



3e. *How to*: Make efficient use of space

Why is it important?

Space utilisation is defined by the UK Higher Education Space Management Group (SMG) as a measure of “whether and how space is being used”. Within dentistry space utilisation is about how often a dental space is used, and how much of a dental space is used (a combination of a frequency and occupancy).

Calculating optimal utilisation rates requires a structured approach to determine effective usage of dental surgery, reception, waiting room. A maximally efficient, effectively run and sustainable dental practice would always have the dental chair in use, so that the energy required to heat the building would be optimal.

What does sustainable practice look like?

Real life example

Duane (2012) found that a number of the newer buildings had larger energy per patient appointments than the older buildings that provided the same care. One of the reasons for this was space utilisation. The waiting room was large, and there was a number of large meeting rooms, which were not always utilised.

Modelled example

David is a dentist purchasing his first dental practice. He has told the architectural firm he has hired that he wants his practice to be designed in a sustainable way, and one aspect of that is space utilisation. He has ensured the surgeries and waiting rooms are optimised in terms of size, to save on heating costs, and his rota will ensure each surgery is being used throughout the day at the same timeslots to make sure the heating costs of the building are justified.

Actions

- When selecting or designing new buildings or practices, ensure the rooms are large enough for purpose but can be sustainably heated in Winter.
- Ensure dental rotas mean chairs are in constant use when the building is being heated- a shift rota may assist with this.





Actions *continued*

KEY:

Implementation: Easy =  Less Easy = 

Investment Cost: Low =  High = 

Financial return on Investment (ROI): Low =  High = 

Environmental benefit: Small =  Large = 



Resources

Duane B, Hyland J, Rowan J, Archibald B. Taking a bite out of Scotland's dental carbon emissions in the transition to a low carbon future. *Public Health* 2012; 126(9): 770-777

Dental Susnet, online network for improving the sustainability of dental services:
<https://networks.sustainablehealthcare.org.uk/dental-susnet>