

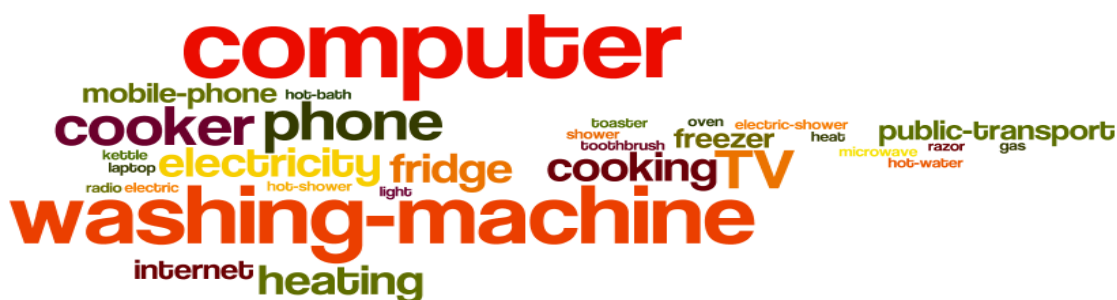
## Energy Biographies at the Royal Free Hospital

The Energy Biographies research project based at Cardiff University has been working in four communities across the UK to explore everyday energy use in the context of people's previous life experiences, current routines and anticipated futures. You can find out more about the project at [www.energybiographies.org](http://www.energybiographies.org)

As part of the Energy Biographies project, 20 employees of the Royal Free Hospital took part in an initial interview. They were aged between 25 and 62, had worked at the hospital between 4 months and 20 years, and worked in different departments and positions across the hospital. 10 of these participants (5 men and 5 women) were followed up for two further interviews and photograph activities over the course of a year. This document highlights some of the comments from participants about their experience of working at the hospital and their views on energy use. We have changed names for anonymity.

### Energy use of Royal Free Hospital employees

In the first interview, everyone was asked what they considered to be essential energy use. Whilst many of the things mentioned by London residents were common across the case sites (e.g. the washing machine), public transport was not mentioned as essential in any other location. This highlights travel as an important issue in this area, which we explore further below.



### Current initiatives

Participants had different levels of involvement with the hospital's energy saving initiatives, although none were carbon champions. In our first interviews we asked people about their experience of the hospital and which energy-saving initiatives they were familiar with. Responses included:

- Travel incentives, particularly encouragement to cycle to work, and public transport card loan schemes
- Being asked to turn off computers, equipment and lights when not in use, or finding someone else has done so.
- Screens around the hospital illustrating energy use
- Recycling facilities (including for pager batteries and a scheme to donate books to the library)
- Encouragement to use the stairs rather than lifts

Some participants were positive about the amount of information they received in their day-to-day working lives, which helped to increase their awareness of energy use.

We do have, it's not so much a scheme that we can participate in but they do talk about how much is being saved in the hospital, they have flat screen televisions going round saying this is how much energy we're saving, this is what we're hoping to achieve, this is how many carbon emissions there were, this is what our goals are so they're making us very conscious of what's going on as far as that's concerned. (Russell)

However, a number of people were not aware of the above schemes, for example, saying they did not work in an area of the hospital where the energy use screens were visible. Others commented that they were aware of some events taking place but felt the timing of these did not fit with their working hours so they were not able to attend.

I have seen, you know from the Freenet news that we get up on our systems, but a lot of things if they're events to attend become quite difficult just because of not having, there's no set hours or anything like that but if there are schemes where we can access things that you can get the information just readily online then I try to do so. (Michelle)

Well it's difficult for nursing staff I think because if you go somebody has to cover you and it's quite difficult. So you don't really get a chance to go along to things like that but I would if I could. (Sarah)

Therefore people felt that their location in the hospital had an impact on the accessibility of information. As Michelle mentions, some people felt having more information available electronically (although not just on Freenet) would help with this.

The most common way people described receiving information at the hospital was via Freenet. This was a useful resource for some, but others pointed out that many members of staff did not routinely use computers as part of their work and therefore would miss information distributed this way.

Oh maybe they did have Energy Saving Week actually. But the thing is they only put these important kind of things on Freenet and not everyone reads Freenet. So it's, makes them a little bit weird, yeah Freenet is not that good. They don't put posters up and they don't do proper campaigns. (Monica)

Switching computers off to save energy was something several people mentioned. Some had experienced their computers being switched off overnight, or had been encouraged to turn them off.

I went to turn on my computer the other day and it was switched off at the wall and someone said that that was an energy saving scheme. Maybe, no, maybe it was fire safety, see I'm not sure ... I would be happy to do it if I knew what benefit I was getting, so I have no idea and I probably wouldn't remember. But if I knew it had great benefits then I'd think, 'Oh great, that's a good idea'... So but at the Royal Free I haven't so much had that and I had an induction and I don't think I had anything in my induction about energy saving. (Kirsty)

Energy saving? They are always encouraging you to switch your computers off. It's something I've always been brought up with; if you're not using something then switch it off, take the plug out. And that's a rule that I live by, so I do it every night (Scott)

Some people felt that more could be done to encourage people to switch off their computers or other equipment.

I believe computers are used, or computers use a lot of energy since we use it all day you know from morning till when you close from work I believe it's something that should be, that staff should be made aware more of you know. So that I guess if it's something that comes on Freenet you know like maybe once a week or something at least, once a week at least, I guess it will catch up you know, because normally even in my department not many people do it. When I'm on a day leave or something and someone uses my, by the time I come back the next day it's not switched off from the mains and I'm thinking I'm going to leave a note on my desk, but people probably will think you're crazy you know, to say 'could you switch off from the mains when you've finished' but you know if it's something that can come on Freenet once a week at least I'm sure people will be aware more and more people would do it. (Aisha)

This was one of the issues that the estates department had taken steps to address:

We've finally convinced the Trust to go and purchase software to switch off all these PCs off automatically so that's probably, we think it's worth somewhere between 20 and 25 thousand pounds a year in energy savings ... It'll work on, so any PC that's attached to the Trust's network I assume it just monitors 'well nobody has used this PC for five minutes or ten minutes I'm going to shut it down'. But obviously there's some PCs that they won't want to shut down especially with patient records you know things like that. (Brian)

### Travel

Of all the hospital's initiatives, incentives to travel to work by bike or using public transport were most frequently talked about, with some describing how this had been extended to patients.

They have a bicycle [scheme] which means that the hospital will give you so much money towards a bike and whatever you need and I believe they also give you a loan as well, so they'll help pay for part of the bike and they'll give you a loan to pay for the rest of it, I believe it's an interest free loan. They also do interest free season ticket loan and they'll take so much out of your pay ... And I guess the season ticket they'd encourage more people to travel on mass transit than their own individual cars, shortened up the parking lots ... and I know that transportation, they're bringing patients in and they do it more carpooling quite often and they just want to pick up one patient and bring him into hospital you know bringing all of them, even if you have an appointment at 11 o'clock and someone's at 10 and someone's at 9, everyone is being picked up between 7 and 8 and brought to the hospital. (Russell)

Despite awareness of the cycling scheme, some people were still reluctant to cycle because they were concerned about safety issues.

I wouldn't think the streets in London are very, some people do cycle but it's not safe. I mean if you go to Holland and Germany there are proper cycle lanes and it's very safe to ride a bike, in London I wouldn't go out on that road and cycle for anything, it's too dangerous ... there's always accidents, I know you need to wear a helmet but it's not equipped, the City isn't equipped well enough. (Marie)

Of those we interviewed, three had purchased a bike through the Royal Free hospital's scheme. Only one person routinely used their own vehicle to get to work, whilst others cycled, walked, used public transport or

a combination of these. Like many of the activities at the Royal Free, some participants thought cycling was promoted primarily in terms of health rather than energy efficiency (although acknowledging that the two are not mutually exclusive), and in describing their own decisions to cycle, emphasised the health benefits. This was also the case with efforts to encourage the use of stairs rather than lifts.

Yes, they do actually encourage you to use the stairs; they have posters on the stairwell telling you how many calories you burn if you take the stairs. So I would always try and take the stairs as well, if I'm not pushing a trolley or something. (Sarah)

It's just for my health and sometimes it's not worth it to wait for the lifts because sometimes you can wait five or ten minutes for the lift and each one is coming full of people, so that's the main reason. And at the Royal Free they do advertise a lot about using the staircase lowers your cholesterol and stuff like that. So they're probably not looking into from an energy saving, you know, they're looking at the aspect of being healthy. (Karolina)

### Ideas for energy saving

During initial interviews we asked participants for ideas about ways they thought the hospital could save energy. Whilst some people were aware of recycling schemes within the hospital, others felt this could be promoted further:

I do, I have seen for batteries because like our bleep batteries are always running down but in terms of accessibility I know on the ward there's only one battery recycling depot in the sluice and whether or not people are really aware of it and you know ... if you know where it is yeah and mention it but we do things like we have one computer that can for instance print off on both sides so we try and encourage people for handover sheets which can be pages and pages unnecessarily and we're even talking about using our iPhones or Blackberry's to read off our handover sheets rather than printing them off. (Michelle)

Lighting was also an area where people identified potential opportunities for change, although recognising that it might be difficult to make alterations to existing buildings.

Yes, like motion sensor lights, rather than leaving them on constantly throughout the night. We had motion sensor lights in radiology actually, that was a new department that they'd built ... when it's up and running it's difficult to make changes, but while they're doing it, it would be good if they could implement something. A&E is difficult because it's used twenty four hours a day and apparently nights are just exactly the same as days, with all the lights on and everything. So I don't know how much they could implement there. I think if everywhere had motion sensor lights that would help because people don't tend to turn lights on and off when they're rushing around doing their work. I think in an emergency situation, the last thing you think of is to turn the light off. So things like that could help I think. But yes I think it would be great to have like a pioneering hospital that's energy efficient and stuff. (Sarah)

Others identified issues in relation to temperature control and heating efficiency.

Probably the only thing I probably would suggest is probably maybe fix the doors so therefore the outside doors are closed a bit more efficiently. I know that the A&E doors sometimes they stick, sometimes they'll be open all day long, that's probably not a good thing and then you've got the doors out the back where the medical school site is and they're not closed properly and I'm sure that if they fixed those and fixed the ones you know the A&E doors I'm sure that that probably would save more but that's probably the only thing I probably could pinpoint. (Russell)

An important issue in people's discussion of these ideas was whether they felt they had any ability to implement change, or if this was seen as outside of their personal control.

Heating and air conditioning and stuff like that that, it's not really done through us it's kind of done more externally, I mean it's done somewhere but I'm not quite sure who regulates that, that's not our department, if we have a problem we call the Works Department if it's too hot or too cold you know but we can't really solve that ourselves, but as far the lights and computers we do that ourselves and that's probably about it really. (Russell)

Some people felt that what they saw as inefficiencies in the hospital (such as dripping taps) often took too long to be dealt with. However, one estates department employee put the challenges of dealing with this into context:

And being in the Estates Department we get calls and they say, "our light bulb has gone again" or something like this or "this one isn't working". And it's thinking, yes we try to get there as soon as we can but, you know ... yes your light bulb might be very important but we've got three wards with no electricity, we've got two wards with no hot water, we've got all this. We're trying to do everything we can but we have to really, we have to categorise and we have to sort of put them into pockets of, is that really an emergency or is that routine maintenance? And I find it sometimes shocking that people can sort of not think of the kind of greater spirit and, 'okay well I can live with three lights in one room where there is normally four for a couple of hours or even a couple of days, I know everyone is busy'. And that's the way I would be thinking but it's like to some people this is like, 'I can't see what I'm writing. Why don't they do this light bulb now, I phoned them yesterday, it's still not done'. (Dennis)

Others were positive about the way the hospital was maintained and felt it was energy efficient:

I think they do quite a good job considering it has to be open 24 hours and they do kind of keep the lights off and they do put emergency lights on. I mean I know because I've walked through there about you know 10/11 o'clock at night and everything has been shut off you know, they're quite energy efficient and they're quite proud of it so, so as far as adding to it I mean I can't see anything, I can't see what they're doing I mean they seem to be quite regulated (Russell)

Some people felt that they did have the ability to make changes to improve energy efficiency or reduce wastage and were able to implement these ideas in their day-to-day work routines.

I remember training [at another hospital] and we had the price of things on the shelves, so there was little wastage, so you weren't taking things off and I must admit it was something that I made my housekeeper do on the ward a couple of months back, 'I want to go through your little book and price every single thing'. He looked at me and he

went, 'You're being serious aren't you!' and I went, 'Yeah' I want to avoid wastage. I want people to think rather than, 'Oh that's not what I want, I can't re-use you, I need to bin you'. I want you thinking, 'What do I need? Is this, before I open this is this the size I need, is this the right thing?' 'I'm not sure, what do I need to do? Let me ask somebody'.  
(Scott)

People's feelings about their own ability to make changes depended on the area of the hospital they worked in and how long they had been or intended to stay there. These factors also seemed to make a difference to their sense of the hospital as a workplace community.

### *The hospital community*

All participants were asked whether there was a sense of community at the hospital. Women with young children most often said they didn't have time to engage in activities outside of work; however they felt it was positive that such opportunities were on offer. Some participants felt that each department had its own community feel, whilst others thought that activities available to all employees across the hospital helped to promote a wider sense of community.

I think departments tend to stick to themselves, there isn't an overall community feel for the hospital in general, more so, you know, each department to themselves sort of thing. And I'm sure the recreational club have a nice community feel and they, like I think they've got a running club and things like that. So they're probably from all different departments but they get together (Sarah)

I believe Royal Free, especially if you've been there that long, as I said I've been there almost 16 years or something now so I do believe there is a sense of community there because there are so many things that you can do together you know and they are introducing more as well. Recently they are introducing things to keep staff fit, you know they've introduced the Weight Watchers that come once a week that you can go and see them in the canteen and they're introducing dance classes for staff, so there are many things that they are doing that can bring round that sense of communal interaction.  
(Aisha)

### *Summary*

Most people identified some of the hospital's strategies to reduce energy use and had had some involvement with this in their daily working lives. Several people suggested potential strategies for improving awareness amongst staff, including:

- more frequent reminders to turn off appliances (such as notices by switches/appliances, or a weekly pop-up on Freenet)
- make clearer what the benefits of saving energy are and what actions individuals can take (perhaps as part of induction information e.g. how much energy/money is saved by switching computers off)
- ensure posters/information are available at basement level for staff who work there and don't tend to visit other areas of the hospital
- where activities are promoted in relation to health, make clearer any related energy-saving benefits
- make information available in other formats for those who cannot attend scheduled events due to their working hours