



6b. *How to*: Develop a sustainability practice policy



Why is it important?

A practice policy or plan can be quite simple for a smaller practice, but a larger practice may require more complex documents. Although not a requirement for dental practices, larger healthcare organisations are encouraged to have Sustainable Development Management Plans. These plans are an indicator in the Public Health Outcomes Framework.

The policy needs to be practice specific and will contain an action plan with **SMART** targets with allocated staff members responsible for specific actions. The practice needs to consider the resources for implementing the plan. Sometimes these may require short-term financial investment for longer-term financial gains.



What does sustainable practice look like?

Modelled example

Leila is an associate dentist, and currently is the practice lead for sustainability. She is developing a practice policy with help and input from her colleagues. After consultation, she has decided to include:

- A process to manage communications raising awareness about sustainability in a network of dental practices
- A process to collect feedback, ideas and offers from patients on sustainability
- A process for the practice to engage staff, patients and visitors
- A process to encourage patients and staff to travel sustainably
- Processes to manage waste, energy and biodiversity

For each process, a staff member will be responsible for implementing and evaluating the associated actions. They used the relevant tips from this guide and decided how each could be best implemented in the context of the practice.



Actions

KEY:

Implementation: Easy = 😊😊😊 Less Easy = 😊

Investment Cost: Low = 💷 High = 💷💷💷

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

Environmental benefit: Small = 🌍 Large = 🌍🌍🌍

- Assess as a team where energy and carbon savings can be made 😊😊😊💷🐷🌍
- Review the Actions for these areas and discuss how they can be adapted for the size of your dental practice. 😊😊😊💷🐷🌍
- Put together a practice sustainability plan, with an emphasis on simple and achievable goals. 😊😊💷🐷🐷🌍
- Make some quick sustainability changes to build excitement and momentum 😊😊💷💷🐷🐷🌍🌍
- Evaluate your plan and goals every 6 months, assessing where improvements can be made. 😊😊💷🐷🌍
- Calculate your savings both in money and carbon and disseminate this information. 😊😊💷🐷🌍



Resources

Sustainable Development Management Plans:

<https://www.sduhealth.org.uk/delivery/plan.aspx>

Duane B, Croasdale K, Ramasubbu D, Harford S, Steinbach I, Stancliffe R, Vadher D. (in press). Environmental Sustainability: Measuring and embedding sustainable practice into the dental practice. British Dental Journal.

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

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

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