



4b. *How to*: Introduce recycling

Why is it important?

Recycling is an important way to reduce landfill and incinerated waste, and the associated environmental consequences. Commonly recycled items include: aluminium cans, tins, cardboard, paper, plastic, glass and food waste, which can be composted.

Providing clearly labelled recycling facilities throughout dental practices makes recycling accessible for both staff and patients, and can hopefully reduce costs associated with incineration, whilst reducing carbon emissions.

It is worth investigating waste disposal contracts on offer locally, as recycled materials have a financial value and some companies reflect this in a lower cost for disposing of recycled versus domestic waste.

What does sustainable practice look like?

Real life example

Frimley Park Hospital NHS Foundation Trust reduced clinical waste, increased staff awareness of recycling and saved costs by providing recycling facilities throughout the hospital for staff, patient and visitor use- 72 recycling bins were placed, with specific bins for clinical areas to meet infection control and fire safety standards.

Oxford University Hospitals NHS Trust has reduced the amount of waste going to landfill or incineration by introducing recycling into the operating theatre setting with recycling bins in every anaesthetic room, recovery and rest area.

Modelled example

Matthew is an associate dentist at a mixed NHS/dental practice, which recently implemented a Recycling Policy. As part of this policy, recycling bins were introduced in every room of the practice, including the clinical areas. Two recycling bins were placed in each surgery, which correspond to the Council's recycling collection groups. One box is for cardboard, glass, and foil items and the other for paper, plastic and glass items.

Any clinical waste which may be contaminated with saliva or blood still goes into the clinical waste bin (orange bag). The recycling bins in each surgery and clearly labelled recycling bins in the waiting rooms and reception/staff areas are emptied daily, into the larger bins outside of the practice, ready for collection by the council recycling service weekly.



Modelled example *continued*

Since introducing the recycling policy the practice has saved money, paying less for waste disposal by incineration as more items are being recycled, and they are aiming to reduce the clinical waste collection from twice to once per week.

The practice staff meet monthly at practice meetings and their 'green' issues are discussed, including any issues they may be having with the waste segregation and disposal and how to resolve these, as well as inviting any new ideas.



Actions

KEY:

Implementation: Easy = Less Easy =

Investment Cost: Low = High =

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

Environmental benefit: Small = Large =

- Create a recycling policy and share with staff
- Ensure that your waste disposal contract includes recycling – if necessary switch providers to one that will give you a good rate for recyclables
- Place recycling bins in all areas and label clearly
- Audit waste regularly

You can calculate both the money saved and carbon saved

•**Money saved:** compare costs of waste collection fees and purchasing of goods costs each month before and after implementation

•**Carbon saved:** Carbon calculator
<http://c.environmentalpaper.org/home>



Resources

Case studies:

Frimley Park Hospital NHS Foundation Trust Recycling on the Go:

<http://map.sustainablehealthcare.org.uk/frimley-park-hospital-nhs-foundation-trust/go-recycling>

Oxford University Hospitals NHS Trust recycling in operating theatres:

<http://map.sustainablehealthcare.org.uk/oxford-radcliffe-hospitals-nhs-trust/introducing-recycling-operating-theatres>

More links:

Less waste, more health. A health professional's guide to reducing waste. (includes "Which waste bin?" sustainability flow chart). Royal College of Physicians, London (2017).

<https://www.rcplondon.ac.uk/projects/outputs/less-waste-more-health-health-professionals-guide-reducing-waste>

A guide for bin placement in the healthcare environment can be found at:

<http://www.greenhealthcare.ie/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/How-To-Undertake-a-Bin-Placement-Survey-revised.pdf>

Many types of waste bins are available, by size/colour for use in surgery: e.g. from :

<https://www.initial.co.uk/clinical-waste/waste-bins>

Duane B, Ramasubbu D, Harford S, Steinbach I, Swan J, Croasdale K, Stancliffe R. (in press). Environmental sustainability and waste within the dental practice. *British Dental Journal*.

Dental Susnet, online network for improving the sustainability of dental services:

<https://networks.sustainablehealthcare.org.uk/dental-susnet>