

FEELING BETTER NOW?

Not that lying in hospital is ever going to be any great shakes, but designers can do a lot to improve the patient experience, says **Stephen Kennett**

Same-sex accommodation is becoming the norm in the NHS, but for one in 10 patients their stay in hospital involves sharing sleeping accommodation and bathroom facilities with the opposite sex.

Many of these patients feel that their privacy and dignity can be compromised at a time when they are already feeling

vulnerable. In an attempt to tackle this, the NHS, together with the Design Council, launched its Design for Patient Dignity campaign.

At the end of last year, groups of designers, manufacturers and NHS staff were brought together to see if they could come up with new ideas to improve hospital environments

and the patient experience.

As a result, a number of prototypes were unveiled at the Design Council and below we look at the four that could have the biggest impact for architects and contractors. These concepts are being evaluated and could be rolled out in NHS hospitals as early as next year.

WASHROOM POD

Designer **Avant Architects**
Industry supplier **Panaloc**
Worldwide Manufacturing

Providing additional bathroom facilities for wards in older buildings can involve a lengthy design and procurement process and disruptive installation. This design takes all the elements of a bathroom and turns it into a standardised product that can simply be slotted into the space for a single bed in an existing ward or attached to the outside of the building – in which case, several can be stacked one on top of the other. Bathroom pods of course aren't new, but this is designed to be delivered in a flat pack so it can be brought into the space and assembled, and complies with the relevant access and infection control requirements. It also has a non-institutional appearance. The makers say a pod can be installed within two to three days.



Mechanical ventilation with heat recovery

A folding shower screen and curtain with magnetic attachment to minimise water spillage

The pumped waste system with macerator gives installation flexibility in areas where services are not directly available

Back-draining basin with sensor-operated tap

Folding shower seat

Wall-hung accessible WC with concealed cistern and infrared flush is designed to allow easier cleaning and infection control

Drains integrated into floor and duct voids to avoid breaking into the existing ward floor



Curved perforated metal bedhead and ceiling canopy redirects sound down to the bed reducing the volume of conversation between a patient and clinician by up to 20dB

Low level LED lighting gives patients enough light to safely navigate around the ward at night when general lighting levels are reduced

A modesty screen can be operated by the patient for increased privacy

Medical gases, power supplies, grab rails and mounting for entertainment systems are incorporated

Ambient lighting behind the bedhead is distributed using the curved panel

MODULAR BED POD

Designers **Nightingale Architects/Billings Jackson Design**
Industry supplier **SASH International**

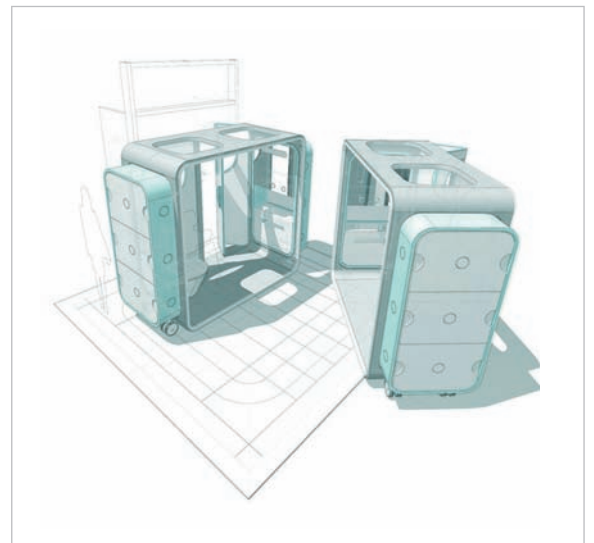
Patients in hospitals often say they don't feel in control of their environment, whether that's because they can't turn the lights on and off when they want to or because the acoustics mean everyone on the ward can hear their conversations. The prefabricated modular bed pod covers the complete bed area and supplied from power, medical gases, drip rails, lighting and a bedside locker to simplify procurement and installation. A patient-controlled modesty screen provides more privacy and a curved bedhead improves acoustics.

RETRACTABLE SCREEN

Designers **Helen Hamlyn Centre, Royal College of Art**



Ward layouts are difficult to change, especially in Victorian buildings or when there are complex services at ceiling level. The retractable screen offers a solution that is somewhere between a curtain and a wall. Suspended from the ceiling and secured to the floor using a foot-operated push clamp, it can be pulled out concertina style. It is made from two layers of polymer fabric stretched across a frame to provide a barrier that is more substantial than a curtain. The fabric can be cleaned in situ or taken down for machine washing.



CAPSULE WASHROOM

Designer **Azhar Architecture**
Industry supplier **Grant Westfield**

Using the toilet and bathroom can be embarrassing for patients and is a key argument for same-sex accommodation. The capsule washroom aims to provide an alternative. It is prefabricated and can quickly be erected and positioned almost anywhere in the hospital. It plugs into a 240V electricity supply, and fresh water and drainage are handled by a cartridge system similar to those used on boats and aircraft. This avoids the need for costly plumbing and disruptive refurbishment.