

# Refurbishment of Doctors Mess

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## Background

NHS England have advised "Improving the working lives of NHS staff is a key strategic priority, as made clear in the NHS Long Term Workforce Plan, and again in the NHS Priorities and Operational Planning Guidance for 2024/25. It's a priority because it's what staff tell us they need, and also because the evidence is clear that better supported staff deliver better services for patients, better productivity, and they stay with us for longer. While this commitment extends to improving the working lives of our entire workforce, it is evident from conversations with doctors in training that we collectively need to do better for them."

## British Medical Association (BMA)

In 2018 the British Medical Association (BMA) published the Fatigue and Facilities Charter which was designed to serve as a good practice framework for trusts to ensure staff working conditions were improved and met a minimum standard. The charter places a responsibility on hospital trusts to provide appropriate rest areas 24 hours a day and seven days a week.

The BMA's most recent tracker survey shows that 46 per cent of respondents are suffering from depression, anxiety, stress, burnout, emotional distress or another mental health condition relating to work or study made worse by the pandemic. It also found that 62 per cent of doctors are living with a level of fatigue or exhaustion higher than before the pandemic. It is even more important now than ever that employers and Trusts provide the facilities they are obliged to and, beyond that, treat staff with the support, care and compassion they expect to be given to patients.

## Collaboration

As part of the project, Year 12 students from Thomas Telford University Technical College (UTC) in Wolverhampton were tasked with creating artwork to be displayed in the Doctors Mess at New Cross Hospital.

## Aims

- Improved facilities in line with BMA Fatigue and Facilities Charter
- Improved wellbeing for doctors that gives a space to relax and recharge

## Challenges

While securing Capital funding proved challenging, Education and Training prioritised doctor well-being. They creatively re-scoped the project to deliver essential refurbishments within budget, utilising alternative resources.

## Feedback

"The art pieces in our Doctor's Mess are just incredible! They add a lovely burst of colour and brighten up the space. We're especially grateful for them during those long on-call shifts when we need something to lift our spirits. As doctors, we sometimes forget the beauty in the human form and anatomy, and these artworks provide such a refreshing perspective. It's really touching to know that the artists thought of us when they made these. We feel truly appreciated."

## Results



## Education and Training

*Refurbishment of Doctors Mess Project Mission:*

*The reality is that these issues are even more important now than ever before – with the COVID-19 pandemic stretching staff and services across the country. Doctors across the profession are working under unprecedented pressure.*

**Working in partnership**  
The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust  
Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust