
Guy's & St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust - Fit for the Future programme

Overview of the Project

Guys' and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust - comprised of Guys' and St Thomas' Hospitals, the Evelina London Children's Hospital and 30 community sites across Southwark and Lambeth boroughs - seeks to not only be a leader in medicine, but to be a leader in sustainability; improving the quality of patient care and of course, reducing their carbon footprint.

Fit for the Future is the Trust's key cross-organisational programme aimed at improving safety, quality and efficiency. The sustainability programme aims to reduce fixed costs, such as energy, water and waste, as well as designing efficiency and sustainability into procurement of goods and services.

Reducing waste and increasing cost savings is high on the Trust's agenda; and in line with their Fit for the Future campaign on service efficiency, the Trust's SAVE initiative (comprised of c.29 Directorates) has been tasked with identifying at least £150,000 in savings per annum; with improvements to sustainability programmes acting as the catalyst for change needed to attain these goals. Working closely with Bywaters, the appointed waste management service provider, to help determine which areas could be streamlined to promote efficiency and develop systems that generate tangible cost savings.

The result was a multi-faceted strategy that aimed to reduce overall waste generation, divert materials from landfill and maximise recycling rates without diluting service quality, efficiency and compliance. As well as data provided from Bywaters and the Trust Waste Team's mini-weighbridge systems, other sustainability metrics are also included. These feed into a sustainability dashboard for each Directorate that is taken seriously by decision makers to influence change. The target of £140,000 was on track to being met or just short thereof.

Economic, Health and Carbon Impact of the project

Recycling

The Trust has an ethos of "results through education and motivation". Their robust framework ensures that all 15,000+ staff are regularly trained in responsible waste management. This means more than simply teaching staff which materials go where. Rather, it is an extensive training program that instils a sense of responsibility in each individual so that they are fully aware of their impact on the environment as a result of

their work. The level of training is of such a high calibre that it is seen as the benchmark for environmental education within the NHS. Sustainability efforts are further supported by extensive communications, regular news updates (including their own GiST magazine), reward programmes and promotion of responsible resource management via the Trust's internal graphics and signage department.

Food, Coffee and Oil

The Trust proactively identified methods to strategically reduce food production to reduce food waste generation, improving overall recycling efforts by increasingly accurate segregation of food waste. The Trust now organically compost over 12t of food waste per month, and recycles over 400 litres of used oil which is blended to make biofuel for London's black cabs, as well as the PWC building (1 Embankment Place) – Europe's most sustainable building. Working with AMT (the onsite café), the Trust has been able to encourage the recycling of coffee waste with greater visibility. Since the start of this project in January 2017, the Trust has managed to divert over 5 tonnes of coffee waste via Recovery into bio-pellets.

Success through Innovation

The Trust has implemented multiple initiatives in an effort to curb emissions and increase recycling efforts, the most innovative being their advanced weigh-bridge system. The 'by-weigh' system acts as a complete auditing tool, giving precise real-time data on waste activity and offers numerous benefits to the Trust's waste management team:

Each bin is assigned a unique barcoded sticker; allowing waste managers to monitor which areas are generating high levels of waste, why it's being produced and how the Trust can make changes to improve recycling. The data, which allows waste managers to hone in on 'time in motion' elements, gives the Trust complete transparency of their waste generation: they know, ward-by-ward, exactly which waste streams are being produced, the times when waste generation fluctuates, which waste streams generate the highest costs, and how staff can be managed for maximum productivity.

Considering the c. 5,400t of waste generated by the Trust in 2017, this insight has been massively beneficial to their recycling efforts. The Trust are the only hospitals in the UK to use such an advanced system to manage waste generation and disposal!

These efforts, coupled with strategic bin placements throughout the wards, have diverted over 10 tonnes of general waste per month: a 30% increase in overall recycling rates over three years! In fact, the Trust has already reached their desired annual recycling target of 65% and hopes to continue this success to achieve 70% recycling in 2018.

Partners, supporters involved in the Project

The Trust's Procurement Department has worked in close collaboration with the onsite waste management team to ensure that internal departments are using Warplt correctly. Their dedication has been key to Warplt's success; as part of best practice, each requisition for furniture is first checked against the StockDoc database to assess whether a new item has to be procured or whether there is a suitable replacement onsite. This small change to their standard operating procedure has become a huge innovation across the Trust – further reinforcing the benefits of a collaborative partnership approach.

Bywaters are the official service partner for Guy's and St. Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust. As London's leading waste management provider it's their job to ensure that all waste streams (including the items for Warplt) are managed safely and efficiently. Bywater's Account Management Team (assisted by dedicated Sustainability Managers) goes above and beyond to support the Trust's re-use initiatives. The Trust underwent a competitive tender process in 2014 which Bywaters were successful in winning. And along with this the Trust was able to secure a £250,000 savings per annum through disposal cost savings on the contract. Now within the final year of the contract, this exercise will have yielded close to £1,2million in savings.

Bywaters in turn works with the following organisations to complement their efforts for the Trust:

Tradebe are Bywater's preferred service partners for clinical waste management. Their innovative solutions for waste reclamation and recycling have helped the Trust realise their environmental targets.

Healthcare Environmental Group (HEG) is the largest independent full facilities medical waste management solutions company in the UK; HEG undertakes the collection and management of clinical waste, medical waste, sharps and hazardous wastes via sustainable inhouse solutions. HEG also works in close partnership with Augean, who operate a national infrastructure of specialist facilities for the final treatment of clinical waste (including an R3 rated incinerator).

This highly successful partnership has paid dividends to the Trust, as they received a 91% score on the Carbon Trust Waste Standard - the highest scored ever achieved in the waste sector! There is no doubt that the Trust will soon realise their goal of becoming THE flagship for sustainability within the NHS.

Future plans for the project

The Trust has ambitious plans for 2018 and beyond, particularly around maximising their achievements and expanding on current initiatives to yield even greater results; work collaboratively to introduce further resource efficiencies, and enhance current practices to create an ever growing sustainable environment in line with their 70% target. In addition, the Trust is working to introduce a baler that will not only allow for better segregation, it will also generate revenue from waste by receiving regular rebates for cardboard bales – essentially making it a cost-neutral service.

The Trust are completely committed to their passion for keeping their practices green, their resources green and their environment green to become the flagship in environmental practices within the NHS; sharing their (easy-to-replicate) successes with other Trusts within the UK.

Contact: Alan Armstrong, Trust Waste Manager
