



“ Both staff and patients are very enthusiastic about the new design of our ward and the new ways of working. ”

Sara Hannuksela Oscarsson -
Deputy Director at the
psychiatric clinic at the University
Hospital of Umeå, Sweden

Customer

Västerbotten County Council,
Sweden

Challenge

Overcrowding and a high number of readmissions called for modernization of the 1970-built psychiatric clinic in Umeå, both in the physical environment and in their ways of working

Results

- New spatial designs have been implemented to make the ward more attractive and suitable for patients
- New patient activities aimed at improving their well-being are being organized and are well received
- First feedback indicates that staff and patient satisfaction have increased substantially

How patients and staff benefit from an improved psychiatric care environment

Faced with overcrowding and a high number of patient readmissions, there was a strong need for modernization of the 1970-built psychiatric clinic at the University Hospital of Umeå, Sweden.

Philips helped to develop and implement new spatial designs and ways of working that improve the experience for patients, staff, and visiting relatives.

This project, which won an iF Service Design Award in 2018, was the first in a public-private collaboration between Västerbotten County Council and Philips, aimed at co-developing solutions for some of the biggest challenges in Swedish healthcare.



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Patients now feel they have more space and privacy, while being able to join a wide range of group activities when they feel like it.

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**Ann Larsson -
Head of Ward 2 at the psychiatric
clinic at the University Hospital of
Umeå, Sweden**

The psychiatric clinic at the University Hospital of Umeå, Sweden, is the largest clinic in the Västerbotten County Council and in Northern Sweden. With about 400 employees in total, it serves as an inpatient and outpatient clinic for 6,600 people with mental illnesses per year.

Challenge

“When I first visited the ward many years ago,” one staff member at the psychiatric clinic in Umeå recalls, “I honestly felt it was a bit depressing.”

It’s a sentiment that reflects the many challenges the clinic was facing: overcrowding, a high number of readmissions, and limited patient activities. Built in the 1970s, the psychiatric clinic in Umeå was in need of modernization.

Solution

In 2015, Västerbotten County Council and Philips formed a public-private collaboration to jointly develop solutions for some of the biggest challenges in healthcare.

The renovation of Ward 2 at the psychiatric clinic in Umeå was chosen as a pilot project. The objective was to improve the existing care environment and processes — and to learn from this for the future development of a brand new psychiatric facility in Umeå.

In an initial research phase, Philips consultants interviewed mental health experts all over the world to collect successful practices for the relevant patient group. This was followed by a so-called Experience Flow Analysis: a team of designers and consultants stayed at the ward for a week to observe and talk to patients and staff, resulting in a visual map of the full patient journey. At the same time, they carried out a spatial analysis of different areas in the ward.

Based on all information gathered, the team from Philips developed concepts to improve the spatial design and ways of working in the ward.

“I was very pleased with the professional and humble way in which consultants from Philips interviewed our patients and staff,” says Ann Larsson, Head of Ward 2. “They did not judge us, but looked for improvement opportunities.”

Results

New spatial designs have since been implemented to make the ward more attractive and suitable for patients, staff, and visiting relatives. The ward now has a more open layout that promotes social interaction, but also includes rooms where patients can retreat and relax. Next to that, the renovated ward includes an activity room, as studies have shown that physical activity is especially beneficial for improving the physical and mental well-being of patients.

The new design also supports new ways of working. It features open work stations that bring staff closer to patients, while still allowing them to seek privacy in a smaller room. There are also more spaces to sit down with patients and relatives.

Since the renovated ward opened in 2017, the feedback from patients and staff has been overwhelmingly positive, says Deputy Director Sara Hannuksela Oscarsson: “Both staff and patients are very enthusiastic about the new design and the new ways of working.”

Ann Larsson adds: “Nurses are telling me that they come to work with much more energy than before. Patients are happy with the spacious layout and the comforting lighting. They are also enthusiastic about the group activities we arrange for them. They no longer feel the ward is overcrowded, even though it is fully occupied. It feels more like a home now.”

In 2018, the project won the iF Service Design Award.

Looking forward

The learnings from the re-design of the psychiatric clinic at the University Hospital of Umeå will be used to create an optimal new psychiatric care facility in Umeå, planned for 2022.

