

NHS Critical Care Areas

A research project to develop spatial key performance indices for ward design

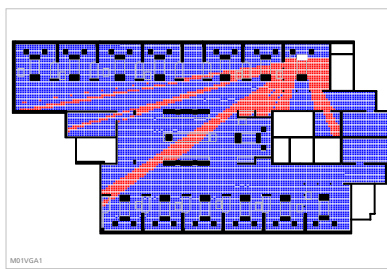
CLIENT	NHS ESTATE
PARTNER	MAAP
LOCATION	ENGLAND
YEAR	2002

Intelligent Space and MAAP Architects were asked to undertake a pilot study to develop a method with which to evaluate the design of critical care areas. This was to identify design differences between wards that function well and those that do not. This will lead to improved methods that will allow new project proposals to be properly assessed and monitored at the design stage, rather than after construction when design changes are costly, time consuming and often are simply not feasible.

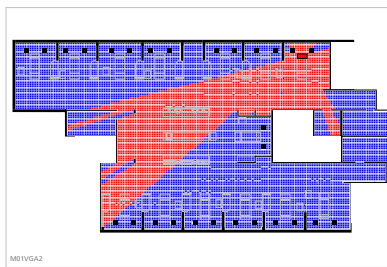
Three critical care wards were selected from the six that were visited. These were selected on the basis of age, available space, type of layout, size of ward and usefulness in terms of informing new guidance. This pilot project outlined a method by which to quantify differences in ward design by identifying benchmarks relating to surveillance of patients.

Surveillance levels of patients are thought to have serious functional implications. Although each patient is cared for on a one-to-one basis, staff at the nurses station need to view the whole ward to assess how care is being administered. It is especially important to know who is at the bedside and who is covering if a nurse is away from the bed. This level of observation is used to assess the level of activity on the ward at any one time and is essential for good management.

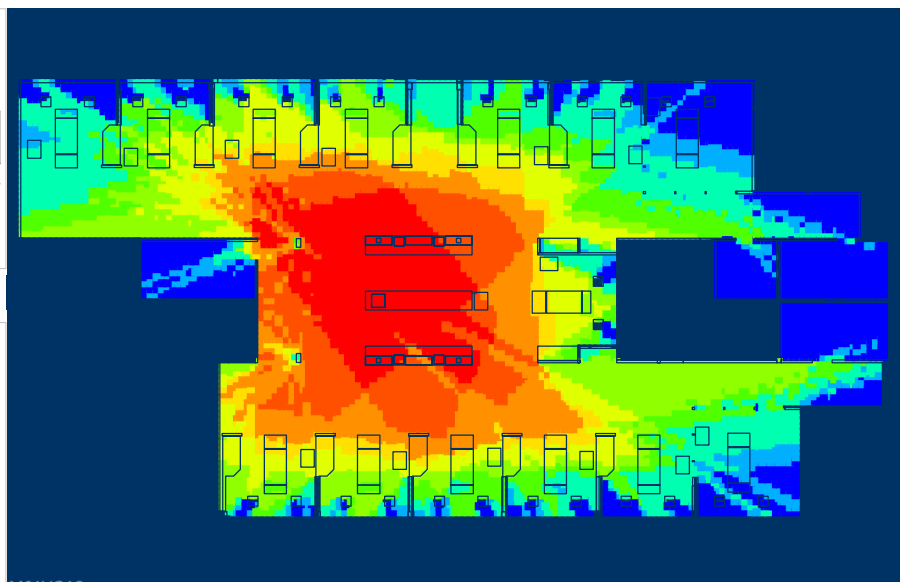
For the wards assessed, there are large differences in the numbers of patients that can be seen when standing at the nurses station, with values ranging from between average of 56 to 94% of patients visible. It was found that the level of patient visibility from the nurses station is not related to the size of a ward; the critical care area that has the highest level of surveillance was the largest of the three wards.



View of patient from seating height



View of patient from standing height



Patients visible from standing height