

Transforming courtyards for staff, patients and visitors at Lauriston Building and Woodlands House

With funding from NHS Lothian Charity Climate Challenge Grants, NHS staff have collaborated with Reconnect Garden Design to enhance 2 outdoor courtyard spaces at Woodlands House, Astley Ainslie Hospital and Lauriston Buildings to benefit staff, patients and visitors. The enhanced courtyards now provide a space where staff, patients and visitors can experience the benefits of nature regardless of the season.



The aim of the courtyard projects was to not only increase the biodiversity of the space but to increase little sparks of joy in staff, patients and visitors through moments spent in the courtyards."

Jetta Aitchison, Work Well Facilitator

Courtyard, Woodlands House, Astley Ainslie Hospital

Previously under utilised due to its exposure to multiple departments' windows, making it challenging for patients and staff to feel comfortable using the area. One staff member shared: "We have found it difficult to let patient's use the space because of noise and lack of privacy, so it feels like a shame that we don't use it more."

With the help of Edinburgh Tool Library, existing furniture was upcycled, and new benches were put in to increase seating within the garden. 4 different types of mature trees were planted creating natural sound barriers and visual screens as well as providing much needed shade. 37 new plants species were dotted about the courtyard providing year round blooming for patients and staff to enjoy.



Courtyard, Woodlands House, before



Courtyard, Woodlands House, after



Courtyard, Lauriston Building, during works



Courtyard, Lauriston Building, after

Courtyard, Lauriston Building

As the main entrance to the building all staff, patients and visitors use this space. While there was some planters it was felt by staff consulted that there was a need for an increased amount of biodiverse planting, an increase in privacy in the area as office windows look onto the courtyard and to make it a more welcoming space. New wooden planters were installed with trees that will hit a certain height and a range of 12 biodiverse plants that will flower throughout the year.

This report is based on feedback from staff, patients and visitors using the courtyards. 70% of respondents said they used the courtyards for lunch or breaks. Other uses included meetings, waiting on relatives and relaxing.



I have a coffee or lunch in the courtyard, especially if sunny. It's a lovely space to relax and read a book."

Staff member, Woodlands House

The enhancement to these outdoor spaces support NHS Lothian Charity meet it's strategic objectives of 'Enhanced patient and carer experience' and 'Improved staff wellbeing and professional development'.

85%

of those surveyed agreed the enhanced spaces have improved the hospital environment



Much improved space, may encourage more of the office to use the space now."

Staff member, Woodlands House



I have been coming to this building for years, the array of plants installed have brightened up the space instantly."

Patient, Lauriston Building

69%

of those surveyed agreed the enhanced spaces improved their connection to nature



Connects me to nature, looking forward to watching it grow."

Staff member, Woodlands House



Biodiversity in action

Between the 2 courtyards, approximately 53 different species of trees and plants have been introduced, which is a fourfold increase in what was originally growing. These courtyards will then go on naturally to attract new wildlife and plant species to further increase biodiversity.

77%

of those surveyed agreed the spaces enhanced their experience at the hospital



Sat to wait for 10 minutes...the flowers are cheerful and pretty up the courtyard of what is quite an ugly building."

Family member, Lauriston Building



Calmer environment in a concrete jungle. Beautiful plants/trees and even new planters enhance my time sitting here..

Staff member, Lauriston Building

67%

of those surveyed agreed the enhanced spaces make them feel valued by NHS Lothian



It is a lovely welcome into the building and makes me feel valued."

Staff member, Lauriston Building

69%

of those surveyed agreed the enhanced spaces improved wellbeing



I love the new outdoor space. I feel I can really relax away from work and just sit and listen to the birds."

Staff member, Woodlands House

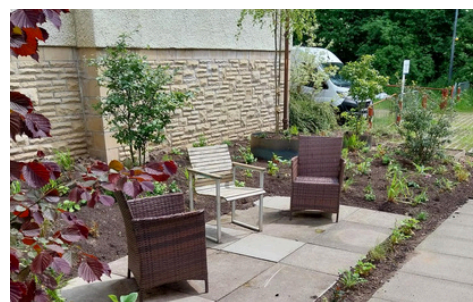


Helps to decompress if a busy day at my desk."

Staff member, Lauriston Building



Courtyard, Lauriston Building, after



Courtyard, Woodlands House, after

Thanks to everyone who participated in this evaluation. Go to [NHS Lothian Charity Website](https://www.nhs.uk/lothian-charity) to find out what funding is available.