



## 5b. *How to:* Support local food growing

### Why is it important?

Supporting local food growing can be an opportunity for all dental team members to engage with the local community, learn more about sustainability and to contribute positively to lowering carbon emissions.

Growing food onsite in a practice garden or obtaining an allotment to be used by practice staff or patients offers the opportunity to learn about food from farm to fork, and can also help reduce emissions that would have been generated by transporting such items.

In larger facilities like hospitals, encouraging staff to support local food growers and producers has a positive effect on the local economy, as well as reducing the miles our food will have to travel and the associated carbon cost. This could be achieved by selling local produce in the staff canteen.

### What does sustainable practice look like?

#### Real life example

Hampshire Partnerships Trusts' project '**Procurement of Local Food,**' involved investing in a project manager from the 'Food Matters,' a not-for-profit organisation, and providing local food seminars for all chefs working in the Trust, allowing them the opportunity to try local food products and to discuss any perceived barriers to using local ingredients. Local food days were also organised at several hospitals.

#### Modelled example

Inge is a receptionist at a mixed NHS/dental practice, and is passionate about local and seasonal food. She has her own allotment and organised a staff visit to it, where she showed team members what she is growing and she made them a plant-based dinner afterwards using a variety of vegetables and herbs she had grown herself.

She discussed supporting local food growers and suppliers and organised a pot luck staff lunch, where each staff member brought a dish created using local ingredients, such as honey and strawberries, with organic cream from a local dairy. She planted some boxes with basil, cress and tomatoes to grow in the windows of the dental practice, and rotates what is growing in them depending on the season.

Inge also has provided some information on '**Grow your Own,**' on the dental practice website and via posters in the waiting room. She is hoping that at the next staff volunteer day, they can volunteer in the local community garden alongside some of their patients, and she recently included this on the practice e-newsletter.

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## Actions

### KEY:

**Implementation:** Easy = 😊😊😊 Less Easy = 😊

**Investment Cost:** Low = 💷 High = 💷💷💷

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

**Environmental benefit:** Small = 🌍 Large = 🌍🌍🌍

- If you have a garden, consult with local wildlife trusts, beekeepers or local nature partnerships on promoting biodiversity alongside growing fruit and vegetables



- Avoid pesticides



- Investing in an allotment can be a team building exercise for staff and encourage gentle exercise



- Invite patients to participate in practice gardens and initiatives, and ask them for feedback on projects they would like to be involved in



- If you have limited space or no garden, consider planting herbs, tomatoes and chillies in window boxes or in pots in the reception area. Discuss amongst staff which plants would be best and organise a watering and maintenance rot



- In larger settings, ensure that food procurement supports local suppliers, and use seasonal produce to reduce food miles, whilst avoiding the need for heated greenhouses.



- Support staff to volunteer with local community gardens or allotments and let patients know about it





## Resources

### Case studies:

**Hampshire Partnership Trust:** Procurement of local food

<http://map.sustainablehealthcare.org.uk/hampshire-partnerships-nhs-trust/procurement-local-food>

### More links:

**Centre for Sustainable Healthcare and Green space:**

<https://sustainablehealthcare.org.uk/what-we-do/green-space-and-health>

**How to grow...**

<https://www.growfruitandveg.co.uk/>

**Grow it yourself** (social enterprise)

<https://giy.ie/>

Duane B, Ramasubbu D, Harford S, Steinbach I, Stancliffe R, Ballantyne G.(in press). Environmental sustainability and biodiversity 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>