

West Midlands Pharmacy Environmental Sustainability Network

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From 1st October 2023 West Midlands Academic Health Science Network is known as Health Innovation- West Midlands

Project Overview

In response to the [NHS Net Zero report](#)¹, which states medicines account for 25% of the NHS carbon footprint¹, the [West Midlands Academic Health Science Network](#) (WMAHSN) identified an opportunity to bring together our complex stakeholders to identify, strategise and collaborate to improve the impact of medicines on the environment.

The Network is inclusive; connecting all pharmacy roles (Pharmacist, technicians, and support staff, alongside sustainability teams) and promotes cross sector collaboration across all six of the West Midlands ICS's. Membership draws from secondary care, primary care, community pharmacy and commissioning.

Meeting every two months it promotes sharing case studies, best practice and examples of medicines and greener NHS quality improvement projects, facilitating improvement and knowledge in medicines environmental impact throughout our wide geographical region

Why?

The West Midlands is a large geographical area

- Six West Midlands ICS's
- 15 Hospitals
- 128 Primary Care Networks

Pharmacists are involved in best practice use and procurement of these medications on a daily basis.

The West Midlands already had established environmental sustainability networks of anaesthetists ([GAIN-WM](#)) and [General Practice](#) (Greener Practice)

Pharmacy professionals within the West Midlands requested a forum to:

- Share successful medicine related environmental sustainability projects
- Discuss challenges
- Build networks with peers seeking to improve the environmental impact in this area.

Aim

- provide a supportive environment
- connect pharmacy professionals across the West Midlands
- discuss medicines related environmental sustainability topics
- virtual platform
- share challenges, successes, and resources
- help pharmacy teams improve the environmental impact of medicines use.

Determining West Midlands Position

- National dashboards reviewed to benchmark
 - Model hospital, Open Prescribing and EPACT2
- Areas of very high use of anaesthetics and high carbon impact of inhalers

National ranking position of West Midlands STP's

April 2022 positions against the Impact and Investment Fund inhaler prescribing sustainability targets². (1 = poorest ranking, 42 = best ranking)

Environmental impact of inhalers - average carbon footprint per salbutamol inhaler by all STPs
1. Birmingham and Solihull
5. Shropshire, Telford, and Wrekin
7. Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent
11. The Black Country and West Birmingham
20. Coventry and Warwickshire
33. Hereford and Worcestershire

Environmental impact of inhalers - prescribing of non-salbutamol Metered Dose Inhalers (MDIs) by all STPs
4th - The Black Country and West Birmingham
6th Birmingham and Solihull STP
14th Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent
15th Hereford and Worcestershire
19th Coventry and Warwickshire
27th Shropshire, Telford, and Wrekin

(Taken from Open Prescribing³ data)

Outputs

- Range of medicines related speakers
- Resource packs with key documents for attendees
- Recordings (keeping those unable to attend, engaged and able to connect with other group members)
- Hints and tips for delivery of quality improvement projects
- Regular evaluation through assessment polls in the meeting

Key Achievements

The group has been well received and grown

- Threefold increase in membership
- Wide cross sector membership
- Diverse composition of pharmacy and medicines sustainability professionals
- Learning and desire to continue engagement demonstrated by polls in March 2023

Establishing and continuing success

Building the network, had several challenges which we worked to overcome:

Discovering who was responsible

- enhanced by using organisational, personal and sustainability networks,
- communication campaign
- Group members inviting appropriate colleagues

Maintaining relationships and brokering connections on a virtual forum.

- Consulted expert on Community of Practice to determine helpful approaches
- Training sessions on undertaking successful virtual learning events
- Utilisation of liberating structures to maintain engaging online space
- Meet virtually- reducing carbon footprint, aid accessibility due to expansive geography and minimise time out of existing roles

Event organisation and evaluation

- Support from inside and outside the immediate organisation is key
- Technical support within the session essential
- Evaluation via survey ineffective - only 1 response despite in event and post event circulation.
- Embedding polls within the meeting increased response to 50%
- Inbuilt meeting polls most effective for gaining insight into structure and function of future meetings
- Recurring meeting invite to allow diary planning and regular attendance

April- July 2022
Understanding local picture and WM carbon footprint position

Aug 2022
Identify key stakeholders, preferred forum style and frequency

September 2022
Focus group- 3 secondary care pharmacists leading on sustainability

Oct 2022
"Improving environmental impact of medicines within an Acute NHS Trust"

Nov 2022
"Inhalers and the Environment – experiences in Primary Care"

January 2023
Medicines Waste

March 2023
Impacts of maintenance and reliever therapy and reductions in Short Acting Beta Agonist Prescribing

Threefold increase in attendance

83% of attendees stated increase in knowledge (Mar 2023)

Members from across all Six West Midlands Integrated Care Systems

Cross –sector involvement; primary care, community pharmacy, secondary care"

Diverse representation- Open to all pharmacy professionals

Group Feedback
"Provides an opportunity to improve patient outcomes on both a personal and professional level"

"Climate change will have a significant impact on public health in the future; we have a responsibility to mitigate and reduce the impact as much as possible"

References

1. NHS, Delivering a Net Zero National Health Service NHS Carbon footprint plus from <https://www.england.nhs.uk/greenernhs/wp-content/uploads/sites/51/2020/10/delivering-a-net-zero-national-health-service.pdf>
2. Network Contract Directed Enhanced Service Investment and Impact Fund 2022/23: Updated Guidance March 2022 <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/B1357-investment-and-impact-fund-2022-23-updated-guidance-march-2022.pdf>
3. <https://openprescribing.net/stp/E54000017/measures/>



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