


Remade South East in partnership with South East Coast Ambulance Service



South East Coast Ambulance Service 
NHS Trust

Delivering a Waste Management Audit to the South East Coast Ambulance Service

March 2010

Executive Summary

There is increasing pressure on NHS organisations to look at the way they manage waste. Targets have been set by the NHS Sustainable Development Unit to reduce the NHS carbon footprint by decreasing waste production and increasing recycling. There is also budgetary pressure on NHS Trusts to reduce expenditure, recycling waste rather than landfilling it is one way this can be achieved.

SECamb commissioned Remade South East to undertake a waste management audit to understand the environmental risks, legislative requirements and levels of legislative compliance within the organisation. The main aim of the audit was to identify approaches to reduce waste disposal costs by increasing waste segregation, recycling rates, staff training and waste policy compliance.

To assess the Trust performance on waste Remade carried out the following methodology:

- Step 1: Review waste management policy, procedures and disposal costs to assess the current waste and recycling strategy
- Step 2: Carry out a waste audits on 19 Trust locations
- Step 3: Collate and interpret waste audit findings to assess the types and quantities of waste produced, waste management and recycling practices, contamination of general waste with clinical waste, legislation compliance and record keeping protocols
- Step 4: Produce a report with conclusions and recommendations for future improvements
- Step 5: Report back to the Trust to explain the audit results and recommendations

The review of the Trust's waste management policy highlighted a number of areas that need updating and strengthening. There is a need to develop a comprehensive waste management and recycling procedures document to accompany the waste management policy. This document should detail the collection and disposal practices of all waste types generated by the Trust. As a starting point Remade produced a basic procedures document, contained in appendix 1 of this report that lists the different waste streams produced by the Trust and the current arrangements for dealing with those waste streams.

A total of 19 Trust sites was audited during the project. This included all three main HQs in Kent, Sussex and Surrey, 3 stores, 1 make ready centre, 1 training centre, 3 workshops and 9 ambulance stations. Reports from each of the 19 audits can be found in appendix 2 of this report. The audits identified that the main bulk of material generated were office and domestic waste streams with the main recyclable materials being cardboard, non-confidential office paper, other mixed paper (including junk mail, magazines, envelopes, post-it notes and newspapers), plastic drinks bottles, milk bottles, drinks cans and tins. It is estimated that these materials make up 50% of general waste generated by the Trust.



In order to calculate the quantities of waste generated, the Trust supplied Remade with invoices dated between April and September 2009 from all the waste management contractors employed by the Trust. Remade estimates that during this 6 month period the Trust generated 110.23 tonnes of waste with 84.1 tonnes being sent to landfill and 26.13 recycled (mainly confidential and non-confidential paper waste). This gives the Trust a recycling rate of 23.7%. The Trust also generated significant quantities of clinical waste (45.32 tonnes) and hazardous liquids during this period.

There are a large number of waste contractors currently servicing the Trust with 17 general waste collection companies, 5 recycling collection companies, 3 confidential waste collection companies, 3 clinical waste management companies and one hazardous waste management company collecting materials for disposal. Ideally the number of service providers should be reduced to 4 or less with 1 for general and recyclable waste, 1 for confidential waste, 1 for clinical waste and 1 for hazardous waste. This approach should reduce the administrative burden on the finance department and waste disposal costs.



During the site visits it was identified that some waste is disposed through domestic disposal routes. There were also a number of ad-hoc collections organised on sites for printer cartridges, metals, fluorescent tubes, tyres, IT equipment, waste electrical and electronic equipment and bulky waste that do not receive the correct consignment note or waste transfer note documentation when collecting wastes. Under 'Duty of Care' regulations both these actions are illegal as commercial waste cannot be disposed through domestic collection routes and all waste streams collected for disposal should be accompanied by the relevant documentation.



The site audit of workshop locations highlighted some potential pollution prevention issues with the way waste fuel, oil and lubricants are stored. The Lewes Workshop in particular did not seem to be storing hazardous waste liquids in an area that was fully bunded and it was located very close to a fuse box/electrical generator. It is recommended that the Health and Safety office for the Trust visit all workshops to check they are compliant with Environment Agency regulations for safe storage of hazardous liquids. A representative from Safety Kleen, the waste disposal contractor for hazardous liquids, should also be consulted on best practice.

The contamination of clinical waste collections with general waste was identified as an issue for the Trust. Most staff questioned stated that they felt contamination levels were low but photographic evidence collected during the audit visits suggest that there is a significant amount of contamination. This is an area the Trust should focus on as minimising this contamination could reduce disposal cost as clinical waste collections are higher than general waste collections.



During the project Remade brokered an opportunity to gain funding from Surrey County Council to purchase internal recycling segregation bins for SECamb sites in Surrey. Remade worked with the Trust and Surrey County Council to produce an overview of sites that could easily incorporate a recycling collection for paper, cardboard, plastic bottle and cans. This process identified 11 suitable sites and gained funding for the Trust for 65 internal segregation bins at a cost (paid for by Surrey County Council) of £8,531.20. Initial calculations suggest that this trial will save the Trust £129.74 per month and could potential save £9,199.75 if the trial was replicated across all 65 of the Trusts sites with commercial waste collections.

There is a need within the Trust to create a dedicated role to implement improved waste management practices and deliver the Sustainable Management Development Plan. This should incorporate the streamlining of waste disposal practices and the creation of a Trust wide recycling initiative as well as meeting the waste minimisation and carbon reduction targets set out in the *NHS Carbon Reduction Strategy for England (2009)*. This is a very intensive function so it would be preferable for the Trust to create a dedicated role rather than adding it to the job description an existing member of staff. It could be a part time role and one that has the aim of paying for itself with the potential cost savings that could be created through reducing the Trust's impact on the environment.

Recommendations:

- Create a dedicated role to deliver the Trust's carbon reduction strategy. This should incorporate the streamlining of waste disposal practices and the creation of a Trust wide recycling initiative
- Provide all sites with a mixed commercial recyclable collection service for cardboard, non-confidential paper, plastic bottles and cans
- Update and maintain protocols for disposing of all waste streams
- Review recycling and waste disposal practices to make sure they adhere to Environment Agency protocols for handling waste in the following areas:
 - Review waste storage areas for hazardous liquids at workshops for Duty of Care and Hazardous Waste Regulation compliance. Arrange visits from the Trust's Health & Safety Officer and Safety Kleen representative for expert guidance
 - Avoid disposal of Trust waste through domestic routes as it is illegal to dispose of business waste through local bring bank facilities, household waste recycling centres and household collections
 - Compliance with regulations for collecting, handling and transporting business waste. All companies collecting waste should provide a copy of their waste carriers or waste management licenses and supply transfer or consignment notes
- Clear sign posting and staff training to reduce the amount of general waste disposed through clinical waste collections
- Reduce the number of waste collections providers to a manageable number by tendering a joint waste and recycling collection contract for all Trust sites
- Keep up to date records of all environmental paperwork required by the Environment Agency (i.e. transfer notes for domestic waste and consignment notes for hazardous waste)