

Buying more sustainably

Increasing understanding of CO₂ emissions related to our procurement activity

The Trust is committed to purchasing more goods from sustainable sources, with a focus on local, ethical and fair trade suppliers. The aim of the project was to organise and produce the evidence and background information that the Trust requires to achieve Level One P4CR (Procuring for Carbon Reduction) Foundation.

University Hospitals of North Midlands NHS Trust

Procurement and food



What was the issue being addressed?

There was a lack of understanding regarding CO₂ (carbon) emissions in procurement activity. The trust aimed to achieve Level One P4CR to establish a baseline for future activity and needed to establish how carbon reduction could be measured and to capture how sustainable procurement can influence the CO₂ footprint.

What action was taken to overcome the issue?

The project was led by Estates, Facilities and PFI division in conjunction with Procurement and Supplies as part of collaboration between UHNM and the [Climate-KIC](#) 'Pioneers into Practice' Programme. Work to establish the Trust's CO₂ footprint resulted in a carbon intensity baseline being produced.

This identified four hotspots of activity :

- Travel
- Medical instruments/equipment,
- Pharmaceutical items
- Energy and heating.

An assessment of risk/opportunity has been conducted. The Trust have established how to measure carbon reduction and to measure how sustainable UHNM procurement is. The project enabled:

- Supplier sustainability assessment
- Supply chain sustainability scorecard
- Case studies
- Self-assessed progress against the sustainable Procurement Flexible Framework

The Trust's top 100 suppliers were identified in terms of spend and those that had sustainability content on their website were approached to fill in a supplier sustainability questionnaire. Areas included environment, corporate responsibility, health and safety, ethics, community and governance.



Pharmaceuticals were identified as a carbon hotspot

What was the impact?

The project resulted in longer term guidance and tools for procurement professionals to use after the project.

- A key learning point has been that as the Trust expands = more procurement = more emissions. Therefore not everything can be equated to carbon.
- 52% of suppliers had sustainable / environmental, corporate responsibility content on their websites.
- Sustainability is becoming a factor in purchasing decisions
- Resource efficiency has become an important element of activity

The work identified the carbon hotspots of activity which has enabled the Trust to target activity in those areas.

“While procuring office equipment an important role was played by whole life cycle. The fact that the supplier has a recycling programme was the Value for Money for UHNM.”

J. Kitchen, Deputy Operations Manager

Lessons learned / success factors?

The Trust plan to build on this project work and continue activity to meet targets. The aim is to achieve PC4R Embed (Level Two) during years 2016 / 2017.

In order to do this the Trust will need to:

- Identify and promote achievements
- Develop a UHNM Sustainable Procurement Practical guide/ policy/ code of conduct
- Develop an internal award scheme based on exceptional procurement practice
- Monitor performance of 100 top suppliers.

Maintaining momentum of this project has been crucial to its success. It can be difficult to identify internal resources available to ensure that activity is continued. It can also be challenging to find good contacts at suppliers (in order to monitor performance) who will have knowledge regarding the agenda.

Scaling up

There is potential for huge impact if organisations are able to equate their activity not just to carbon and activity but to resource efficiency. The NHS has huge influence on suppliers.

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