

WALKING AID RECYCLING AT MILTON KEYNES UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL



*Nisha Dutta-Plummer –
Transformation Project
Manager*

AGENDA

- Background
- The Issue
- Solution
- Challenges / considerations
- Benefits and review
- Feedback
- Questions
- Appendices - posters



BACKGROUND

As identified in the Delivering a net zero National Health Service report, reusing crutches, frames and walking sticks provide an excellent opportunity for carbon savings due to the high greenhouse gas intensity of aluminium manufacture. In addition to reducing carbon emissions, increasing the amount that are returned and reused can also help improve access for patients and save money:

- Reusing a refurbished walking aid is on average 98% lower in carbon emissions than using a new walking aid.
- Increasing the return rate over the next three years could reduce NHS carbon emissions by 7,400 tonnes of carbon emissions, equivalent to 281,397 car trips from London to Bristol.

All walking aids available to purchase via the NHS Supply Chain catalogue are reusable.

[NHS England » Walking aid reuse](#)



THE ISSUE



THE ISSUE

- MKUH were purchasing brand new walking aids with no recycling. Issues approx. 265 per month with a Procurement cost of approx. annual spend for crutches £26k (largest spend) – likely to be largest supplier in MK
- No used walking aids were accepted at MKUH What was happening to used crutches; skips, bins, sheds
- Contributing to waste and carbon emissions



SOLUTION

- Work as a Team - create a process flow to accept used walking aids
- Clinician to lead on all clinical activities and processes
- PM to identify stakeholders, remedy challenges and create a project plan with timelines
- Collaborate ideas and work with Leads, PM, Age UK, MKC, recycling centres, MKUH Volunteer team, driver.

CHALLENGES / CONSIDERATIONS

- ❖ Identify type of walking aids to be returned and agree drop off points
- ❖ Engagement - How and where will these be reissued
- ❖ Collaborate with MKCC – logos
- ❖ Collection - Who, when and how will the walking aids be collected
- ❖ Storage - Where will the used / dirty walking aids be stored
- ❖ Fit for Reuse - Who will clean and check the walking aids against criteria (label clean)
- ❖ Identification - How will we identify the recycled walking aids
- ❖ Comms - Posters and labels to be waterproof and legible to read (appendices)
- ❖ Review - success

BENEFITS / REVIEW

- ❖ Go live June 2023
- ❖ Reduction in Procurement = CIP savings ££
- ❖ Reduction in carbon emissions
- ❖ Recycling
- ❖ Stock to issuing source - no Procurement lag or delivery delays

BENEFITS / REVIEW

- The current return rate is approx 60% rate by August 2024, 744 items had been returned

Type of aid	Number
Crutches	711
Walking sticks	12
Frames	21

- There had been 91% reduction in ordering crutches compared with the previous year.
- It is estimated that after the costs of disinfecting and refurbishing the walking aids have been taken into account, the saving in comparison to purchasing new items and disposing of the used ones amounts to approximately 6 ktCO₂e and £2,500

FEEDBACK

- **Project Led Helen Tozer**, who is Lead Dietician at Milton Keynes University Hospital, said: “Recycling as much as we can is important to our Trust and is just one small way we can help to reduce our impact on the environment.
- **Jamie Stamp**, Head of Therapy at MKUH, said: “We are delighted to have worked closely with partners across Milton Keynes to bring this project to fruition and I am hugely proud of all the hard work and time, most of which has been voluntary outside of usual working hours, that has gone into making this happen. I look forward to seeing the difference this will make to our communities and patients.”
- **Nisha Dutta-Plummer**, MKUH Transformation Sustainability Project Manager said: “this was a great project, defined timeline and outcomes which are sustained and measurable. Challenges were overcome with everyone working to one outcome. Lovely to work with Helen, Comms and MKCC.

THE TEAM



Helen Tozer
Project Lead
– Dietician /
Physios



Nisha Dutta-
Plummer
Project
Manager



JACOB
PRITCHARD
Head of
Communications



MKUH
VOLUNTEERS



MK
COUNCIL



MK Age
Concern



THE WAY TO GET STARTED IS TO
QUIT TALKING AND BEGIN DOING.

Walt Disney



THANK YOU



PUBLIC COMMS

Appendix 1



Device reuse and refurbishment is one of the operational interventions to reach a net zero NHS supply chain. Walking aids, such as walking sticks, frames, rollators and crutches, can be safely refurbished and reused repeatedly, reducing carbon emissions and waste to landfill and saving money. Milton Keynes University NHS FT could save up to £46,000 and carbon emissions the same as 5,670 car trips from Bristol to London a year.

10 reasons to start a walking aid return and reuse scheme:

- Reuse is common practice across the NHS
- Reuse is significantly lower in carbon than new
- Walking aids are low risk for infection, making them safe for reuse
- All walking aids on catalogue are reusable
- Walking Aids don't have a used by date
- Refurbishing a device inhouse is quick and easy
- Buying spare parts for refurbishment is easy
- A refurbishment service for the NHS is being explored
- Reuse can provide financial and carbon savings
- Even defective walking aids returned provide value for the NHS

Help us to recycle, repair & reuse!

Please return your elbow crutch or metal walking stick to the following drop off points:

- **New Bradwell Recycling Centre**

Newport Road, MK13 0AH

Open Monday - Sunday 8-5pm 1st Oct – 31st March

Open Monday - Sunday 7-7pm 1st April – 31st Sept

- **Age UK MK - The Peartree Centre**

1 Chadds Lane, Peartree, MK6 3EB

Open Monday – Thursday 9-4pm

- **Age UK MK - Home & Furniture Store**

6 Burners Lane, Kiln Farm, MK11 3HA

Open Monday to Saturday 9-5pm, Sunday 11-4pm



Free parking at all drop off points

Reusing a hospital walking aid saves the NHS £46k per year