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Dementia-friendly landmark development will open this summer

The dementia-friendly design of Haven Court, South Tyneside's centre of excellence for joined-up care for older people which will open this summer, is being highlighted in Dementia Awareness Week, May 15th-21st.

The £9 million flagship development is being built in the grounds of South Tyneside District Hospital by South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust, on behalf of South Tyneside Council, to provide integrated health and social care services for older people, particularly those with dementia, and their carers and families, and enable them to live independently for as long as possible.

Flexibility is key to the design by P+HS Architects to cater for different clinical needs and for people with varying degrees of dementia. Special features include individual 'memory boxes' - a box of personal objects and mementoes - to help people find their rooms and stimulate memory, and door viewers to allow a discreet method to view and be viewed by staff, providing a feeling of safety and security. Colour schemes have been chosen that will help people to find their way around and support independent living. All this in a comfortable, welcoming, 'home' environment featuring light-filled dining and social areas, spacious en-suite bedrooms, mini-kitchens, small, cosy spaces for quiet times and safe access to landscaped gardens.

The services such as residential, day and respite care and rehabilitation, information and advice, and help to use technological aids to support independent living, will be provided by a range of partners including South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust, the Council and the mental health trust, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust, as well as the Alzheimer's Society and other third sector organisations.

Mark Kirkpatrick, South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust's lead for the project, said: "The design brief for Haven Court was to provide the very highest quality environment, tailored to older people's individual needs and incorporating the latest research and thinking. The inbuilt flexibility and special features of the design will support people with differing levels of need, abilities and social requirements and help them to engage and support each other."

The decision to build Haven Court was taken in the light of South Tyneside's ageing population. Currently, older people make up 18 per cent of the Borough's population but this is estimated to rise to 21 per cent by 2021. By 2030, there is expected to be a 50 per cent rise in the cases of dementia and a 138 per cent increase among those aged over 90.



Councillor Alan Kerr, Deputy Leader of South Tyneside Council, said: "When we first commissioned this building, we wanted local residents to be at the heart of its design. I am delighted that this building is 100 per cent dementia-friendly with a range of features to encourage confidence in our older people and provide reassurance for their families and carers."

Hazel Cuthbertson, Regional Operations Manager for the Alzheimer's Society, said: "At Alzheimer's Society, we know that the current system of health and social care is letting down people affected by dementia, leading to worse outcomes. Our analysis shows that on average people with dementia and their carers have to open twenty doors from agencies, bodies and organisations – from the hospital consultant, GP or district nurse, to the physiotherapist, direct payments team or dietician or housing officer. Haven Court is a fantastic initiative to change that for people living in South Tyneside. Not only will the services be integrated, but they will be delivered from a building that has been designed with the needs of people with dementia at its heart."

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- For more information about Dementia Awareness Week go to www.alzheimers.org.uk/DAW

Pictured above: Work is progressing on Haven Court

Issued on behalf of South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust by Kay Jordan

For press enquiries on this release, contact 0191 404 1128 or email kay.jordan@stft.nhs.uk