Overview of the Project

Barts Health NHS Trust’s Waste Management Team (a working partnership with Skanska Waste Management Service) put time aside, back in 2014, to investigate ways of reducing unwanted bulk waste items being disposed of at our five hospital sites. Bulk waste containers, in acknowledgement that we believed this was an area we could improve our waste management skills, innovation and expertise.

The Trust’s Waste Management Team concluded that many bulk waste items found in our bulk waste containers were in reasonable condition, but obsolete for Trust reuse. We decided to build links with Globechain, explaining our dilemma.

Globechain had never engaged with the NHS and were very keen to develop their online “user vetted” portal, so they could help us and help them develop a Trust friendly tool that could allow the NHS to connect with local, national and international charities and local community projects, which would reuse our unwanted obsolete items being thrown away. Globechain allows the WMT to upload images of unwanted items into tailored categories, describe them in detail, explain where items are located and providing our contact details. This expedites collection turnaround, maximising precious temporary storage space for shorter periods of time.

After a yearlong free trial with Globechain, typical items diverted from the bulk waste containers included wheelchairs, hospital beds, examination couches, crutches, walking frames, metal trollies, chairs and tables. The WMT were given the go ahead to continue using Globechain's platform, after presenting its successes to Trust Senior Managers and receiving their approval to proceed. The WMT continues to prove that waste prevention, via donation, is wholly sustainable, reduces disposal costs, increases social value and improves engagement with local, national and international communities.

Following the WMTs partnership success with Globechain, we still identified item disposal, due to damage or similar, but were potentially reusable for the Trust, if we could find an answer to repair and / or renovate for Trust reuse, without increasing costs. Premier Sustain approached the WMT in February 2016 and asked if they could pilot and support our reuse idea, via renovation. Based locally to the Trust’s five hospitals, Premier’s Renew Centre seemed the ideal opportunity. Their award winning service is the UK’s only independent, commercial facility solely dedicated to remanufacturing, refurbishing and repairing desks, chairs and other furnishings.
To understand our health service requirements, Premier Sustain’s team visited several Bart Health sites to view the types of furnishings being disposed of, the faults and the repairs required. Previously, Premier Sustain have only traditionally worked with non NHS clients, in both the public and private sector; so Barts Health became a keen opportunity to make a repair service work for the NHS. Premier offered to renovate three items retrieved from a bulk waste container; the fabric seating to all of them had been breached - two, four seat internal public benches and a high backed patient ward chair. These were returned fully recovered in impervious vinyl, meeting infection control standards. They remain in use at one of our hospital sites today.

**Economic, Health and Carbon Impact of the project**

Since inception to the end of 2017, working closely with these two key partner organisations; combining their unique sustainable solutions for health service benefit, we have consolidated and ambitiously facilitated the reuse of huge quantities of unwanted bulk items, reducing the Trust’s bulk waste container lifts by 91. The combined cost of not purchasing new [provision via reuse] and reduction in bulk waste container lifts currently stands at £170,150, with the additional benefit of 77.3 tonnes of reduced CO2 emissions.

Since April 2016, at less than half the cost of purchasing new; using money from bulk waste container savings, the Trust have salvaged and renovated 689 office swivel chairs, 126 high backed patient chairs, 10 sofa seating arrangements, 51 desks, 42 internal public bench seating arrangements, over 300 patient waiting room chairs and 10 coffee tables. Over 90% of these items are now repaired, recovered or reformed and have been placed back into reuse for the Trust, giving them all a new long life, at a fraction of purchasing new carbon loaded products, saving on energy production and delivery road miles.

The costs that the WMT have saved our Trust, via our innovative working partnership with Globechain and Premier Sustain has achieved £129,250 in procurement savings and £40,900 from waste disposal processes, to the end of 2017. The WMT’s imaginative sustainable innovations have led to solid, hard and factual costed year on year financial savings, the Trust now utilises in its SIPS targets; but most importantly for the WMT, places us where we are proud to be - at the top of the waste hierarchy; sitting in that very hard to reach “waste prevention” peak. As a WMT, we have raised our profile by being game changers in achieving these cost efficiencies, whilst holding our heads high in sustaining social and environmental impact.
Via Globechain, since inception to end of 2017, we have donated over 9300 items that have benefited over 1,450 communities, helping over 17,000 people, whether, through providing furnishings, opportunities to learn new skills or items to help provide better healthcare environments. Donated items have aided Ebola Disaster recovery in Sierra Leone and Guinea, equipped a non-profit physical rehabilitation centre for the disabled, poor and elderly in Tripoli, Libya, supported construction apprentices in the UK, helped take youth out of knife crime, aided local community projects, social enterprises, local schools and schools in Africa.

Through using Premier Sustain's unique reuse facility, we have revitalised patient and visitor surroundings, by replacing tired and worn public seating within hospital waiting rooms and resting places. Engaged with our staff and improved their working environments, by replacing old and faulty office chairs and desks. Improved patient care and safely by renovating examination couches and clinical seating. A proud example has been the reuse of refurbished furnishings in the Ambrose King Centre [Royal London Hospital]. We salvaged 27 chairs from St. Bartholomew Hospitals skip and refurbished this Sexual Health clinic with the same recovered, returned chairs to their 1st floor waiting room.

**Partners, supporters involved in the Project**

In embarking on our journey to achieve our aim in finding solutions to reduce our bulk waste disposal, it has also become a game-changer in staff’s behaviour towards bulk item disposal. Great swathes of the Trust workforce now engage with the WMT before a request for disposal occurs. This enables us to ask departments to hold on to their items, so buying us time to rehome it, if obsolete; or arrange collection, via swap in / swap out with a Premier Sustain replacement. It has streamlined and honed this now, well-known Waste Management supported service initiative.

Before any procurement orders are now processed, there is now bold, standard text in the ordering process, stating that if the Trusts Reuse Facility, via contact with the WMT has not been exhausted first, then no item will be ordered. Staff enquiries to Trust Procurement are now briefed by Buyer staff, who explain WMTs role in furnishings supply, item disposal prevention, so potential diversion for reuse is expanded, allowing renovated furnishings, like office swivel chairs, desks, patient chairs, internal public seating to be maximised. The Buyer teams redirect staff to the WMT for obtaining repurposed items.

To also support our own Trust staff in their transition to understanding furnishing disposal / purchase new v’s renovation / reuse, we have created a webpage of the
projects aims within the Trusts intranet. This raises our profile and continues to increase staffs behavioural change in this field.

Bulk item reuse via Globechain, would otherwise, not have been possible without our now, key links to local community representatives, social projects users and people working for charitable causes, so we can continue achieving sustained cost reductions and carbon savings.

WMTs engagement with Globechain, Premier Sustain and our FM support service managers help, we continue to successfully implement this projects achievement, which has now become a necessity that many Trust managers and their staff rely on, to either replace furnishings, and / or remove unwanted items. At each site, our hospital portering teams play a vital role in redirecting item disposal / or a prompt to the user, so that they are diverted to contact the WMT for further help and advice.

To further enable successful bulk waste container reductions, the WMT have also created diversion charts for each hospital site, so that FM Managers and waste portering teams can reference, when understanding item diversion via Globechain or Premier Sustain. Each chart identifies where items are to be temporarily stored. The WMT then visits these locations to manage item progression via Globechain or Premier Sustain. Duty of Care audits by the WMT, has assured that, regardless of continued bulk waste container usage at all five hospital sites, content is recycled, reclaimed, reused or sent to waste to energy plants; we just pride ourselves that these containers are lifted less frequently and their contents are exhausted items that are of no further use to the Trust or our Globechain users.

**Future plans for the project**

Our success story goes beyond utilising our own gains for Barts Health NHS Trust. Where once, we would arrange once per month visits to our hospital sites with Premier Sustain, we have just recently decided that Premier Sustain will now expand our joint venture to two visits to our Trust, per month; such is the demand for reusable Trust assets.

We have now also extended our reuse facility supplies, by better managing unwanted Trust assets. Where once, if staff did not want an item in their office / department / area, it became a porter request to remove for disposal; it now becomes a porter request to temporary storage for assessment and reuse. Now staff are enlightened and empowered, not just behavioural change, but organisational change towards sustainable furnishing reuse, everyday items, once not thought about, have now
become essential items to ask for, rather than a move to a procured new purchase.

We now upload item reuse, for such things as unwanted and unused saline solutions, single use medical items and liquid soap containers and their dispensers; such things, we never thought we would shift, via Globechain, but now has further expanded unthought-of and unchartered donation territory, by offering items we would never have considered, would be reclaimed. To aid further development in utilising the WMTs links with Globechain, we have recently dovetailed our Sustainability Co-ordinator’s expertise, so that other bespoke ideas could potentially fold into exploiting, currently, disposed of waste resources.

As an extension of our accomplished project success at Barts Health, we hope the NHS embrace our recognised achievements and use it to further grow, what could become, a mini revolution in sustainable bulk item reuse. As part of this recognition, we were 2017’s shortlisted candidates in the Chartered Institute of Waste Management’s [CIWM] Sustainability & Resource Awards for Best Reuse & Waste Prevention category. Further to this, we have now just learned that we are also shortlisted finalists in this year’s HSJ Value Awards for the category of Value & Improvement in Facilities and Estates Management, for the same project.

The Waste Management Team can only further facilitate this project success to the next level, if we are to acknowledge that, without our Skanska waste management partners, the exceptional skills of prestigious experts in their fields, such as Globechain and Premier Sustain, would not have made it happen for Barts Health; a fantastic venture in collaborative waste management partnerships. We wish the NHS well in its long history and wish its long life, through better sustainable development.

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