

LCB-HEALTHCARE recently gained some global attention at the 37th World Hospital Congress, organised by the International Hospital Federation (IHF) from 8th to 10th November in Dubai. LCB partner organisation EuHPN was invited to speak on the aims and objectives of the LCB-HEALTHCARE network and to give the congress participants some flavour of the LCB pilot projects and the progress towards a Good Practice Guide. The LCB talk was part of a session that also covered related topics such as energy management systems in hospitals and the principles of design for efficient energy use. Full information on the IHF event is here: [://ihfdubai.ae/index.php](http://ihfdubai.ae/index.php).

Sustainable European Healthcare Infrastructure: innovation in procurement, planning and design for a green future

EuHPN / LCB-HEALTHCARE Workshop; Bologna, 10-12 October 2011

This year's European Health Property Network annual workshop was organised in collaboration with the LCB-HEALTHCARE network, and focused on the key issues that concern LCB network partners and associates: innovative procurement for low carbon healthcare buildings, lead market methodologies, and the practical challenges of planning, designing and constructing low carbon healthcare facilities.

EuHPN member organisation SIAIS (the Italian Society for Healthcare Engineering and Architecture) hosted the event, and was instrumental in organising a number of study tours to local hospitals in Rimini, Forli and Ferrara. The workshop was sponsored by SIRAM, a leading Italian exponent of innovative technologies for energy management in the healthcare sector.

Day 1 of the workshop was devoted to understanding the context in which European healthcare organisations now have to operate, and how this may affect the drive towards low carbon solutions for healthcare buildings. Plenary speakers were clear that future capital investment in healthcare infrastructure is going to be severely constrained by the global financial crisis, and that innovative means to achieve health system goals are now the only option. As one speaker put it "*We can no longer 'buy' progress*". The public sector has a very clear role to play in stimulating and encouraging innovation in technology and construction – even where healthcare is largely provided by private or not-for-profit organisations – and should aim to become a more intelligent and demanding supply chain manager.

Day 2 started with an LCB-led session on the network's progress and findings thus far, followed by a number of presentations on LCB pilot studies and related projects in the UK, the Netherlands, Sweden and Denmark. These addressed procurement for ultra-efficient ward lighting and bed cleaning technology, as well as use of renewable energy, waste management technologies, energy efficiency in hospitals and the Swedish Sustainable Health Care network. The session concluded with an introduction to the LCB Good Practice Guide; examining ways to overcome barriers to innovative, sustainable healthcare goods and services, and looking forward to creating environments conducive to pro-innovation procurement.

The presentations on day 2 continued with some detailed examinations of real-life low carbon projects in healthcare settings. The key emerging messages from these presentations were:

- A clear need to establish accurate and reliable baseline measures, whether for energy use, infrastructure utilisation, resource management, or projected future demand, to enable realistic and achievable contributions to carbon reduction targets.
- Recognition that better use of existing healthcare infrastructure, properly linked to evidence-based care models, can have a very significant impact on energy efficiency – even without introduction of new technologies.
- Acknowledgement that concentrating on ‘big ticket’ projects and large scale strategic plans is not always the most effective way to encourage innovation in design and procurement. Small scale projects can also produce new ideas that can be shared and scaled up to great effect.
- The healthcare sector needs to look outwards and to learn from other sectors. In many countries, local and regional government has already taken steps to promote public sector procurement as a means of stimulating markets, and may be able to offer ready-made expertise to healthcare facility planners, managers, and procurers.
- Are we sure that healthcare buildings – existing and future – are really used effectively for measurable health gain? If not, perhaps we don’t need some of them, and the issues of procuring the best low carbon solutions can be in part resolved by simply occupying less space.

Participants were able to choose from three study tours on day 3 of the workshop. The visit to Rimini hospital showcased a holistic, whole systems approach to reducing its carbon footprint, by using more efficient technology for producing power and heat, introducing renewable energy sources, and even beginning a long-term project to education of staff and patients in relation to carbon targets. The Morgagni hospital at Forli demonstrated their innovative approach to management of cleaning in the ward and surgical environments, and Ferrara’s Cona hospital offered participants a tour of the monitoring technology that underpins their drive towards greater energy efficiency in one of Europe’s largest hospital facilities.

The 2011 EuHPN/LCB workshop attracted participants and speakers from around 15 different European nations, and brought together healthcare planners, hospital managers and CEOs, academic researchers in health system development, national and regional health policy experts, supply chain representatives and procurement specialists. It was clear from feedback received from participants at the event that the aims of LCB are relevant and timely for all of this diverse group of healthcare infrastructure professionals, and that further developments in innovation procurement for low carbon infrastructure will be very welcome.

The workshop’s conclusions and outcomes are being written up as a report that will be made available on the EuHPN and LCB websites.