

COMMITTING TO A GREENER NHS

How Hillingdon Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust undertook an ambitious sustainability programme to meet net zero targets.

BACKGROUND

Hillingdon Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (THH) is located in west London. The Trust provides clinical services to over half a million patients and employs 3,500 staff.

Whilst sustainability is relatively new to the Trust, its leadership have quickly taken it on board as a key priority following the launch of 'For a Greener NHS Campaign' in January 2020.

This case study will demonstrate three areas that THH have made interventions and taken action to work towards the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Trust understood it needed to make progress so carried out a Sustainability Status Assessment (SSA) in April 2020, which identified several target areas in line with NHS Standard Contracts and NHS Long Term Plan such as energy savings, waste reduction, recycling, green travel, education, and awareness. It was evident that there was a big challenge ahead to meet the sustainability and net zero targets.

DESCRIPTION OF INITIATIVE

Zero emissions patient transport initiative

The SSA identified an opportunity to reduce transport related carbon emissions. The Trust manages internal transport for its services, such as courier, specimen, logistics, and waste transfers; however, it contracts out non-emergency patient transport service (NEPTS) to an external Group: HATS.

HATS provides over 30,000 patient journeys per annum. A clear goal of THH's first ever Sustainable Travel and Transport Plan (STTP) was to reduce NEPTS related carbon emissions that contribute to 90% (on average 104 tonnes of CO₂) of the Trust's transport service-related emissions, and contribute to the Mayor of London's Green New Deal.

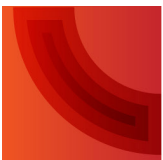
The ambitious goal was addressed by developing the UK's first fully electric ambulance (EVA). EVA was officially launched on 24th August 2021 and has since been recognised at the Electric Vehicle Innovation & Excellence (EVIES), winning Best Product or Service award.



BENEFITS

The EVA was fully operational and contributing to its target of reducing carbon emissions instantaneously.

On average, each HATS ambulance completes 13,000 patient miles a year. For EVA to complete these journeys, it would save 8.6 tonnes of CO₂ (8% of patient service related carbon emissions).



The EVA also enhances overall patient comfort and experience for those who travel in it. Benefits include the reduced noise, and improved design and weight distribution which delivers a smoother journey. These factors are helping to alleviate what is already a considerably stressful experience for many NEPTS patients.

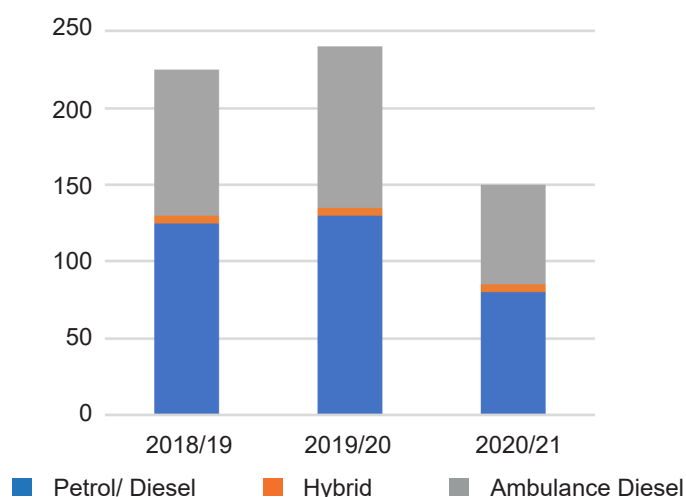
"The new HATS electric vehicle is very good, I can't hear anything, we just need more..."

THH NEPTS Patient

"The new electric vehicle is so nice, super quiet"

THH NEPTS Patient

Tonnes of CO2 emissions



A further benefit is EVA uses fully green electricity that is generated onsite. Equipped with the latest battery technology, which delivers an extensive mileage range of just under 100 miles between charges and a lightweight design, complemented by a low centre of gravity, the vehicle is a fully functioning and operational asset. It has a top speed of 60mph and a current recharge time of less than three hours (with fast charging units).

- One of the 12 ambulances is electric and zero emitter
- Average 8.3% zero emissions in non-emergency patient transport
- Approximately 37% reduction in transport related carbon emissions
- 24% of Trust transport fleet is electric and zero emitter

FURTHER WORK

The zero emissions transport initiative is one of the biggest steps towards decarbonisation of NHS activities. Although the transition has been lengthy, it has contributed to THH meeting the NHS Green Plan and supporting the national ambition to be a net-zero.

As part of their first STTP, THH have invested in and doubled both electric vehicles and charging points. As a result, their internal transport service is undertaking on average 30,000 miles (15-20%) with zero carbon emissions.

The Trust Internal Transport Team has six 100% electric vehicles with seven fast charging dedicating units. Currently, the Trust is looking to enhance staff EV charging infrastructure.

DESCRIPTION OF INITIATIVE

Sustainability Awareness Course initiative

Sustainability requires engagement and awareness to empower people and teams, enable strategic decisions, and develop future plans.

Staff awareness and education were identified as top priorities in order to raise the profile and increase understanding of environmental and health issues to help deliver NHS Green Plan commitments.

A 'Sustainability Awareness Course' was identified as 'must-have' and a strong case was submitted to the Senior Management and to the Learning and Development (L&D) Department, who supported the drivers, objectives, audience, duration, frequency, and medium of delivery.

Once the training was approved, the course contents were developed in-house covering areas identified in the SSA including energy, waste, water, green travel, procurement, patient care, operational efficiencies and carbon targets (net-zero). Guidance from NHS Green Team related to UN SDGs were also used.

The course was launched on the Trust e-learning Management System as a 'Trust Requirement'

and communicated through the staff newsletter. Every member of staff is expected to complete the training annually, with a Trust compliance target of 80%.

BENEFITS

Despite the unprecedented activity pressures in 2020 due to COVID19, and the challenge to introduce and engage on new initiatives like sustainability, the early support from senior leadership resulted in creating a strong will to prioritise the sustainability agenda.

Since the course launched in June 2020, staff engagement and awareness of sustainability has increased, with staff sharing ideas and raising local issues on waste recycling and energy saving practices.

- 74.2% (2,882) staff have completed mandatory training (previously zero)
- 17.6 tonnes of food waste to energy (previously zero)
- Zero domestic waste to landfill (previously 550 tonnes)
- Over 60 desktide bins removed (previously most desks had a bin);
- Winner 2020 International Green Apple Award – for environmental best practice

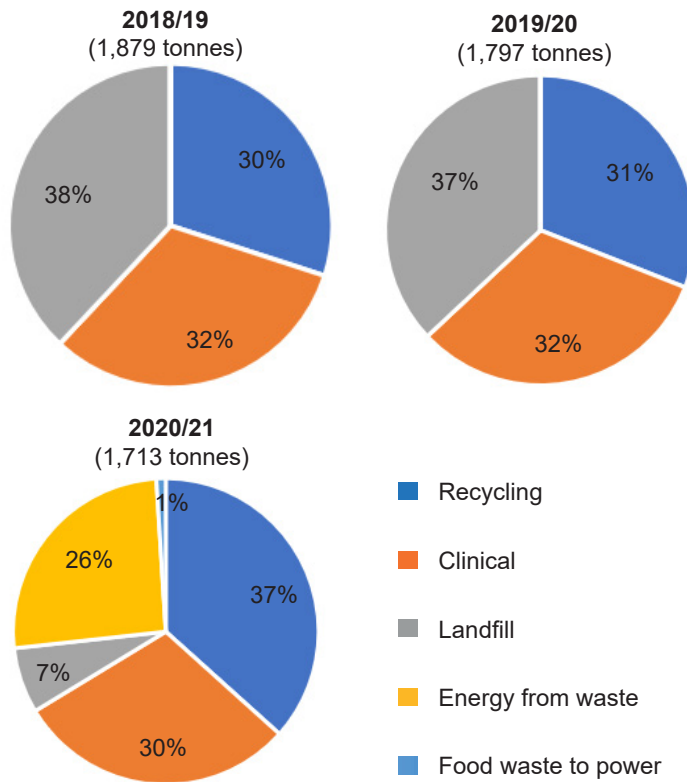
Several departments have also embraced sustainability and are working with their teams toward setting and achieving targets.



The Catering Department has implemented food recycling, helping THH divert approximately 25 tonnes of food waste from landfill and help generate green energy, which could power two UK average households for a year.

Capital projects are also embedded sustainability into their work, undergoing sustainability assessment, incorporating sustainability questions in their procurement tenders, and creating a ratified sustainable procurement policy.

A ‘Green Message’ newsletter is published monthly to continue awareness, engagement and promote regular success stories.



FURTHER WORK

Following the Green Plan publication in 2021, the course will be revised to meet the requirements of the Trust objectives, staff expectations and share success, all in line with net-zero carbon commitments.



DESCRIPTION OF INITIATIVE

Fast forward to net zero initiative

THH has the second largest backlog of repairs for any hospital in the country with its buildings and infrastructure continuing to be operational beyond their expected life. As a result, the Trust is undergoing a redevelopment programme to build a new hospital.



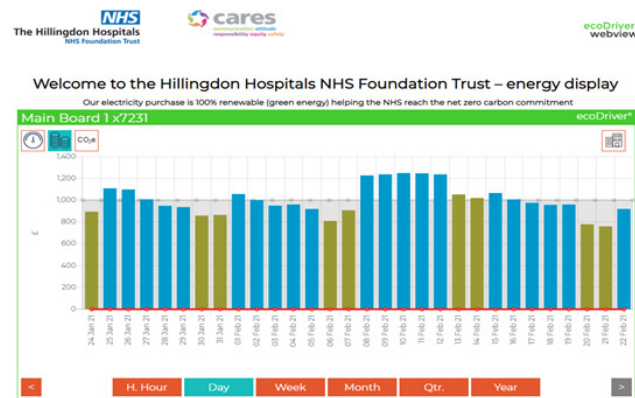
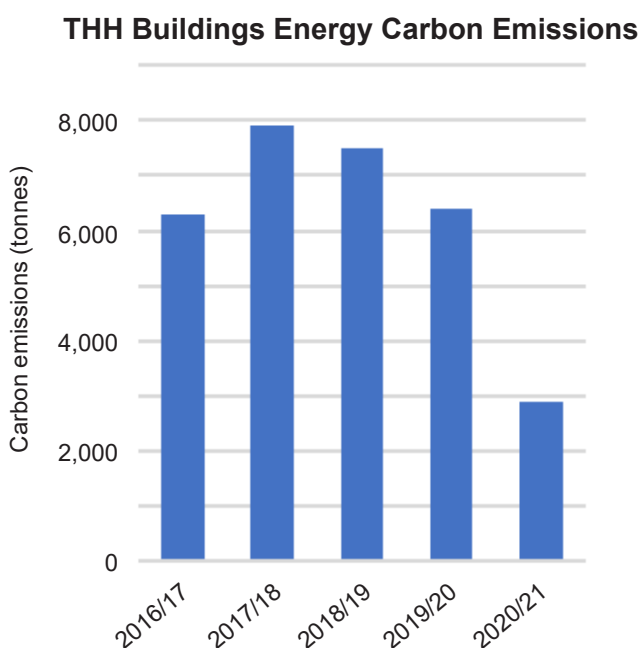
This vision coincided with the NHS net zero carbon emissions target. A strong commitment is made through the Strategic Outline Case for a net zero carbon building. This also means the Trust is limited in implementing innovative long-term carbon reduction initiatives between now and the new build. Under these circumstances quick-wins needed to be identified.

Despite the lack of historical or internal success on buildings related energy and carbon savings, the early engagement of the Senior Management team and strong evidence of the NHS Long Term Plan and NHS Green Plan Foundations requirements, ensured that a transition of contracts to renewable energy forged ahead.

A decision was made to switch all Trust electricity supply to Renewable Energy under the REGO scheme administered by the Ofgem. As of 1st April 2020, in line with new contract transition, electricity purchased by the Trust is now 100% renewable (green) with zero carbon emissions.

BENEFITS

The Trust's electricity related carbon emissions in 2019/20 was 3,615 tonnes of CO2. This is 57% of energy related total carbon emissions. From 1st April 2020, the figure is zero, supporting the Trust's ambition to move fast forward towards building a net zero carbon hospital.



In addition, this provides an extra 685 tonnes of CO2 carbon emissions savings for the Trust tenants, equivalent to filling 24 Royal Albert Halls, or a Wembley Stadium, or 24,447 Double Decker buses.

FURTHER WORK

This initiative is one of the biggest steps towards decarbonisation of NHS activities. More importantly, implementing such schemes helps beyond NHS to invest in green technologies at the source (National Grid) and assist in meeting the UK's Climate Change Act commitment.

This also helped the Trust evidence that it is committed to reducing its activity related impact on the environment and public health, proving that it can deliver a cleaner, greener, and safer patient care during unprecedented challenging times.

To extend staff and buildings operational teams' participation in understanding energy use and eliminate wastage of energy, real-time live energy consumption data is published. Moreover, to ensure the continuity of decarbonisation through behavioural and culture change and to embed in the organisation regular success stories newsletter 'Green Message' are published.

CONTACT DETAILS

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