

## Muckamore Abbey, Antrim



Durability, choice and aesthetic appeal were the key criteria involved when seating from the Knightsbridge Furniture Care portfolio was specified for a specialist assessment and treatment unit for people with learning disabilities in Northern Ireland.

Muckamore Abbey Hospital is sited just outside the county town of Antrim, and some 12 miles from Belfast city centre. Now operated by Belfast Health & Social Care Trust, the facility opened in the late 1950s and subsequent modernisation programmes have ensured that it remains at the forefront of innovation and service provision for people with learning disabilities in the area.

Included in the £8.9m first phase of the latest redevelopment programme is a new 35-bed admissions and assessment unit, providing acute provision for adults aged 19-70. Working with the scheme's Business Performance Manager Brendan Ingram and with the specialist multidisciplinary team, Knightsbridge Furniture was asked to select seating and tables which would support the philosophy of maintaining patient self-esteem and positive self-identity through aesthetic appeal whilst offering essential durability and product choice.

Throughout the single-story facility, emphasis has been placed on the need to appreciate the privacy and dignity of patients. Each bedroom has en-suite facilities, with the unit arranged in linked wings surrounded by landscaped areas to act as calm places of rest and leisure. Inside, all the bedrooms and quiet areas feature Knightsbridge Thorpe armchairs to a special 'Extreme' specification to cater for patients demonstrating challenging behaviour patterns, supported by examples of Kog, a range of

soft and supportive foam seating in bright cuboid and cylindrical formations. In the day rooms, Madison armchairs and settees are again to the Knightsbridge 'Extreme' specification, with their simple lines giving a comfortable and homely appearance, whilst the dining and activity areas feature versatile Tempo upright chairs partnered by sturdy Ascot tables.

The visitor and staff areas are also populated with furniture from the Knightsbridge Care portfolio. Guests are welcomed by Shelley armchairs and twin-seat settees, where a clean, modern design and inviting plump upholstery is enhanced by elegant feet in solid wood, whilst smart Nimbus multi-purpose armchairs and Owen high-back office chairs feature in the consulting suites. Easy armchairs and two-seater settees from the Knightsbridge Vienna collection are also in the staff quarters, with Delta stacking armchairs allowing effective use of space in the training rooms.

Through its thoughtful layout, furnishing and décor, enhanced by artwork created by the patients themselves, it is intended that the specialist Learning Disability unit within Muckamore Abbey Hospital will play a positive role in fostering a sense of ownership, belonging and achievement amongst the patients, thereby engendering a positive ethos and helping to facilitate clinically effective treatment and care.