

Hospital's hi-tech pharmacy opens

AFTER TWO years of intensive planning and construction work, the rebuilt aseptics unit at York Hospital opened in April 2010.

The aseptics unit is a suite of cleanrooms with highly filtered air and a 'sterile' environment, to exclude bacteria and viruses when complex injectable medicines are prepared.

It is operated by an expert team of specially trained and accredited staff from the hospital's pharmacy department, with support from medical physics technicians, and is accredited to national standards.

Every dose is custom made to meet the particular needs of an individual patient for whom standard products would not be entirely suitable.



Hugh Bayley MP takes a tour of the new aseptic pharmacy unit

The unit includes separate facilities for the preparation of cancer treatments, antibiotics, radiologicals, and gene therapies.

The purpose built gene therapies facility is believed to be the first in the region, and one of very few nationwide. It gives the York Hospitals Trust an edge in the implementation of these innovative treatments, which experts believe will in the future be able to cure conditions such as cystic fibrosis, which are caused by a defective gene.

This project represents a £3 million investment by the Trust, with support from the Department of Health's National Institute of Health Research.

One special feature is that there will be extra capacity for clinical trials. Often, enrolment in a clinical trial is the only way that a patient can gain access to the newest most effective therapies.

The team also hopes to be able to prepare injections for patients to self administer at home. This would allow some patients to have a shorter inpatient stay, and to complete their course of antibiotics in more comfort at home.

To mark its completion, Hugh Bayley MP visited the aseptic pharmacy for a tour conducted by pharmacy staff. Once the unit is fully operational, access will be limited to those who are scrubbed up and gowned in head-to-toe sterile clothing to maintain the controlled environment.

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Enhancing the healing environment

IN THE second part of our series illustrating beautiful spaces and quiet places within the hospital, City of York public governor Helen Mackman takes a look at The Nightingale Courtyard.

In the 19th century, Florence Nightingale was one of the first to recognise the importance of light, fresh air and beauty as a means of aiding recovery.



Above: The completed Nightingale Courtyard

Opened by the NHS's Chief Nursing Officer in November 2005, it was a unique scheme that set a standard for future developments within the hospital. Up until 2005, the courtyard area that could be seen from the main corridor near the chapel, between Junctions 4 and 5, didn't allow access to the public and was a bare, sterile space.

With some funding, staff development and inspiration from the King's Fund, a nurse-led project was launched in 2003 to open this area to the public and create a peaceful space to sit in or to gaze down at from the surrounding offices and wards. A local landscape design and construction company was awarded a contract to produce the scheme.

Automatic doors were installed, two large shelters constructed to allow the garden to be used in all weathers and the planting scheme and installation of art work was agreed by the nurse-led team after much research and specialist advice. Patients, volunteers and staff worked with a local poet to agree on the use of words to enhance the space and inspire those who would use the garden. The result of this was 12 different inscriptions worked into the paving stones: "fields, wren, shade, moss, sky ...", we invite you to visit the garden and find the rest.

At night time, the ends of the branches on a burnished steel tree at the centre are illuminated by tiny lights and the mosaic of glass and ceramic tiles surrounding the tree introduces colourful patterning that can be seen from above as well as by visitors to the garden.

..dates for your diary...dates for your diary...dates for your diary...

9 June 2010 (16:00-18:00)

Council of Governors: public meeting
York Hospital Social Club, White Cross Road

Open event and Annual General Meeting
York Hospital

17 June 2010 (13:00-16:30)

Members' event: cancer services (invite only)
Postgraduate lecture theatre, York Hospital

22 September 2010 (12:30-13:30)

YorkTalk presentation: The role of the matron
Postgraduate lecture theatre, York Hospital

23 June 2010 (12:30-13:30)

YorkTalk presentation: Nutrition
Postgraduate lecture theatre, York Hospital

13 October 2010 (16:00-18:00)

Council of Governors: public meeting
York Hospital Social Club, White Cross Road

5 August 2010 (13:00-16:30)

Members' event: care of the elderly (invite only)
Postgraduate lecture theatre, York Hospital

15 December 2010 (12:30-13:30)

YorkTalk Presentation: Retinal screening
Postgraduate lecture theatre, York Hospital

18 August 2010 (12:30-13:30)

YorkTalk Presentation: Introduction to NHS Finance
Postgraduate lecture theatre, York Hospital

(please note dates and times are subject to change)

14 September 2010 (time tbc)