

ROADMAP TO SUSTAINABLE DENTISTRY



Appoint an Eco-Ninja
Team lead, idea generator,
content creator



Baseline
Measure where
you're starting from



Changes
Implement one new
eco-habit per week



Discuss
Team
Patients
Suppliers

ROADMAP TO SUSTAINABLE DENTISTRY



A. APPOINT A SUSTAINABILITY CHAMPION

Appointing a sustainability lead (or Eco-Ninja) takes the pressure off the practice owner/manager and empowers the team to lead the change. Sustainability is a team goal, not a top-down mandate.

B. BASELINE MEASUREMENT

You don't have to, but you'll be very glad you did when you can see the difference your changes have made.

We used Zerobees who provided a comprehensive assessment of your carbon footprint - zerobees.com

Denplan offer a quicker and simpler carbon footprint estimator developed by Brett Duane - denplan.co.uk/dentists/training/green-dentistry

Go Practice Green also offer a great looking platform, though I've not used it myself - gopracticegreen.com

C. CHANGES

Making one small change per week is not only easy, but really effective in delivering a long-lasting positive changes. Over the page, there's a list of many of the changes we've implemented, but the best ideas come from in-house. Ensure you engage the team in coming up with ways for your practice to become more sustainable. Also look at the FDI Sustainability Award, it's free, you get a certificate, and it has around 100 goals, each of which are small steps towards sustainability - sustainability-platform.fdiworldddental.org/

D. DISCUSS

Can you make sustainability a part of every team meeting?

Can it be part of your newsletter?

Do your suppliers have a sustainability policy and are they committed to working with you to improve sustainability in healthcare?

Publishing your commitment to reduce your carbon footprint on your website is a great way to share what you're doing and your journey.

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CHANGES AT SMILES IN TANDEM

This is not an exhaustive list, nor is it in order but an overview of some of the more impactful changes we've made

Appointed an eco-ninja

Audited our carbon footprint using Zerobeas

Made recycle bins widely available

Switched to a 100% renewable electricity supply

Installed a more efficient boiler, smart thermostat and about to install a smart meter

Installed solar panels

Swapped all light fittings for LED lighting

Switched to reverse osmosis (RO) water instead of distilled water

Clinical waste optimisation

- Switched to tiger bags. Orange bags only needed for waste for patients with suspected infections
- Educated team on correct segregation of clinical waste, general waste and recycling

Team engagement on consolidating appointments to reduce travel

Trained dental nurse in oral health education and fluoride application

- appointments provided alongside existing ones to avoid extra visits

Reduced single use items

- Swapped for reusable where appropriate
- No longer use tray liners
- 3-in-1 tip, mouthwash cup, patient bib not used by default for every appointment
- Stopped using single use plastic sleeves - no evidence of efficacy
- Washable towels used in decon instead of single use cloths
- Installed Veraco dispensers which eliminated the need for single use wipes
- Reduced steripouch use
 - sealable containers for exam kits in surgery, reprocessed daily
 - sealable containers outside surgery must be reprocessed weekly
- Provided reusable hand towels as an alternative to paper towels in staff and patient bathrooms

Using intra oral scanning rather than conventional dental impressions

Using in-house milling instead of sending jobs to laboratories - less waste, less travel

Optimised stock control

- Single monthly orders from as few suppliers as possible, less deliveries, less packaging
- Buy quality and maintain equipment well
- Stock more sustainable options for sundry sales

Maximising chair and building utilisation including attic conversion

Switched to cloud based practice management software and radiography

Utilised online patient portal for completing documentation before appointments

Provided tablets for updating medical histories, signing consents, providing estimates etc in-house

Removed computer server

Created a wild garden next to the practice to promote biodiversity

Install compost bins for cardboard packaging and food scraps from staff lunches

Invested in climate positive solutions to compensate for the emissions we do generate

Changed owner pension provider to sustainable fund and made staff aware of this as an option for them

Talk about sustainability

- Included sustainability as an agenda item at every practice meeting
- For Our Planet section in our monthly patient newsletter
- Promoted walking and public transport for staff and patients
- Encouraged walking the last mile for staff using a car to get to work
- We plant a tree for every new patient who joins us on recommendation from an existing patient creating our Forest of Smiles
- Seed impregnated thank you cards
- Quizzed our suppliers on their environmental credentials
- Spoken at local study clubs and on podcasts about the changes we've made