



April 2023

Background

In the Climate Emergency Strategy Newcastle Hospitals has established an aim to inspire, inform and empower their people to deliver sustainable healthcare. This will be done by:

- Embedding Shine and climate emergency action into the culture of the organisation
- Upskilling the workforce
- Empowering people to make the most sustainable choice

A programme of employee engagement and training has been developed over the last 10 years, growing from a group of Green Champions, to a tiered network of engaged and motivated staff, mobilised and empowered to take action.

The issue

Approximately 70% of the total carbon footprint is attributed to the products and services we buy and use as an organisation. This means that the way in which our services are delivered will need to change if we are to achieve net zero carbon, and zero waste goals. Crucially these changes will be driven by staff within the specialisms themselves.

What we did

With an existing network of approximately 300 Green Champions which had grown organically over a number of years, the aim was to retain and grow that network whilst also creating a network of mobilised and knowledgeable change-makers distributed throughout the structure, with time dedicated to their role.



The decision was made to create a second type of Green Champion—a Green Champion Plus. The Green Champions Plus have their line managers approval to take the role, agree to attend quarterly meetings, undertake some training and drive forward

projects relative to their role. In other words whether you are a Data Analyst or a Laboratory Manager you will understand how your role impacts on sustainability, and what sort of changes you can make.

Promotion of both the Green Champions and Green Champions Plus roles has grown the networks to almost 400 Green Champions, and almost 40 Green Champions Plus representing a wide range of departments.

Training

In order to support the network we make various training options available:

- Building a Net Zero NHS—e learning



- Environmentally Sustainable Healthcare—e learning
- Leading in the transition to Net Zero—via teams
- Sustainability Ambassadors—classroom and via teams
- Signpost to external courses such as Centre for Sustainable Healthcare and Royal College of Nursing courses

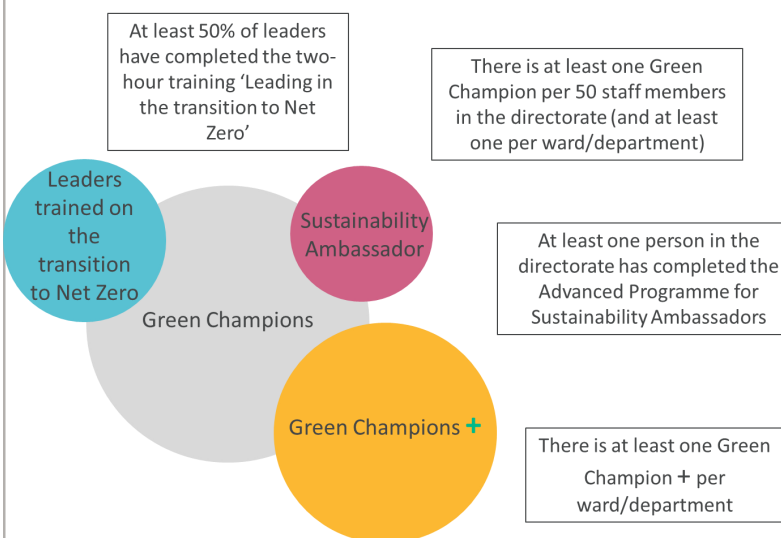
More information on these can be found on our [webpage](#).

What Good Looks Like—A Model for Sustainability in Directorates and Departments

We know that the majority of staff care about sustainability and want to support this agenda—but we could make it easier for people to act in a more sustainable way when doing their jobs

We were receiving enquires from staff wanting to know how they could support sustainability from their departments and directorates. In order to help them in this, we developed a model for ‘what good looks like’. A model directorate would:

1. Produce a Sustainability Statement
2. Have a named individual responsible for sustainability and a sustainability working group which meets regularly to drive forward improvements
3. Identify and record the main sustainability impacts arising from its activities, and work to reduce these impacts
4. Create an action plan and monitor progress towards the aims contained within it
5. Report progress and share success stories to inspire others



To have the best chance of success we recommend implementing the following roles within a directorate. Both types of Green Champion role are crucial in this model.

What Happened Next?

Some early adopters of the model were Clinical Research Directorate, and Integrated Laboratory Medicine. In each case the model was picked up and driven forward by someone who had completed the Sustainability Ambassadors training and joined the Green Champions Plus network.

ons Plus network.

They established sustainability working groups, found out who else was a Green Champion or interested in sustainability and grew the group from there.

As project ideas came forward, both groups developed action plans and continued to grow their membership. Working through the model they also aimed to increase the number of people in the groups that had done the training and joined up as Green Champions Plus.



As we continue to expand the network of Green Champions Plus, more departments picked up the model and started to drive improvement in the same way as the early adopters.

In the meantime the sustainability team have promoted the model with Directorate Managers, meaning that it will become easier for Green Champions Plus wishing to implement the model to gain support at this level.

10 departments and directorates have engaged with the model to date.

Spreading good practice and upscaling success!

As we continue to build our networks in this way, the hope for the future is that Green Champions Plus will carry on contributing to a shared project log. This will enable any member of the network to see what the other members are working on, even if they are not able to make the quarterly meetings. This is hosted on a Teams channel which keeps the group connected.

The log of projects will enable us to create a bank of case studies and articles of staff-led initiatives resulting in change across the Trust. Some can be found [here](#).

The sustainability team also provide a link to the Trust's Executive Oversight Group for Climate Emergency—meaning there is a route to present good practice and fast track changes that could be made into Trust-wide initiatives, as well as the potential to help remove barriers and obstacles to progress.

Some Examples

Examples of projects being discussed and driven forward by Green Champions Plus and departmental sustainability working groups include:

- Creation of a sensory garden
- Adoption of Laboratory Efficiency Assessment Framework for ILM
- Initial pilot of re-usable transport boxes for specimens, replacing single-use bags, and work to roll this out for wider adoption
- Reduction in site visits related to research through increased use of virtual tools
- Increase indoor planting at Regent Point to improve indoor air quality
- Review of internal policy to stop sending HR related letters by post
- Introduce automatic shutdowns where allowed
- E-bike trials for community services
- Working with research project sponsors to reduce quantity of single use items used and disposed of.

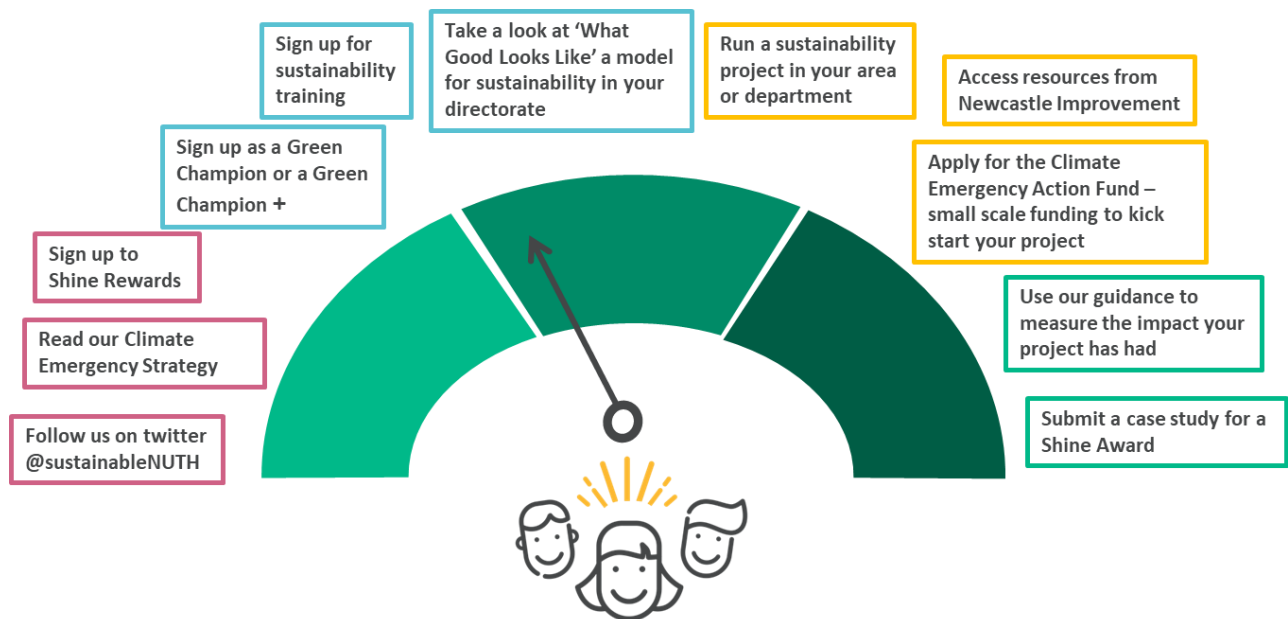




Whilst understanding that it is crucial that changes are originated and driven by the staff working within the specialisms themselves, the sustainability team does remain involved in the following ways:

- Training, as described
- Providing a step-by-step framework that can be applied at a department or directorate level
- Supporting departments and directorates to understand their main sustainability impacts and prioritise
- Communications and engagement support to increase membership and interest in departmental sustainability working groups—such as support with launch events, or promotional material
- Facilitate and host the Green Champions Plus network, creating the space to share ideas and support each other in person and virtually, and delivering bitesize training sessions as part of those meetings
- Support with upscaling ideas and removal of barriers and obstacles to success
- Provision of funding to kick-start projects through the Climate Emergency Action Fund
- Links to Newcastle Improvement support—with sustainability as a domain of quality

As well as the model described we also engage with staff using some other methods:



- [Shine Rewards](#)— a staff benefits programme which rewards staff for saving energy, reducing waste, travelling sustainably and taking part in other sustainable actions
- At staff inductions and Inductions for New Managers
- Regular comms in Trust-wide channels such as all staff email In Brief & Dame Jackie’s blog
- Use of twitter @sustainableNUTH
- Quarterly Green News newsletter and regular emails to Green Champions
- Host links to all information, news and contacts on Trust intranet and [Flourish at Newcastle Hospitals](#) website.