



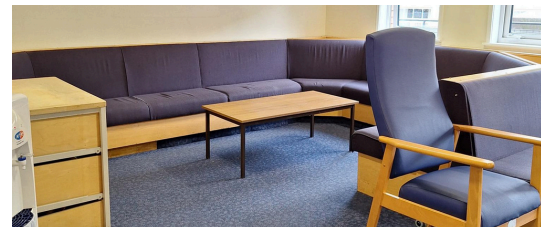
From clinical to comforting, improving the breast screening experience at Ardmillan House

With £39,297 generously donated by Breast Foot Forward, a community-led charity offering support, connection, and practical help to those affected by breast cancer, £33,555 was invested to upgrade and enhance the main reception and waiting area at the South East Breast Screening Service at Ardmillan House, Edinburgh. As the space had not been refurbished since the building opened in 1995, these improvements were essential in improving the experience for the approximately 55,000 women who access the service each year. Surplus monies from the donation will be used, with the support of NHS Lothian Charity's Tonic Arts Team, to purchase artworks to further enhance the space and provide a welcome distraction. NHS Lothian Charity's Evaluation Manager visited the service to gather staff insights on the impact of these enhancements.

Impact – Increased physical comfort and dignity

Comfortable, varied seating (upholstered chairs and sofas arranged in smaller groupings) provides a more relaxed and supportive place to wait (which can be up to 3 hours for same day results), shifting the experience from being purely functional to more person-centred. NHS Lothian Charity: Tonic Arts support with suitable artworks will further enhance the experience. Reception staff shared:

“Women often attend with partners and sometimes family members, so the waiting area can become busy. The improved layout now provides well-spaced seating, ensuring everyone can sit comfortably without feeling crowded, which is important as we know people all already feeling anxious or unsettled.”



Before, dark carpet and uncomfortable seating



After, bright flooring and comfortable seating

Impact – Reduced anxiety and improved emotional comfort

The brighter lighting, softer colours, and less clinical appearance help create a calmer and more reassuring atmosphere, which is particularly important for women and their families attending screening appointments which are intimate checks with uncertain outcomes.

Donna, Centre Administrator, shared:

“What a huge difference, the feeling in space is completely transformed from before. Women who return for annual appointments have shared how much more relaxing the space is now.”



You can see women and their families now visibly ease when they arrive.”

- Centre Administrator

Impact – More welcoming, “non-clinical” experience

By introducing warmer materials, such as wood flooring, and a softer, more welcoming layout, the space now feels more aligned with a ‘well woman’ environment rather than a clinical setting. This helps women and their families feel more at ease and valued, rather than like ‘patients’ – an important distinction given that the majority of those attending screening are ‘well’. Staff have noted that the space now feels comparable to other everyday health settings, such as dental practices, creating a more familiar and reassuring experience.



So many women and their families say “ooh this is nice” when they enter the building now. This didn't happen before!”

- Reception staff

Go to [NHS Lothian Charity Website](#) to find out how to access funding for enhancing patient spaces.

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