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Salisbury District Hospital

Setting the standard for dementia-friendly wards

Altro XpressLay™, Altro Wood Smooth™, Altro Whiterock Satins™, Altro Aquarius™, Altro Whiterock Digiclad™

Altro have developed product ranges and colours specifically designed for use with people who have dementia. This has come about through close co-operation with the University of Stirling's renowned Dementia Services Development Centre (DSDC), to gain a greater understanding of how the physical environment impacts on those with dementia.

Redlynch Ward at Salisbury District Hospital comprises two separate units, and having been in use for over 20 years, they were due for modernisation. Phase one of the project was to refurbish one of the units, and specifying the wall cladding and flooring to meet the variety of complex requirements was the task of the hospital's ArtCare design team, headed up by Lesley Meaker.

"Life for dementia patients can be frustrating, confusing and distressing," explained Lesley. "It was our aim to create an environment tailored to their needs – a truly dementia-friendly ward – one that would help to minimise the stresses that they suffer and make their lives more manageable.

"In refurbishing this first unit we also wanted to set a standard, a universal principle – a template – that we could replicate elsewhere in the knowledge that it is the best possible environment for mental healthcare.

"Floors must to be very safe underfoot – especially when wet – slip-resistant and sparkle-free, so as not to confuse people with dementia. Colours need to be neutral, with no patterns or ambiguous designs that can potentially upset patients, and finishes must be matt and muted. There also needs to be good contrast between floors and walls.

"But to make the space look less clinical and more welcoming we wanted to bring nature inside, by using natural-looking designs and products, wood effects, images of trees and flowers etc. And of course all the products need to be easy to clean and maintain long-term.



“There was a lot to think about in our product selection, but one thing we were sure of right from the start was that it had to be Altro. We have used their products very successfully for many years and we were confident that their superb product quality and choice would be perfect for this project.”

For the ward’s main corridor, Lesley and her team specified Altro XpressLay safety flooring.

“We chose Altro XpressLay because it was so quick to install, just a few hours, and this meant we didn’t have to close the other ward while the corridor was out of action,” said Lesley. Altro Whiterock Satins is a durable, grout-free, water-tight smooth wall cladding system designed for building environments required to meet strict hygiene standards.

Altro Aquarius has a non-sparkle finish and chipped / non-chipped variants ideal for dementia sufferers and the visually impaired.

“For dementia patients, bathrooms can be very confusing and dangerous areas, so it is essential that they are safe, clearly defined and easy to use,” said Lesley. “Using Altro Whiterock Satins for plain, non-reflective walls and Altro Aquarius for the floors – which is slip-resistant for both bare feet and shoes – we have wet rooms ideal for patients and staff.”

Lesley Meaker and her team chose Altro Whiterock Digiclad wall cladding to turn a single room on the ward into a communal living space.

Altro Wood Smooth flooring was specified for the ward’s main circulation area.

“Altro Wood Smooth enabled us to create a wood-effect flooring to add a natural, warm touch to the surroundings,” explained Lesley.

Lesley Meaker added: “We have had some fantastic feedback about the new unit. Patients have emailed us to say how amazing the environment is now, and VIPs and visitors have responded very positively. We are delighted with the results – we achieved exactly what we set out to do.

“Altro’s expertise in designing products for these specialist environments has given us the ability to create what we feel is the benchmark for future projects. We are now looking forward to using the same principles to modernise the second unit, and we are also hoping to refurbish a hospice with Altro products.”

All information is correct at the time of print and is subject to change without prior notice. Visit us at www.altro.co.uk for more information and updates.

For further information on Altro’s vast product range of integrated flooring and wall cladding systems:

☎ 01462 707604 ✉ enquiries@altro.com 🌐 www.altro.co.uk