

Personalised apartment

Reporters

Donna Fleming and Debbie Nutt at [Lighthouse Healthcare](#) on 19 November 2014.

What do you do*?

We are creating personalised living spaces for individuals who need a bespoke environment. For one person, this includes the careful use of protective padding.

What is excellent about it?

One individual used to live in a shared apartment where there were sometimes 60 self injurious and assaultative incidents every month. A thorough behaviour assessment and incident analysis has helped us design a single-person's apartment that is tailored to their needs. The design features were shaped by input from the previous clinical team, their family and the commissioner.

The living space includes an area with no external noise, a simple floor plan, large rooms with big, low windows and rural views, some fixed and some weighted furniture and homely furnishings. The specific spaces that were used to self harm were identified, such as a specific section of wall. This has been exactly measured and found to cover a specific section of wall only, between standing height and sitting height, and it is these areas where sections of padding have been applied, so ensuring safety whilst maximising homely features. The remainder of the wall, and other features, such as the corner of the table where there has been no previous risk, were assessed as not needing protection.

This has dramatically reduced the amount of dangerous incidents and increased the person's social interaction and engagement in chosen activities. She seems much happier.

Even better next time?

Creating a bespoke physical environment was matched with careful and comprehensive staff support, to enable the staff to adopt person-centred positive approaches.

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The organisation has made a significant investment in both the physical environment and in terms of providing staff training and support. The Intensive Progression Programme involves all members of the multidisciplinary team and daily attention to detail, including debriefing, incident review, implementation of changes that need to be made and documentation, so that the support plan is constantly updated. Managers track changes over time, pressure on the staff team, impact on the rest of the service and wider implications.

The organisation has the commitment, expertise and resources to provide positive ways to support people with significant challenges.

Our commitment to the principle of the least restrictive environment means that we aim to remove the sections of protective padding inch by inch, as soon as the ongoing assessment suggests that this may be possible. The apartment stands alone, so we hope to recategorise the unit in the future from 'hospital' to either a registered care home for one person or a Supported Living situation.

We have other bespoke apartments and support packages created for complex individuals with plans to create more bespoke apartments in the future.

** [NDTi](#) was commissioned to deliver a staff development programme promoting a more personalised and inclusive approach for those living and working in locked rehabilitation services in the English East Midlands. While the current inspection routine has a focus on risk prevention, our job is to focus on sharing positive practice and innovation. Peter Bates led the programme and wrote up these stories.*

The Excellence Programme is for independent and voluntary sector providers of locked residential rehabilitation services for people with mental health issues or learning disabilities living in the East Midlands. It has delivered:

- *A series of seminars for key staff and people using services to promote a more personalised and inclusive approach*
- *A shared sense of what excellent services look like, captured in an [Excellence Framework](#) document.*
- *Learning exchange visits between members which lead to individual action plans for each service*
- *Excellence stories that capture and share ideas for service improvement.*

These case studies have arisen from members of the Excellence programme and NDTi has not independently verified what we have been told. Some are radical and ambitious approaches that transform the whole service, while others consist of small steps that may not seem especially exciting to other readers, but make a difference to one person. Some readers might even question whether progress is being made

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at all! The overall purpose is to stimulate reflection and celebration for every step forward, whether large or small.