

# POWERSCOPE

ENGAGING PEOPLE COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE MONTHLY BULLETIN **Bulletin 3 · May 2016**

## Green Advocates at the heart of sustainable action

As one of the largest teaching hospitals in the country, Cork University Hospital (CUH) is aware of the importance of getting staff buy-in to its **Sustainable Healthcare and Living programme**, a key part of which is controlling energy use. Part of CUH's solution to get all staff on board is their **Green Advocate Network**, a network of over 120 'Green Advocates' who are effectively the 'eyes and ears' of the programme on the ground, and vital to cascading the message in each ward/department of the hospital and throughout the campus. These committed individuals head up **local Green Teams** in every part of the site and are key players in spreading the message, gathering information and collecting ideas for improvement in sustainability in the workplace, including energy saving.

The Sustainable Healthcare and Living programme is branded under the **social, environmental and economic** sustainable change banner – **seeco** seeks to inform and inspire staff to become more energy efficient and adopt and promote a low carbon lifestyle, at work and at home.

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*Sustainable Healthcare & Living logo*

Edward Murphy, the Sustainable Environment Officer at CUH comments:

*"It's important for staff across all sections to be on board. In CUH this is driven both from the top-down, through leadership from CEO Tony McNamara and Clinical Director Ken Walsh, and from the ground-up through the Network and Green Teams and from all staff engaging in sustainable actions, controlling energy use and contributing to a truly sustainable healthcare facility."*

## Role of Green Advocates



*CUH Green Advocates*

The Green Advocates play a key role in **championing sustainability** in their area. Their role includes:

- Actively promoting Cork University Hospital Group Sustainable Environment initiatives to staff.
- Maintaining their own awareness about Sustainable Environment issues around the hospital.
- Acting as a communication channel between staff and the Green Team / Steering Group and the Sustainable Environment Officer, so that initiatives can be developed and concerns resolved.
- Raising staff awareness about the impact of the workplace upon the environment, by reducing the carbon footprint and energy consumption, conserving water and managing waste correctly.
- Providing staff with the tools to improve and minimise their environmental impact.
- Facilitating and supporting staff in creating their own Sustainable Environment opportunities for improvement and initiatives.

## Setting up the Network

The Network was set up initially through an **invitation email** from the Sustainable Environment Officer to all staff asking people to volunteer as Green Advocates. To further encourage participation, the Officer visited wards and delivered a **short presentation** outlining the benefits and requirements for becoming an Advocate. As volunteers came forward, the ward/department manager formally appointed them as an Advocate. There is now an active Green Advocate in each ward/department of the hospital and their name is displayed on the local noticeboard. A full list is displayed on the CUH webpage, with the master list held by the Sustainable Environment Officer.

## Supporting Green Advocates

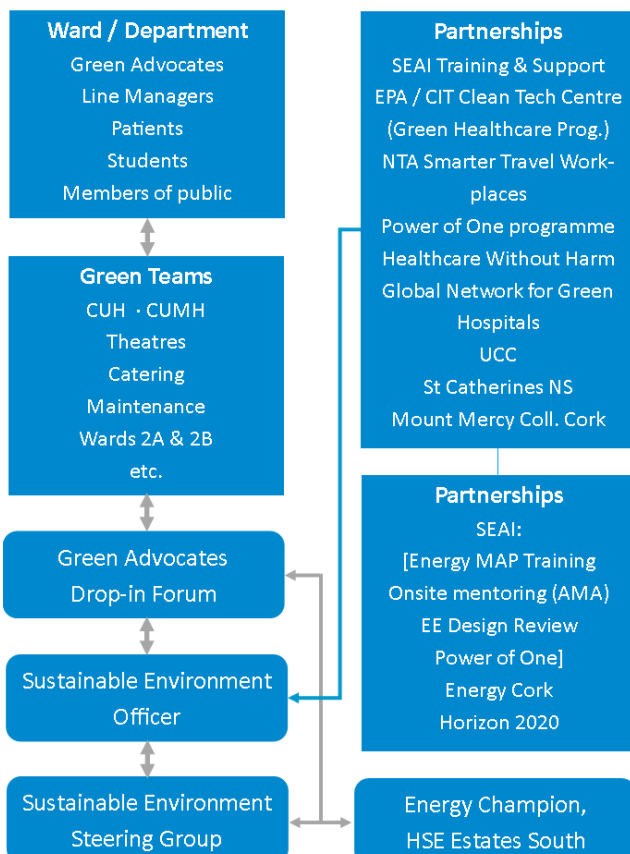
It is crucial to maintain support for the Advocates in order to maintain the momentum, and to help achieve this, the network is supported by a number of measures:

- Induction training on sustainability issues.
- A Green Charter.
- A Green Advocate Network Staff & Student Brochure.
- Drop-in Forums.
- Green Campus Newsletter.
- Handbooks, guidelines, posters and signage.
- 'Report a Sustainability Improvement Opportunity' staff suggestion scheme.
- Sustainable Checklists for wards, offices and labs.
- Noticeboards in wards and throughout the hospital.



## Part of a bigger picture

### Sustainable Healthcare Team Structure



The Green Advocates are provided with initial training on signing-up, receive continued support from the Sustainable Environment Officer and are kept up to date by email, meetings and face-to-face. Quarterly **Drop-in Forums** are held for Advocates for the communication of environmental issues and to obtain feedback on issues in the workplace.

Energy Champion for HSE Estates South, Eric Crowe, who supports CUH on energy management, stresses the importance of the group: *“By creating a visible network of Advocates, all staff has a clear point of contact for energy and environmental suggestions and improvements. They act as a natural focal point for improvement ideas, which in turn helps motivate others in their day-to-day activities.”*

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The Green Advocate Network and Green Teams fit into a wider structure for guiding the direction, management and monitoring of sustainable healthcare and living within the hospital. Overseeing this structure is the **Sustainable Healthcare/Environment Steering Group**, established in 2013 and **chaired by the hospital's CEO**. The group places particular emphasis on changing behaviour for better environmental stewardship in addition to improving energy and water efficiency and waste reduction, and crucially includes **representatives from a cross section of functions** including HSE estates, nursing management, medicine, maintenance, finance, ICT, biomedical engineering, security and support services.

The Network and Green Teams have contributed to significant achievements on sustainability, including a **12% reduction in primary energy use** since 2009 and being the first teaching hospital in the world to achieve the prestigious international **Green-Campus award**.

The hospital's sustainable healthcare programme, with the support of management and staff, driven by the steering group and cascaded through the Green Advocate Network, has achieved savings in energy use; an increase in waste recycling; and a reduction in waste cost disposal. This demonstrates that the Cork University Hospital Group is committed to becoming a leading sustainable low carbon organisation delivering sustainable healthcare into the future.



#### FURTHER INFORMATION

CUH ['Achieving Sustainable Healthcare & Living'](#) website.



#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to Edward Murphy, Sustainable Environment Officer at CUH, and Eric Crowe, Energy Champion for HSE Estates South, for providing information for this bulletin.



#### CONTACT

If you have any queries on the information in this bulletin or examples of staff engagement on energy or environmental issues in your organisation, then please contact COP Facilitator Brian MacNamee [bmac@consulteco.eu](mailto:bmac@consulteco.eu)

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This Bulletin is issued through the Staff Awareness Community of Practice on Energy Link. To join, please go to: <http://energylink.seai.ie/community/view/9>

- **Mission Statement:** To exchange experience and best practice on achieving greater staff awareness and engagement on energy saving in the workplace. Also to include avoiding common pitfalls in implementing awareness programmes.
- **Terms of Reference:** Identify and exchange experience on staff awareness and engagement on energy saving in the public sector workplace. Provide feedback to members on the effectiveness of staff awareness measures and programmes. Demonstrate what works and what doesn't work.

If you would like to be kept up to date on the latest activities on staff awareness in the Irish Public sector, or think other members of your organisation would like to join, sign up here <http://energylink.seai.ie/community>