



WILLMOTT DIXON
INTERIORS

HOW REFURBISHMENT IS REDUCING LIGATURE RISKS



MENTAL HEALTH ENVIRONMENTS PRESENT UNIQUE CHALLENGES

THE CONSTRUCTION AND REFURBISHMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH ENVIRONMENTS PRESENTS UNIQUE CHALLENGES FOR PUBLIC AND PRIVATE HEALTHCARE.

Keeping vulnerable people safe from harm requires specialist knowledge and an acute understanding of the ligature risks posed in each estate.

Nabeel Javed, Construction Manager at Willmott Dixon Interiors, has dedicated the last few years of his career to supporting capital projects teams in the NHS.

FIT FOR PURPOSE MENTAL HEALTH FACILITIES

Rosewood Terrace is an inpatient mental health rehabilitation unit at St. Michael's Hospital in Warwick.

The building was recently revamped by Willmott Dixon Interiors and its supply chain partners on behalf of Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership NHS Trust.

It's one of several 'anti-ligature' projects we have been contracted to deliver at St. Michael's, which are designed to prevent vulnerable people from accidentally or intentionally self-harming.

"We are delivering anti-ligature works to the very best standard," says Nabeel Javed, who is leading the refurbishment programme. "It's specialist work and very different from a traditional refurbishment. There is a large amount of detail behind each project and a huge focus on patient risk."

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR NHS TRUSTS

Budgetary constraints in public healthcare have led to gaps in construction expertise.

In practical terms, that means when a door or window is upgraded to meet anti-ligature requirements, other alterations such as removing vinyls or making good around the frame may not necessarily be included in the scope of works.

Nabeel believes that huge value can be added through "the finer details" by influencing guidance and assisting NHS Trusts in taking a schedule of works to a finished project.

He explains: "We might typically expect to see an architect or a clerk of works involved in refurbishment projects of this scale but generally that kind of knowledge doesn't exist within the NHS. "We've developed an understanding of mental health estates that has enabled us to make our customers aware of any problems as well as offering them practical solutions. It means we can work with customers from preconstruction to project delivery."



Image above: Recent anti-ligature work completed at St Michael's Hospital in Warwick.

APPLYING ANTI-LIGATURE EXPERTISE

Nabeel and his team have developed an in-depth understanding of approved ligatures and ligature points.

It covers everything from the installation of toilet facilities to wardrobe designs.

“Most contractors are used to working with a certain type of fire door but anti-ligature works require bespoke doors with topple arms that sense an increased weight,” explains Nabeel. “They need to be wired in a certain way so they can send out an alarm in an emergency. Similarly the toilets we install are very different from a standard model and require a connection to power supply units. Understanding these specialist items is crucial.”

So too are the relationships we’ve developed with the specialist manufacturers of such products, which significantly increases the speed and efficiency of installation.

COMMUNICATION LEADS TO GOOD CUSTOMER RELATIONS

Pre-planning, communication and good customer relations are essential to the success of projects delivered in a live hospital environment.

It’s especially important given the make-up of our teams, which feature small, well drilled groups of as little as 10-15 operatives on-site – including subcontractors.

The approach has also proved effective in the delivery of similar anti-ligature projects, such as Forest House, a psychiatric unit for young people, and Albany Lodge, a 24-bed mental health care unit in St. Albans.

Nabeel says: “We oversee the work and orchestrate it but we’ve developed a supply chain that has an enhanced understanding of anti-ligature. We have points of contact for every facet of the refurbishment.”

A SPECIALIST IN ANY LOCATION

The success of our partnership with Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership NHS Trust has led to our appointment on several additional projects across St. Michael’s Hospital and beyond.

As anti-ligature becomes a more pressing concern for our resource poor NHS Trusts, in-house maintenance and capital project teams are often being left to carry the burden of delivering vital upgrades to estates.

It’s clear that they can only benefit from external expertise.

Nabeel says: “NHS Trusts face continual challenges in managing budgets and resources and generally don’t have the means to deliver projects of this type from start to finish. “We want hospitals to be aware that there is a service out there that can help them.”



Image above: The team leading on the anti-ligature work at St Michael’s Hospital in Warwick.

DESIGNING WITH PATIENT SAFETY AS A PRIORITY

We've delivered the remodelled Forest House, a general acute psychiatric unit near Radlett and Albany Lodge, a 24-bed mental health care unit in St. Albans.

As project manager, Barry Talbot, explains, the pair of successful projects highlight the anti-ligature expertise of teams at Willmott Dixon Interiors.

CAREFUL PLANNING IN LIVE ENVIRONMENTS

Children and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) assess and treat young people with emotional, behavioural or mental health difficulties.

At Forest House, CAMHS services are delivered to young people between 13–18 years of age who may require more intense treatment which cannot be provided in their own home.

Limiting the disruption these young patients are exposed to during refurbishment is crucial, which is why our delivery of works was so meticulously planned.

"We established a six hour working day, which we made clear to our specialist supply chain partners from the outset," explains Barry Talbot. "We were also in constant communication with dedicated nursing staff to make sure that access to various areas of the building was available, and that members of our team were escorted around the site as appropriate."

DESIGNED WITH PATIENT SAFETY IN MIND

The Forest House project has seen the full strip out and refit of a high dependency unit, paving the way for a new ground and first floor extension.

Non-secure accommodation areas have been partially reconfigured and refurbished, while there is new accommodation for staff too.

The nature of the highly specialised work involved in delivering mental health services, requires an estate which meets particularly stringent criteria.

It explains the level of detail and expertise applied by Barry and the team.

He says: "Everything we have put into the building has been designed with patient care and safety in mind. We applied a particular resin across walls and floors, allowing more than three weeks at a time for it to set fully in each room."

"Ceilings contain mesh, the walls have been formed of plasterboard with a ply finish, while the moulded furniture we've installed weighs up to 65 kilos."



Image above: Anti-ligature work completed at Forest House in St Albans



MEETING THE LATEST ANTI-LIGATURE STANDARDS

Albany Lodge is located less than six miles away from Forest House and delivers services to adolescent and older people towards the end of their rehabilitation journey.

We have designed and refurbished all bedrooms within the building to meet the very latest NHS England Health Building Note (HBN) anti-ligature guidance.

There have been upgrades to four ensuite bathrooms, five communal bathrooms and a further three communal shower rooms, while a new assisted bathroom has been added in the male section of the facility.

This type of work not only demands the highest construction expertise but also requires good relationships with NHS approved suppliers too.

“All light fittings were specified, beds with square posts and rounded edges were carefully screwed to the floor and specialist radiator covers were also installed,” says Barry.

“There are sloping wardrobe roofs, anti-ligature door stops, toilets fitted to the walls and anti-barricade hinges on oversized, NHS-approved doors. We have even installed anti-climb guttering.”

A DIFFERENT WAY OF WORKING

One of the key challenges in delivering the Albany Lodge refurbishment was the short amount of time for site inspections before the project began.

As medium secure patients had to be asked to leave their rooms, Barry often had as little as 45 minutes to conduct a site survey.

During the fit-out, staff completed a daily sign-off of work against a checklist. In addition, as each phase was completed, further checks were made from an infection control perspective to ensure that everything complied.

Just like at Forest House, the project schedule was also carefully planned around the specific needs of service users. Battery powered tools were used wherever possible and noisy works were confined to set spaces.

Barry explains: “We would start work at 9am once service users had vacated their bedrooms and would continue until 4pm when we’d hand back to the clinical team for inspection. All works were phased, and it was a longer project because of that, but we had a weekly ‘look ahead’ programme in place with clinical staff which enabled them to manage service user expectation.”

A PARTNERSHIP FROM PRE-CONSTRUCTION TO PROJECT DELIVERY

The refurbishments of Forest House and Albany Lodge add to an impressive body of anti-ligature work that has been carried out by Willmott Dixon Interiors.

Our experience and expertise means we can work with customers from preconstruction to project delivery, through a collaborative approach which improves the staff environment and patient pathways. We can also offer significant benefits to NHS Trusts, playing an important role in helping them to prevent vulnerable people from accidentally or intentionally self-harming.



Image above: Anti-ligature work completed at Forest House in St Albans



WILLMOTT DIXON
INTERIORS

CONTACT OUR TEAM TODAY



PAUL GORRY
Regional Head of Business
Development (London & South)
paul.gorry@willmottdixon.co.uk



JOSH ARMSTRONG
Regional Head of Frameworks
Management
joshua.armstrong@willmottdixon.co.uk



JOLENE MCLAREN
Regional Head of Business
Development (Midlands)
jolene.mclaren@willmottdixon.co.uk