

## **Musgrave Park Regional Acquired Brain Injury Unit**

In March 2003, Green Park Healthcare Trust received full formal approval from the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for its Regional Acquired Brain Injury Unit Business case.

As the new unit is the first of its kind in Northern Ireland, a benchmarking exercise was completed to aid the planning process of the Acquired Brain Injury Unit. Members of the project team, including Health Estates' Brendan Smyth, visited three centres of excellence in the field of neuro-rehabilitation in the UK.

Building work began in July 2004 and was completed in April 2006 with the official opening on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2006 by His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall.

There are approximately 7,800 incidences of head injury reported each year in Northern Ireland, of which around 3,300 are admitted to hospital. Previously, these patients were cared for in the Trust's brain injury facilities at the Joss Cardwell Centre and Ward 3 at Forster Green Hospital. These facilities offered limited space so often patients had to remain in acute hospital care and had nowhere to go after this for rehabilitation treatment.

The new £8.5 million facility at Musgrave Park Hospital will offer a specialist unit to which patients can be transferred as soon as possible after care in an acute hospital, freeing up valuable bed space, and provide an interdisciplinary rehabilitation programme, on an inpatient and outpatient basis, for individuals who have suffered an acquired brain injury in order to reintegrate them within the community setting, after discharge from hospital.

Dr John McCann, Lead Clinician and Consultant in Rehabilitation Medicine, Green Park Healthcare Trust stated,  
"The new unit will provide integrated inpatient and outpatient services under one roof for the first time and will increase the number of inpatient beds available."

The Regional Acquired Brain Injury Unit aspires to create a 'Centre of Excellence' for research into the management of acquired brain injury and its complications, and to develop effective evidence-based models of practice and provide consultation, advice and training to other professionals working in this area.

Brian Sore, Project Director and Deputy Chief Executive, Green Park Healthcare Trust stated,  
"The new Regional Acquired Brain Injury Unit at Musgrave Park Hospital will be a centre of high quality care and expertise, improving the current quality of life for both patients and carers. The unit will also provide a research and training facility for all staff working in this area; it will become a focus for developing a network of brain injury services right across Northern Ireland."

The new facility features a 25 bed inpatient capacity which is more than double the previous allocation and pre discharge assessment flat. As the unit is a regional centre relatives' overnight accommodation is also provided.

A full range of modern therapy facilities are provided including an extensive gymnasium for patients and more modern equipment than was previously available for more innovative treatments.

The building itself is intended as a landmark building at the entrance to the campus and its curved form makes it striking and distinctive. It includes two 'light wells' which run through the middle of the structure to increase the amount of natural light inside the building.

The project included an integrated arts programme to enhance the patient environment, enrich patients' experiences and stimulate healing. These include sculptures, painted glass and ceramic floor murals. There are a number of landscaped gardens including two private, secure areas for patients to allow an extent of freedom which was previously impossible.

It is hoped that the use of design, space, equipment and expertise will transform neuro-rehabilitation services in Northern Ireland for families affected by acquired brain injury.