
Mid-Essex Hospital Services NHS Trust -

Overview of the Project

Mid-Essex Hospital Services NHS Trust (MEHT) has over 5000 employees spread over five Trust sites. Broomfield Hospital, the largest site supports 800 beds, with Trust medical services as a whole supporting more than 800k patients annually; there is therefore a huge variety of furniture required throughout the Trust; from patient to visitor, to clinical and non-clinical staff.

Hospital and clinic environments are constantly changing, with items of furniture coming in and going out of requirement. By re-using suitable items of quality, the procurement expenditure of new purchases can be avoided, and a reduction of waste can occur. The carbon footprint of transportation, disposal and manufacturing can likewise reduce, creating a more sustainable organisation. Given the current climate and pressures on the NHS, furniture re-use must be an important area of focus to achieve success. The SDU has likewise recognised the benefits of such a scheme, promoting active research and external signing up to the NHS Reuse Programme.

The Board at MEHT takes its corporate responsibilities seriously and is fully committed to tackling anthropogenic emissions and becoming a sustainable organisation by ensuring sustainable development is undertaken in all activities. The Trust's Sustainable Development Management Plan (SDMP) 2014-2020 works through seven workstreams, including Procurement, Community Engagement and Facilities Management. Taking on board these ideals, the Trust launched its Furniture Reuse Scheme in August 2017 to aid in cost avoidance, associated emission reduction and to lead by example locally and regionally.

Produced by the Sustainability Team, a furniture catalogue is in place logging available items ready for reuse; each item is referenced and visually inspected to ensure of adequate quality and cleaned for infectious prevention. For items that are no longer required internally, community research is conducted for suitable reuse locations, enhancing external engagement and supporting our local services.

To aid in the scheme's awareness, a variety of promotional materials are utilised;

- All staff emails
- Staff PC screensavers
- Trust social media
- Verbal communication
- Intranet pages

- Sustainability Champion Newsletters

The awareness enhancement is working alongside the Procurement Department, who are advancing any furniture requests onto the reuse scheme prior to any acceptance of requisitions to ascertain whether an appropriate replacement is already available.

For items that are logged for location to the furniture store, a 'Porters Pocket Furniture Guide' is available; ID badge fitting sized to aid Porters in initial assessments, prior to further inspections undertaken by the Sustainability Team to maintain furniture quality.

Following the successful relocation of items, each recipient is provided with a summary of the cost avoidance, waste reduction and associated procurement emission avoidance, to increase support and awareness into the benefits of reusing items. For items that are deemed unsuitable for reuse, disposals take place with the Trusts waste provider Tradebe sub-contracting Green Recycling to recycle such items, avoiding landfill and minimising further environmental impacts.

Benefits of the scheme are now reported within the Trust's Annual and Carbon Footprint reports, with aforementioned internal communications providing achievements to staff enabling all to feel encouraged from the scheme's implementation.

Economic, Health and Carbon Impact of the project

Since the August 2017 implementation, the Furniture Reuse Scheme has avoided £31,518 (est.) from procurement purchase of new items.

The Trust recognises that determining the exact value and weight of each reusable item is not possible due to the number of suppliers, annual cost inflations and the differing costs of suppliers. However, average estimations of cost per item avoidance can be calculated. Utilising NHS Supply Chain alongside online supplier research, an average estimated cost and weight of similar items can be obtained, and is used to populate avoidance figures. The Trust aims to achieve best value for money (VFM) for all areas of non-pay expenditure whilst continuing to maintain minimal risk and to provide high quality services to patients. VFM is the primary driver behind procurement processes, and discretion is therefore taken in avoiding highest expense items that may cause significant overestimation in avoidance calculations.

Over 18tonnes (est.) CO2 emissions avoided from the Procurement processes of new

items

Calculated through the SDU's Procuring for Carbon Reduction SCO2PE Tool, the carbon intensity per pound sterling of furniture items can be obtained, illustrating the procurement emission avoidances of reusing items.

- Reduction of 4452.15kg (est.) from the Trust's waste stream, by reusing items
- £760 (est.) associated waste disposal avoidance by reusing items
- 71.44kg CO2 (est.) emissions avoidance from the associated HGV transport of removing the reused items

By reusing, each item is reducing the potential waste load and associated cost from transportation and removal. This has an indirect avoidance of transportation emissions, with the waste HGV MPG and mileage to the waste facility obtained, and the carbon footprint per journey calculated. This journey is avoided every 2 tonnes of weight reused.

Quick relocation of reusable items will aid in services running smoothly, ensuring stress free and safe working environments. As an example, multiple items were sought for the Trust's 'Baywatch' initiative in providing additional seating facilities for patients with cognitive impairment to prevent falls, associated costs of care whilst increasing socialising opportunities. These items were quickly relocated, minimising further fall probability in a far shorter lead time than any requisition of new purchases.

Following the successful relocation of an item, each recipient is provided with a summary of the cost avoidance, waste reduction and associated procurement emission avoidance, to increase support and awareness into the benefits of the scheme. To allow for a more personal understanding, the weight of items and CO2 amount is compared to that of a well-known object or animal, highlighting the positive impact of how reusing even a single item can be.

Externally, items have been donated to several local care homes and hospices following on from blanket brand changes throughout the Trust. These items have saved £1440 from the purchase of new equipment, with a partnership developed and positive community outreach.

Partners, supporters involved in the Project

The Trust strives for excellent communication and inter-department collaboration; the furniture reuse scheme has acknowledged expert advice alongside support from senior

management and key departmental stakeholders. Infectious Prevention Control confirmed the schemes cleaning procedure to minimise risks when items are relocated, with a standard operating procedure to ensure of multiple cleaning opportunities. Procurement has accepted the schemes implementation, forwarding on purchase requests before approvals to widen impacts Trust wide.

Waste & Porters have acknowledged the changes, allowing for an easier method to relocate and identify the quality of items, a smoother running service. Every member of staff however is key to the scheme's overall success and achievements; through verbal communications, social media responses and cross departmental discussions enables the biggest behavioural change to occur and by coming together can create a more sustainable organisation moving forwards, in all sectors.

Externally, research has led to the establishment of partnerships between the Trust and locally based Havens Hospice and Manor Lodge Care Home. Communications have also been received from voluntary organisations including the British Red Cross. Collaboration has recently begun between MEHT and the other two NHS Trusts within Essex; Southend University Hospital and Basildon & Thurrock University Hospitals who are in support and are interested in a cross Trust furniture scheme application.

Future plans for the project

With the scheme still in its infancy, the future scope of this initiative is far reaching. The first target is to maintain the VFM whilst reducing risk and increasing quality of patient care. Encouraging further staff participation will advance the success and may lead to a greater behavioural change surrounding sustainability sectors, for example energy awareness as the ideals have been brought to the forefronts of the mind. Updates in the aforementioned promotional materials will maintain engagement, enhancing the environmental and financial creditability.

Within the 8months of the scheme's initiation, in excess of 90 recipients have received a relocated furniture piece, with more than 240 items logged in the catalogue. An increase of 10% each month is targeted, to assess engagement and identify areas of improvement. Items that are requested, which are not currently available are logged onto the catalogue's non-stock list, with contact re-made following any item's subsequent appearance in the log to ensure the swiftest delivery.

Collaborations between the three Essex Trusts will deliver a greater community service base for where unrequired items can be donated, and will provide a positive role model to both local organisations and regional NHS Trusts in how corporation can

bring around large scale sustainable changes.

Technological advances in social media have already been acknowledged, but proactive research into the latest technologies can again preserve engagement with any new advances pre-empted to retain the scheme to modern times. One such technology is online auctioning markets, with both Globechain and Warpit previously presenting their facilities on how a widened external audience can be targeted for increased recycling of furniture items; this is to be pursued to heighten

Currently, the only repairable items through the scheme are operator swivel chairs and vinyl upholstery component chairs. Good quality wheels and vinyl components are removed and replaced onto otherwise good quality items, missing those features. Limited resources has restricted these items, but opportunities lie ahead for extending these items, with the cost of purchasing new predominately outweighing the cost of additional components. Purchase approvals and delivery cause a longer lead time, meaning that a fully entrenched repair scheme will aid in a quicker recipient request, generating a smoother service and increased social satisfaction.

By implementing these additional plans, the scheme can develop and provide further significant contributions to accomplish the Trust's SDMP, and NHS targets.

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