

# ELFT WASTE REDUCTION 2022

**In week 6 of our waste campaign, we wanted to share a great project that staff in Tower Hamlets mental health directorate have been working on, with support from corporate services colleagues, to reduce wasted estates space and repurpose it for clinical use.**

This directorate have a large room at Mile End Hospital storing 32,000 archived paper medical records. Many of these records could have been destroyed by now due to service users being deceased or not in contact with the Trust for a number of years. As well as being a poor use of Trust estate, this is an information governance compliance issue; we are legally required to safely destroy medical records which meet certain criteria. Chris Kitchener, the Trust's Associate Director of Information Governance, joined the project team to provide her expert guidance in this area. Chris was very keen to establish good records management principles to ensure records can be routinely reviewed and retained or destroyed in future years, to avoid the need for another large project like this and for review processes to become part of our business as usual processes.

Our Trust estate is costly and the Trust is always keen to optimise its use and get the best possible value out of it. Buildings also make a significant contribution to the Trust's carbon footprint and with the NHS required to achieve net zero for direct carbon emissions by 2040, reducing our estate can really help us achieve our environmental objectives.

A fantastic team of admin staff in the directorate have been analysing each paper record, setting aside around 15% for safe destruction and packaging up the rest to be stored by one of our records archiving suppliers. Selma Ali, Head of Administration in Tower Hamlets, praised the staff for *"giving up their weekends to come in and work. Some have been working 10 hour shifts and 1700 hours have gone into the archiving so far. There is still some way to go but the staff are all really proud of themselves as the room becomes more empty"*.

Once the room has been cleared, it will be reconfigured and turned into a new space for Tower Hamlets Perinatal Team to occupy. This team would otherwise have had to engage in a lease for a new building, with an estimated annual cost to the Trust of at least £50,000 and an additional carbon footprint implication. The team can now also be co-located with a good number of our other mental health services in the directorate.

**Tackling the waste in our systems and processes – in this case wasted building space – can allow more effective allocation of resources to areas where we can have a real impact on the health and wellbeing of our service users and staff.**

The work undertaken in Tower Hamlets will now be replicated in the Newham Mental Health Directorate, who have a smaller space storing paper medical records but which they hope to turn into a clinical supplies storage area. This will improve the management of inventory for mental health inpatient wards at Newham Centre for Mental Health.

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If this story stimulates ideas about the waste in your area of work but you need some support to reduce or remove it, sign up to our waste reduction tool workshop in September!

**Monday 12 Sept, 9:00 – 9:45 am AND Friday 16 Sept, 9:00 – 10:00 am**

These sessions are open to staff at every level and in every directorate of the Trust. We have already trained around 60 staff to use this tool and we welcome service users and carers to join these sessions too.

You can book here: <https://forms.office.com/r/3rhJgP11gx>

Please continue to get in touch with [sarah.barnett6@nhs.net](mailto:sarah.barnett6@nhs.net) if you have a waste reduction story to share or if you need any support to address some waste you have identified.

**Together, we can all reduce waste at ELFT**



**PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT TEAM**

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