



South West  
Clinical Senate

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

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Citizens' Assembly



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Clinical Senate

"Amplifying the Local voice to  
Regional level"

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 catheterization **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



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- 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 e-prescription 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