Hello and welcome to the spring edition of Green News.

This month James and Ian have asked me, as their student placement, to guest edit the Green News.

I am in my final year as an undergraduate student studying Geography with a main focus on Sustainability at Northumbria University. As part of my work placement module James and Ian have kindly allowed me to shadow them in order to gain an insight to what it’s like being an Energy/Waste Officer within a large organisation.

In this issue we’re excited to invite you to get involved in NHS Sustainability Day. We’re encouraging everyone to come and visit our stall by the MediCinema on the day and to complete our Staff Survey to be in with a chance of winning some fantastic prizes.

Wishing you all a Happy (and Green) Easter and thanks for reading,

The Sustainability Team
(James, Ian, Lynsey and Hannah)

NHS Sustainability Day

We are supporting this nationwide day of action designed to make the provision of NHS services more environmentally sustainable. On the day members of the Trust’s Sustainability Working group will set up an information stall outside the MediCinema at the RVI to help inform staff, patients and visitors of the work the Trust is doing to improve it’s environmental performance.

Come along and visit our stall; ask us any of your queries, speak to experts, learn how you can save the Trust money or how you can make a big difference by becoming a green champion for your ward or department!

Complete our Sustainability Survey and be in with the chance of winning a Samsung Galaxy Tablet or a Kindle e-reader!

The Sustainability Working Group are keen understand staff awareness and attitude towards sustainability. We have created a short survey and are asking all staff to take five minutes to complete it. As an incentive, everyone who completes the survey will be in with a chance of winning one of the two amazing prizes (kindly provided by our clinical waste partners). So, what are you waiting for?!

A link to the online survey will be available on the Trust intranet homepage until Friday 11th April. Good luck!

1st Prize
Samsung Galaxy Tab 3 (7”, 8GB)

2nd Prize
Kindle e-reader (6”, Wi-fi)

Don’t forget to email us with any Green queries: environment@nuth.nhs.uk
Peruvian Government Visit

Our Trust Waste Officer, James Dixon, was contacted by representatives from the UK Home Office and their colleagues in Peru to arrange a fact finding visit to the RVI. As reported in the last issue of Green News, we are lucky to be considered a good example of managing healthcare waste in the NHS. It’s nice to know this has now gone global!

Kathia Soto, pictured here with James, was keen to hear how we secured waste at ward level, moved it safely outside and how contractors collected and treated our waste before disposal.

She was impressed with how well we segregated our waste to reduce costs and environmental impact - especially given all the different categories and colour coded containers. She even requested a copy of our current “Colours of the Rainbow” Waste Segregation Chart (as shown in the photo) to take back to the 27 hospitals she represents in Lima, Peru.

‘Green’ Ward Profile: Ward 39 (RVI)

We’ve decided to start profiling a ‘Green’ ward, or department, in future editions of Green News.

Ward 39 is a multi-speciality day unit providing care for people requiring treatment for gynaecological and chronic pain problems, they also provide care for patients requiring some types of plastic surgery.

Staff Nurse Brenda Johnson was one of our first Green Champions and works hard to encourage ward staff to segregate their waste correctly and turn off lights and non-essential equipment when not in use.

Brenda also issues small ‘You are a Star’ stickers praising green behaviour amongst staff - a bit of simple fun that seems to work: the ward are very efficient with their energy use and recycle a high proportion of their waste. They also have a Green noticeboard with environmental awareness posters.

If you would like your ward/department featured in Green News, please email: environment@nuth.nhs.uk
Serious Incident - Metal item put in cart of Orange waste

We were notified by our clinical waste contractor that a large piece of metal had entered the clinical waste stream and damaged their treatment facility. It is believed that this piece of metal was in a clinical waste cart from the Freeman Hospital (though it isn’t known if it was in an orange bag or placed loose in the cart). This piece of metal is quite large (30cm long x 6cm wide x 1cm thick) and is smooth and curved in shape (pictured below - please note the bag in the background is the contractors own, not ours).

As you know, metal items are banned from entering our orange bags/boxes of clinical waste. The treatment process for our ‘orange’ waste is that it is shredded before being heat treated (to help ensure all bacteria are killed) just for this reason. Contaminated metal items that can’t be cleaned should be placed into white Sharpsmart boxes which are sent for sterilisation then recycling.

There have been incidents of small metal items (i.e. hip joints from surgery) entering the orange clinical waste stream in the past, causing similar damage. However the last incident at our contractor’s local facility was over four years ago (and the metal item on that occasion was from another local Trust).

The damage caused to the facilities by misplaced metal objects is significant. As you can see from the pictured below, it destroyed the shredder causing thousands of pounds of damage and significant downtime. The facility needs to be chemically cleaned before contractor staff can enter it to carry out repairs.

Please ensure all metal is kept out of orange bags!
Trust Agrees Sustainable Procurement Policy

The Trust have recently ratified our first ever Sustainable Procurement Policy, aiming to ensure that the Trust procures goods and services in a way that:

- Creates value for money on a whole life cycle basis,
- Generates benefits to the organisation, society and the economy,
- Minimises damage to, and indeed enhances, the natural environment.

It was first proposed by the Trust Sustainability Working Group (SWG) as a way of ensuring that all future purchasing decisions has an environmental sustainability consideration. This new policy sets the foundations of this aim and we hope to achieve this by working closely with our colleagues in Supplies & Procurement.

The Policy was drafted by Lesley Fallon (Supplies SWG rep) and James Dixon (SWG Chair) and then ratified by the Supplies & Procurement Committee. Compliance with this policy will now be subjected to Internal Audit - another way of ensuring the aims are achieved. A link to the new policy is on the Trust Policy & Procedures intranet page:

http://intranet.xnuth.nhs.uk/Policies/operational/SustainableProcurementPolicy201311.pdf

Award Winning Oncology Homecare Project Saves Carbon

When the Trust Sustainability Working Group (SWG) heard about the good work of the Oncology Homecare Team we asked them to present to our meeting in November, due to its close links to the aims of our Sustainability Strategy. Shifting models of care from acute hospitals closer to patients’ homes not only saves money and improves the patient experience, it can also save carbon (associated with their travel to and from hospital).

The team then went on to win the HSJ Award for “Quality & Productivity” later that month.

Working with Karen Hamlen, the Trust SWG been able to calculate that the project saved 700kg of CO₂ (from an estimated reduction in 3,044 patient miles).

Don’t Miss Any Future Issues of Green News

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Alternatively, if you don’t have an email address, just give us a ring on 0191 282 1655 and we can post a printed copy out to you.