
Wirral Community NHS Foundation Trust - Behaviour change and sustainable procurement for a smaller footprint

Overview of the Project

Wirral Community NHS Foundation Trust set out to establish a set of principles and targeted interventions aimed at addressing one of our Trust's core strategic objectives, which is to be a socially responsible, strong and sustainable business, led by excellent staff. Reflecting our vision of excellent care in the heart of the community, our top priority is to provide high quality health and care services and help drive transformation across the wider health and care system in order to rise to the challenges of the future sustainability is central to the way we do this.

The scale and urgency of the climate change challenge in the 21st century means that large organisations like the NHS must act swiftly and decisively to create a business that is fit for purpose, both now and for the future.

Our Trust's vision and response to addressing climate change is defined by our Sustainability Plan it sets out a clear commitment to decarbonising our operations, promoting healthy, low-carbon lifestyles and creating a shared vision for the health service where NHS Trusts are part of the solution. Sustainable Development (or sustainability) is about meeting the needs of today without compromising the needs of tomorrow. In the health and care system, this means working within the available environmental and social resources to protect and improve health now and for future generations. In practice this requires us to reduce our carbon footprint, minimise waste and pollution, make the best use of scarce resources and build resilience to a changing climate whilst nurturing community strengths and assets.

The case for sustainability in healthcare is clear. There is sound evidence that taking action to become more sustainable can achieve cost reductions and immediate health gains. More importantly, it ensures the development of a health system that is sustainable in the long term – reducing inappropriate demand, reducing waste and incentivising more effective use of services and products. Reducing Carbon Dioxide emissions is the law in the UK, the climate change act 2008 sets legally binding targets for the UK to reduce its CO² emissions by 80% by 2050 and all public sector organisations.

In the UK we have a responsibility to put in place plans to meet this target. The NHS is one of the largest employers in the world and is the largest public sector contributor to climate change in Europe. Consequently it has the potential to make a significant contribution to tackling climate change in the UK.

Wirral Community NHS Foundation Trust has developed an Environmental Management System (EMS) which has resulted in achieving the ISO 14001-2015 Environmental Award in December 2017. The award is an internationally accepted standard that outlines how to put an effective environmental management system in place.

Economic, Health and Carbon Impact of the project

Wirral Community NHS Foundation Trust was established on 1st April 2011. We achieved Foundation Trust status on 1 May 2016. The Trust provides a comprehensive range of high quality; community based health care services to the population of Wirral, Cheshire and Liverpool.

We operate in a challenging economic environment. We have invested in our properties over recent years and must now ensure we obtain maximum value from that investment. We aim to deliver a productive estate that supports the delivery of high quality clinical services and integrated service provision (e.g. of health and social care). A significant development that will affect the development of the Trust's Estates Strategy in future, is the eventual implementation of the Cheshire & Merseyside Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP).

The first stage of our sustainability journey has delivered fantastic results. We set out to demonstrate how investing in and taking action to become a more sustainable organisation can bring about tangible and measurable improvements in environmental performance (particularly a reduction in CO²), as well as create financial and reputational co-benefits. We will decarbonise our facilities ahead of NHS and national targets, with the ultimate aim of creating a carbon neutral healthcare estate for our staff and patients. We will raise awareness of climate change and communicate progress with our own CO₂e reduction efforts to our Board, our staff, our patients and other external stakeholders.

As a result of our achievements so far we have exceeded the 2020 targets that was laid down by the NHS, public health and social care system to reduce carbon dioxide equivalent emissions across building energy use, travel and procurement of goods and services by 34% (from a 1990 baseline) equivalent to a 28% reduction from a 2013 baseline by 2020 and 80% by 2050. The actual figures achieved so far are 66% reduction in water usage, 78% reduction in electrical and 54% reduction in gas usage. Staff have been encouraged via the use of screen savers and staff bulletins to recycle the following items in work-:

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- Used batteries.
 - Cardboard.
 - Used toner and printer cartridges.
 - Plastics from goods delivered (shrink wrap packaging).

We have also run staff “switch it off” and “save it” campaigns aimed at encouraging staff to save electricity and water. Water has been termed the “new carbon”: it is a scarce resource and costs are rising rapidly making it an increasingly precious but undervalued commodity. Staff are now report all dripping taps within all our buildings and our team of maintenance engineers are repairing these leaks quickly. Dripping taps wastes approximately 5,500 litres of water a year.

We have commissioned a Six-Facet Survey which will enable the Trust to make better informed decisions based on the following criteria: Existing space that is (or will shortly be) no longer fit for the delivery of modern health care services and/or has significant maintenance/condition challenge, bookable space that is not well used and void space in long-term core buildings and modern high-quality space that is under-occupied and often badly utilised.

Partners, supporters involved in the Project

Procurement is the biggest contributor to carbon emissions within the NHS, The national healthcare system spends in excess of £40billion each year on the procurement of goods and services which presents a significant opportunity to influence the suppliers of these goods and services to develop more environmentally, financially and socially responsible practices. We will eliminate waste from our supply chain through the implementation of new procurement policies and tendering processes and through proactive collaboration with our major supply chain partners.

Implement a new Sustainable Procurement Policy, ensuring that sustainability and social responsibility considerations are introduced at the earliest possible opportunity as a business-as-usual feature of our procurement activity. Engage in collaborative initiatives with suppliers to identify and address known carbon “hotspots” to deliver measureable environmental performance improvements. We will develop a programme for managing suppliers and contracts using clear sustainability performance criteria and metrics and outcome-based evidence on sustainability initiatives, guided by the EU consolidated Procurement Directive.

We will promote our Sustainable Procurement Policy to all potential suppliers and train staff to ensure that anyone procuring for our Trust understands what is required to

procure in a sustainable way. We will ensure that we develop a Procurement Stock Review programme to help reduce waste generated by our clinical services. The procurement department will set up effective communications with other NHS organisations to share best practice and benchmark our performance and publicly report on our progress each year.

We will liaise with waste contractors, suppliers and relevant support agencies to implement the Waste Hierarchy with the ambition of achieving zero waste to landfill across all of our operations and turning residual waste into a resource opportunity wherever possible. Waste recycling initiatives have been implemented across the estate, with all locations encouraged to recycle paper, cardboard, bottles, printer and toner cartridges, portable batteries, both Zinc and Lithium types and mixed recyclable waste. We recover or recycle 119 tonnes of waste, which is approximately 64% of the total waste we produce.

Our Estates Strategy sets out how we intend to utilise our estate so that we are best able to respond to changes in service delivery. It will directly support sustainable development by optimising the size and location of our estate, driving energy efficiency and waste reduction and supporting a shift away from car travel to more sustainable and healthy transport alternatives.

We recognise the vital role our staff can play in helping to achieve our targets as well as the power of partnership to accelerate progress and achieve success. The challenge for us now is to set out a longer-term vision for sustainability within Wirral Community NHS Foundation Trust and define the actions that we will take over the coming years to reach it.

Future plans for the project

The Trust has already exceeded the target the Climate Change Act set in 2008 that requires a 34% reduction in carbon emissions by 2020 however to ensure that we reach the end goal set to ensure the NHS cuts its carbon emissions by 80% by 2050 we must keep improving. It is fundamental to being a sustainable organisation that we operate with integrity and responsibility, we will achieve this by measuring and monitoring our progress which we believe is the key to ensuring that we are developing in the right direction.

We recognise the vital role our staff can play in helping us deliver this management as well as the power of partnership to accelerate progress and achieve success. The Trust has set ambitious but achievable targets for 2018/19. We have set a 100% target of

trust staff to receive training on sustainability in healthcare, including Carbon reduction and climate change adaptation, as appropriate to their role.

We will inform, empower and motivate our workforce to take action to deliver high quality care today that does not compromise our ability to deliver care in the future and ensure this becomes integral to the “Wirral Community NHS Foundation Trust Way”.

We will embed sustainability into our HR policies and practices and ensure that staff development processes support a shift to more sustainable and resilient healthcare delivery with clear senior leadership.

Travel and transport by the Trust is one of its most significant environmental impacts and will therefore be a priority for future management and carbon reduction opportunities. Our impact includes carbon emissions arising from:

- Trust Business Travel by road.
- Staff commuting
- Patient and visitor travel

The Trust will seek to improve travel data collection and management in the future to enable greater analysis of travel behaviour by staff and patients and to identify opportunities to reduce carbon emissions through sustainable transport options.

This includes a short survey of staff travel modes, distances and behaviour. In other Trusts business travel is 52% of the overall estimated transport footprint. However, it is directly within the control of the Trust and offers significant opportunities for direct financial savings as well as carbon savings. The Trust’s Travel Plan sets out our ambitions to reduce the environmental impact of staff commuting to and from work in single occupancy vehicles and what the Trust will be doing to encourage staff out of their cars and into other sustainable travel options. Examples of actions include:

- The Trust will work with suppliers to increase the efficiency of deliveries and to minimise the associated Carbon emissions
 - Encourage teleconferencing and video conferencing facilities to minimise business travel
 - Promotion of cycling - provide additional secure lockers, changing and shower facilities where feasible
 - Develop the trust walking plan/trust cycling map showing safe walking and cycling routes, indicating distances and times to popular destinations
 - Education and communication with staff to reduce unnecessary travel
 - Improve the dissemination of public transport information to staff and patients/
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visitors.

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