

Green Accreditation with Investors in the Environment

There is an increasing requirement within the NHS to have some form of externally validated Environmental Management System in order to satisfy the requirements of tenders. There is also some merit in having an external review of KPIs and environmental actions.

Northampton General
Hospital NHS Trust

Governance



What was the issue being addressed?

Northampton General Hospital has limited resources (a sustainability team of one) and money to invest in external environmental credentials. Many of the well known standards can be expensive to apply for over an entire site and require a large number of man hours to keep up to date.

Administering these for a site with 4,500 staff would take the majority of the Sustainability Manager's time. In addition some standards can be inflexible in terms of the types of actions required.

What action was taken to overcome the issue?

Investors in the Environment Green Accreditation was applied for. This is a not for profit green business scheme administered through local partnerships.

It can be tailored to reflect the actions already underway within the organisation as part of the SDMP and is designed more towards the actions rather than documentation.

What was the impact?

The cost of the scheme is £800 per year and requires an Environmental Statement signed by the Chief Executive, thus raising the profile to the Board Level. The audit reviews resource use; utility use, waste, and travel via an Evidence Pack presented in advance. As the scheme reflects work already underway there is minimal effort required for annual upkeep – half a day of audit and a day or so creating and updating the Evidence Pack.



In the first year NGH were awarded Overall Achievers for our efforts – this led to mentions in dispatches by the Chief Executive, as well as an article in the local paper – all very valuable for raising the profile of sustainability within the hospital.

Investors in the Environment (iE) is a growing network, covering small and large organisations. Their newsletter and networking events are at a local level and can present different ideas and solutions from local businesses with similar challenges.

“Gaining Investors in the Environment Accreditation has allowed NGH to show that they are reducing their negative environmental impact whilst not taking money and resources away from further green actions.”

Clare Topping
Energy and Sustainability Manager

Lessons learned / success factors?

Success factors:

- Green Accreditation was achieved
- The profile of sustainability was raised across the Trust
- External review undertaken of actions
- Can be quoted on tenders that require an EMS
- Links with the Trust’s SDMP

Limitations:

- Not yet widely recognised compared with Carbon Trust and ISO14001
- Does not force any particular set of actions or compliance
- Allows own targets to be set

Scaling up

This scheme is readily applicable to other NHS organisations, particularly those with limited resources to administer schemes. It can be applied to a whole organisation or just one site.

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