

SI Midland Chase Programme Action Update

1. COP26

An update from SI Tamworth in relation to the last newsletter with the focus on Planet projects, particularly relevant as COP26 is currently underway:

Members of the Young Christian Climate Network have been walking by relay from Cornwall and the G7 in June to COP26 in Glasgow and are now nearing their goal. Members of SI Tamworth were pleased to be invited to be part of the Meet and Greet held courtesy of St. Edith's Church on 28th August. We were delighted to engage with the young people, talk to them about the work of Soroptimists, providing them with a copy of the latest Regional PA Newsletter, and suggest they look out for the Soroptimists at Glasgow.



2. Keyworker Report (May 2020) with relevance to Summer 2021 newsletter on Planet projects

Critical Care sister Rhea Conn wrote a piece for our Keyworkers Newsletter and has just had a paper published in Nursing Times in relation to her efforts in reducing waste within the NHS. Lots to do there and it's encouraging to see the progress and efforts being made by one person.

Since 2011, Critical Care Sister Rhea Conn has been on a mission to make the NHS a greener place. She started her journey simply by asking her colleagues at Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust "if they wouldn't mind bringing in their own reusable cup, instead of the polystyrene ones supplied in the coffee room".

Her quest to rid the room of synthetic materials was a success and the cups are now no longer available to order. She explained: "I have always had a passion for sustainability and it's amazing to see it become a headline topic in the NHS. The NHS is planning on becoming carbon net zero by 2045, but what can we do at a local level?"

Small wins are what we are aiming for here. Start a sustainability project group and look at your area to see what you use. Ask the following: where does it come from? Is it virgin plastic? Is there an alternative option? How is it disposed of? There may also be a sustainability lead or procurement

SI Midland Chase Programme Action Update



manager in your organisation who may be able to come in and look with fresh eyes at how you can improve. The most dangerous thing we can do is say 'this is what we always do'.

I learnt early on in my polystyrene cup campaign that without support from the top I was going to struggle. Some of the ways to combat this can be working out costs and how the change will save money.

This also includes saving money on waste disposal costs. Always make sure your alternative is safe for use - your infection control lead can help there.

I'm now working on spreading the word about improving sustainability within critical care and encouraging others to do the same. Reusable PPE is something I am promoting at the moment. One small intensive care unit (ICU) with 10 nurses per 12 hour shift, having three breaks over seven days, equals 560 sets of PPE.

The critical care services at the Trust has used washable gowns since the first wave and each staff member has their own respirator mask or hood. I am also working with the head of procurement to evaluate current practice and see what changes can be made. We are about to trial reusable tourniquets.

I started my sustainability group as a junior staff nurse with no experience of leadership or change management. But it was an invaluable experience and something I could reflect on."

The link to the whole article as it appears in the Nursing Times is <https://www.nursingtimes.net/opinion/ditching-polystyrene-cups-has-led-to-some-big-changes-for-me-01-11-2021/>