

## **MEDIA RELEASE/**

---

5 December 2018

AMH.LD\_30\_18

### **Mental health ward opens patient ‘Sanctuary’ after fundraising boost**

A calming ‘Sanctuary’ has opened for acutely unwell women on a Leicester mental health ward, thanks to a fundraising drive by staff and the support of a city legal firm.



*Ranjit Thaliwal and Cathy Ellis cutting the ribbon to officially open the Sancturary, with Jo Hulme from Aston Ward.*

The new sensory room on Aston Ward, at Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust’s (LPT) Bradgate Mental Health Unit, provides a therapeutic relaxation environment for patients that goes above and beyond the core service provided for the ward’s 19 female patients.

It has been refurbished and equipped thanks to a fund-raising drive led by staff from the ward, with a £5,000 boost

from a fund-raising event organised by Thaliwal and Veja solicitors in Leicester, who have a long tradition of supporting mental health causes.

The Sanctuary room has been furnished with soft and flexible furniture and equipped with sensory lighting and items such as therapy balls, weighted blankets and wraps, hand-held massagers, aroma therapy aids and relaxing music.

It was opened officially in a ceremony for staff and patients, by LPT chair Cathy Ellis. She was joined by solicitor Ranjit Thaliwal and his wife Reena, Aston ward sister Jo Lock, LPT fundraising manager Lindsay Woodward and healthcare support worker Jo Hulme, one of the ward team members who came up with the idea of creating a peaceful place where patients can relax on the ward.

Jo Hulme explained: “We wanted to create a calming area that would offer patients a sanctuary at times of stress, agitation and anxiety. Fitted with equipment designed to help soothe the senses, it can play a key role in aiding their recovery.”

Ranjit Thaliwal, pictured below in the Sanctuary room with his wife Reena, Jo Hulme and Cathy Ellis, said: “This lovely room is a real sanctuary for patients, a place where they can have time out in a calming zone and we are hoping it will really enhance the patient experience. It has been a privilege to support this project and be involved in making it happen.”



And Jo Lock commented: “Aston ward is one of the older wards at the Bradgate Unit and we are really lucky to have had the opportunity to develop something so therapeutic here.

“It’s a place where patients, accompanied by a member of staff, can go to take part in

relaxation sessions and it’s really good for patients who are feeling distressed, need time to regulate their emotions or to take time out from the distractions and stimulus of the ward areas. Some of the patients have already tried it and really like it.”

There were positive comments at the launch event from patients, who are on the ward to receive care for acute mental health needs.

One said: “I am the biggest fan of the Sanctuary, we can come away from the noise of the ward and I have enjoyed some relaxation classes here, it’s been like having an early Christmas present.”

And another added: “I’ve been on the ward for three weeks and the Sanctuary helps me to relax. It’s a quiet space we can come to when things feel like they are getting too much for us and we can use the sensory equipment for relieving stress.”

**-ends-**

## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

1. **Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust (LPT)** provides community health, mental health and learning disabilities services for the one million people living in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. We have a budget in excess of £275 million and employ approximately 5,500 staff. For more information visit: [www.leicspart.nhs.uk](http://www.leicspart.nhs.uk)

2. **Raising Health** is our registered charity (number 1057361) which raises funds to support LPT’s excellent care initiatives, equipment and innovations which go above and beyond core NHS provision, to enhance the experience of our patients, service users and staff.

[www.raisinghealth.org.uk](http://www.raisinghealth.org.uk)