



## Key Facts

Working with the ProCure21+ collaborative process the scheme was delivered within budget and received BREEM Excellent certification

### **Post-occupancy evaluation and positive impact**

The project has only been operational since December 2016 but early evidence suggests Mitford is delivering on the Trust's key objectives:

- Improved the quality of clinical care for service users by delivering a fully integrated service in a purpose built environment.
- Reflects a national agenda and the Winterbourne principles including a focused admission and treatment pathway of 18 months, and early multi agency discharge planning into an appropriate community placement.
- Incorporates best practice from around the world and becoming a leading edge national autism service.
- Enhances the facilities for research and development to provide a national centre of excellence.
- Builds a sustainable commercial model to ensure that the capital costs of the building are recuperated over an eight year period.
- Staff are witnessing huge impacts on quality of life.



## Project Description

Mitford is located on the existing Northgate Hospital site in Morpeth providing 24 hour support and treatment for adults with complex and severe autistic spectrum disorders. It is the first building in the UK specifically designed for this patient group and is a pioneering project, requiring sector-leading, client driven design standards.

The building includes residential accommodation for up to 15 adults, in single and shared flats within the four 'fingers' of accommodation. There are 8 single-person flats for the most complex and challenging service users. The remainder of the accommodation is divided into two 2-person flats and one 3-person flat, for the service users who are more able to socialise and are being prepared to leave the unit. The typical care pathway for these patients involves a stay of 18 months – two years, during which individual stimuli and appropriate therapies are identified, before returning to the community.

There is very little design research and few exemplary purpose-built facilities for this type of service. Individual service users respond differently and sometimes aggressively to the sensory aspects of their environment, presenting a considerable 'design challenge'.

A key resource available was the highly enthusiastic and committed clinical team with specialist knowledge and understanding of the client group.

Designed by Medical Architecture, the building has a very legible form, allowing patients, staff and visitors to orientate themselves easily once inside.

## Facts and figures

- **Project name**  
Mitford Unit
- **Location**  
Northgate Hospital, Morpeth
- **NHS Client**  
Northumberland, Tyne & Wear NHS Foundation Trust
- **Principal Supply Chain Partner**  
Kier Health
- **Contract value**  
£9.7 million
- **Building size**  
1,996 m<sup>2</sup>
- **Start on site**  
June 2015
- **Completion**  
October 2016

"There was very little design research or exemplary purpose built facilities for this type of service and as individual patients respond differently to the sensory aspects of their environment, this presented a considerable 'design challenge.' However, we believe the collaborative approach of an integrated and committed project team, particularly in building upon clinical expertise, has created an innovative and world leading facility."

**John Carson,**  
**Capital Projects Manager,**  
**Northumberland, Tyne and**  
**Wear NHS Foundation Trust**