

Herschel Prins Centre, Leicestershire



Seating from the new Knightsbridge Mental Health Furniture collection is playing a pivotal role in establishing a therapeutic environment within a pioneering mental health complex just opened in Leicestershire.

The Herschel Prins Centre is a specialist low-secure facility run by Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust, catering for the needs of people from Leicestershire and Rutland with a diversity of mental health needs. Adopting the Enhancing the Healing Environment philosophy, the centre has been furnished in line with an ethos of accessibility and homeliness, ensuring an ambience which encourages both respect and courtesy from patients and regular visits by their friends and families.

Spread over three floors, the new 18-bed unit - named after Professor Herschel Prins, who has specialised in the study of mentally disordered offender-patients for over fifty years - has tripled the Trust's provision for this patient category. Both men and women are cared for within facilities which include two dining rooms and several small lounges, plus a games room, a faith and reflection room, a gym and a TV lounge in addition to the bedrooms. Other amenities include a visiting room for children complemented by a smart reception area and supporting offices, staff rooms and nurse stations.

Throughout, members of the Knightsbridge Mental Health Furniture team have worked closely with the project team in developing colour and design stories which engender a positive and therapeutic response. Woodwork is a light shade of natural beech and fabrics coordinate with the artwork which adorns the walls of every room. Yet all the furniture retains its suitability for use in challenging mental health environments: within patient areas, for example, non-retractable screws have been specified to avoid their use in a self-harming context.

Herschel Prins Centre visitors are greeted by smart Melrose club

chairs and twin-seat settees in luxurious red hide upholstery, an elegance matched in the dining rooms by chairs from the Knightsbridge Elliot and Katrine collections in shades of cream and navy faux leather. In the family areas and faith room, a more informal atmosphere is enhanced by the curved profile and soft covers of Bugatti easy chairs and settees, whilst patients and visitors alike are tempted to linger in the lounges by the comfortable low-line Byron armchairs, where practical loose covers feature a diversity of designs.

Demonstrating the versatility of the Knightsbridge Mental Health Furniture portfolio, occasional seating is provided throughout the centre by Islay chairs in various configurations and in a range of waterproof washable soft covers: bedrooms feature Hamilton upright armless chairs in easy-clean vinyl, and a 'time-out' space for patients displaying exceptionally challenging behaviour incorporates Thorpe chairs to the Knightsbridge 'Extreme' specification.

Staff areas also reflect input from the Knightsbridge design team, with the company's Owen chairs co-ordinating with individual themes in clinical and administration sectors. Offices are equipped with Harris visitor seating, complemented by Nimbus armchairs in meeting rooms and in the staff room.

Commissioning Manager Clare Kozłowski is reported to be "...delighted with the support received from the Knightsbridge team in making the right choices to fit with the ethos of the Herschel Prins Centre."