

"The best bit of my job is being able to make a real difference to save energy and drive down carbon."

Matt's role means he is helping the NHS with its ambition of reaching net zero carbon emissions by 2045. He's encouraging others to get trained up and start helping develop a sustainable planet .

Matt Gitsham

Carbon and energy manager

Employer or university

North Bristol NHS Trust?

Matt worked as a low energy/zero carbon buildings consultant for a construction consultancy for 12 years before joining the NHS.



How I got into the role?

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I worked as a low energy/zero carbon buildings consultant for a construction consultancy for 12 years, supporting clients to reduce their building energy use and transition them to zero carbon operation.??

I felt I wanted to write fewer reports and achieve more real change, so I spotted this job advert on the NHS Jobs website for North Bristol NHS Trust and applied.?

What I do

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A typical day involves monitoring meters, checking the building management system, assessing potential projects for carbon savings and cost payback, meeting consultants working on designs and visiting buildings to assess on going work.

One of my main tasks is monitoring energy use within the trust's buildings. I also support the capital, maintenance and new developments teams to ensure their work is as low carbon as possible. I make sure we take every opportunity to improve energy efficiency and help with the trust's transition to low carbon.

Another big part of my job involves applying for funding to deliver energy efficient projects. I was recently awarded funding to deliver heat pumps, LED lighting, Solar PV and insulation into six buildings. This will make a significant carbon, energy and comfort improvement for the trust.

I also spotted that one of building systems was not operating correctly. To fix it required a small correction to our building management system at a cost of £250. Last year this change saved the Trust in excess of £70k!

The best bits and challenges

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The best bit of my job is being able to make a real difference to save energy and drive down carbon. I can spot a sign of energy waste, propose a resolution, deliver the necessary works and monitor the savings.

The only thing I'd change about my role is to bring in more people to help. There is so much opportunity to save energy and make our buildings more comfortable, but there aren't enough hours in the day!

A major myth about staff in roles like mine is that all we're interested in is turning things down or off which makes people less comfortable. But at the trust it's the exact opposite. We recognise that it's critical that people feel comfortable to do their work and for patients to recover, so we do everything we can to make that happen.

What we want is to prevent is wasted energy. Let's switch off, or make them automatically switch off, things that aren't needed.

Career plans and top tips for others

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I am very proud of the work I've done at the trust that has been zero cost, or very low cost, that's saved significant amounts of energy, cost and carbon – things like updating time schedules in line with users' needs, repairing solar panels and updating control strategies.

In five years' time I'd like to be managing a team of energy managers at North Bristol NHS Trust, all working to drive down carbon emissions and save energy costs. It would be even better if we could start to work and support other trusts to learn from our successes and failures.

If you're considering a 'green' career in the NHS, go for it! It's very rewarding and there is so much opportunity to improve things. Progress can feel slow and frustrating, but wins come frequently and seeing your actions leading to real improvement is very satisfying.

Sustainability is only going to become more and more important, so don't hesitate to get trained up and start helping us develop a sustainable planet we're proud to leave to our children.

Life outside of work

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Outside of work, it might sound a cliché, but I'd love a small holding, where I can really drive my personal life to the next level of sustainability ... ideally with a straw bale house!