

GREEN CHAMPIONS

SETTING UP A HOSPITAL-WIDE GREEN LABORATORY NETWORK

When I started a new job as a principal clinical scientist at The Royal Marsden Hospital (RMH) in September 2023 I was determined to bring my green values to the fore. I had long been reducing, reusing and recycling at home and had bought my first electric car in 2016, but bringing this to work felt like a big, difficult problem. I decided to be brave in my new role and try to make a difference.

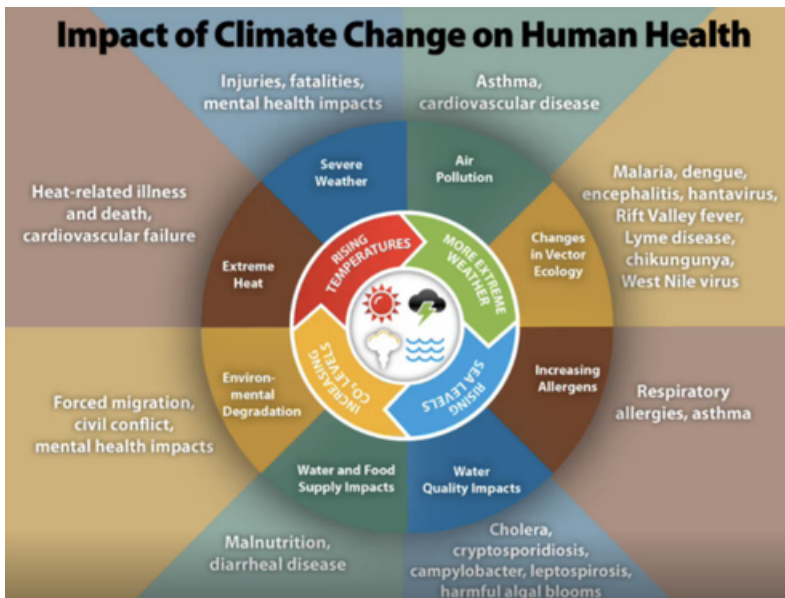
My first action was to appoint myself sustainability champion in my laboratory and set up a green forum to discuss ideas there. As a result, we successfully achieved EFLM Green and Sustainable Laboratories Accreditation and started to work with our suppliers on green issues. However, we were beginning to ask questions that involved other departments and I knew communication was key.

The Royal Marsden have a network of green champions across all areas of the hospital, and I met Julie Codet-Boisse there. She is on the transformation team and was currently managing a digital pathology project. She asked how many pathology members we had in the green champions and I realised I was the only one.



CERYS MARCH

Principal clinical scientist-biochemistry, The Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust



The effects of climate change (CDC)

Laboratories use so much plastic and energy, we knew we could make a difference to the hospital's green plan if we got them onboard. Julie and I decided to try and set up a green laboratory group across RMH. Importantly, she had access to the pathology managers group and managed to get us a space in their meeting to make our case.

We gave our pitch:

- The NHS is directly contributing to climate change and therefore making people ill
- This goes against 'do no harm'
- The NHS has pledged to be net zero by 2040
- Laboratories need to be part of that
- Small changes make a big difference
- Turning off computers and lights when not in use can save energy and money
- The International Freezer Challenge is a great place to start – check it out
- Introduce procurement to the MyGreenLab ACT label
- We wanted a green champion in every lab

- We wanted them to have protected time – one day a month
- We would meet quarterly to discuss ideas and I would support them if I could.

So, the green pathology network was born. We have 10 laboratories at RMH; seven NHS and three research. We've now met six times since March 2025 and discussed topics such as Innovation Den funding and use/disposal of dry ice and energy monitoring. Our achievements include having automatic sensor lighting installed in many labs, switching to pipette tip suppliers who offer take-back schemes and six labs completing the Freezer Challenge in 2025. In order to recognise this accomplishment my boss nominated me for the Trust Staff Achievement Green Award. Not expecting anything except good food and dancing, we both dressed up for a glamorous night in Battersea Power Station.

To our great surprise I won!

Just a little bit more motivation to keep up the green work.



Cery March with RMH chief executive, Dame Cally Palmer, and chief medical officer, Nick van As