

13th January 2021

PRESS RELEASE

Single use plastic success

The amount of single-use plastic used in Dudley's local hospital and outpatient centres has fallen drastically as part of a plan to be more sustainable.

The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust has signed the NHS Single-Use Plastics Reduction Campaign Pledge which commits it to reduce the amount of single-use plastic used in catering services. Changes made by its PFI partner Mitie¹, which provides these services, has seen the number of single use plastic items fall from just under 1.8 million annually to 300,000.

Changes introduced by Mitie include switching to compostable food containers, cups and cutlery, as well as using larger size milk bottles to reduce the number of bottles needed. This means the Trust has gone from using just over a million plastic drinking cups, cutlery and food containers each year to none at all.

It comes as the Trust's board of directors approved a Green Plan which sets out the actions it will take over the next few years. The initial focus will be on reducing energy consumption and improving the management of waste, including increasing the amount of waste that is recycled.

So far Mitie has introduced more recycling points and the Trust has invested in LED lighting. Other plans include biodiversity on Trust grounds. Staff have also joined a 'green team' to promote sustainability in their wards and areas.

Trust chief executive Diane Wake said: "Climate change is a threat to our health as well as our planet. The environment in which we live has a direct impact on our patients and as a board we are committed to doing all we can, working with our PFI partners, to provide our services in as sustainable and eco-friendly was as possible."

Justin Cook, accounts director, communities, for Mitie, said: "We're incredibly proud of the fantastic results we've achieved alongside Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust, reducing the number of single-use plastic items by a staggering 1.5 million. By working with our partners at the Trust, we look forward to making even more improvements to reduce our impact on the planet."

While the Trust has had to restore some use of single use plastic for infection control reasons during the COVID-19 pandemic, the changes will be reintroduced as soon as possible.

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CAPTION

Trust chief executive Diane Wake, catering manager Sam Astill and accounts director Justin Cook

¹. On 30 November 2020, Mitie acquired Interserve FM who previously held this contract.

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Issued by the communications team at The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust.