trend with specialist care and facilities.

Warrington Hospital began by forming a consultation group to aid design and specification of the Forget-Me-Not dementia unit. The group comprised patient/carer representatives, members of the estates team, clinical professionals and representatives from the Alzheimer's Society to ensure both practical and social considerations were incorporated.

Among the practical elements, the nurse call system was critical, ensuring not only that patients can call for prompt assistance but also that a degree of flexibility is built into the unit, as Lee Bushell from the hospital's Estates Capital Projects team explained:

"We had been upgrading the hospital to Courtney Thorne's 08 wireless nurse call system on a rolling programme of ward refurbishments since 2012, so we knew we could be



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confident it would be reliable. We also needed a system that was both flexible and scalable should we need to reconfigure or extend the unit in the future. The wireless system means we can make changes without any rewiring.

"Any hospital ward needs to use management information to monitor standards of care and plan staffing levels, but in a dementia unit that's particularly important because staff ratios need to be higher and patients often become disoriented and may complain that nurses have taken too long to respond. The data recorded by the Courtney Thorne system ensures we have accurate information about response rates, helping us reassure relatives of the standard of care."



courtney thorne
NURSE CALL SYSTEMS

Relaxing Environment

That standard of care is exceptionally high, thanks in no small part to the custom-designed dementia environment. Every element of the layout and decoration has been designed to reduce patient anxiety and disorientation while encouraging social interaction, independence and stimulation. Colour plays a pivotal role, with colour-coded doors and door frames to help patients identify different areas, such as toilets, and neutral-coloured doors to staff-only areas to deter patients from straying into these parts.



Wireless installation can be completed in just a few days

“Pictures are also a noticeable feature, with pictogram to aid wayfinding, a cartoon-style mural of the local area to help patients tap into long-term memory and a bus stop where they can sit and chat.”

Said Lee: “We found that dementia patients often ‘want to go home’ and the bus stop provides an area where they can go and sit to ‘wait for the bus’. Any member of staff who sees a patient sitting alone at the bus stop will chat to them and reassure them, and many patients like to use it as a social area too. Other social areas include the dining room and a quiet room where an ‘old style’ TV screen shows images of local scenes from the 1950s and 1960s.

“Our approach has been to prioritise comfort, safety and high standards of care in an environment that helps patients to feel at home by engaging with their long-term, functioning memory while providing strategies for addressing their lack of short-term recall.”

Dementia Unit Specifics

- Accommodates 17 patients
- One seven-bed bay
- Two five-bed bays
- Each bay served by its own nurses’ station
- Each station has a dedicated touchscreen to display and monitor calls from patient beds, dining and social areas on the unit and the sensory garden
- Real-time management information, enabling the hospital’s team to track call patterns and analyse response rates



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