

Case Study

Healthcare



The Serenity Midwifery Birth Centre

Facts about the project

Birmingham & Sandwell Maternity Hospital, United Kingdom

Project Manager: Paul Scott, Birmingham Hospital

Contractor: Ceilings & Interiors Ltd

Project size: 500m²

Products: Ecophon Hygiene Meditec



Birmingham birth centre installs serene sound solution

A midwifery-led birth centre that opened in 2010 at City Hospital in Birmingham has won The National Royal College of Midwives Award for "your Birth in our home". It was judged by the President of the RCM and committee of judges. The award was presented by Natasha Kaplinski at The Brewery, London.

The Serenity Midwifery Birth Centre provides low risk women with a tranquil, state of the art place to give birth but achieving a quiet, relaxing environment. It is designed to be a comfortable environment where birth is treated as a 'normal' process rather than a medical one. It is a purpose-built facility designed to look and feel homely so patients feel as relaxed as possible.

There are five ensuite birthing rooms, four of which have access to pools and double beds for resting after birth. The rooms were named by the midwives at the centre; Amber, Jade, Sapphire, Ruby and Violet and this has also been reflected in the interior style of each of the suites. There is an additional therapy room where patients can have complimentary therapies during labour or just to be quiet and relax.



It also has a large reception area, a comfortable space for visitors and a breakfast room leads out to a decked garden with seating, water features and stone artwork.

Keeping the noise down

City Hospital is situated in one of the poorest areas of Birmingham and serves a multi-ethnic population where one in three babies are born to mothers who were not born in the UK. The women using the hospital's services demand little but are not familiar with midwifery-led care so the aim of the midwives at the Serenity Midwifery Birth Centre is to educate and inform. Therefore it was crucial that the interior design of the Birth Centre was conducive to clear communication between the midwives and their patients, which also meant needing to limit disturbance from surrounding hospital areas.

Saint-Gobain Ecophon helped them find a suitable acoustic solution that could provide effective sound absorption and meet the stringent cleaning requirements that every hospital environment must adhere to.



Kay Heritage, Areas Sales Manager at Ecophon explains: 'In healthcare facilities, a well planned acoustic environment is particularly important as it reduces patient stress and improves feelings of security. Research has shown that health care is more effective when patients feel calm and secure, so these things combined will help the midwives at the Birth Centre overcome the issues of working and communicating with multi-ethnic patients who are unfamiliar with midwifery-led care.

'To ensure optimal sound absorption and withstand regular cleaning, we installed Ecophon Hygiene Performance acoustic ceiling tiles in the Centre's reception and other communal areas. Hygiene Meditec was then installed in the birthing rooms which require heavy duty disinfection and cleaning on a regular basis.' Paul Scott, Capital Projects Manager, from City Hospital says: 'It was an important consideration to get the acoustics right in the Serenity Midwifery Birth Centre, as its name suggests we wanted to create a serene and tranquil space in which low risk patients could feel as comfortable as possible when they give birth. Given the difficulty of communicating with some of our patients it was also important to create an environment where they could feel safe and supported by our midwives.

'In addition to the Birth Centre, we've used Ecophon acoustic ceilings in a number of clinical areas in the hospital. Anecdotally, we've noticed a vast difference in the acoustic quality of all these areas after fitting the acoustic ceilings but as we refurbish more areas, we're planning to actually measure the acoustic performance and compare it to measurements taken before the sound absorbing ceilings were installed.'

For further information please contact:
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