


'Saving Lives with Solar' Community Energy scheme.

Lead Organisation:

University Hospitals of North Midlands 
NHS Trust

Partners:

SWM members Southern Staffordshire Community Energy (SSCE) and Beat the Cold



The Project

Beat the Cold is a charity based in Stoke-on-Trent set up to combat the health and wellbeing effects of fuel poverty faced by vulnerable households. In partnership with University Hospitals of North Midlands NHS Trust (UHNM), they sought to assist vulnerable patients suffering from conditions which are exacerbated by the cold, following their discharge from hospital, at the same time, reducing cost and the carbon footprint of NHS operations. 'Saving lives with solar' is a community energy project, the first of its kind for the NHS. As part of the scheme, Solar Photovoltaic (PV) panels have been installed and commissioned on hospital roofs. The electricity generated by the panels will receive a guaranteed 20-year 'Feed in Tariff' (FiT) income from the Government, which will accumulate into Southern Staffordshire Community Energy's (SSCE) community fund and then be diverted to 'Beat the Cold'.

Aims

To facilitate both energy and community resilience by assisting local and vulnerable patients who are suffering from fuel poverty whilst increasing the sustainability of UHNM's estates.



The main building and Post-Graduate Medical Centre at County Hospital, Stafford

Challenges

- Government policy towards renewable energy may change, although the government has maintained a commitment to ensure whichever tariff a project is registered for at the commencement, will remain the same for the duration of the FiT period.
- New technology inventions and developments may render existing technologies and equipment obsolete, though such applications require long lead times.
- Long-term changes to weather patterns could result in lower levels of production.
- Operational costs may rise faster than anticipated during the life of the project.



Roof-mounted PV panels at the Maternity Centre at Royal Stoke Hospital

The Outcome

Results

- Over 1,000 roof-mounted solar PV panels have now been installed and commissioned on seven buildings across both hospitals.
- The £335,600 project has been entirely funded by investment from members of the public, who will receive a 4.5% average rate of return.
- £300,000 has been raised for the community fund from the FiT.

In the Future

- Further funding has been awarded to increase the capacity of the project

The Extra's

- The project was named the national 1st prize winner of the Energy Impact Awards.
- The project was awarded 'Highly Commended' at the 2016 HSJ awards

Links and Downloads

- UHNM press release: <http://www.uhnm.nhs.uk/news/Pages/Community-Energy-scheme-success.aspx>
- UHNM: <http://www.uhnm.nhs.uk/Pages/Home.aspx>
- Beat the Cold: <http://www.beatcold.org.uk/>
- SSCE: <http://ssce.co.uk/>

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