

1000 Days – Born Free. Creating a toxic-free generation

Project proposal prepared by
Health Care Without Harm Europe
for the Flotilla Foundation

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- The first **1000** days -

*The period of maximum developmental plasticity,
and therefore the period with the greatest potential
to affect health and wellbeing over the life course.*

A photograph of a woman sitting by a hospital bed, holding the hand of a patient. The scene is dimly lit with a green tint. In the background, there is a medical monitor displaying various waveforms and data. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

Early life exposure to harmful chemicals causes diseases.

Not only in adulthood, but also in **future generations.**

A newborn baby is lying in a hospital bed, wearing a nasal cannula. The baby is being held by a person's hands. The image has a yellowish tint. The text "Babies are born pre-polluted." is overlaid on the left side of the image.


Babies are born pre-polluted.

High levels of harmful chemicals have been detected in umbilical cords, providing evidence that toxins are transmitted from the mother to the baby through the placenta during pregnancy.

Babies born in the US have on average **more than 280 industrial chemicals in their bloodstream at birth**, and concentrations of microplastics of up to **10 times** those of adults.



*My first little footprint ! - Maria Kojck,
YouTube (2022)*

A person in a white lab coat is using a pipette to transfer liquid into a petri dish. A microscope is visible in the background. The entire image has a blue tint.

Microplastics have been found in lungs, placenta, and blood.

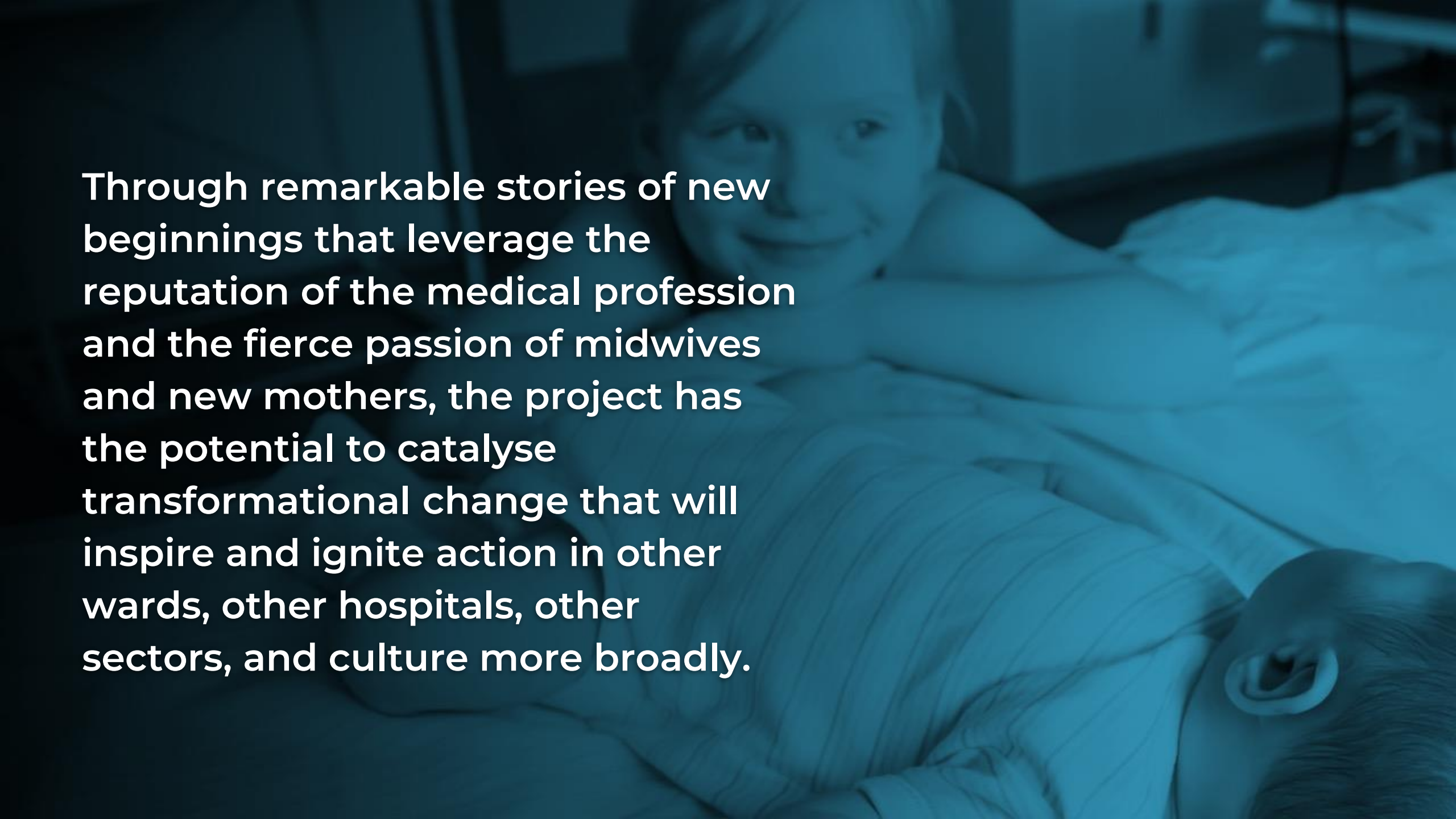
Infants presented microplastic concentrations in their stool
10 to 20 times higher than adults.

The **#BornFree** campaign
will change all that.

THE WORLD'S SAFEST MATERNITY, NEONATAL AND PAEDIATRIC WARDS



- We're seeking funding for the world's safest maternity, neonatal and paediatric wards as a proof-of-concept pilot for toxic and plastic-free healthcare.
- The power of this project is using a solution to spotlight a problem that's still invisible to many.



Through remarkable stories of new beginnings that leverage the reputation of the medical profession and the fierce passion of midwives and new mothers, the project has the potential to catalyse transformational change that will inspire and ignite action in other wards, other hospitals, other sectors, and culture more broadly.

By modeling a new concept of medical best practice, highlighting solutions that can shift massive supply chains, inspiring replication and solutions of scale, and harnessing the power of the first 1000 days after conception — a window of opportunity where parents become hyper-aware of the impact of their choices, and are more open to enacting long-lasting changes in behaviour — we will set off a series of ripples that together will help to deliver our ultimate ambition:

By 2030, the first generation of babies in over a century will be #BornFree of plastic pollution and toxic chemicals.



VISION

BY 2030 THE FIRST TOXIC-FREE GENERATION SINCE THE ADVENT OF MODERN MEDICINE

- *Phase out toxic chemicals used in pre and postnatal care*

- *Eliminate unnecessary single-use plastics in maternal and paediatric units*

PILLAR 1 - Practice

A fully functional eco-maternity, neonatal and paediatric unit – European first of its kind in leading European hospitals

PILLAR 2 - Policy

An enabling policy environment for sustainable, non-toxic maternal and paediatric care in Europe and globally

PILLAR 3 - Culture

Healthcare professionals become agents for change within their communities, educating and empowering patients and parents on how to reduce exposure to plastics and harmful chemicals

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The healthcare sector's over dependence on plastics and toxic chemicals endangers the health of patients, especially of the most vulnerable: mothers, newborns and children.

PILLAR 1 - INNOVATING

PRACTICE

ECO-MATERNITY, NEONATAL, AND PAEDIATRIC UNITS IN EUROPEAN HOSPITALS

KEY OUTPUTS

- Four implementing partner hospitals create eco-maternity and/or neonatal and paediatric units
- A business case for support to secure the model's scale up
- An eco-maternity, neonatal, and paediatric initiative is scaled-up across Europe and beyond (collaboration with WHO, UNICEF, European Children's Hospitals Organisation, etc.)



PILLAR 2 - TRANSFORMING

POLICY FRAMEWORKS FOR SUSTAINABLE AND NON-TOXIC MATERNAL AND PAEDIATRIC CARE

KEY OUTPUTS

- Recommendations on sustainable and safe eco-maternity/paediatric units developed with Steering Committee, WHO Europe and approved by health systems
- PVC phase-out campaign targeting the revision of the EU's chemical legislation (REACH)
- Healthcare plastics are not exempted from the Global Plastics Treaty



PILLAR 3 - SHIFTING

CULTURE

HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS AS AGENTS FOR
CHANGE - DELIVERING A TOXIC-FREE GENERATION

KEY OUTPUTS:

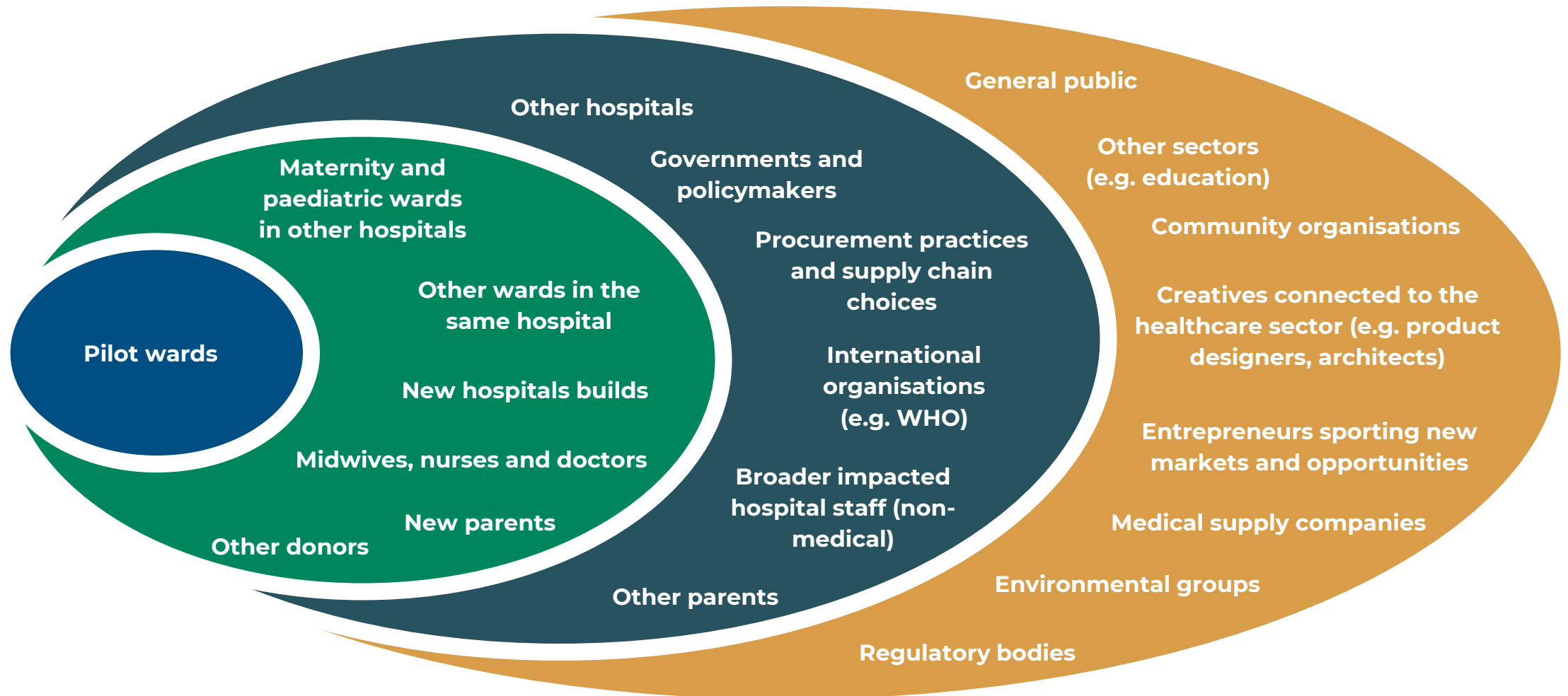
- A plastic reduction pledge to secure concrete commitments from healthcare providers
- A Circular Healthcare mentoring programme and Summit to share learnings and support other healthcare providers in implementing the eco-maternity/paediatric model
- An e-learning course on circular healthcare for students of medicine, midwifery, nursing and public health
- A communication campaign to raise awareness of the health impacts of plastic and chemical exposure on newborns and children, and scale the project






The healthcare ecosystem can
become a pioneer.
If we can do it, everyone can do it.

THE RIPPLE EFFECT





“This project has **enormous** potential to ripple out — hospitals steal best practice aggressively.”

— James Dixon, Associate Director of Sustainability at Newcastle Hospitals

“ECHO is committed to ensuring all children have the healthiest start possible in life. **But we can’t do it alone.** Many hospitals lack the resources or expertise to implement projects like reducing plastic, making initiatives like this project essential to the patients, families, and communities we serve.”

— Jennifer McIntosh, PharmD, MHS, BCPS, Project Director at ECHO



A blue-tinted photograph of surgeons in an operating room. The surgeons are wearing masks and caps, and are focused on a patient lying on the table. The text "OUR PARTNERS" is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font on the left side of the image.

OUR PARTNERS



Centre Hospitalier (CH) Angoulême (FR)

The maternity ward of CH Angoulême delivers almost half of the births in their region (approximately 1500 per year). For years, the team has been working to reduce vulnerable patients' exposure to harmful substances such as endocrine disrupting chemicals (EDCs) and plastics, and have also implemented reusable nappies in their maternity.

Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH) (UK)



GOSH is an international centre of excellence in child healthcare. Since its formation in 1852, the hospital has been dedicated to children's healthcare and to finding new and better ways to treat childhood illnesses. Their mission is to put the 'child first and always'. In 2018 they started a campaign to reduce their unnecessary use of gloves, and since then they have reduced consumption by approximately 40% and their waste by 21 tonnes.



The Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (UK)

The Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust has provided patient-centred healthcare to communities in the North East of England and beyond for over 250 years. They are one of the largest NHS trusts in the UK, offering a wider range of specialist services than any other. In June 2019, Newcastle Hospitals became the first healthcare organisation in the world to declare a Climate Emergency

Centre for Sustainable Hospitals (DK)

Centre for Sustainable Hospitals is a joint centre for all hospitals in Central Denmark Region. The purpose of the Centre is to initiate and support the green transition of the hospitals. focuses on reducing consumption in relation to treatments because we in this way can harvest the highest potential to improve our climate and environment footprint. For this project, five hospitals of the Central Denmark Regions will be participating.





**L-Università
ta' Malta**

The University of Malta (MT)

University of Malta has been, over its 400-year history, the hub for international academic exchange on the island. UM is the leading higher education institution in Malta and its structures are in line with the Bologna Process and the European Higher Education area. They will be collaborating in designing and delivering the circular healthcare online modules for students.



**Berner
Fachhochschule**

Bern University of Applied Sciences, School of Health Professions (CH)

Bern University of Applied Sciences is one of Switzerland's leading application-oriented universities. The 32 bachelor's degree programmes, 27 master's degree programmes and numerous continuing education programmes combine to give BFH its unique profile. The School of Health Professions is divided into four fields of study: Nutrition and Dietetics, Obstetrics, Nursing and Physiotherapy. They will be collaborating in designing and delivering the circular healthcare online modules for students.



NO HARM

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