



4c. How to: Reduce paper waste



Why is it important?

Becoming a paper-free practice or reducing your paper usage can have a really positive impact on the environment. Paper has a surprisingly high carbon footprint owing to the carbon emissions produced from its production cycle, accounting for more than 7% of global greenhouse gas emissions.

Scanning, telephone calls, email and text messaging can be used as alternative methods of communication. Moving to digital communication often has many other benefits: saving staff time, improving transfer of information between different parts of the care system and improved flexibility for patient booking, with potentially a reduction in 'failed to attend' appointments.

Where using paper is necessary, printing on both sides of each page, using recycled paper and recycling paper waste can all contribute towards reducing waste, as can regularly monitoring and auditing paper consumption.

You can use a CO2 paper calculator (see below) to calculate the amount of carbon emissions created in the production of your current paper usage- and then again after reducing your paper usage!

<http://environmentalpaper.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/paper-vapour-discussion-paper-c.pdf>



What does sustainable practice look like?

Real life example

West Kent Primary Care Trust saved an estimated **£10,000** per year and **10 tonnes** of carbon by implementing the following Paper Saving Plan:

1. Cut paper use in half by using double-sided photocopying and printing wherever possible.
2. Set duplex printing as default.
3. Chairs of all meeting to request summaries only to be printed of long documents with detail available electronically.
4. Use "Locked Print" where possible so document is only printed when you need it and can retrieve it. This is essential for confidential information.



What does sustainable practice look like?

Real life example *continued*

5. Use email and voicemail wherever possible instead of memos/letters.
6. Create a secondary storage for used but reusable paper that can be for draft print-outs, faxes and note taking. Reuse paper trays should appear next to printers, fax machines and photocopiers and be a fixture of every desk.
7. Proofread documents carefully on screen before printing them out.
8. If you print a multiple page file and then discover errors, use the print option to only reprint the pages that have been changed.
9. Set the document line spacing to no more than 1.5.
10. Arrange publications so there is a minimum of white space, such as by adjusting margin width.
11. Consider use of text messaging for appointments and reminders

By implementing this plan, the practice both saved money and reduced their carbon emissions.



Actions

KEY:

Implementation: Easy = 😊😊😊 Less Easy = 😊

Investment Cost: Low = 💷 High = 💷💷💷

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

Environmental benefit: Small = 🌍 Large = 🌍🌍🌍

- It's easy to develop a paper saving plan like the above. 😊😊😊💷🐷🐷🌍



Actions *continued*

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:

West Kent Paper Policy:

<http://map.sustainablehealthcare.org.uk/west-kent-primary-care-trust/paper-policy>

Chester Hospital Reuse Recycle Paper:

<http://map.sustainablehealthcare.org.uk/countess-chester-hospital-nhs-foundation-trust/reduce-reuse-recycle-paper>

More links:

Paper carbon calculator: <http://c.environmentalpaper.org/home>

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>