Ashford and St. Peter's Hospitals NHS
NHS Foundation Trust

COUNCIL OF GOVERNORS
7th September 2022

TITLE	**COVID Waste Update**
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	This paper provides an update on the Trust's management of COVID waste.
The Council is asked to:	Note the update
Submitted by:	Rachael Westerman, Assistant Director Facilities Support Services, for: Tom Smerdon, Director of Strategy and Sustainability
Date:	September 2022
Decision:	To note

COVID Waste Update

The Trust's waste management contractor and in house waste team have performed very well during an immensely difficult time since the emergence of COVID. The clear guidance and support provided by the Trust IPC team, the application of the NHS England COVID operational waste procedures, and drawing on the already existing HTM 07 relating to the Safe Management of Healthcare Waste enabled both the in-house waste team and the trust's waste disposal company Grundons to deliver compliantly throughout the pandemic. This continues to be the case.

To put this achievement in to perspective, some Trusts utilising large waste disposal companies struggled with the removal of clinical waste from their sites with their providers unable to process the amounts of clinical waste being created. This led to NHS England invoking a business continuity contract to support trusts in need. The costs to trusts accessing this continuity contract were very high as waste was transported to the north of England and Scotland for incineration. ASPH has had no cause to access this continuity contract and has not incurred any of these additional charges. Grundon's were without delay able to remove and incinerate all the Trust's clinical waste locally at their plants.

The table below shows the costs and volume of the Trust's clinical waste disposal for the last three years. An additional 7,842 tonnes of clinical waste were disposed of in 21/22 compared to 19/20. The spend and volume of waste created from other waste streams reduced in line with the clinical waste increase linked to the NHS England COVID waste procedures at the time.

		ASHFORD HOSPITAL	ST PETER'S HOSPITAL	ASHFORD HOSPITAL	ST PETER'S HOSPITAL	ASHFORD HOSPITAL	ST PETERS HOSPITAL
Waste	**Unit**	**21/22**	**21/22**	**20/21**	**20/21**	**19/20**	**19/20**
Incineration (clinical waste) cost	£	7,853	63,055	4133	55521	5,992	55,213
Incineration (clinical waste) volume	Tonnes	14.67	114.15	7.72	99.58	11.20	100.39

The Trust benefits from operating a hybrid portering and waste team making it possible to prevent clinical waste building up inside the hospital even when there were high levels of COVID related absence in the team.

NHS England advised that there was unlikely to be a stable market to retender waste disposal contracts during the COVID-19 emergency response and therefore trusts should carefully consider grounds for extension of existing contracts where these are due to expire imminently. Trusts were asked to drop all contract performance measures to enable waste companies to focus on operational service delivery. The Trust's Grundons contract is being extended until the end of March 2023. This will ensure continuity of service is maintained through 2022-2023 winter pressures.

The Trust is working with a waste consultancy called Greener Edge who in March 2021 completed a full review of the Trust's waste management compliance. Both the Trust's supplier and the in-house management of waste was declared compliant and well run. Suggestions on improving practice included working with clinical staff in some areas of the hospital to improve their understanding of correct waste segregation, securing all clinical waste bins, and moving away from using a chute system for the movement of waste on site. There were no COVID specific concerns raised by the review.

Re-introducing and increasing recycling is possible now the strictest COVID waste restrictions have been lifted. Recycling initiatives form part of the Trust's approved Green Plan. Recycling projects are currently underway in Theatres, Pathology, and the EDU Kitchen.

Should there be a resurgence of COVID over the winter period and any re-introduction of NHS England COVID waste procedures and/or Trust directives on the management of COVID, the in-house waste service and Grundons will respond as required.