

Trip to Irvine Thursday 24th April 2008



Members of the Planning Team, the Youth Panel and the Family Panel visited Red Cross House in Irvine on Thursday 24th April 2008 to get ideas for the New Children's Hospital which is to be built on the Southern General site. Red Cross House aims to get physically disabled adults between the ages of 16 and 64 rehabilitated so that they can live independently. We found this to be of great interest as we were able to see what has been done there for rehabilitating disabled people into a home of their own and the access that is required to do this.

There were three main points that we looked at and have learned from which make the building easy to access.

1. Accessibility for the people who use the services was



extremely well thought out at the time that it was built, 16 years ago. Each resident has their own fully accessible house within the complex and each house has been equipped to the highest standards. Not everyone that lives in each house will need a

hoist in the bedroom, environmental controls or flexible plumbing to allow the sink units to be lowered but all the houses have all these features. This means that if a resident gets ill or has an accident then they don't have to move out to a house with a hoist etc. Similarly when a resident moves on and someone new arrives then they are not limited to certain houses and can move into any one that is free – regardless of their level of need for assistance. There are wide corridors, spacious rooms, cupboards etc at a low height, beds that can be accessed easily and a central swimming pool and gym where residents can get physiotherapy. The picture to the left shows that the centre has flexible, accessible kitchen units so that residents can learn how to cook for themselves. However, the main reason that this complex is such a good idea is because it is incorporated into the local community. It is such a great part of the community that the pavements have been lowered to accommodate wheelchairs so that users of the site can go to the local shops and be independent.



2. The finishes and furnishings that were put in at the time were expensive but very good and are still in place after 16 years. This meant that the money that they spent on the furniture at the time has lasted, and is still in very good condition, and that they have not needed to buy more fittings to replace the original ones. The centre has hard wearing wood around the door and window frames and high kick-boards (right) so that wheelchairs do not cause damage to the doors or walls. The buildings looked new even though they were 16 years old.





3. The third, and last point that we looked at and learned from is that the design of the buildings are very simple, so that there were not any obstacles that needed to be overcome. This is so that anyone who has trouble seeing can reassure themselves that they are not going to trip on anything that might be lying around.

Alison Cloudsley

