



Case Study

Waste reduction,
culture change

Barking, Havering and Redbridge
University Hospitals NHS Trust

Clinical Waste Reduction in Theatres

As part of its sustainable development management plan (SDMP) objectives the Trust has been working on a Waste Improvement Programme and implementing waste reduction and recycling initiatives by engaging with a wide range of stakeholders.

What was the issue / problem being addressed?

As part of the various audits it was identified that theatres waste management facilities required a full review. Most of the areas were using yellow bags (high temperature incineration) waste, which is expensive to dispose and harmful to the environment.

What action was taken to overcome the issue?

As part of the Trust's Waste Improvement Programme theatres have gone through a bins replacement programme changing all old metal models for new plastic labelled bins. This change provided an opportunity as bin types were mapped based on activity on a room-by-room basis. As a result theatres were provided with Mixed Recycling, Clinical Waste (orange bag) and Food Recycling and main operating theatres were provided with dedicated customised sack holders for clinical waste and recycling waste.

Regular audits were carried out and appropriate actions were taken to raise awareness amongst staff.

What was the impact / result?

Actions including the provision of appropriate bins by activity in rooms, conducting regular audits, raising awareness and education, and the dedication of staff - has enabled theatres to reduce their expensive and carbon producing, High Temperature Incineration (HTI) waste by 21%. In 2014/15 this represented a cost saving of approximately £33,500.

Lessons learnt / success factors

Theatres have been congratulated for their achievements and staff are proud to be exemplars in supporting the Trust's sustainability agenda. Special cupcakes were produced to congratulate theatre staff for their good work. Building up on this success theatre staff are hoping to improve further on waste segregation and reducing the quantity of waste in their areas.

The Trust's Sustainability team is



already working with other departments in rationalising the bin allocation and increasing staff understanding. The waste and recycling is highly promoted both by the Trust and Facilities Management contractor Sodexo and PFI partners.



*Peter Harris, Head of Estates,
Congratulating and Thanking staff with
"Well-done Theatres" printed cakes*

Scaling up

Disposing clinical waste is nearly 8-10 times more expensive than mixed recycling. This means any recyclable items ending in Clinical Waste bins will cost more to get rid of and are more environmentally harmful.

So segregation of waste at point of disposal is important. This can be achieved by providing tailored facilities based on activity in a room and through engaging local teams.

"Theatres are very enthusiastic and compliant with going Green. At theatres we have realised that we are high users of consumables that require a lot of packaging to ensure its safe use. We are so pleased to have a mixed recycling system. Our clinical waste has been reduced by this packaging going into the right disposal system. We are grateful to Sustainability Team who we highlighted this to and was able to implement a plan to reduce the amount of packaging that was going into the clinical waste bags."

**Lisa Awong,
Sister, Queen's Hospital Theatres**

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