

Abstract submission to the European Healthcare Design Conference 2020

Title The influence of design on wellbeing within the Prince and Princess of Wales Hospice
Category Supporting healthcare workforce resilience and mental health
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Abstract The design of the built environment has been shown to have significant impact throughout all stages of our lifetimes, this has been widely acknowledged in relationship to clinical healthcare architecture but is now also being explored in regard to end of life care. Given the reality of deteriorating health, caring responsibilities, death or bereavement, palliative care can offer specialised attention and support. An environment incorporating specific features can facilitate this by positively contributing to wellbeing; offering independence, dignity, sense of purpose, belonging and social connection.

The central aim of this project is to determine the key benefits to the quality of life as experienced by patients, staff and families in a palliative care environment through the provision of an enhanced care model delivered within an innovative architectural programme. The opportunity is given by the relocation of the Prince & Princess of Wales Hospice (PPWH) from their existing premises to a “new build” location in Glasgow. The envisaged methodology seeks to leverage the architectural procurement and delivery process to deliver new insights and new knowledge of the relationship between design intentions and operational outcomes.

The change in location from the urban inner city to a suburban green space provided opportunities for the hospice to explore its relationship with the natural environment. Biophilic theory suggests that we are intrinsically connected to the natural world and research has shown that this relationship makes a significant contribution to good physical and mental health. Initial research has concluded that the benefits of this philosophy are clearly evidenced within the PPWH, where each patient bedroom opens onto a garden area and all staff have access to open terraces. Externally the design ethos is continued with landscaped grounds offering different seasonal and climatic connections. This relationship with the outside world has proven to be especially important in a time where COVID-19 has disrupted our social connections and increased feelings of isolation.

This paper reports on how the building performance and occupant satisfaction was assessed through a variety of methods ranging from EBD, environmental conditions monitoring, questionnaires, interviews, focus groups and basic ethnography. The outcomes from the research aim to inform similar future projects and add new knowledge for the EBD of palliative care environments.