



Organisation	Mid Essex Hospital Services NHS Trust
Category	Community
Please detail your project below	<p>The Natural Health Service - managing our estate and natural woodlands to provide an enhanced environment to provide patient care.</p> <p>Mid Essex Hospital Services NHS Trust takes much pride in the way we manage our estate. Two areas of ancient and natural woodland as well as beautiful formal gardens are located on our campus and we aim to manage these areas in a manner which provides an enhanced environment for our staff, patients and local community as well as promoting a healthy habitat for local wildlife.</p> <p>MEHT takes its responsibility towards our patients, the local community and the environment very seriously and we are committed to working with others to become a better corporate citizen and to reduce the impact of our services on the environment. One of the ways in which we are achieving this is by maintaining our estate sensitively and by improving the management of and access to the two areas of natural woodland that is located on our campus. We work closely with local volunteer groups and organisations to offer volunteer opportunities in our woodlands, our community vegetable garden as well as our fruit tree orchard that was established in 2014.</p> <p>Members of staff and teams of community and corporate volunteers give their time to improve the woodlands and hospital garden areas to allow patients, visitors and staff the opportunity to relax and enjoy in the tranquil environment, away from the busy setting of the hospital.</p> <p>Pudding Wood, a two hectare ancient woodland and the Long Shapely Belt, a narrow strip of natural woodland, has natural features and trails and is managed sympathetically by volunteers and staff under the guidance of woodland conservation experts. The woodlands are also maintained by teams of community and corporate volunteers who give their time to improve the site and to maximise the habitat by planting new native species and encouraging natural regeneration, keeping the areas clear of litter and fly tipping, encouraging wildlife by siting bird and bat nesting boxes and creating insect habitats.</p> <p>Since 2009 woodland management activities have been delivered in line with the objectives set out in the Trust's 10 year Woodland Management Plan. This approach enables us to ensure that we create an environment that benefits the people using it, as well as the wildlife that inhabits it. We have installed a new footpath through the Puddings Wood to enhance an access as well as created several large wooden sculptures from the fallen ash trees with volunteers.</p> <p>In the summer of 2014, we launched a new vegetable garden and fruit tree orchard which has been developed on a regenerated demolition site on the hospital estate. This garden and orchard provides further opportunities for our volunteers (from various backgrounds) to support them to learn about sustainable lifestyles through vegetable gardening and healthy eating. The students from City of Chelmsford mncap also use the volunteer sessions to contribute to their learning curriculum of 'Discover Health'.</p> <p>Social and therapeutic activities incorporated with horticulture and conservation are offered by professional instructors (an arboriculturist and a psychotherapist) as well as MEHT staff. The instructors guide the participants on their personal journey, providing a simple</p>



framework to help make sustainability an integral part of their everyday life. They work with participants on a designated garden or woodland site, setting a program of work tailored to the space available, time of year and, most importantly, to the needs of the participants. Part of our mission is to help each participant to become more sustainable and to bring about positive behaviour change in children, young people and adults and those connected to them, so that good habits learned from within the project are followed through into their homes and communities.

Partnership working:

Year on year we lead by example by the actions we take to improve our estate and by engaging with our community. We follow best practice evidence from various agencies including the Forestry Commission, the NHS Sustainable Development unit, the National Trust and others. We actively raise funds and seek external grants to support the work that we do and our work is currently supported by a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund. Our Woodlands project also supports the NHS Forest initiative, a national project that aims to improve the health of staff, patients and communities through increasing access to green space on or near to NHS land. We have already planted 620 trees on the campus since 2009 in support of this initiative.

We continuously engage with various professional groups including DF Clark (woodland and arboricultural services) to seek professional advice and involve them in the practical implementation of the project. Their views support us in identifying new areas for development and it also informs our on-going woodland management approach. We have also been supported by NGOs (Non-governmental Organisations) and other corporate partners such as the Cause-an-Effect Foundation (a social enterprise focusing on social and educational change), who have given their time and expertise to volunteer in the woodlands. We have also previously worked with The Conservation Volunteers, the Woodland Trust and the National Trust to enable us to improve our access and interpretation of our green spaces. We have also developed a close relationship with our local Parish, District and County Council's in developing pedestrian access routes through the woodlands to provide enhanced access to our hospital and woodlands.

This project provides us with an opportunity to engage with our users to promote a better understanding of how we use our estate and our most recent Sustainability Survey indicated that there is much local support for more trees and other plants to be provided on the campus to promote biodiversity.

Following the success in the delivery of this project, the volunteer sessions will be continued and expanded to offer various opportunities to more volunteer groups in 2015. A 'Wellbeing Terrace' is currently being planned to transform a tarmac area (part of a demolition site) into a healing and recreational space with an outdoor walking labyrinth and sensory garden area. We are also keen to expand our healing green space approach by working closely with Farleigh Hospice (adjacent to Broomfield Hospital).

<p>How has your project improved sustainable development within your organisation or community setting?</p>	<p>Supporting the delivery of care</p> <p>Our woodlands and gardens are used as part of our clinical pathway (where appropriate) to enable the transition from hospital to home by recognising the benefits of green spaces contributing to aid the recovery of patients. Our approach also encourages appropriate</p>
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outdoor play and recreation and it aids rehabilitation through informal physiotherapy which is in line with paediatric and dementia care recommendations.

Delivering social value

Our approach demonstrates triple bottom line benefits and we believe that our project is a good example of sustainable development in action:

Environmental - The woodlands deliver various environmental benefits to the area as we are supporting and providing further habitats for local wildlife and we are protecting the ancient woodland on site. We also ensure that we manage our woodland resources effectively by using wood from felled trees as natural bollards and we also use wood chippings and fallen wood for path definition, beetle banks, wind breaks and wood sculptures.

Financial- Our proactive approach ensures that the project requires minimal funding from the Trust as it is mainly funded through external grants and donations.

Social- The project contributes to the Health and Wellbeing of our staff and patients and our commitment to the woodlands has been recognised by a series of awards and commendations including Green Flag Status for the woodlands, a Green Apple Award, Highly Commended status in the HSJ Awards and also shortlisted in the Heart of Essex Community Awards.

What role does sustainable development play within patient and staff services within your organisation?

The Trust Board approved our Sustainable Development Management Plan in 2014 which sets out challenging targets for the Trust to ensure that sustainable development is integrated into the fibre of the organisation. Our commitment towards engaging with our community is set out in this plan and focusses on engagement that promotes health and sustainable development. We aim to achieve this by:

- Having clear policies in place that sets out developed an engagement plan with clear social, economic and environmental objectives.
- Contributing effectively to the plans of our key partners in the local area, and use these opportunities to discuss and promote sustainable development.
- Having a clear strategy for understanding patient and carer experience of our services with regular data gathering, which is promptly analysed and fed back to appropriate parts of the organisation
- Providing each patient with the commitment of ‘no decision about me without me’. We assist patients and the public to understand that the NHS Constitution gives them a right to be given information in order to make choices about their healthcare
- Reviewing the organisation’s assets and resources beyond healthcare that we have available to share with our local community (e.g. green space, commercial space, staff volunteers).

Who has led the way on sustainable development within your organisation?

Our Trust’s Chairman acts as the Board level champion for sustainability to challenge at a senior level ensuring that all decisions and actions considers the future sustainability of the organisation. This role is essential to ensure that all sustainable targets are met and that sufficient progress is being made on key actions identified in the Sustainable Development Management Action Plan.

The Director of Estates & Facilities Management also provides strategic leadership for the Sustainability agenda supported by a specialist team based in the directorate.

Over 100 Sustainability champions have been recruited to ensure that sustainability is considered in every part of the organisation. Various engagement session and workshops have been undertaken in order to develop and scope the sustainability communications



campaign for the Trust. Throughout a series of workshops and engagement sessions, it became apparent that champions were keen to ensure that the role they were taking on would make a difference to the future of the MEHT community.

First Image <http://nhssustainabilityawards.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/formidable/vege-volunteers.jpg>

Second Image <http://nhssustainabilityawards.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/formidable/volunteer3.jpg>

Third Image <http://nhssustainabilityawards.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/formidable/P1010005-1.jpg>

Fourth Image <http://nhssustainabilityawards.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/formidable/footpath-launch.jpg>
