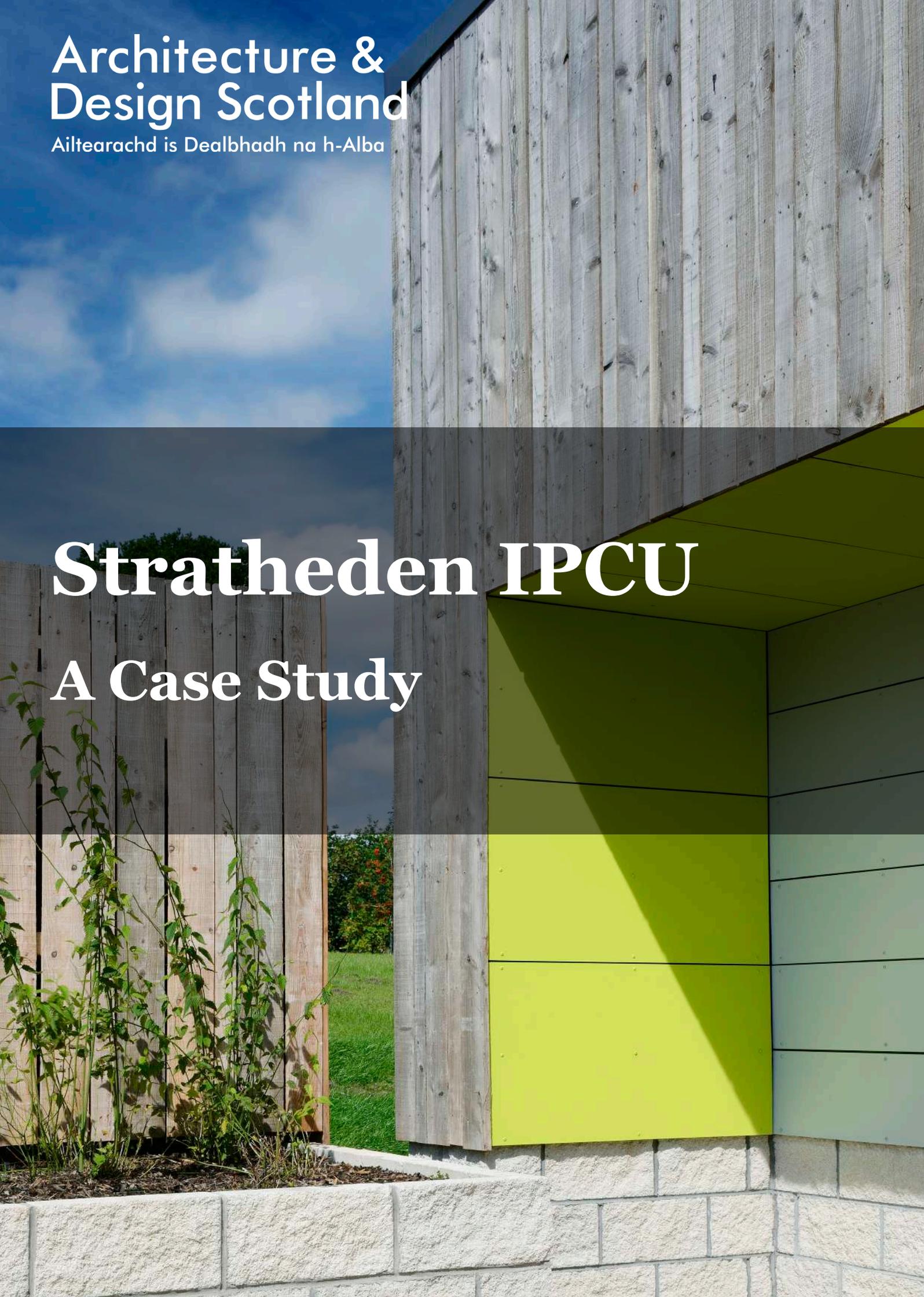


Architecture &
Design Scotland

Ailtearachd is Dealbhadh na h-Alba

Stratheden IPCU

A Case Study



Introduction

The recently completed purpose-built Intensive Psychiatric Care Unit (IPCU) at Stratheden Hospital near Cupar in Fife has already had a significant effect on patients and staff alike. The new eight-bed facility, which is designed to provide specialist care and treatment for patients experiencing acute psychiatric episodes, is according to nursing staff, "night and day" in terms of its clinical facilities and overall environment compared to the previous unit, housed within one of the original Victorian buildings on the hospital site.

The new IPCU facility, which was procured under Frameworks Scotland 2, which principally focuses on new build and refurbishment within the acute health sector, opened to patients in June 2016. Designed by Edinburgh based Oberlanders Architects in conjunction with Graham Construction, the new facility's patient-centred design emerged out of an intensive and extensive period of stakeholder engagement.

Original Building

"I've worked in acute mental health for 34 years, and from the IPCU point of view Fife have been trying to get the idea of a new build off the ground for many years," says Lesley. "Everything about the previous building was completely unfit for purpose. There was one long corridor that took you down to the dormitories with toilets at the bottom of the corridor. There was no privacy and the dormitory setting meant that we were limited in who we could admit at certain times. Females due to privacy issues, and disabled patients because of the stairs. So there were massive restrictions to it."

This is a view echoed by Tanya Lonergan, Senior Charge Nurse at the new IPCU, who also worked at the previous premises. "It was very old fashioned wards. There was nowhere to put the patients, they were virtually all sitting in one large room getting no stimulation and getting more and more agitated with each other, and more agitated with the staff. There were no areas for therapeutic activities and nowhere that you could actually have five, ten minutes to yourself. Almost on a daily basis we would be having to assist, de-escalate and separate patients. It was a very stressful environment."



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Stakeholder Engagement Process

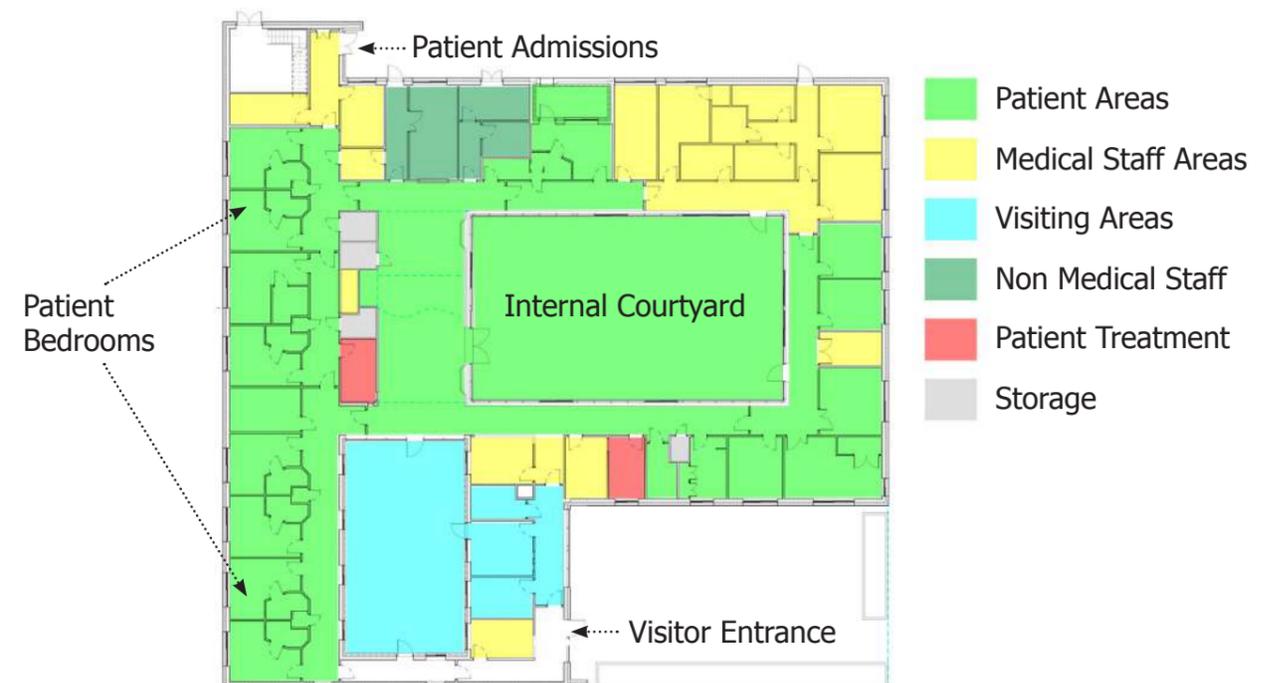
During the lengthy stakeholder engagement period and preparation of the main brief, Lesley Tweedie drew patient and staff views from Fife and other Board areas. However, the central focus of the vision for the new IPCU unit would be the patients themselves.

“The most important thing was the patient’s perspective, to make sure it was what they required to aid their recovery. It was very much clinically driven,” says Tweedie. “In the IPCU patients are only there short-term for intensive care and when they’re here they’re too unwell to actually give you a true impression. So we reached out to the patients that had been through the experience to get their opinion and a proper narrative from their point of view.” We also reviewed all available literature with regards to care provisions within IPCU environments, and liaised with colleagues from other Board areas.

“I met with all the patients that had been recently through IPCU and asked them for their wish list,” continues Tweedie. “And it was a lot basic stuff, such as can you give me a shower that lasts for more than two minutes so I can wash my hair? Can you give us a tap that we can shave with and it doesn’t just cut off every two minutes?”

I asked them to think out the box and say what they REALLY wanted too, and they said they’d like things like a Jacuzzi for relaxation. I also got ideas for the different types of rooms that they wanted and what therapy they’d like. We got Circles Advocacy involved to get independent views from the patients and from the staff as well.

Tweedie pulled all these wish lists together and eventually came up with a presentation that would inform the design and build teams bidding for the contract. “The presentation went through every room highlighting what patients wanted. This included all the arts and crafts and therapeutic spaces and what kind of therapeutic activity was required. Therapy is a big requirement as an essential part of treatment, we had no therapy space in the old unit. Then we identified fitness areas, relaxation and personal space, single bedrooms with en suites with showers that lasted longer than two minutes, and a separate kitchen where patients could actually go and prepare their own food if they wanted to, and be assessed in their level of functioning. We also looked at having a separate and flexible sitting area off the main day room where, for example females could go if they wanted to be on their own - the majority of our patients are male.”





Design and Build

As part of the Frameworks Scotland 2 procurement programme, Graham Construction, one of the five Principal Supply Chain Partners (PSCPs) invited to bid, were awarded the design and build contract to build the new Stratheden IPU in collaboration with Edinburgh based Oberlanders Architects.

Prior to construction the architects teamed up with Lesley Tweedie and the project team to refine the final design details. "Lesley initially presented us with ideas that she had picked up during site visits to other healthcare buildings and brought to the

table what she thought were good details and what she'd like to adopt," explains Project Architect Paul Gilligan of Oberlanders Architects healthcare team. "Once we came on board, we actually did a tour of health buildings in Scotland with Lesley. We got a good indication from her about what she was hoping to achieve and what the stakeholders wanted from the building."

What finally emerged in May 2016 following a year long construction is a new 1200 sqm single-storey eight-bed facility that sits to the northeast of the hospital grounds. A Scottish larch rainscreen cladding affords the building a softness and site sympathetic solution within its rural setting.

The build was largely tailored around its modest budget of £4.4million, according to Paul Gilligan. "We originally thought of using brick for the plinth and perimeter wall. But brick was too expensive and the block was a cheaper solution. We had to acknowledge that the money saved on the brick would go towards interior features that would be more important in terms of the day-to-day function of the building. It's a compromise but it actually worked out well."

In terms of accommodation the design provides significant clinical benefits supporting recovery, with patient access to an art and music room, a group therapy room, gym and a relaxation area. There is

also a separate patient kitchen area. Single bedrooms with en suite shower rooms allow patients greater privacy as do the furnished meeting rooms, one with its own courtyard, where patients can spend time with visiting friends and family.

The unit is built around a secure central outdoor courtyard providing space to relax, exercise and enjoy some fresh air, which was lacking in the previous unit. Additional features installed for patient and staff security include bio-dynamic lighting, nurse call systems, video linked access control and CCTV.



Internal finishes

In addition to the building's safety and security features, internal finishes were also a key consideration in terms of patient comfort. "On such a tight budget we needed to really understand where we're going to spend the money, what are the non negotiables. The emphasis was on robust solutions that would last. In terms of the finishes we have used a reinforced wallboard for partition walls, which have a really robust finish. It's not a standard plasterboard finish because they are liable to get bashed and knocked," explains Gilligan.

"The idea was also to create a building that does not need to be maintained internally. So we've got a parapet on the roof, where maintenance can happen on the roof and courtyard without having to come into the building. The courtyard flooring is a self-draining 'Playtop' (playground material) surface, which means that drains aren't necessary. Elements such as metal grills and drains and those kind of things are a risk as a lot of service users may want to pick at those things, and these elements could cause harm."

In terms of energy efficiency, the highly insulated building is performing well, with solar PV panels on the roof providing some of the energy needs. The building is heated via an under floor heating system. "The underfloor heating was a decision again based around the idea of having less elements, such as radiators, within a room. It's a more controlled system that's not visible," says Gilligan.

Overall Design Concept

“The concept that we brought to the table was the idea of a courtyard and how that not only relates to the function to the building but also the positive effect it can have on the way people feel,” explains Gilligan about the final plan featuring three courtyards. “We put a lot of consideration into the entrance. Arriving at this building can be a stressful experience for some a visitors coming to see a family member inside, so the entrance courtyard with the landscaped garden provides a secluded, quieter, transition space. The aim was to reduce stress levels but it also gives an element of privacy from the main road.”

“Once inside the unit the first section of the building is the visitors entrance, so what we have created at this point is a link to a visitors courtyard. This is a softer space where family members can join a relative or close family member to relax and chat, and just enjoy themselves in the space.”

“The third courtyard is the large central one that activates the whole function of the building. All the therapy spaces are wrapped around the main courtyard. The main social space and staff base are also just off it. And there are visual links right across the courtyard, so you can actually see all the staff and patient areas through that main space due to all the glazing in the courtyard walls. This was a huge driver for the client group because visibility is such an important consideration - staff members have to be able to see everything at all times. It’s vital to have observation points to ensure that the day to day running goes as smoothly as possible.”

A long east facing bedroom wing with 8 single en suite bedrooms overlooks the surrounding countryside, a deliberate placement to further reduce stress levels via the available views. This wing also features a staff area. Effectively this means that this part of the unit can be self-contained, and the rest of the building be shut down at night if required.



“And for the staff, it’s a totally different culture than it was before. Everyone’s so much more relaxed. The morale is much higher.”

An airlocked emergency entrance also features at the far end of this wing, allowing for secure admission and assessment of patients. “All our patients are detained under the Mental Health Act,” explains Tweedie. “This discreet entrance not only offers a secure way of admitting and assessing distressed and often disturbed patients, but it means that they aren’t being seen when they’re coming in, which preserves their dignity and privacy”.

Post-opening experience

Since its first patients arrived in June 2016 Gilligan believes the positive results of the patient-centred design of the building are palpable, particularly in the central courtyard. “The way that the main courtyard is so active within the whole unit itself is so good to see, it’s such an important part of the experience of the building. When I visited people were sitting out in the main courtyard, enjoying the sunshine. There were lots of clothes horses where clothes were drying, after patients had done their laundry. And that to me is a huge success

because often courtyards in healthcare buildings don’t work as they are just there to be looked at rather than used.”

This is a view very much shared with visitors and staff. “The new building is a massive change in terms of its environment,” says Tanya Lonergan. “The patients now have the space to move around, and they have their own rooms, so they don’t all need to be in one area at the same time. Access to outdoor space in the courtyard and fresh air, as well as the gym, pool table, kitchen, laundry...all of these facilities have made a huge difference to the patients.”

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“And for the staff, it’s a totally different culture than it was before. Everyone’s so much more relaxed. The morale is much higher. There’s not the feeling that we’re coming in and waiting for something to happen, we’re not walking on eggshells as we were in the old ward when incidents were happening due to the fact that everyone was living on top of one other and patients were becoming bored and agitated. The new unit is the other extreme, the opposite experience where there’s hardly any incidents. Staff stress levels have really reduced in the new building.”

The transformation has greatly affected the clinical outcome, according to Lesley Tweedie. “Looking at our incident reports and the monitoring that we carry out as part of the Scottish Patient Safety Programme, in the old ward we were sitting at around 70% a month in term of incidents involving control, restraint and violence & aggression. These numbers have come right down, and we’re at less than 10%. It’s the space, the freedom of movement. That’s so important. Patients aren’t restricted any more.”

Conclusion

“The new building is all about the patients. It’s not just about having a fancy new building. It’s about making it right for patients. And in the end we got everything that we asked for,” says Lesley. “Apart from the Jacuzzi bath - as the budget wouldn’t stretch to this, instead of a Jacuzzi the patients are got a more basic bath but we’ve put a speaker in the bathroom so the patients can have a safe relaxing bath with bubbles, music, everything. Music is very important in terms of wellbeing.”

“I’m not interested in award-winning buildings, I’m interested in quality award-winning care within it,” concludes Tweedie. The success of Stratheden IPCU is that it can actually lay claim to both.

A&DS would like to thank the following for their time and candour:

Lesley Tweedie, Clinical Service Manager - NHS Fife
Paul Gilligan, Associate - Oberlanders Architects LLP
Tanya Lonergan, Senior Charge Nurse - Stratheden IPCU

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Architecture & Design Scotland

Bakehouse Close, 146 Canongate
Edinburgh EH8 8DD

The Lighthouse
Level 2, 11 Mitchell Lane,
Glasgow, G1 3NU

T: +44 (0) 131 556 6699
E: info@ads.org.uk

www.ads.org.uk/healthierplaces

**Architecture &
Design Scotland**
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