

Sustainable Kidney Care - Implementing Best Practice: Project Summary

Kidney care is one of the most resource-intensive specialities in healthcare, making it a key focus for achieving sustainability goals. Recognising this, the Greener NHS, the UK Kidney Association, the Centre for Sustainable Healthcare (CSH) and Health Innovation North-East and North Cumbria have partnered to develop a pioneering initiative aimed at reducing the carbon footprint of kidney care while delivering cost savings and conserving water.

The Challenge

While kidney care has led the way in identifying opportunities for sustainable practices, there are still barriers to widespread adoption. Clinical teams face significant challenges, including being overwhelmed by competing priorities, a lack of clear guidance, and insufficient tools to measure progress towards sustainability goals.

The Opportunity

CSH estimates that scaling 20 proven green innovations across UK kidney centres could achieve annual savings of:

- **£7 million** in costs,
- **11,000 tonnes of CO₂e**, and
- **470 million litres of water**.

To unlock this potential, a comprehensive benchmarking framework is needed to track progress, encourage implementation, and provide the necessary tools and guidance for sustainable kidney care.

Project question:

How can we produce a benchmarking framework to track and measure progress, whilst also encouraging implementation of more sustainable kidney care?

Project Objectives

1. **Benchmarking Framework:**
Develop a robust system to track and measure progress across kidney centres. Reporting will be based on a set of 10-15 evidence-based interventions for sustainable care, enabling centres to easily record progress in implementing changes.

2. **Data Sharing Mechanism:**

Establish a system for collecting and sharing data from kidney centres, with pilot data from 60 centres helping to shape the benchmarking framework. This work will be undertaken in collaboration with the UK Renal Registry and the UK Kidney Association.

3. **Engagement and Leadership:**

Foster sustainability leadership in kidney care by training 60 active "Kidney Centre Sustainability Champions" across England's 250 kidney centres (48 main adult centres, 9 paediatric centres and approximately 200 satellite centres). Champions will receive training, engage in an online network, and lead local implementation projects.

Establish a Community of Practice to enable peer learning across the regional renal networks.

4. **Modelling Impact:**

Model the carbon, cost, and water savings achievable through these interventions. Provide data-driven targets for reducing CO₂e emissions by 200, 500, or 1,000 tonnes over two years.

5. **Sharing Learnings:**

Publish a summary report of insights and best practices for implementing sustainability initiatives within a clinical speciality.

Long-Term Vision

This initiative aims to embed sustainable practices throughout the kidney care pathway, demonstrating how speciality care can contribute to the Greener NHS's net zero goals by reducing resource intensity and fostering a culture of sustainable practice.

Together, we can transform kidney care into a model for sustainable healthcare delivery.

2 December 2024