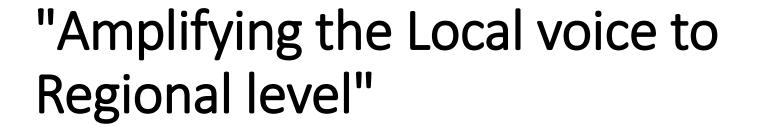


Conversations with the public: Top Three Tips to make the NHS more environmentally friendly

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Involved Healthwatch across the SW, GP Practice Patient Participation Groups and conversations with local groups such as Torbay Climate Action

A number of issues raised

- Travel volume, mode
- Single use plastic
- Energy Use
- Waste and waste management
- Food/Water
- Medication packaging
- Commissioning and planning
- Procurement and purchasing
- Culture
- Offset Carbon Emissions



Travel (contributor from a PPG)



"Yesterday I volunteered to take a patient to the RD&E Hospital to have his wound inspected, drain bottle and dressing changed. He had spent 5 days in hospital and was discharged after having a tumour removed from his chest under GA. He is in his 80s, unable to drive and his mobility is poor. I assumed he was to be seen by a registrar from the surgical team. He was seen by a dressings nurse. The total journey was 108 miles. I picked him up at 08.45 and returned him home at 13.40hrs. We stopped for only 20 mins for a coffee. A local nurse had been visiting him at home for 2 days after his discharge to ensure there was no wound infection or blockage of the drain. I don't understand why this procedure could not have been done at the local community hospital. The journey would have been only 12 miles. Not just a saving on resources and pollution but far less stress on the patient."

Single use plastic (Healthwatch volunteer and retired GP)



"Having had recent experience of an NHS Hospital I am appalled at the amount of single use plastic being used. It appears that everything is disposable from scissors to forceps to aprons to packaging for every thing. I appreciate this was done in response to the problem of CJD and prion induced illnesses but it seems overkill. I accept that in operating theatres instruments need to be sterilised to eliminate prions but surely general dressings, cannula insertions and urinary catherization some equipment could be metal (gallipots) and be reused? Why not go back to using paper bags to receive waste dressings?"

Energy Usage, Food /Water and Waste Management



- Why do hospitals always feel overheated?
- Why are hospitals lit up like Christmas Trees? Does the NHS use ultra efficient lighting?
- Can the use of solar power be introduced? What about using more renewable energy?
- Is water usage monitored and managed?
- How is hospital waste avoided, disposed of and/or recycled?
- How far do hospital food supplies have to travel?
- Is bottled water banned in all NHS hospitals?
- Are there any compostable approaches used for waste?
- Could there be meat free' menus for patients and staff on some days of the week?

Medication Packaging (contributors from PPGs)



- "This is a small point but it bugs me. I have to use steroid eye drops. They come in plastic phials with no way to reuse/recycle. I think this issue needs to be addressed"
- "An enormous amount of wasteful packaging used for medication.
 Why do so many medications have to be in blister packs? My mother cannot get her tablets out of the blisters."

More than Three Top Tips!



- Improve public transport links to NHS facilities
- Use more electric/hybrid transport, for patients and staff
- Use bicycles in the community
- Shuttle bus services direct to hospitals in major towns and cities
- Deliver care as locally as possible
- Enable more use of e-appointments and eprescription services and more telephone bookings
- Go paperless wherever possible
- More use of video conferencing for face to face patient doctor appointments
- Digital First primary care

- Synchronise care interventions so only one appointment needed
- No more 'routine' follow up appointments
- Switch off lights and computers, no more 'standby'
- Source food supplies locally
- Ensure that all NHS suppliers are being as carbon neutral as possible
- Think compostable whenever possible
- Sustainable procurement
- Staff to learn about sustainable development, simple changes can have a big effect
- Plant a tree ... The NHS Forest