



CENTRE *for*
SUSTAINABLE
HEALTHCARE

Setting up a Sustainability Scholarship or Fellowship Programme

with support from the Centre for Sustainable Healthcare (CSH)

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1. What is a Sustainability Fellow/ Scholar?

A Sustainability **Fellow** is a health professional who is seconded or employed to work **half- to full-time** on sustainable healthcare for 1-3 years, before returning to clinical practice.

A Sustainability **Scholar** typically has **1-2 allocated days per week** to work on a sustainability project over the course of a year

Usually a scholar/fellow's employing organisation continues to cover any appointments process, costs, their salary, on-costs, project costs, e.g. travel and expenses, plus degree registration, if applicable.

Both Fellows and Scholars have a **strategic role** in accelerating transformation towards sustainable healthcare and often undertake research supported by a university partner; they may focus on a clinical specialty or on a cross-cutting theme such as education, quality improvement or a specific topic (e.g. single use plastics). Most are based in a host organisation – often an NHS Trust/Board.

Clinical specialties are uniquely placed to address the sustainability of services – from the design of the clinical pathway to the organisation and delivery of care. Fellowships combine research with support for local change, underpinned by wider engagement with patients, and relevant industry and clinical bodies.

Sustainable Specialty Fellowships can:

1. Increase knowledge about resource use and opportunities to improve value within specialty care pathways
2. Support the transmission of good practice through a network of local representatives within clinical departments
3. Accelerate progress in the specialty via embedding into policy, reporting standards, clinical guidelines and education
4. Provide professional development of the fellow as an ambassador for sustainable healthcare

Example outputs

- Research publication(s) quantifying the baseline environmental impact of relevant clinical pathways and identifying opportunities for improvement
- Development of sustainability best practice standard for clinical departments
- Active specialty sustainability network with annual meetings/awards
- Case library of sustainable quality improvement projects

2. Why set up a Sustainability Fellowship or Scholarship programme?

In order to meet public expectations of compassionate, effective, patient-centred care, while also keeping within existing financial constraints, health services need to do more with less. However, it is increasingly well recognised that financial costs are not the only resource constraint. The NHS recognises the climate crisis will have detrimental effects to human health and has set a target for net-zero carbon emissions by 2040.

Benefits of a Fellowship

Fellows/scholars gain the opportunity to learn about a dimension of healthcare, develop skills in leadership and research, and contribute to strategic initiatives at national and local level to promote sustainable resource use.

Patients benefit from service changes designed to increase value from resources by preventing illness and promoting individual and community resilience, empowering patients to manage their health, reducing wasteful activity, and making use of low carbon alternatives.

Health services benefit from service changes as above, and from staff engagement in service improvement and resource stewardship. Many sustainable innovations save money - e.g. it has been estimated that the average dialysis unit could save £150-200,000 each year by implementing documented sustainable innovations.

The Health Professions benefit from the development of Fellows as ambassadors for sustainable healthcare, and from their work to further understanding the environmental, social and financial burdens of services, while promoting a culture of innovation and resource stewardship.

3. Who can be a Sustainability Fellow or Scholar?

Fellows and Scholars can come from any professional background in any field of healthcare. To date CSH has supported fellows in Nephrology, Dentistry, Surgery, Anaesthesia, General Practice, Paediatrics, Psychiatry, Endoscopy, Ophthalmology and Education.

4. Introducing the Centre for Sustainable Healthcare (CSH)

An independent charity, CSH has been leading efforts to incorporate the values of environmental sustainability into the health sector since its establishment in 2008. It has a particular focus on engaging those in the front line of patient care and promoting the concept of “sustainable clinical practice” and has developed a “SusQI” framework for integrating sustainability into Quality Improvement methodology.

CSH is respected nationally for a specialty-led approach combining research with support for local change, underpinned by wider engagement with patients, and relevant industry and clinical bodies. As part of this programme, CSH has partnered with NHS bodies and specialty organisations to promote Sustainable Specialty Fellowships, and has managed Fellows and Scholars in a range of specialties.

CSH has been at the forefront of embedding sustainable healthcare into education for health professionals. The Centre co-led a national consultation to establish priority learning outcomes in medical education, which were published in The Lancet in 2014 and have informed the GMC Outcomes for Graduates 2018. It supports an Education for Sustainable Healthcare network for sharing good practice and has developed a number of online training [courses](#) for healthcare staff.

The CSH Principles of Sustainable Clinical Practice

1. Prevention
2. Patient empowerment and self-care
3. Lean care systems
4. Low carbon alternatives

“Our Clinical Sustainability Fellows really benefit from the complementary training, supervision and support from the CSH programme. CSH have years of experience in educating and empowering clinical staff to deliver sustainable healthcare.”

James Dixon- Associate Director-Sustainability, Newcastle Hospitals

“The regular meetings and mentoring from CSH were invaluable - they provided support, guidance and a framework which allowed our Fellow to develop, gain confidence and have productive year”

Dr Kate Gardner, Anaesthetic Consultant, East Suffolk and North Essex NHS Foundation Trust

5. What support can CSH provide?

Sustainability Fellows and Scholars can be supported by CSH through personal supervision and a range of in-house resources including training courses and materials, web-based networking tools, online case libraries, and a sustainability in quality improvement (SusQI) toolkit.

CSH seeks to maximise the impact of Fellows and Scholars through:

1. Development of Fellows and Scholars as future leaders for sustainability, providing a unique opportunity to learn about healthcare systems from a different perspective, while developing skills in leadership, healthcare improvement, academic writing and public speaking.
2. Supporting Fellows and Scholars to contribute to a specialty-wide discourse on sustainability, through presentations, publications, events and networking – e.g. via CSH Networks, the Health Foundation Q community, BMJ blogs.
3. Development and sharing of case studies demonstrating sustainability in practice.

CSH support for individual Scholars

Scholars typically have 1-2 allocated days per week to work on a sustainability project over the course of a year.

For Scholar support CSH provides three online training courses, each of which comprises 4-6 hours of interactive self-study followed by a half-day workshop facilitated by expert instructors +/- an optional work-in-progress presentation a few months later.

In addition, CSH provides supervision and project guidance, access to in-house training resources and input to written outputs of the Scholarship. CSH uses its extensive networks to connect Scholars to people in other NHS Trusts/Boards, specialties and countries who are undertaking related work, and assist them in disseminating their work through its websites, e-newsletter and on social media.

Cost breakdown for CSH training and supervision for one Scholar (one year)

Item	Cost
Course fees for online courses x3	£495
Educational supervision and project guidance (approx. 1 day per month)	£9,000
Total	£9,495*

*If the money is paid as a grant, there is no VAT applicable.

CSH support for Fellows

A Fellow works half- to full-time on sustainable healthcare over 1-3 years, taking a strategic role in accelerating adoption of sustainable practice within their area.

Fellows are supported by CSH’s range of in-house resources including training materials, web-based networking tools, online case libraries, and a sustainability in quality improvement toolkit.

In its standard educational support package, CSH provides 4 online training courses, each of which comprises 4-6 hours of interactive self-study followed by a half-day workshop facilitated by expert instructors +/- an optional work-in-progress presentation a few months later.

Fellows are assigned to a supervisor within the team, with whom they meet 2-4 weekly throughout the post. Fellows have an active role in selecting and designing projects to achieve the programme objectives as well as their own professional development goals, while benefiting from CSH’s experience, resources and networks. CSH uses its extensive networks to connect Fellows to people in other Trusts, specialties and countries who are undertaking related work, and assist in disseminating their work through its websites, e-newsletter and on social media.

Fellows benefit from robust carbon footprinting support from CSH’s sustainability analysts. This enables them to include accurate carbon measures throughout their projects.

CSH Fellowships may include an optional Summit to engage senior stakeholders, gather perspectives or share good practice from across the specialty. Ongoing strategic guidance and collaboration can be provided through a strategic steering group, including representation from professional bodies, health service providers and commissioners, patients and industry. A CSH supervisor would attend these, alongside the Fellow.

Cost breakdown for CSH training and supervision for one Fellow (one year)

Item	Cost
Course fees for on-line training days x4	£735
Educational supervision and project guidance (approx. 1 day per month)	£9,750
Specialist project support, e.g. carbon footprinting (6 days)	£4,500
Total	£14,985*

*

1. All meetings costed as virtual, travel costs are not included
2. If the money is paid as a grant, there is no VAT applicable.
3. Optional extra costs
 - i) Summit organisation and hosting (£3000)
 - ii) CSH input into strategic steering or management groups (£1400)
 - iii) Quarterly meetings with host organisation and presentation to meetings (£750)

6. How to set up a Fellowship

Contact us to express interest

A successful scholar or fellowship is always a collaborative effort. CSH can input early on into planning discussions, share experiences and join up interested parties. Do contact us on info@sustainablehealthcare.org.uk

Approaching partners

As well as CSH, partner organisations in setting up a Fellowship might include one or more of:

- Specialty organisation/professional body
- NHS Trust/Board
- Academic partner, e.g. a university, Academic Health Sciences Network
- Other education provider/commissioner, e.g. Health Education England

When approaching partner organisations, consider what they will gain from the Fellowship, e.g. meeting the needs of their members/patients/staff/students, reputational gains, etc.

Finding funding

Potential funding sources include:

- Royal Colleges / Specialty associations
- Charitable foundations
- Education funders, e.g. Health Education England
- NHS Charities
- Industry sponsorship

Fellow/Scholar salary costs may sometimes be covered by NHS Trusts/Boards or through an existing fellowship scheme in medical education, quality improvement, innovation or leadership.

Each organisation will have its own funding priorities, so consider how the Fellowship will fit with these and make sure that is clear. Many organisations will have their own templates for funding applications, otherwise CSH has model proposals which can be adapted.

7. Example of previous Fellowship

Clinical Leadership Fellow in Net Zero/Sustainability in Dentistry 2022-23

Dr Jenny Girdler took a year out of her oral surgery specialty training to undertake a full-time fellowship through the Health Education Yorkshire and the Humber Future Leaders Programme. CSH supported Jenny throughout the year.

Jenny's primary focus was to embed sustainability into dental training programmes. This was achieved through:

- Embedding Sustainability in Quality Improvement (SusQI) into postgraduate dental training programmes at Yorkshire and Humber Dental Core Training
- Gathering data about the environmental and ecological impact of dentistry
- Liaising with senior stakeholders and contributing to consultations to influence the inclusion of sustainability into dental practice
- Furthering the inclusion of sustainability into the General Dental Council policies and learning objectives.

During her fellowship, Jenny relaunched and was lead for the Dental Care Sustainability Network. With over 300 members, this network continues to share learning points and disseminate successful dentistry sustainability initiatives both nationally and internationally.

Following the fellowship, the need to address sustainability principles has been incorporated into the GDC's Safe Practitioner Framework for Dental Nurses and Special Care Dentistry Specialty Training Curriculum, the latter with a sustainability learning objective that Jenny helped devise. These inclusions set the scene for sustainability being addressed more widely across dentistry.

Centre for Sustainable Healthcare
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