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Greener Primary Care Wales

Canolfan Datblygu ac Arloesi Gofal Sylfaenol a Chymunedol | Primary and Community Care Development and Innovation Hub

Greener Primary Care Wales

Year 2 (2023)

End of year report

March 2024

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1. Background

The Greener Primary Care Wales Framework and Award Scheme was launched in June 2022. The Scheme is designed to support general practices, community pharmacies, primary care dental surgeries and community optometry practices to take positive environmental actions.

A short animation provides a helpful overview to the Scheme.

Public Health Wales identified climate change as an emerging threat to health in 2017. The Health and its determinants in Wales report (2018) describes how the projected changes will have implications for health. This has been reinforced by the 2023 Public Health Wales Health Impact Assessment on the health and wellbeing impacts of climate change across Wales. The link between climate change and health is a useful lever to engage the primary care workforce to take action.

Since the Welsh Government's declaration of a climate emergency in 2019, Public Health Wales has been looking at what could be done on a once-for-Wales basis to support the primary care sector to take action and respond to the climate crisis. This was in response to the requirement for a reduction in emissions of **16%** by **2025** and **34%** by **2030** in the health and social care sector. The targets have helped with engagement and have motivated practices to get involved.

Due to the contribution of healthcare to Wales' carbon footprint, the huge proportion of healthcare delivered in primary care (90%) and that primary care contractors operate as independent businesses contracted via health boards, however are often regarded as outside of the NHS, Public Health Wales's focus was to concentrate on the primary care part of the system. This was reinforced in the publication of the NHS Wales Decarbonisation Strategic Delivery Plan calculating the carbon footprint of NHS Wales based on data from hospitals only, without considering the impact primary care was having.

The Scheme is the first of its kind in Wales and is delivered in partnership with SOS-UK Green Impact. It has also been endorsed by several professional bodies as part of the Scheme's Expert Group. Obtaining endorsement from professional organisations and other key stakeholders in Wales has been instrumental in shaping the Framework, promoting the Scheme to their workforce and leveraging partnerships for delivery.

The Scheme consists of a suite of clinical and non-clinical actions, agreed by the Expert Group. Each action is accompanied by further information and resources to help with implementation. Practices self-select which actions to complete and one point is achieved per completed action, pending an audit at the end of the year. As the number of actions completed increases, so does the level of award achieved (from bronze, to silver and gold). Many actions are featured around mitigation in line with the NHS Wales Decarbonisation Strategic Delivery Plan, however actions for adaptation including planning for access to primary healthcare services in the event of service failure due to adverse events such as extreme weather, are also featured. The actions also align with the UN Sustainable Development Goals, Prudent Healthcare Principles and the Goals of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

2. Highlights of Year 2

There were numerous highlights to report during Year 2 of the Scheme. Some examples have been presented below under the themes of awareness raising, advocacy and action.

2.1 Awareness raising

- Year 2 opened with a re-launch webinar on Monday 20th March 2023. The webinar was chaired by Kate Eden, Vice Chair, Public Health Wales and Chair of the Greener Primary Care Wales Expert Group. The relaunch provided an overview of the Scheme, how to get involved, a practical demonstration of the online toolkit and reflections from practices participating during 2022.

- During 2023 there have been numerous presentations to a wide range of stakeholders to raise awareness of the Scheme. (Appendix 1)

- Indirect communications via stakeholders and Expert Group representatives to raise awareness of the Scheme.

- Workshop and poster presentation at The Tipping Point: Where next for health and care? Bevan Commission Conference to mark the 75th year of the NHS in Wales in July 2023.

- Spotlight examples featured during Wales Climate Week 2023 which included a live session about Tackling The Public Health Effects of Climate Change (Public Health Wales / Welsh Government), a pre-recorded case study Greener Primary Care Wales Award Scheme and Champions (Public Health Wales / Local Partnerships) and signposting to further information via the Resources pages.

- The Scheme featured as an exemplar case study in the Chief Medical Officer's Annual Report 2023.

- Community pharmacy in Wales reaches net-zero emissions. The Pharmaceutical Journal. Online December 2023.

- Development of the Greener Primary Care Wales Framework and Award Scheme animation to promote the initiative.

Advocacy

- Publication in 2023 of the Greener Primary Care Wales 2022 Yearbook as a result of a successful bid to the Health and Social Care Climate Emergency National Programme. This was one of a few primary care funded projects to receive funding from round 1.

- Further grant funding from the Health and Social Care Climate Emergency National Programme – round 2 to support four work packages to advocate for primary care and promote the Scheme. These included:

  Work package 1 – Testing a Primary Care Climate Champion proof of concept. Seven trained champions to provide local educational outreach to individual primary care contractors and clusters. Each based in one health board area.

  Work package 2 – Gaining behavioural insight into barriers and enablers for primary care contractors to take action to decarbonise.

  Work package 3 – Calculating carbon saving values for actions in the 2023 Greener Primary Care Wales Framework and Award Scheme.

  Work package 4 – Designing and developing a suite of collateral and assets that can be used to encourage primary care to take climate change action.

Due to the financial situation in Wales the availability of funds from the Health and Social Care Climate Emergency National Programme was uncertain. We worked with the Primary Care Division and Pharmacy & Prescribing branch and the Health and Social Care Climate Emergency Team in Welsh Government to agree an exceptional case for funding to support primary care to deliver action against climate change.

- Ongoing work with primary care contracting to identify opportunities to embed climate friendly actions into primary care contracts.

- Establishment and leadership to a ***Decarbonisation – Inhaler use and disposal Task and Finish Group*** to provide a coordinated approach, national oversight, input and support to address inhaler use and disposal in Wales aligned to the relevant initiatives in the NHS Wales Decarbonisation Strategic Delivery Plan (2021).

- Influencing the Public Health Wales Long-Term Strategy 2023-2025 to include a chapter on climate change and the role of primary care in tackling climate change to be featured in the associated Intermediate Medium Term Plan.

- Discussions initiated about embedding climate change in professional practice.

Action

- Year 2 consisted of 54 actions of which 33 actions were generally applicable to staff in any primary care setting, and with 21 being contractor-specific.
  Figure 1: Example of toolkit action[1]

- A total of 1,724 climate friendly actions were achieved during Year 2 from participating practices which included 635 actions from independent practices and 1,089 actions across 99 Boots stores in Wales. This is an increase from the 638 actions reported for Year 1. Cumulatively over 2,362 climate-friendly actions implemented across primary care over a 2-year period.

[1] Image from SOS-UK toolkit (not available in Welsh)

Figure 2: Image provided by SOS-UK demonstrating the number of actions achieved during 2023[2]

- A breakdown of registration, actions and awards is provided in table 1 and 2 below.

Table 1 – Breakdown of participating practices, awards and actions for Year 2

Year 2
85 teams registered - 37 GP - 6 community pharmacy - 27 primary care dental - 15 primary care optometry
99 Boots community pharmacy stores via a corporate award
124 individuals registered
25 awards - 7 Bronze - 7 Silver - 11 Gold
18 practices achieving the Active Participation Award*
4 Special Award winners**
45 teams completing at least one action
Most actions taken by one team (n=39)
635 climate friendly actions

*Eighteen teams achieved an Active Participation Award which recognises teams that have begun progressing towards the 8 points needed for a bronze award.

[2] Figure provided by SOS-UK (not available in Welsh)

** Three practices and one individual were nominated and received a Special Award. Every year, SOS-UK's Special Awards are given out by each individual Green Impact project across the country, including the Greener Primary Care Wales Scheme. The awards are given to people and teams who go above and beyond for sustainability. These awards reflect the breadth of positive action taking place in the UK through the Scheme and highlight some of the efforts that the typical Bronze, Silver, and Gold awards may not fully represent. These local Special Award winners are then put forward for consideration for the yearly Green Impact National Awards, which are typically announced in May every year.

- All award winners are detailed in Appendix 2.

Table 2 - Breakdown of practices by Health Board *(this table does not include Boots stores)*

Health Board	Count
Aneurin Bevan UHB	15
Betsi Cadwaladr UHB	5
Cardiff and Vale UHB	16
Cwm Taf Morgannwg UHB	17
Hywel Dda UHB	13
Powys THB	10
Swansea Bay UHB	9

- Potential reach of over 450 individuals in practice.

- New corporate offer developed with Boots (community pharmacy). A bronze award achieved by Boots (pharmacy and optometry) which means that over 99 Boots stores across Wales have achieved a bronze award. This is in addition to the 25 awards detailed in table 1.

- A number of practices reported adaptation actions for the first time. (Appendix 3 for further details).

- Minor amendments and updated information with input from the Expert Group to support revised actions for inclusion in the Framework for Year 2.

- Further feedback sought from the Expert Group earlier in Year 2 to update and include any new actions in preparation for Year 3.

- Ongoing communication with the Expert Group and one meeting held in November 2023 to inform Year 3. The meeting consisted of fifteen representatives from a broad range of stakeholders across the four independent primary care contractor services and other parties.

- Time to Talk Public Health survey findings reported that:

"80% of respondents believed that primary care practices should be taking action to reduce their impact on the climate…"

3. Spread and scale

The engagement and uptake for Year 2 was similar to Year 1 with over 630 actions being reported each year, however the Scheme did not achieve the spread and scale hoped for during Year 2. This was discussed with the Expert Group in November 2023 to identify ways to raise awareness and the profile of the Scheme, in addition to increasing engagement from primary care contractors.

A number of areas are emerging and will be explored by the Primary Care Division during 2024:

- It is hoped that the behavioural insight work underway and due to report in March 2024 will help to understand barriers to participation.
- A member of the team, Sian Evans, has been accepted onto the 2024 Bevan Fellowship two year programme to explore how the Bevan Commission can help to enhance the work.
- Promoting the initiative to healthcare professional trainees as part of their training programme to be explored. This currently happens for dental trainees via the HEIW programme. This could be explored and considered for other professionals.
- Continue to consider weaving environmental sustainability into the individual professional contracts where possible. For example, in optometry, the Scheme has been included in the new Quality in Optometry Framework with actions about awareness and action.
- Exploring other recognition from across the system for taking part in the Scheme. For example, Optometry Wales held an awards ceremony that included the Green Practice Award.
- Explore assets to practices as an opportunity to use this Scheme as a promotional opportunity for driving business.
- Building on the success of Boots' bronze corporate award by encouraging individual Boots community pharmacies to implement additional actions and reach a silver award.

- Expanding the new corporate offer award to other contractor professions e.g. optometry. Negotiations underway with Specsavers.
- Analysing the outcome of a local Champions pilot being implemented October 2023- March 2024 to inform the future model and mechanism for delivery of the Scheme.
- Identifying and reporting carbon savings associated with the actions included in the framework.

4. Next steps

The Scheme has been funded until end December 2024. Year 3 will run between January 2024 and October/ November 2024 when the audits will take place.

Funding to continue the Scheme beyond December 2024 will be sought during Q4 2024.

Appendix 1- List of presentations

Approaches to Healthcare project group	13	January	2023
Green Health Wales National Leads	16	February	2023
Primary Care Interests group (with Health Board Local Public Health Teams)	16	February	2023
Caerphilly North NCN (Cluster) meeting	9	March	2023
Caerphilly South NCN (Cluster) meeting	16	March	2023
Greener Primary Care Re-launch (Year 2) webinar	20	March	2023
Caerphilly East NCN (Cluster) meeting	23	March	2023
Bevan Commission Conference: The Tipping Point - Where next for health and care? Breakout session: Pinch with Pride- To Reduce Waste-Bevan	6	July	2023
Dysgu@Lunch (internal Public Health Wales)	8	August	2023
Greener Primary Care Wales Champions Meet & Greet	11	October	2023
Primary Care Division (internal Public Health Wales)	11	October	2023
Pharmacy Show 2023, NEC Birmingham	15	October	2023
Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board West Pan Cluster Planning Group	17	October	2023
Aneurin Bevan University Health Board Decarbonisation Programme Board	16	November	2023
Swansea Bay University Health Board Pan Cluster Planning Group	22	November	2023
Greener Primary Care Wales Expert Group	29	November	2023
All Wales Medical Directors group	1	December	2023
Wales Climate Week - signposting to further information via Resources	4	December	2023
Wales Climate Week - live session about Tackling The Public Health Effects of Climate Change (Public Health Wales / Welsh Government)	7	December	2023
Wales Climate week - pre-recorded case study Greener Primary Care Wales Award Scheme and Champions (Public Health Wales / Local Partnerships)	8	December	2023

Appendix 2 – Award winners

Bronze, Silver and Gold Award winners

Green Impact
GOLD AWARD
Delivered by Students Organising for Sustainability - UK

Congratulations to the 7 teams that achieved Bronze, 7 teams that achieved Silver and 11 teams that achieved Gold this year!

- Brackla Dental Surgery
- C.N. O'Leary Opticians
- Greenacre Orthodontics
- Jonathon Partridge Optometrists
- Kingsway GP Surgery
- Montgomery Medical Practice
- Nantgarw Road Medical Centre
- North Cardiff Dental and Implant
- Pearce and Blackmore Opticians
- Probert & Williams Eye Care
- Vale View Dental Care

Green Impact
BRONZE AWARD
Delivered by Students Organising for Sustainability - UK

- Boots
- Cwtch Dental Care
- Llynyfran Surgery
- Monnow Eyecare
- Roath House Surgery
- Specsavers Talbot Green
- Ystradgynlais Group Practice

Green Impact
SILVER AWARD
Delivered by Students Organising for Sustainability - UK

- Canton Optical Ltd
- Fairwater Health Centre
- Llanfyllin Practice
- Penarth Eye Centre
- Rook & Thomas Optometrists
- Talbot Road Dental Practice
- Y Bont Faen Dental Centre

Active Participation Award winners

Green Impact
PARTICIPATION AWARD
Delivered by Students Organising for Sustainability - UK

The participation award recognises that these teams have begun progressing towards the 8 points needed for Bronze by marking some actions as completed this year!

We hope to see these new teams going on to continue their sustainability journey and achieving a full award in 2024.

- Aber Medical Team - Caerphilly South
- Bargoed Sight Centre
- Court Road Surgery
- Cwmbwrla dental
- Glan Irfon Community Dental Clinic
- Glynneath
- Kirsty Herbert
- Middle Lane Surgery
- Mydentist Milllane
- New Chapel Street Surgery
- Powys Community Dental Service
- Specsavers Brecon
- St Peters Surgery
- Symbiosis Dental
- T and R Healthcare
- Tyn Y Coed surgery
- Vergam
- Whitchurch Medical Centre

Special Award winners

- **Sustainability Hero Award:**
  Flo King, North Cardiff Dental & Implants, Cardiff

  To recognise an extraordinary person within a Green Impact team who has really become a sustainability hero. They may have helped others in their team realise the importance of taking action on climate, inspired people to get involved through their enthusiasm, or be very good at practicing sustainability within their role or personal life.

- **Innovation for Engagement Award:**
  Greenacre Orthodontics, Connah's Quay

  To recognise ways in which Green Impact teams have engaged more people in sustainability activities, supporting more staff and students to learn about and lead on sustainability. This award spotlights creative innovation in engaging staff and students: the more people we can actively engage, the bigger the positive impact we can make.

- **Sustainability Improvement Award:**
  Kingsway Surgery, Swansea

  To recognise an environmental improvement or initiative that has been put in place to make a tangible impact within, or beyond, Green Impact teams. Every step within the Green Impact programme is designed to make positive sustainability improvements, but this award showcases those initiatives that have gone above-and-beyond to make a particularly significant impact.

- **Community Action Award:**
  Pearce & Blackmore Opticians, Cardiff

  To recognise how Green Impact teams have led, developed, or participated in innovative community action. Examples can include working in partnership with community groups, developing new projects, and helping their organisation to build capacity for sustainability in the wider community.

Appendix 3 - Adaptation actions

Adaption action reported by participating practices
Flood risk checked for both practices and is less than 0.1%. Optometrist is able to walk to both practices so that they can remain open in case of snow.
We have grit readily available at both practices in case of ice and or snow.
Our practice has a Disaster Planning and Emergency Procedures policy that we follow if we was to ever encounter any geographic or technical issues in practice.
We have an extreme weather policy which is part of our practice handbook and was recently reviewed by HEIW on their inspection.
Business continuity plan in place and includes information about informing patients of extreme weather. Natural Resources Wales flood map shows the Practice building is in a low flood risk area.
Met Office weather warnings and link to official advice posted on the Practice website and social media.
This year we implemented a Business Continuity Plan which includes information on what the business should do in case of extreme events. Attached is a redacted version of our BCP.
The Welsh government website has shown that the dental practice is in a very low area for any floods by rivers, seas, and watercourses. Our practice has introduced a 'bad weather policy' which informs patients via email of any weather updates and what to do if there are any. Any heat-related issues would be to stay at home if any dangers to traveling to the practice and to drink plenty of water. If the patient is inside when a weather warning occurs, then the practice provides air conditioning.
As a practice, we sent patients text messages in bad weather conditions such as snow, thunder, and rain. We send the messages the night before any bad weather is forecast. This allows the patients to decide whether they feel comfortable attending their appointments without feeling guilty if they don't.
There is a limited amount that we can do to deal with extreme heat. However, we have been forced to mitigate against very heavy rainfall- the basement of our surgery holds our paper medical records but floods when the underground storm drains are full. Despite the use of pumps to clear water from the basement we have been forced to fit a raised false floor in that room to keep records dry.
The plan is available on request.
The practice has a business continuity plan in place, this plan includes sections on extreme weather, long and short-term loss of access, floods, fire, and loss of water supply. The practice is a buddy practice with a neighbouring practice in the North Powys Cluster.
Directors and staff have each other's telephone numbers so that everyone can be quickly and easily contacted.

During extreme weather, such as the snow which engulfed Wales in March 2023 a dynamic risk assessment is always made to ensure patients are protected. In this most recent case, the decision was made to close to practice on 2 days to ensure that patients did not feel obligated to travel in conditions that were unsafe. This is always a difficult balancing act, but it is aided by members of staff traveling in from different directions, and therefore situational awareness in improved and more accurate and timely decisions can be made.
We have an established business interruption plan including emergency manager and contact details. We have used the flood risk assessment online tool to establish the practice is at low risk of flooding. The full policy has personal details included; hence it's not been fully submitted as evidence.
Fans and heaters bought, and new uniform choices being looked into.
We have an adverse weather policy. Additionally, the practice also has a business continuity plan which takes into account loss to services. Our patient management software is cloud based and is therefore accessible offsite, in the case of adverse weather / a disaster, patients can be texted to be updated.
We have air conditioning installed to protect our patients for heat exhaustion and dehydration during the extreme heat.
Both surgeries are over 20 years old and as a practice when we replace a lighting unit we replace these with LED light which are more efficient and hopefully last longer.