

## How should a wellbeing centre look and feel?

*Keywords: wellbeing, environment, collaborative, environment design*

This research is a collaborative project between academia, the NHS, and professional designers. The Royal Free Hospital in London is developing an innovative new service provision to help patients, visitors, and staff address lifestyle related health issues, such as smoking, harmful alcohol consumption, and unhealthy weight. This service will be delivered from a self-contained space within the hospital's main entrance foyer. Existing research has determined the effect of environmental features on users' perceptions, outcomes, and experiences of healthcare environments (Devlin and Arneill, 2003, Phiri, 2006, Ulrich et al., 2008). However, being the first service of its kind to be launched within a busy acute care setting, specific design guidelines for the service provision of wellbeing centres did not exist. Furthermore, the physical design elements that would be important for this particular setting and population were unknown. Therefore research was required to establish "how should a wellbeing centre look and feel?" The academic research team designed and conducted a co-design process involving 53 Royal Free Trust members in focus group workshops. A range of activities including questionnaires, group discussions, and drawing and modelling ideas for the centre's layout allowed important design considerations to emerge. The data from the workshops was analysed using descriptive statistics, content and thematic analysis.

Six important design themes emerged from the research: Atmosphere; Initial points of contact; Waiting Experience; Health Assessment Areas; Spatial layout, size, structure; and Service. On average, privacy was very important (69%, n=16). Results from each of the themes were supplemented by existing evidence-based research (e.g. Dalke et al., 2004, Phiri, 2006) to produce design recommendations for the Wellbeing Centre. The professional designers interpreted

this research to produce user-led concept designs for the centre (Figure 1 and 2) which are now undergoing further user testing.



Figure 1: Proposed designs: Looking into the Centre from the Hospital foyer.

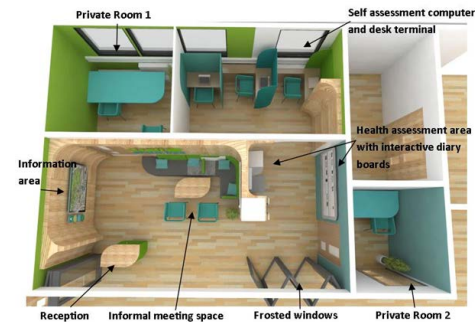


Figure 2: Proposed designs: Overhead plan of the Centre.

