



Greener Primary Care Wales Framework and Award Scheme Case Study

How the Community Dental Service in Powys Teaching Health Board achieved their Gold Award in 2024

What was the problem?

We joined the Greener Primary Care Wales Framework and Award Scheme in 2024 as part of our commitment to sustainability. Our Community Dental Service operates within Powys Teaching Health Board, a rural area in Wales known for its stunning landscapes but also its healthcare challenges. As a team, we wanted to make the best use of our beautiful surroundings and play an active role in protecting them.

Initially, our goal was to raise awareness of sustainability initiatives within a Community Dental Service setting. While we don't operate like a typical high-street dental practice, we believed we could still contribute significantly to the Scheme. We also recognised that many of us already take steps to be more environmentally friendly in our personal lives, and we wanted to align our workplace practices with these values.

As newcomers to the Scheme, we decided to start with small, achievable actions that, collectively, would lead to a meaningful impact. We also prioritised initiatives that could enhance the health and wellbeing of both our team and our patients.

What did you do?

Our project lead, Rhian Lewis, a Senior Dental Officer, introduced the Scheme to the team at the start of our journey. She informed everyone via email and during team meetings, ensuring that all members were engaged from the beginning. This early communication helped create a sense of shared responsibility and encouraged team-wide participation.

Each team member was provided with a direct link to the Scheme, allowing them to explore it independently. We then developed a comprehensive list of our existing sustainable practices and identified areas for improvement over the coming year. Throughout the process, we used emails and posters to keep both our team and patients informed, further raising awareness of our sustainability efforts.



Two key initiatives we implemented were writing a Business Continuity Plan and a Green Environmental Sustainability Plan. The online framework provided helpful resources and guidance to assist us in developing these documents. Additionally, we encouraged as many team members as possible to complete Making Every Contact Count (MECC) training, another action within the framework that we believed would benefit both our team and service.

Overall, participating in the Scheme required approximately 8–10 hours of initial organisation and an additional 8–9 months to implement our planned changes. The associated costs were minimal, primarily covering materials used across the service.

What were the challenges?

We encountered both expected and unexpected challenges while participating in the Scheme.

The expected challenges included resistance to change and the need to consider everyone's opinions in a non-judgmental way. Ensuring that all voices were heard while maintaining momentum required careful communication and flexibility.

The unexpected challenges included difficulties sourcing more sustainable alternatives due to procurement procedures set within the health board. Additionally, we experienced periods of low engagement from some team members, which made it harder to implement certain changes.

To overcome these challenges, we collaborated with the more engaged team members to find workable solutions and alternative approaches, helping us stay on track with our sustainability goals.

What difference did it make?

Participating in the Scheme has had a significant impact - not only on our environmental footprint but also in terms of financial savings, team morale, and clinical benefits.

From an environmental perspective, we have transitioned to a paperless service, significantly reducing our reliance on physical resources and administrative time, as well as minimising paper, ink and battery waste.

Financially, we hope to save money in the long-term by reducing printing needs, encouraging the team to work from bases closer to home, promoting carpooling, and opting



for online meetings whenever possible. Socially, the Scheme has proven to be an effective team-building exercise, strengthening collaboration across the service.

Clinically, by encouraging staff to complete MECC training, we have seen more productive patient consultations, improving overall service quality.

Top tips

Based on our experience, our top tips for other teams, including Community Dental Services interested in joining the Scheme are:

- Start with quick, easy-to-implement strategies that deliver early wins
- Engage as many team members as possible to encourage participation and shared responsibility

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