# Willmott Dixon starts £30m build of new NHS mental health unit and SEN school at Barnes Hospital



Tier one contractor Willmott Dixon has commenced a £30 million regeneration project at Barnes Hospital in south-west London, delivering a state-of-the-art NHS mental health facility alongside a special educational needs (SEN) school. This undertaking is part of a much larger £280 million investment by South West London and St George’s Mental Health NHS Trust aimed at modernising mental health infrastructure across the region. The scheme, supported by LocatED, an agency of the Department for Education, features a 90-place SEN school called the London River Academy, designed to cater to children aged seven to 19 with social, emotional, and mental health needs. The school will be operated by the Beckmead Trust.

Following extensive consultations with patients, NHS staff, and the wider community, the final plans received approval in October 2023. Early groundwork began at the start of 2024, with demolition completed by Dunton Environmental by year-end. Main construction is slated to begin in summer 2025, with both the healthcare facility and the SEN school expected to open their doors in 2027. To ensure continuity of care during construction, services formerly provided at Barnes Hospital were relocated to Livingston House in Teddington in 2023. From 2027, the expanded services will operate across both sites, providing enhanced mental health support.

The redevelopment is a cornerstone of the Trust’s broader ‘Better Environments’ programme, which represents a near £300 million investment in mental health facilities across South West London. Recent milestones within this programme include the £150 million transformation of Springfield University Hospital and the creation of the Richmond Royal Wellbeing Centre. Additionally, a significant £110 million upgrade to Tolworth Hospital is underway, aiming to replace outdated buildings with modern, purpose-built units, including a new five-ward hospital building expected to be completed by 2027. Collectively, these projects seek to improve patient care environments and mental health service delivery throughout the region.

Alongside the health and educational developments, LS Estates is progressing residential development plans on the remaining land at the Barnes site. This housing project is proceeding under a separate planning application, which is currently under review by the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames. Community engagement remains an essential element of the redevelopment process, with the Trust hosting events to keep local residents informed and involved.

Overall, these initiatives exemplify a concerted effort to replace aging hospital buildings and provide modern, integrated facilities designed to meet contemporary standards of care and education. By investing heavily in permanent infrastructure and collaborative partnerships, the Trust aims to create sustainable environments that support mental health recovery, education, and wellbeing across south-west London.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.constructionnews.co.uk/contracts/willmott-dixon-begins-30m-barnes-hospital-regeneration-25-06-2025/), [[2]](https://swlstg.nhs.uk/richmond-borough-redevelopments), [[3]](https://swlstg.nhs.uk/latest-news/works-to-get-underway-on-new-hospital-and-school-at-barnes-hospital-1848)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.constructionnews.co.uk/contracts/willmott-dixon-begins-30m-barnes-hospital-regeneration-25-06-2025/), [[2]](https://swlstg.nhs.uk/richmond-borough-redevelopments), [[3]](https://swlstg.nhs.uk/latest-news/works-to-get-underway-on-new-hospital-and-school-at-barnes-hospital-1848)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.constructionnews.co.uk/contracts/willmott-dixon-begins-30m-barnes-hospital-regeneration-25-06-2025/), [[4]](https://kingston.nub.news/news/local-news/tolworth-hospital-revamp-underway-256691), [[7]](https://kingston.nub.news/news/local-news/south-london-hospital-buildings-could-be-replaced-under-huge-plans-to-transform-mental-health-services-132627)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.constructionnews.co.uk/contracts/willmott-dixon-begins-30m-barnes-hospital-regeneration-25-06-2025/), [[5]](https://swlstg.nhs.uk/latest-news/register-for-our-event-to-find-out-more-about-the-redevelopment-of-the-barnes-hospital-site-1841), [[6]](https://www.putneysw15.com/info/ldrsplanning003b.htm)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.constructionnews.co.uk/contracts/willmott-dixon-begins-30m-barnes-hospital-regeneration-25-06-2025/), [[3]](https://swlstg.nhs.uk/latest-news/works-to-get-underway-on-new-hospital-and-school-at-barnes-hospital-1848), [[7]](https://kingston.nub.news/news/local-news/south-london-hospital-buildings-could-be-replaced-under-huge-plans-to-transform-mental-health-services-132627)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.constructionnews.co.uk/contracts/willmott-dixon-begins-30m-barnes-hospital-regeneration-25-06-2025/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://swlstg.nhs.uk/richmond-borough-redevelopments> - South West London and St George’s Mental Health NHS Trust is investing nearly £280 million to modernise mental health services in Richmond. This includes redeveloping Barnes Hospital into a new outpatient facility, a 90-place Special Educational Needs (SEN) school called the London River Academy, and residential housing. The project aims to provide high-quality environments for patients and the community, with construction set to begin in July 2025 and completion expected in 2027. During development, services have been relocated to Livingston House in Teddington to ensure no disruption to local services.
3. <https://swlstg.nhs.uk/latest-news/works-to-get-underway-on-new-hospital-and-school-at-barnes-hospital-1848> - South West London and St George’s Mental Health NHS Trust has announced the start of a major regeneration programme at Barnes Hospital. The plan includes creating a new healthcare facility for adult community mental health services and a 90-place Special Educational Needs (SEN) school named the London River Academy, operated by the Beckmead Trust. This redevelopment is part of the Trust's 'Better Environments' programme, which also encompasses projects at Springfield University Hospital and Tolworth Hospital, representing a near £300 million investment in new mental health facilities across South West London.
4. <https://kingston.nub.news/news/local-news/tolworth-hospital-revamp-underway-256691> - Construction has commenced on the £110 million redevelopment of Tolworth Hospital, marking a significant milestone in South West London and St George’s Mental Health NHS Trust’s 'Better Environments Programme'. The project aims to replace outdated buildings with state-of-the-art facilities, including a new five-ward hospital building, enhancing care for patients. The redevelopment is expected to be completed by 2027 and is part of a broader initiative to modernise mental health services across the region, including projects at Springfield University Hospital and Barnes Hospital.
5. <https://swlstg.nhs.uk/latest-news/register-for-our-event-to-find-out-more-about-the-redevelopment-of-the-barnes-hospital-site-1841> - South West London and St George’s Mental Health NHS Trust is hosting a community engagement event to provide information about the redevelopment of Barnes Hospital. The project, developed by LocatED, an arm’s-length body of the Department for Education, includes a new healthcare facility and a Special Educational Needs (SEN) school called the London River Academy, operated by the Beckmead Trust. A residential development is also proposed for the remaining part of the site, currently awaiting planning determination by Richmond Council. The event aims to keep the community informed and involved in the redevelopment process.
6. <https://www.putneysw15.com/info/ldrsplanning003b.htm> - Plans have been submitted for the redevelopment of Barnes Hospital by South West London and St George’s Mental Health NHS Trust. The proposal includes demolishing existing structures to create a Special Educational Needs (SEN) school and a health centre, with associated facilities. The educational facility, led by LocatED and operated by the Beckmead Trust, aims to provide modern mental health services. The residential component of the development is being brought forward by LS Estates and is currently awaiting planning determination by Richmond Council.
7. <https://kingston.nub.news/news/local-news/south-london-hospital-buildings-could-be-replaced-under-huge-plans-to-transform-mental-health-services-132627> - South West London and St George’s Mental Health NHS Trust, in partnership with developer STEP, plans to replace old hospital buildings at Tolworth Hospital with a new five-ward mental health unit. This redevelopment is part of a broader initiative to transform mental health services in South West London, which also includes projects at Springfield University Hospital and Barnes Hospital. The aim is to modernise facilities, improve patient care, and enhance the overall environment for both patients and staff.