NHS

Property Services

Our estates

Launching Open Space

The way that space is being used across the NHS estate is evolving, and demand for more flexible space is growing. We recognised that there was an opportunity to ensure that space was used more effectively across our portfolio – matching rooms that were underused with a need in the community for bookable spaces for health and wellbeing activities, ranging from community groups to mental health support providers.

In April 2019 we launched NHS Open Space across 20 sites in England, following a successful two-year pilot programme. NHS Open Space enables the booking of NHS space (both clinical and non-clinical), by the session, hour or day, on a pay-as-you-go basis. This provides services flexibility and choice over the space they use, while making better use of the NHS estate, minimising vacant or underused space and opening up NHS buildings to offer a wider range of services to local communities.

Following a successful launch, we will be expanding the programme across our portfolio over the next few years. We plan to run this across a total of 250 NHSPS properties, but we believe in the scalable potential of the programme and are already working with NHS and public sector partners on how this platform may be adapted for their estates.

Key achievements

This year, we have:

Secured more than **37,000 bookings** in the first year, with **210,900 hours** of services provided to patients

Rooms booked by over **1,000 customers** across England

Our estates

The demands on health facilities are constantly changing so it is vital that our buildings can adapt and flex within this environment. Since NHS Property Services (NHSPS) was established in 2013, our focus has been on working with our colleagues and partners across the healthcare system to ensure that the NHS estate is fit for purpose, both now and in the future.

Over the past twelve months, our estates strategy has been centred around optimising the way that space is used across our portfolio, ensuring that our sites are used in the most effective way possible to deliver a positive patient experience and value for the NHS.

Developing and refurbishing properties across our portfolio

As owners of 10% of the NHS estate, we are focused on how our properties can help create healthier communities. Development and refurbishment works are essential not only to ensure that buildings remain fit for purpose and compliant with regulation, but also to improve patient experience when visiting a hospital, health centre or GP practice. By building brand new facilities, updating current facilities and reconfiguring space to enable additional clinical services, our construction works can have a huge impact on local communities. It's therefore critical that we work with healthcare professionals, patients and the public to understand their needs and how we can create a space that is right for them.

This year, we've been delighted to open new health centres in Warrington and Orpington, as well as complete refurbishment works at GP practices and community hospitals across England that will make a huge difference to patients and staff.

Key achievements

This year, we have:

Undertaken **461 construction projects** across our portfolio to improve the space both inside and out

Completed refurbishment, reconfiguration, development and fit-out works on **63 spaces** in our buildings, modernising facilities for patients and staff
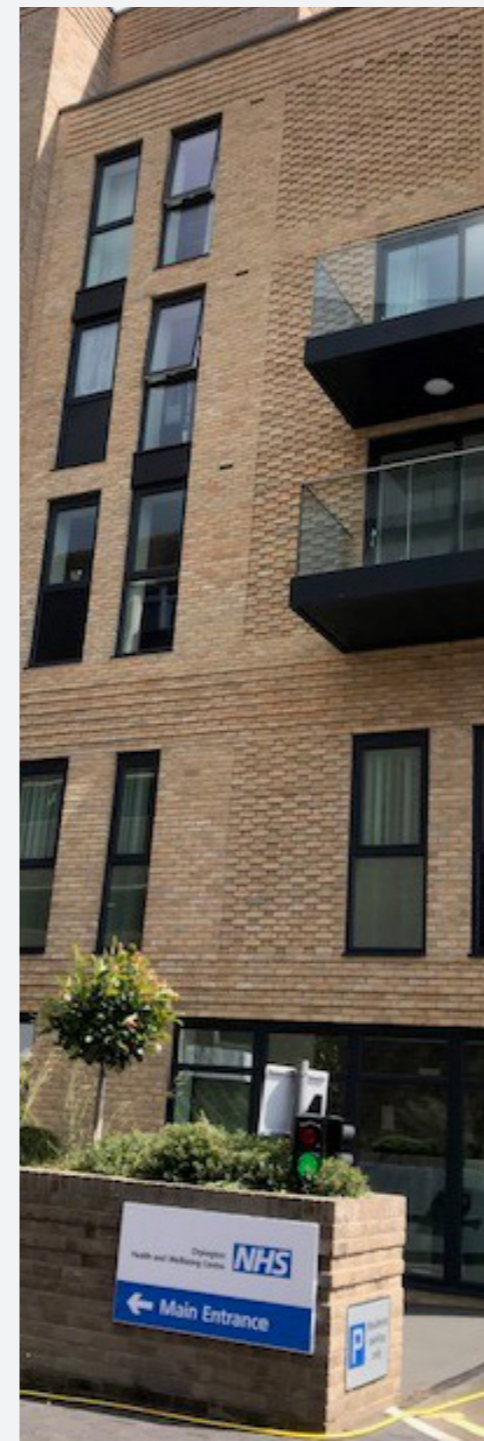
Case study:
Slaithwaite Health Centre

Slaithwaite Health Centre had suffered from a lack of investment over the years and was beginning to show wear and tear. This was affecting the service provided so works were undertaken to refurbish the interior and exterior of the building.

Our designers met with the GP to discuss how to tailor the layout to best support patient and community needs. As over 30% of the space was vacant, we were able to develop the space and create further consulting rooms, enabling the GP to continue to treat patients from this space so that the works could be phased, minimising disruption.

Slaithwaite Heath Centre now benefits from ten clinical consulting and treatment rooms (including three additional purpose-built rooms in previously vacant space), with ancillary support spaces, a small minor treatment room, and an inviting reception and waiting area which supports the health and wellbeing agenda. In addition, healthcare staff benefit from their own dedicated space including an admin wing with office accommodation, a meeting room and staff common areas.

By removing walls, we also enlarged some of the rooms as well as installing double-glazed windows, replacing the roof and putting in new insulation. The result is a modern healthcare facility with increased capacity to deliver clinical services and a refreshed, more inviting space for patients.

Case study:
Orpington Health and Wellbeing Centre

Demand on primary health care services in Orpington, Greater London was rising and the current premises was substandard, cramped, insufficient and poorly located. Bromley CCG worked with Berkeley Homes who were redeveloping the former Orpington Police Station into a residential-led mixed use scheme, to incorporate a new Health and Wellbeing Centre in the ground and first floors of the development.

We were asked to lead on project management and procurement for the new centre, and undertook the role of Head Leaseholder with a 125 year lease at a peppercorn rent with Berkeley Homes for the ground and first floor of this mixed-use building.

The building accommodates primary care and community services for the local population of Orpington in a new, modern and compliant health facility, and located in the easily-accessible town centre. The building includes a GP practice relocating from previous accommodation within the Orpington area, rooms for the GP Alliance, clinical space for therapy services, bookable clinical space, provision for health and wellbeing services, supporting accommodation and a shell space for the development of an MRI suite. Throughout the project we have been fully engaged with the CCG on all decisions, providing excellent customer service and collaboration.

Customer feedback: "We are so excited to move into the new Orpington Health and Wellbeing Centre. Our staff and patients are set to benefit from having modern and fit for purpose premises that will enable us to develop our services further".

Dr Ruchira Paranjape
GP Partner, Knoll Medical Practice

Managing surplus properties

In 2019/20, we made a number of significant sales of surplus properties, helping to drive reinvestment in the primary healthcare estate for the benefit of patients, clinicians and taxpayers. Our strategy is focused on optimising the estate and selling on land that the NHS no longer needs so that we can help increase efficiency, reduce the operational costs of the estate, and focus investment to develop and improve our healthcare estate in areas of high demand.

We were pleased to have surpassed our stretch target for capital receipts by £1.7 million. All capital receipts are reinvested into the NHS estate and land and building release has enabled the development of an estimated 6,607 new homes to date, supporting new housing targets.

Reducing vacant space

One of our key priorities is to reduce vacant space in our portfolio. As part of our strategy, we established the Vacant Space Handback Scheme in 2017 to allow customers to release space (either parts of or whole buildings) that is no longer needed, if eligible. Through this scheme we remove the burden of costs such as rent, business rates and service charges from customers, allowing them to use funds to provide the frontline care our communities need.

Since the scheme was launched, 88 properties have been handed backed to us and over £10 million has been generated to be reinvested in the NHS estate. Once space is handed back, we continue to work with our customers and colleagues to optimise the way space is used in our portfolio, re-allocating vacant space through re-letting, disposal or development.

Key achievements

This year, we have:

Reduced vacant space to **6.45%** across our portfolio from a 1st April 2019 baseline of **8.5%**

Delivered portfolio vacation pipeline of **32,500m²** and **£26.4 million**

Establishing occupancy levels

To ensure that we are supporting the system in a cost-effective way as landlord and adding value as service provider, we have established a simplified occupancy model for our customers. The initial stage of this process focused on establishing a basic level of occupancy across our eligible portfolio, and over the coming years, we will continue to work with customers to formalise their occupancy where there is not already a lease or an occupancy agreement in place.

This forms part of the work we are undertaking in partnership with the DHSC and NHSE&I to implement an action plan to address the feedback provided by the National Audit Office (NAO) and Public Affairs Committee on establishing occupancy agreements with our occupiers. It will also help us to drive accurate billing and optimise the way that space is used across the NHS estate.

Key achievements

This year, we have:

Achieved **91%** of our surplus property sales target, totalling **£40.9 million**

Delivered **£46.7 million** in capital receipts

Key achievements

This year, we have:

Worked with the DHSC and NHSE&I to develop **2 standard occupancy agreements** for customers

Established a basic level of occupancy across **91.3%** of our eligible portfolio

For more information, get in touch

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