

Epsom Hospital wins Vistaport® race

Since its well-received launch at this year's Interbuild exhibition, the revolutionary new circular vision panel from VISTAMATIC has been in high demand in areas where health, safety and security are serious concerns. One of the first major hospitals to incorporate the Vistaport, Epsom General Hospital, features 54 panels in the modern and stylish refurbishment of their 5 operating theatres.

With the NHS Surrey and Borders Partnership Trust recommending the hospital consider installing the original VISTAMATIC Vision Panels in their annual report, the timely launch at the exhibition provided the ideal solution as the redesign of the theatres was currently under construction. The commission noted that the panels would offer privacy to the patients as well as the ability for medical personnel to undertake unobtrusive inspections.

The panels operate on a simple mechanical principle and comprise three sheets of glass sealed in a metal 'U' shaped channel section. A single glass sheet suspended between two fixed outer panes is made to move up or down by a built in cam mechanism, operated in this case by a circular knob or lever handle.

In the open position, staff inside the room can observe who wishes to enter prior to allowing admission. In the closed position, whilst light can still permeate, through-vision is completely obscured. Medical staff can observe from both sides in order to keep a discreet watch on patients and to prevent doors from being opened accidentally, particularly when patients are undergoing examination or treatment.

Burren and Whittaker, the building contractors responsible for carrying out the hospital's ongoing maintenance programme, have been involved in many of the projects undertaken to bring the trust in line with the NHS modernisation plans. Manager Crawford McFerran specified the panels and explains: "The redevelopment scheme was designed to create a clinical and professional feel, and every aspect was designed with this in mind. The hardwood doors leading to anaesthetic preparation and operating rooms were measured and cut to size for the round vision panels to be fitted, before a special hydro clad surface finish was applied to aid effective cleaning and to help reduce the risk of contamination. The ingenuity of the panels is that vision can be accessed via an elbow operated lever, allowing staff to keep hands free for carrying medical materials or operating equipment and to avoid potentially hazardous incidents."

"Air vents installed on all exterior walls maintain the room pressure and temperature to keep them at constant levels. Intumescent seals on all edges of the doors make certain that doors remain in a secure position after staff enter or leave, ensuring air flow is kept at the required intensity. Manual door closures help to regulate the speed of the doors, making sure they are closed gradually and without sudden jolts resulting in draughts. No detail has been overlooked where health and safety matters are concerned."



The polished stainless steel framed Vistaport Vision Panels complement the stylish decor of the theatres, blending in discreetly. Each door is fitted complete with matching stainless steel kit plates, protecting the door faces against speeding trolley beds and wheels chairs that pass through the busy operating rooms. The contrasting blue hardware helps to create a sanitised look as well as an aid for the visually impaired.

Chief executive of Epsom General Hospital Lorraine Clifton says: “Keeping the operating environments sterile is not only a critical issue but an obligatory duty for hospitals to adhere to in accordance with guidelines and regulations. We are increasingly reliant on security enhancing products like the Vistaport so we can guarantee the general welfare of our patients, staff and visitors is being looked after. It is important that both patients and surgeons involved in operations realise that they are in a controlled environment throughout the procedure, helping it to run that much more efficiently.”

VISTAMATIC director John Nerden says: “Our standard 404 x 404mm and 800 x 250mm panels have always been held in a high regard in the medical industry and now, with a unique 400mm circular model added to our portfolio, we can cater for differing interior design needs whilst still providing a quality assured performance.”

Serving the southern part of the Surrey catchment area, the large university hospital provides an extensive range of inpatient, day and outpatient services. Situated close to the centre of Epsom, a full Accident and Emergency service sees 44,000 attendees per year and the hospital has 300 beds. There is also an extensive range of diagnostic and supporting services, including pathology, radiology (including CT, MRI and ultrasound) vascular diagnostic services, and a busy modern purpose built day care and day surgery unit. The site also includes an acute psychiatric facility operated by Surrey Oaklands NHS Trust, making the Vistaport with the extra security measures it affords an important safeguard.

VISTAMATIC products are designed and manufactured in the UK and distributed worldwide (Registered Design No: 3018601 and International Patents Pending). The vision panels meet the British Standard BS EN ISO 9002: 1994, as well as BS 6206 for Tempered Safety Glass Class ‘A’. VISTAMATIC can also work with architects and designers to create bespoke sizes and specifications.

The in-patient rooms quite often have to be deep cleaned to avoid the spread of bacteria, such as Clostridium difficile, to which the elderly may be more susceptible. The blinds that were on the windows needed to be removed and washed. Vistamatic® Secure Vision Panels are easily cleaned in situ, saving valuable staff resources and causing less disruption to patients.

The installation has benefitted the patient, their families and the nursing staff. The nursing staff described the panels as robust, reliable, discreet, quick and easy.