

Focus on... Strategic Estate Planning: Space utilisation, improving range of patient services, and reducing costs

Building / Location:

Fryatt Hospital & Mayflower Medical Centre, Harwich, Essex

Organisations Involved:

- North East Essex CCG
- Realise Health Ltd
- Community Health Partnerships

Project objectives:

- Improved space utilisation at valued and popular local hospital facility
- Extended range of patient services
- Substantial cost savings to local healthcare economy



Located in rural north east Essex, the Fryatt Hospital serves the port town of Harwich. CHP's detailed SEP analysis and recommendations considered the demographics, epidemiology, social and economic need in the area

The challenge:

The Fryatt Hospital in Harwich opened in 2005 as a high specification facility providing a popular and valued resource for the residents of north east Essex. The demography of the catchment area indicates an older than average population with high levels of dementia, stroke and diabetes. The area also has high teenage pregnancy rates.

A range of health services are currently provided at the Fryatt, including a minor injuries unit, physiotherapy, podiatry, dentistry and rehabilitation. The adjoining Mayflower Medical Centre offers a comprehensive range of services including a GP Practice, asthma, diabetic and coronary heart disease clinics, cytology, maternity services and family planning.

Between them, the hospital and medical centre provide an extensive range of integrated health services on a single and accessible site within Harwich.

Despite its popularity, underutilised space at the Fryatt Hospital is costing the local healthcare economy almost £400,000 per annum. Changes in clinical service models and the evolving healthcare needs of the local community, presents a challenge to North East Essex Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to attract alternative uses that reflect the needs of the population.

CHP's Response:

CHP's Strategic Estates Planning (SEP) advisers worked closely with the CCG Board to assess a number of innovative and practical options for reducing the costly under-utilisation of space, by identifying opportunities that are designed to meet local needs and priorities.

Following a thorough and detailed appraisal, which took into account the demographics, epidemiology, social and economic need in the area, CHP developed and presented a series of options for consideration by the CCG.

These options reflected both the need and opportunity presented by the unused space at the Fryatt Hospital and included:

- The option of remaining purely as a centre for NHS services, with a primary care focus and delivery of a wider range of locally required services.
- Providing a dementia care activity centre and research base, meeting the needs of an ageing population and a key priority of the Essex Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
- Introducing a sport and fitness centre, complementing the existing rehabilitation gym in the Fryatt, while addressing an increasingly obese demography.
- Acting as a research base for IT and medical research industries, with links to local universities.

Each of these options was extensively researched by CHP with potential service providers and occupiers to test their viability and market appeal. As part of that process, a detailed brochure was produced and circulated to potential occupiers, highlighting the space and high quality facilities available.

"The Fryatt Hospital is a much-valued community facility that has delivered high quality services to the people of Harwich and north east Essex over the past 10 years. Greater utilisation of available space will enhance the range of available services, while addressing the associated financial implications. Working with the CHP Strategic Estates Planning team to review and consider a range of options for new service providers has been a really interesting and valuable process. Their fresh thinking backed up by thorough research and a detailed understanding of the local healthcare market has been of great assistance to the CCG."

Kirsty Denwood, Director of Finance at North East Essex CCG

"The SEP approach thinks differently to help provide solutions that maximise the true potential of the NHS estate. Our approach to the Fryatt Hospital was to identify a range of varied but practical options that could help address the issue of space under-utilisation. Naturally, those options were based largely around extending patient health services, but they also recognised that the hospital could accommodate complementary uses like medical research or sports and fitness."

Ian Greggor, CHP's Strategic Estates Adviser

Next steps:

- Project ongoing at August 2015.
- CHP continuing to work with the CCG by introducing potential services and providers.
- This includes support to reach a negotiated agreement on use, costs and timescales