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Greener Primary Care Wales Framework and Award Scheme

Frequently asked questions



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Canolfan Datblygu ac Arloesi
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Primary and Community Care
Development and Innovation Hub
Developing Primary Care in Wales

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1. What is the Greener Primary Care Wales Framework and Award Scheme?

The [Greener Primary Care Wales Framework and Award Scheme](#) is an environmental sustainability framework and awards scheme developed for the four primary care contractors in Wales (General Practice, Community Pharmacy, Optometry and Dental).

The framework has been aligned to the [NHS Wales Decarbonisation Strategic Delivery Plan](#) and consists of over 50 actions across a broad range of categories such as waste and procurement; of which 29 are applicable to all primary care settings and the remainder being contractor-specific.

These actions are aimed at helping primary care contractors to improve the environmental sustainability of their day to day practice. The actions are not supposed to be time or resource draining and are proven to be cost effective as well as good for the planet.

The framework has been designed to support primary care in taking environmental sustainability actions, it is voluntary and is a great place to begin your sustainability journey and take steps in creating a healthier planet. The award aspect of the scheme corresponds to the following levels: Working Towards, Bronze, Silver, and Gold. By achieving a set amount of actions (and therefore points) you will progress up the award scheme.

-  Registered but less than 25% complete – Working Towards
-  25% complete – **Bronze**
-  50% complete – **Silver**
-  75% complete – **Gold**



2. Why do we need a Greener Primary Care Wales Framework?

Currently in Wales there is no one resource to support all four primary care contractors in becoming more environmentally sustainable and take action to support decarbonisation.

As a result of Welsh Government declaring a climate emergency in April 2019, a number of key targets have been set:

- Health and Social Care to deliver a reduction in emissions of 16% by 2025 and 34% by 2030.
- A carbon neutral public sector by 2030 and net zero emissions for all sectors by 2050

These have been supported by the [NHS Wales Decarbonisation Strategic Delivery Plan](#) (2021).

The health sector in Wales is responsible for the largest carbon emissions in the public sector with GP practices, community pharmacies, dental practices and optometric practices having an important role in reducing health sector emissions.

In Wales, the Greener Primary Care agenda closely aligns to our legislative and policy context. The well-being goals set out in the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#) will all be positively impacted by this work. It supports the sustainable development principle of the Act by taking a long-term approach to prevent the deterioration of the climate emergency by working in collaboration with stakeholders and involving the healthcare professionals who have the ability to enact change.

Currently, the only UK-wide frameworks are for general practice and dentistry only and these are written with English practices in mind. Therefore, only Welsh GPs and Dental practices can engage in this work and will face potential barriers to completion as some of the content refer to England-only schemes which are not available in the same way in Wales. There is no equivalent UK wide resource for community pharmacy or optometry.

A bespoke framework which can support all primary care contractors on a Welsh footprint was developed by the Primary Care Hub, Public Health Wales. This allowed the actions included in the framework to be aligned to the strategic and policy context in Wales, supporting



colleagues in primary care to demonstrate legislative and policy duties regarding environmental action easily.

3. Who can participate in the Greener Primary Care Wales Framework and Awards Scheme?

The scheme has been designed specifically for the four contractor professions in Wales (General Practice, Community Pharmacy, Optometry and Dental). Access to the framework and scheme is therefore restricted to the above at present.

As the framework and scheme is implemented, we will explore developing the framework further to include a broader audience within primary and community care settings.

4. What are we asking primary care contractors to do?

We are asking contractors to [register](#) with the scheme and start on the journey towards environmental sustainability and decarbonisation. The scheme is voluntary and free of charge.

There are ongoing discussions as to how the wider sustainability agenda may be embedded in primary care contracts in the future. At this point, other than inclusion as an optional QI project in the GMS contract environmental sustainability is absent from the contract. Participation in this scheme may mean that contractors are more advanced in their sustainability practice if any mandatory requirement to comply with similar actions comes into force in the future.

This framework will act as a tool to support primary care in meeting the ambitious government targets and for all sectors to be carbon neutral by 2050. Where, for example, health boards support practices to participate in the scheme, it will also support them in their duty to demonstrate how they are meeting the goals of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

We recognise the enormity of climate change can seem daunting and that individual actions sometimes don't feel like enough, however if we all take some action across a range of activities, then the collective impact will be much greater.



In summary, we are asking contractors to consider their personal, professional and organisational responsibility towards tackling the climate emergency and achieving the Welsh Government's decarbonisation milestones.

5. What sort of activity is included as actions in the framework?

The majority of the actions within the framework are generic to any primary healthcare provider and could therefore be implemented by all independent primary care contractors and any community service e.g. changing to energy efficient lightbulbs. However the framework also includes a sub-section of actions specific to each setting e.g. general practice, dental, optometry and community pharmacy.

Actions have been developed, in the first instance, based on a number of factors:

- Alignment to NHS Wales Decarbonisation Strategic Delivery Plan
- Feedback from the Expert Group and other key stakeholders
- Insight from the pilot sites
- Support the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 Goals and Ways of Working, Prudent Healthcare principles and the UN Sustainable Development goals
- Inclusion and uptake in RCGP Green Impact for Health Toolkit*
- Inclusion in Dental Green Impact for Health Toolkit**

**RCGP Green Impact for Health toolkit is a UK wide scheme for general practices only established in 2014, similarly Green Impact for Health Dental toolkit is a UK wide scheme for all dental practice (primary and secondary care). These schemes tend to be quite English centric and refer to some England only schemes and resources not relevant or available in Wales. Nevertheless these are also useful resources practices may wish to consider. Welsh practices which have already initiated one of the UK-wide toolkits may be able to use some of this evidence towards the new Welsh framework.*

6. How does the assessment and award process operate?



The Primary Care Hub, Public Health Wales has formed a partnership with the charity [Students Organising for Sustainability UK \(SOS-UK\)](#) who will manage its use and train university students to become auditors of the evidence submitted by practices.

We are requesting that students from Welsh universities studying relevant healthcare degree programmes will be prioritised as volunteer auditors, therefore providing them with relevant work experience opportunities.

The scheme will operate as follows:

- Practices [register](#) with the scheme.
- Practice select actions they wish to work on.
- Evidence to support the completion of actions will be uploaded onto the digital platform by participating practices.
- The framework will remain open for evidence submissions until 28th October 2022.
- Once the framework closes university students volunteering for SOS-UK will undertake auditing of submitted evidence. These volunteers receive specific and specialist training from the charity, who provide ongoing support to students and oversee the whole process.
- Practices may be invited to attend a brief 1 hour meeting with the student auditors to confirm completion of the actions and clarify and evidence.
- Award levels will be based on the successful completion of incremental percentages of the total actions e.g. 25%, 50% and 75%, as explained above.

Practices can therefore reach a bronze award by implementing just 8 actions.

7. What about the carbon footprint of primary care?

One of the first steps primary care settings may wish to think about is to calculate their current carbon footprint to help identify ways in which they can reduce their carbon emissions.

A recent [review](#) of carbon calculators by the Primary Care Hub, Public Health Wales identified some carbon footprint calculators suitable for use by small and medium-sized business/small organisations that may be most relevant for use by individual primary care practices.



Our findings indicated that there is no one, free of charge, carbon calculator that takes into account all the factors that satisfies its use across all four settings in primary care, general practices, community pharmacies, dental practices and optometric practices. However, each offer at least partial suitability for use by primary care settings:

- [See Sustainability GP Carbon Footprint Calculator](#)
- [The Carbon Trust Carbon Footprint Calculator](#)
- [The National Energy Foundation Carbon Footprint Calculator](#)
- [The Climate Hero Carbon Footprint Calculator](#)

8. How do I get involved?

If you would like to get involved in the Greener Primary Care Wales Framework and Awards Scheme click [here](#).

The first step is to register yourself and your team, please fill in the registration form by using the link above and clicking the dark green 'Register' button. If you are the first person in your practice to register then you will need a registration code which can be gained by emailing greenerprimarycare@wales.nhs.uk or celine.clark@sos-uk.org. This is a simple security check to stop inappropriate registrations.

If you are already registered on the Green Impact for Health Toolkit you should have received an email from SOS-UK to explain the options available to you regarding registering with the Greener Primary Care Framework. If you are yet to receive this email please contact greenerprimarycare@wales.nhs.uk or celine.clark@sos-uk.org.

If you are the first person joining from your practice, please set up a new team with a name that will be recognisable to your colleagues. Once your team is set up, it will then appear on the drop-down list on the registration page under 'Team', and other colleagues can then select to join your team when registering.

Once registered, you can log in to the framework using the email and password you set up, and being to familiarise yourself with the guidance information on the Intro page which takes you through how to get started.



There is a generic [Green Impact User Guide](#), this is available to show you the key functions of the framework. For each action there is a description tab and further information tab, both of which will help to explain how you can meet that criteria and earn a point for your practice.

The 'Comments/Evidence' tab should be used to support framework completion and the audit process by allowing teams to upload evidence against each action. Team members can leave comments to explain how they have completed actions, and evidence can also be uploaded to support this (e.g. emails, photos or other files).

Once you have finished completing a criteria, click 'Done' on the top right of the box and then click 'Save Changes' at the top of the framework to ensure your comments and evidence saves.

Please [save changes regularly](#) so the framework doesn't time you out.

The online framework will be 'open' for submissions of evidence until 28th October 2022, please make sure all evidence and submissions are complete by this date and ensure you click the *DONE* button to complete the process. The evidence and comments provided will be audited on 16th November 2022 and you may be invited to attend a 1 hour meeting on this date. Further information in relation to the auditing and awarding aspect can be found on the online framework.



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