Project Update

Welcome to the June 2016 edition of the HE&WM newsletter, the newsletter of the EU-HCWM project. We are now moving into the final 6 month period of the project. We are currently working on an exploitation plan for the project outputs and also trying to increase the number of professional networks associated with the project. In addition we are also developing the e-learning platform which will facilitate online access to the training programme and where relevant the vocational qualification. More detail on all of this in the summer newsletter.

As is the tradition with these projects they normally culminate in a final conference and we are no different. We are currently planning this event and are working towards a conference in association with the NHS National Performance Advisory Group on Waste in Birmingham on 10 November this year. We will provide full details of the venue and the agenda in the summer newsletter which will be published in the first week of August.

In this issue we reflect on latest project partners meeting in Italy as well as looking forward to the next meeting on 4th and 5th July in Warsaw. We also report on some of the HCWM initiatives of the partners in both Albania and the UK.
NHS waste managers gear up for EU HCWM project conference in November

NHS England’s special interest group for healthcare waste managers met on 5 May in Birmingham and heard from several speakers, including Kate Ling from the NHS Confederation’s European Office, one of the partner organisations in the EU Healthcare Waste Management Project.

About forty participants heard Kate present an update on the project’s progress. She outlined what the project has achieved so far: the project partners have, over the last two years, analysed and compared training for healthcare waste managers across a range of various EU countries and have developed a vocational education and training programme in line with national occupational standards. The next steps are to develop an e-learning platform and to “grow” an EU-wide network to disseminate and support the project’s outputs.

E-learning portal

The portal being developed will have two versions: one to provide training for healthcare waste managers in countries where there is an absence of vocational training, and a second version for countries such as the UK where the training will fit into an existing vocational qualification framework. For this second group of countries, there will be three distinct qualifications available: healthcare waste manager; healthcare waste treatment manager; and healthcare waste transport manager. The award will be a degree level vocational qualification.

Professional networks

The aim is to develop a network of interested experts working in the field of healthcare waste across European countries. The network would provide members with an online “platform” to share expertise, solve problems and exchange good practice and could include different kinds of stakeholders: healthcare waste managers in both the public and private sectors, environmental specialists/consultants, contractors dealing with waste treatment and transport, vocational trainers, and equipment suppliers. There is currently no accredited professional body specifically for health sector waste managers at European level - such a network could form the nucleus of a future European association or institute and would be a lasting legacy from the EUHCWM project.

Conference on 10 November – watch this space!

Finally, the meeting had a lively discussion about co-hosting the EUHCWM project’s final conference on 10 November in Birmingham. The meeting discussed a draft conference agenda which, as well as presenting the project’s outcomes, would include contributions featuring best practice from both NPAG members in England and international partners from other countries. We hope it will be an inspiring event which will not only celebrate the project’s achievements but will pave the way for next steps – in other words, a beginning rather than an end!
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Professional Networks

It is the point in the project where we need to turn our attention to developing the professional networks to member states beyond those of the partners.

In this regard the project will now rely heavily on the networking of its 3 multiplier organisations:

1. European Union Private Hospitals Association (EUPH)
2. International Solid Waste Association (ISWA)
3. NHS Confederation (NHS Confed) and the HOSPEEM network
4. Regional Environment Centre

At the moment we have established professional networks in each of our partner member states and these networks have contributed considerably to the development of the project outputs.

In this second period of the project the intention is to further develop those networks into member states where we do not have representation at the moment.

It is the hope of the project partners that this expansion of the networks will lead to a significant improvement in the understanding of the issues which may be barriers to the implementation of the overarching project objectives.

If you can assist in the furtherance of this agenda and help develop a professional network please contact Scott Crossett via email:

scott@icerms.com

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6th Coordination Meeting: Reggio Emilia, Italy on 14th to 15th March

SiNERGi hosted the 6th project partners co-ordination meeting at their offices in Reggio Emilia, Italy and it was a chance to discuss with the partners the key issues and project activities related to the work package outputs of the project as we enter this crucial final six months period of the project timeline.

It was another productive couple of days and it was good to have all the partners represented at the event. The meeting focused largely on the outcome of the EUHCWM qualification external evaluation process and Pawel from our Polish partner Institute of Environmental Protection – National Research Institute (IEP-NRI) gave an excellent presentation of the outcome of that process.

This process completed meant that we now had a finished product in terms of the qualification options and also the underpinning training materials. We were now able to do two things:

1. Translate the definitive versions of the qualification and the training modules &
2. Tal Peer, ICERMS, would now be able to get on with developing the Moodle based e-learning platform

Tal then gave a first class presentation of the framework and structure of the new e-learning portal and this was well received by the partners.

It was really helpful for everyone to actually get an impression of how the Moodle programme would be utilised given the complexity of the EUHCWM qualification options and also the fact that within the project partners we would in effect be having two different scenarios for the use of the portal:

1. the formal qualification option and
2. the informal training programme option.

At the moment only the UK partner intends to utilise the Moodle programme for a formal qualification.

One of the conclusions from this meeting was to ensure that a meeting was arranged with CEDEFOP in Thessaloniki to explore options in regard to the project outputs and to establish what barriers there would be to having this qualification disseminated and taken up on a pan Europe basis.

The next key item on the agenda was the development of the professional networks and it is imperative that the current professional network list is extended beyond the limitations of the project partnership. This will ensure that the project outputs have a better chance of sustainability in terms of their uptake.
Implementing the “Sharps Directive”: protecting healthcare workers from sharps injuries

Injuries from sharp instruments are a major hazard in healthcare settings. For example in the UK, at least 4 healthcare workers are known to have died as a result of occupationally-acquired HIV infection, and there were 17 recorded cases of Hepatitis C infection between 1996 and 2009. Behind these “headline” figures, there are numerous instances globally every year of health workers suffering distress and anxiety while they wait for test results to see whether or not their injury has had more serious consequences. Employees may face restrictions on their working practices and may need counselling, time off work and treatment, and employers face significant costs resulting from staff absences and legal liability.

Concern about this issue at European level prompted the “social partners” – HOSPEEM, the European association of healthcare employers, and EPSU, the European umbrella organisation of public sector trade unions – to negotiate a health and safety agreement that was subsequently transformed into Directive 2010/32/EU on prevention from sharps injuries in the hospital and healthcare sector. This Directive was transposed into national legislation by the EU Member States and took effect from May 2013.

In the UK, the relevant domestic legislation, the Health and Safety (Sharp Instruments in Healthcare) Regulations 2013, was supported by guidance from the Government inspection agency, the Health and Safety Executive, NHS Employers and the Royal College of Nursing. The regulations build on existing health and safety legislation that requires employers to conduct risk assessments and put appropriate control measures in place, and to consult employees and provide information and training. For their part, employees must attend training and comply with workplace procedures. The new regulations impose additional duties on both employers and employees, including substituting devices with safety mechanisms (“safer sharps”) for traditional sharps where their use is necessary, and where the risk assessment shows it would be appropriate and “reasonably practicable” to do so, as well as arrangements to provide safe disposal facilities, information, training, support, and follow-up action if an injury occurs, and regular local reviews of compliance.

Kate Ling, from the NHS Confederation’s European Office (a member of HOSPEEM) and Monica Smith from the Health and Safety Executive presented jointly on this topic in February to a meeting of the NHS National Performance Advisory Group (NPAG) Waste Management group, and initiated a lively discussion. After Kate had presented an overview of the reasons behind the agreement, legislation and guidance, Monica presented the preliminary findings of HSE’s recent Sharps Inspection programme. 40 hospitals across England, Scotland and Wales were inspected to assess compliance with the 2013 Regulations. Of the 40 organisations investigated, 80% were in breach of the legislation, and a third were issued with “improvement notices”. Whilst the hospitals visited were generally good in their post-exposure follow-up procedures if an injury occurred and in their arrangements for disposing safely of sharps, significant failings included:

- Risk assessments not properly done – didn’t take local circumstances into account, or focus specifically on the risk of exposure to blood-borne viruses from sharps injuries
- Where non-safe sharps had to be used, a lack of suitable and sufficient risk assessments and controls to reduce risk
- Need to take human factors into account, such as resistance to change and the temptation to cut corners when under pressure, rather than presuming an “ideal world” scenario
- Failure to use safer sharps where “reasonably practicable”, or inconsistent use of safer sharps: “old” and “new” sharps were sometimes used side by side or in different work areas. “Safer” sharps are not safer if staff are not familiar/comfortable with their use.
- Lack of information and training in new procedures and handling the new devices for staff who joined recently, and of refresher training for existing staff
- Failure to report incidents or to report them correctly as “dangerous” occurrences
- Not investigating thoroughly to understand why an injury occurred and whether/how it could have been prevented.

For more information on this topic, see the NHS Employers and Health and Safety Executive websites:


Healthcare Waste Management in Albania

In May 2016 there have been three positive initiatives in the sector that will hopefully be the beginning of improvements which are so badly needed in the healthcare waste management system. Firstly we had the REC Albania national informative workshop at the Tirana International Hotel. This excellent and well attended event was organised by REC Director, Mihallaq Qirjo and his team at REC Albania. The event was chaired by REC Albania senior waste management expert Eduart Cani and included a host of speakers covering a variety of topical issues in the sector.

The event was well received by the delegates and they have agreed as a collective to some follow up actions and Eduart is currently working on an action plan for these follow up activities.

Presentations were made in regard to a number of topical issues including Teida Shehi, IBeca: healthcare waste management legislation; Dr Bledar Dollaku, ISHSH: the structure and function of the State Health Inspectorate; Armand Konduri, Meditel: Private sector capacities in healthcare waste management and treatment — Meditel Tirana & Scott Crossett, IBeca, HCWM EU Best Practice – United Kingdom.

The Ministry of Health has a National Guideline for the safe management of healthcare waste however they are keen to update this document which was published in 2010.

Zhaneta Miska and Silvana Novi both the Ministry of Health outlined the Ministry’s current position on healthcare waste management and were keen to have feedback from the group in regard to an updating of the current national guideline.
Inter-agency training programme on Healthcare Facility and healthcare waste treatment installation inspections

The IBECA project is the current EU funded technical assistance programme to the Ministry of Environment in Albania. It is led by Dr Paolo Bacca, SWECO, and one of the components of the project is building capacities at the State Inspectorate for the Environment & Forestry (ISHMP). The project has developed a comprehensive vocational learning programme aimed at improving the function of the ISHMP in relation to the inspection of environmental permitted installations and waste producers.

The IBECA team have been addressing key cross cutting issues of the inspection function and one of those critical interfaces is between the ISHMP and the State Health Inspectorate for Hospitals (ISHSH).

In this regard Dr Bacca agreed with both the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Health to assist the inspectorates in inter-agency co-operation and joint inspections of both the hospitals themselves and of the installation where the healthcare wastes are treated and disposed. This will ensure that there is an inspection mechanism which has synergy with the requirements of the Duty of Care for the producers in the Cradle to Grave concept of waste management.

The first 5 day training programme developed, and delivered by Scott Crossett consisted of a mix of theory and practice. The theory modules covered the following topics: healthcare waste management and inspection legislation; inspection planning; conducting inspections at permitted installations for healthcare waste treatment; conducting inspections at a healthcare facility; evidence gathering for compliance and healthcare facility inspection checklist.

IBECA will continue to facilitate inter agency co-operation between the two inspectorate and plans a further 5 day training programme in September 2016 to focus on inspection reporting. It is hoped that the foundation has now been laid to ensure that key representatives of each agency are able to arrange inter inspectorate operations in an effort to improve the standards of healthcare waste management in Albania.
Inter-Governmental Group on Environment Crime

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Presence in Albania has assisted the Ministry of Environment to establish an Environmental Crime Taskforce. This is in preparation for changes to the Albanian penal code making environmental crimes a far more serious issue in legal terms than is currently the case.

The group is chaired by Mr Julian Beqiri, the Director of the Albanian Environment Agency and all the activities of the group are overseen by Mr Elton Qendro, for the OSCE.

The Group meets monthly and this month there has been a focus by the Group on the illegal management of healthcare wastes across the country. The Albanian healthcare system has suffered and continues to do so from a chronic lack of investment and this is reflected in the standard of healthcare waste management across the country which is very poor indeed.

There are problems across the sector including low capacities, lack of investment in waste management infrastructure, poor quality of environmental permitting and inspection.

Dr Bledar Dollaku from the Hospital Inspectorate gave an excellent presentation of the key issues affecting the Albanian healthcare waste management system and the approach being taken by the Inspectorate.

The IGEC will continue to facilitate inter agency cooperation between the environmental inspectors and the health inspectors in order to improve the different aspects of the healthcare waste management system in Albania.

The overall Healthcare Waste Management system will be one of the key areas of activity for the IGEC in 2017.

Initiatives are planned in regard to target the Waste Producers; Waste Transport Companies and the Waste Treatment and Disposal Installations.
The International Solid Waste Association (ISWA) Working Group on Healthcare Waste met on the 13th of April, to discuss the groups work programme for the next 3 years and strategic cooperation with the World Health Organization (WHO). The meeting was hosted by the Healthcare Waste and Resources Research Group of the University of Northampton at the St. Thomas’ Hospital in London. Dr. Ute Pieper, representative from the WHO, presented key focus areas of their work and future collaborative projects with ISWA.

The working group members also discussed critical linkages between the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) and healthcare waste. Dr. Anne Woolridge, Chair of the ISWA Working Group on Healthcare Waste, presented main ideas of the “Developing an EU Standardised Approach to Vocational Educational Training Awards in Healthcare Waste Management” (EU-HCWM) project. This EC funded project, under the Lifelong Learning Programme, aims to provide a unified approach to the development of National Occupational Standards and Vocational Educational Training (VET) Awards for Healthcare Waste Management across the EU Member States. This will be achieved through a new healthcare waste management qualification framework, and an e-learning platform.

The working group meeting was followed by a two day conference on healthcare waste management, and was also hosted by the Healthcare Waste and Resources Research Group of the University of Northampton and ISWA. The conference brought together over 80 participants from around the world and examined the management of waste from healthcare facilities in Europe and beyond. Mary Creagh Member of Parliament gave a keynote presentation and stressed that waste reduction must go side by side with carbon reduction in order to achieve the SDGs. ISWA President Mr. David Newman presented ISWA’s work to the audience and highlighted the importance of creating markets for secondary materials for effective waste management.

Key themes discussed at the conference were planning for and response to emergencies, the sustainability agenda within the healthcare sector, and current and emerging treatment technologies in dealing with healthcare waste.

A special session on healthcare waste, chaired by Dr. Woolridge, is planned on the margins of the annual ISWA World Congress taking place from the 19th to 21st September 2016 in Novi Sad, Serbia. As an invited speaker, Mr. Scott Crossett, Head of ICERMS, will showcase the outputs from the EU-HCWM project across several European countries and discuss the way forward beyond 2016. More information about the Congress can be found at:

http://www.iswa2016.org/
Industry News & Events

**CYPRUS 2016 4th International Conference on Sustainable Solid Waste Management**

**WHO Conference on Health and Climate 2016 — 7 to 8 July 2016**
The World Health Organization and the Government of France are pleased to announce the Second Global Conference on Health and Climate. Building Healthier Societies through implementation of the Paris Agreement. The Conference will showcase how the public health community will support the implementation of the Paris agreement, in order to build healthier and more sustainable societies.

http://www.who.int/globalchange/conferences/en/

**CRETE 2016 — 5th International Conference on Industrial and Hazardous Waste Management**
will be held from 27th to 30th September, 2016 in Chania, Crete, Greece.


**New Case Studies from Taiwan** — Global Green and Healthy Hospitals are proud to announce the release of 8 new case studies showcasing the innovation and success of GGHH members from around Taiwan. From energy efficiency programs, to new greywater systems, to carbon emissions reductions, these case studies document the projects and achievements from our members in creating sustainable health care solutions.

http://greenhospitals.net/en/

**New GHG Inventory Guide Supports Expansion of 2020 Health Care Climate Challenge**
*Projeto Hospitais Saudáveis, Brazil.* Health Care Without Harm partner in Brazil, has launched a new Guide for Inventory of Greenhouse Gas Emissions in Health Organizations to assist the health sector in understanding, tracking, and addressing emissions from their facilities. The release of the guide represents an important step for the health sector in Brazil to develop a low carbon path for the future.


**ISO 13485 Standard published**
The standard provides an effective framework to meet the comprehensive requirements for a medical devices quality management system; for manufacturers and service providers to both comply and demonstrate their compliance to regulatory requirements.


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