

Launch of outpatient assessment clinic @ Dorset Health Village

Monday 20 December 2021

Today sees the opening of a brand new outpatient assessment clinic in the centre of Poole. This purpose-built centre on the top floor of Beales Department store in the Dolphin Centre will play a vital part in tackling hospital waiting lists and increasing the volume of life-saving screening as part of Dorset's Think Big initiative.

The outpatient assessment clinic will initially assess ophthalmology and dermatology patients as well as running breast screening clinics. There are plans to further develop to include AAA screening and orthopaedic clinics.

Planning of the outpatient assessment clinic started in March this year. Taking lessons from the creation of the Nightingale Hospitals at the height of the Covid pandemic and from mass vaccination centres clinically-led plans were developed to transform the large shop floor into 2,600 square metres of partitioned clinical space. Many of the materials used in the construction came from the Nightingale Hospitals stock including 1,000 plasterboards, over 200 light fittings, 90 doors and the wash stations.

This project has been led by University Hospitals Dorset NHS Foundation Trust, in partnership with other NHS Organisations across Dorset, the department store Beales, and Legal and General, the landlords of the Dolphin Centre. The construction partners were CFES, architects BDP and Innova who supplied many of the materials used in the build from the Nightingale Hospitals. As part of the Dorset Health Village, LiveWell and Active Dorset will be offering free health and wellbeing support for our patients from their dedicated space on site.

Mark Mould, chief operating officer of University Hospitals Dorset, said: "We wanted to do something significant to help the many patients we have on our waiting lists. This centre will provide the same levels of clinical care as in our hospitals, but we will be able to see more patients than we currently are able to. The location in the middle of a shopping centre will offer a totally new experience for our patients, with transport links and local facilities. Our army of volunteers will also play a large role improving the patient experience and we thank all of them."

Ashleigh Boreham, Deputy Director Design and Transformation for Dorset CCG, said: "The speed of this build has been a phenomenal achievement and we are fortunate to not only use the experience from the building of the Nightingale Hospitals but also many of the materials. I am very proud of what we have achieved to create an innovative way of seeing our patients which has been codesigned in this way with patients, clinicians and architects. This is a unique space and one that I think will be used as a model across the country."

Greg Westover, Fund Head of Retail and Leisure at LGIM Real Assets, said:

“We are pleased to have worked closely with University Hospitals Dorset (UHD) and the NHS to bring the first outpatient assessment clinic in the country to the Dolphin Centre. Through this collaboration we can push forward with our wider retail mission to future-proof the Dolphin Centre. Our aim is that the clinic will fast become a place of great importance for the community and will sit alongside a multitude of new environments due to launch at the Dolphin Centre next year that focus on education, curated events and independent retail.”

Tony Brown, CEO of Beales, said: “This is part of a community effort to alleviate the backlog of patients and to support the NHS to make sure their efforts are maximised. We are looking at retail destinations in a different light now post pandemic. This has been a very quick development, but it has been an incredibly smooth journey working with the NHS and the building contractors, with an outstanding collaborative approach.”

Further details: www.uhd.nhs.uk/think-big

Watch: film of the build of the outpatient assessment clinic <https://youtu.be/-2iDdlrLBbs>