



Green Impact in dentistry

Frequently asked questions

This document answers some of the common questions we've received from practices regarding the launch and delivery of the Green Impact programme. We'll continue to add to it as the programme develops.

Who is Green Impact in dentistry for?

The 2019 programme is being funded by NHS England (East of England) and supported by the Local Dental Networks in Anglia and Essex. Therefore, any practice, whether they deliver NHS contracts or not, in this region are eligible to participate in the programme, fully supported by the Green Impact team, for free. If you're a practice outside of the region, you can still register, access and use the Green Impact online tool for free.

Who developed Green Impact for dentistry?

The National Union for Students (NUS) are the original developers of Green Impact tools for all industry sectors. The NUS worked in partnership with Public Health England (East of England), Health Education England, Local Dental Networks and the Centre of Sustainable Healthcare and together we mapped research relating to carbon emissions in dentistry to create a bespoke version of Green Impact just for dental teams (there is also a bespoke version for GP's). In October 2019, the sustainability within NUS created a new charity Students Organising for Sustainability (SOS-UK) in response to the climate emergency and move further faster with our sustainability work. SOS-UK now deliver the Green Impact programme.

Why are SOS-UK running a programme for dentists?

SOS-UK has over a decades' experience running Green Impact as a way of enhancing and normalizing sustainability whilst also providing students with excellent development opportunities. In 2016 they were recognized by UNESCO as one of just nine global laureates for education for sustainable development for the Green Impact programme. What started in students' unions is now being used by universities, hospitals, local authorities, businesses, museums, GPs, and now, dentists! The model remains the same for each individual Green Impact programme, but we adapt and tailor the toolkit, communications, and partners for each programme so it's completely fit for purpose.

What does it cost?

This project is funded by NHS commissioners in the East of England and therefore free for any dental team in the UK to access (private and NHS).





How much time does it take?

The length of time varies for each practice and will reflect the time you can devote to this. We try to encourage all dental teams to work towards an annual assessment date setting achievable goals for them. Many of our practices move through the Bronze award quite quickly. Many of our teams are surprised to discover they are already doing a lot to be sustainable.

What support is available?

There's a whole host of resources and tools within the toolkit to help implement particular actions - look at the 'Further Information' tab for each action to find these.

You'll get personal contact from the Green Impact team who'll periodically check in with you, see how you're getting on, signpost you to resources that will be of benefit to your work and help overcome any challenges.

We'll be running skills and knowledge development webinars (CPD accredited wherever we can) throughout the year.

Periodically you'll get programme updates and news stories about the programme but we promise never to spam anyone viewing or registered on the programme - you can reference our privacy policy [here](#).

Finally, we hope to be running a sustainability leadership course in parallel to the programme, but this is still in development.

I have registered but I don't know where to start

In the toolkit, have a look at the 'help' section as well as the 'further information' tabs on each action in the toolkit.

You can also find help and guidance on our Green Impact resource bank with a 'toolkit user guide' as well as templates to use.

You can also get in touch with us to book in an introductory call for us to explain how to take part and offer guidance and support. Email us at Gdentistry@sos-uk.org.

When are the assessments?

We aim to carry out assessment at least once a year. However, we are continuously reviewing the progress of Green Impact teams and the demand for assessments. The toolkit will always have the latest information



Do I have to be assessed?

No, it's not compulsory but we love to celebrate your achievements and hope you will want to show off your commitment and achievement too to patients and staff.

What is the role of the student auditor?

For people registered in the Anglia and Essex region, the audit is an opportunity for you to showcase your work, provide feedback on the programme, and get further support you may need. We'll also be reviewing your work to verify the results of the programme to ensure we're fair with the award levels we give out, recognizing and respecting data confidentiality and privacy as set out below.

The students who get involved with Green Impact are incredibly passionate about developing their skills and driving sustainability. The enthusiasm and innovation they bring will be a huge asset to your practice. In many cases they'll be studying to be dentists, or to work in healthcare.

We personally give them all the training they need to support your work in a professional and structured way, and they'll be absolutely confident about the process, your expectations and their responsibilities. The training is approved by [IEMA](#), and students will have signed a confidentiality agreement in advance of their audit so they just share their findings with the Green Impact team.

How will the data I provide be used? Can I be assured it will remain confidential and meet all requirements for data security?

Upon registering for the programme you provide us with some basic contact details. These will only be used to contact you about the Green Impact programme - we won't ever share them beyond the programme team. You're also able to upload evidence about your sustainability work. This will be seen by the programme team and your trained student auditor. They'll have signed a confidentiality agreement. We'll only ever share information about your practice (for example as a case study or to celebrate your success) with your permission. Anonymous data about the programme's impacts will be collated throughout the programme and shared with various parties. All of our work is GDPR compliant and you can access our privacy statement with further information at any time.

Who's supporting the programme?

The programme is being delivered by SOS-UK in partnership with PHE England and the Centre for Sustainable Healthcare. It's being funded by NHS England (East of England). The Centre for Sustainable Healthcare coordinates the Dental Sustainability Advisory Group which contains representatives from many sector bodies such as Health Education England, the British Dental Association, the Federation of General Dental Practice, the General Dental Council and British Dental Industries Association. This group oversees a dental scholarship programme for sustainable dentistry, and has fed into and reviewed the overall plans for Green Impact including its toolkit and are helping support the communications surrounding the programme. We're sure we're liaising with the right stakeholders and are very grateful for their input and support, especially the dental scholars for their input to the toolkit.





What's the benefit of participating for my practice?

Green Impact is a proven way of increasing sustainable attitudes and behaviours of people within an organisation and is a powerful communication and engagement tool for staff. However, what your particular practice gets out of the programme depends on a lot of things: your starting point, your enthusiasm and resources, your areas of interest etc. Some of the commonly reported benefits we've seen from the programme that we think we'll see realized in this programme for dental practices are:

- Increased environmental sustainability
- Cost savings
- Improved staff morale
- Contribute towards the NHS Greener plan - <https://www.england.nhs.uk/greenernhs/>
- Demonstrable commitment to improving sustainability practices
- Efficiency through the model - enabling practices to learn from others
- CPD opportunities for staff
- In addition, there may be benefits for patients: fairer access, benefitting a larger proportion of the population, better oral health and equitable, sustainable care

How can I find out what other practices are doing in relation to sustainability?

You can follow what other Green Impact teams in dentistry and beyond are doing on social media using #GreenImpact. Please share your achievements and use this as a way to connect with others progressing towards a sustainable and just future.

Dental Susnet is a great resource provided by the Centre for Sustainable Healthcare - it's a friendly online forum where you can share resources, ask questions, and stay up to date with the latest in sustainable dentistry. Being an active member of Dental Susnet is one of the actions in the Green Impact programme. Dental Susnet is available at:
<https://networks.sustainablehealthcare.org.uk/dental-susnet>.

You'll also receive periodic updates from the Green Impact team sharing good practice and helping overcome common barriers faced by practices.

As part of the Anglia and Essex programme, we plan to develop a team of clinical leaders who will be proud to share their work, and promote opportunities for others.

How does the toolkit work?

There is a user guide which you can refer to [here](#) which explains how to manage your personal and practice account, how to access the glossary, how to make and review comments and evidence, how to export or print the toolkit as well as submitting your toolkit. If you are still having problems with a particular toolkit functionality issue please contact Gdentistry@sos-uk.org.



How do I progress through the levels?

We formally audit (although it's a very friendly audit!) once a year, for those practices in Anglia and Essex. Again, if you're in that region, you'll get lots of support throughout the year - the Green Impact team will check in regularly with you, see how you're getting on, support you to progress through the programme and help overcome challenges.

We thoroughly recommend you start with Bronze - we anticipate that some people will aim for completion of Bronze in the first year, others will want to go further and can absolutely aim for Silver or even Gold in the first year. We'll support you to progress as is best suited for your practice, but you'll only be able to find out what you've officially achieved after the audit. However, it's very rare that an organisation doesn't achieve the award level its expecting.

How can I find other sustainability enthusiasts in the dental sector, so I can share ideas and find out what others are doing?

As a Green Impact user, you are now part of this wider community of 'Green Champions' you can connect to these by joining our MS teams group. To request access email Gdentistry@sos-uk.org.

We are keen to hear about your journey to share the learning and identify what the barriers and issues are. We will aggregate feedback and share that with NHS Dental Commissioners in East of England to who fund this project use it to develop our understanding of what works and develop key messages for strategic partners.

How can I help to make the dental sector more sustainable?

Green Impact is much more than a tool with tips we are trying to build a community of green champions that can support each other and help us to work out what else needs to change to allow us to implement change across dentistry. Hearing from you is very important to us. We aggregate your comments and share them with strategic partners and the NHS Dental commissioners that have funded this project.

Where can I go for further help?

If you have any questions that you can't find here, please contact Gdentistry@sos-uk.org.