

## Supporting staff wellbeing by improving break spaces at the Western General Hospital

Recognising the importance of breaks to staff wellbeing the Western General Work Well facilitator carried out an audit of localised break rooms on site that complimented the larger centralised wellbeing space. The audit revealed the need for improvements in a number of areas to ensure that appropriate spaces were available to as many staff as possible. NHS Lothian Charity worked with the Western General site team drawing on several Specific Funds and complimenting this with General Funds to support the enhancement of existing and development of new spaces.



We are committed to making the Western General a great place for staff to work, including enhancing the staff spaces on site. By improving these areas, we aim to create an environment where staff can relax and recharge, leading to increased job satisfaction, and overall wellbeing."

- James McKay, Business Manager,  
Western General Hospital

### How NHS Lothian Charity supported

NHS Lothian Charity's Tonic Arts programme provided input around colour and furniture options which the staff most likely to use the spaces were then consulted on. A budget was prepared, which was supported by the Charity and work carried out by the project team at the Western General Hospital who procured items and facilitated works in Ward 27, General Medicine, Ward 26, General Medicine, Minor Injuries Unit, Pharmacy, Ward 73, Medicine of the Elderly, Ward 23, Colorectal & Urology, Ward 54, Respiratory & Cardiology, Catering staff room and Stores

As a result, funding from NHS Lothian Charity went towards the painting of walls, new furniture such as such as dining tables and chairs, comfortable chairs/ and sofas, coffee tables and lamps. Facilities for storing and preparing food such as crockery, kettles and fridges. Other items provided included lockers, blinds for windows, wall art/pictures and televisions.

Staff in Ward 26, Ward 23 and Ward 73 told us what they thought of the changes.



Staff break room, Ward 23, after

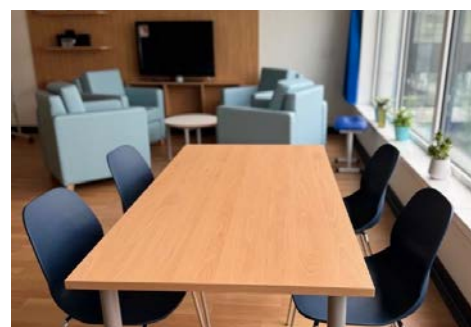
Staff were asked to rate their satisfaction with the spaces out of 5 (1 = low, 5 = high).  
On average staff rated:

Before

2

After

5



Staff break room, Ward 73, after

The improvements to the spaces have impacted staff in the following ways:

100%



of staff agreed the space has improved the working environment

We used to sit by the lifts for our breaks and we got no down time as visitors or patients would ask us questions, I really like that this is a staff only space and you get the privacy. It's made work much better."

- Domestic Services Staff, Ward 23



I use it on every break as would take too long to go to other parts of the hospital in my 30 minute break. I like the table, we don't have to eat food on our laps anymore and I can sit up and read. The matching crockery is very much appreciated, it was a bit chaotic before."

- Clinical Support Worker, Ward 23

## 100%

of staff agreed the space has improved team morale

## 86%

of staff agreed the space enabled them to switch off from work when taking breaks now

## 71%

of staff agreed the space now provides a comfortable place to take a break

We are really happy with the new dedicated staff space, it brings a sense of community to the staff. We didn't even have a table before so staff can now sit and eat, read etc. which provides staff the ability to have a real break."

- Deputy Charge Nurse, Ward 23

Formerly our staff room was a small room just off the ward so this is easier to escape and switch off and recently had frosted glass put in so relatives and patients can't look in."

- Nurse, Ward 73

It's a lot more comfy, though very small. Nice colour scheme so I take a lot more breaks here than before. Nice to sit down and chat with colleagues. "

- Nurse, Ward 23



Staff break room, Ward 23, after

It's a really lovely big space, nice pictures on wall and comfy chairs which we didn't have before and a beautiful big window which I look out now when I am on my break and it's a bit of an escape

- Health Care Assistant, Ward 73



Staff break room, Ward 73, after

## Is it still difficult for dedicated staff to take a break?

Despite the positive responses from staff to the changes there are still hopes for more, feedback from staff highlighted:

The location of the staff break room in Ward 73 means staff still feel it's difficult to switch off. One staff member shared; "Like the TV but you can hear everything happening on the ward so sometimes doesn't feel like a break" another shared; "It's on the ward by a nurses station so no break for staff as they can hear falls alarms and machine bleeps."

Some improvements staff requested have been harder to implement, one staff member from Ward 26 shared; "There was no redecorating and the main ask from staff that we have controlled access to the room has still not happened" another staff member from Ward 23 shared; "The lights are very harsh and give me a headache, a lamp would be good" and in Ward 73 a staff member shared; "A coffee machine was asked for, but doesn't look like we are getting it."

Thanks to work of the Impact Support Volunteer who collected data and to the staff who supported and took part in this evaluation.

Go to [NHS Lothian Charity Website](https://www.nhslothiancharity.org) to find out what funding is available to improve staff spaces.

Report compiled by Rebecca Caulfield, Evaluation Manager, NHS Lothian Charity.