QUALITY PRACTICE ACCREDITATION

Environmental Sustainability Checklist

A practical first step for understanding impact, assigning responsibility and documenting improvement strategies.

Practice		Date started	
Sustainability lead		Review Date	

How to use this checklist

Work through the sections with people who understand the practice premises, purchasing, waste, clinical care and daily workflows. The examples are prompts, not mandatory actions. Select what is relevant and proportionate, then use the notes column to record current arrangements, decisions or next steps. Start with a small number of actions that are safe and achievable. This resource supports preparation but does not replace the Standards or practice-specific assessment.

> Safety comes first
> Environmental action must not compromise infection prevention and control, cold chain management, patient privacy, accessibility, safe clinical care or legal requirements.

1 Responsibility and team involvement

	Consideration	What this could look like	Practice notes or action
☐	A practice team member has been named as the environmental sustainability lead.	Record the person's name in the action plan, role description, responsibility register or meeting minutes.	
☐	The lead understands their role in coordinating actions, engaging the team and reporting progress.	Agree what the lead will coordinate, how often progress will be reported and when leadership approval is needed.	
☐	Practice leadership has agreed how sustainability actions will be approved and reviewed.	Use an existing leadership, governance or quality improvement process rather than creating a separate committee.	
☐	Environmental sustainability is discussed through an existing leadership, team or quality improvement meeting.	Add sustainability as a periodic agenda item and record decisions, actions, owners and review dates.	
☐	Relevant team members can suggest practical improvements and raise safety or workload concerns.	Invite suggestions through team meetings, a shared action list or a simple staff ideas process.	
☐	New actions are checked for patient safety, infection prevention, privacy, accessibility and unintended consequences before implementation.	Complete a brief risk check and consult relevant clinical or operational staff before changing products or processes.	

2 Understand the practice's current environmental impact

	Consideration	What this could look like	Practice notes or action
☐	The practice has reviewed recent electricity use, including heating, cooling, lighting and equipment where information is available.	Review several recent bills or landlord reports, note seasonal patterns and identify the main areas the practice can influence.	
☐	The practice has reviewed water use, leaks and avoidable consumption where relevant.	Check bills where available, inspect for leaks and identify fixtures or activities that use significant water.	
☐	Clinical waste, general waste and recycling streams have been reviewed for correct segregation and avoidable waste.	Observe bins over a typical day, check labels and confirm that clinical waste is not being used unnecessarily.	
☐	Paper purchasing, printing and opportunities for safe digital alternatives have been considered.	Review high-volume printing, default printer settings, forms and patient communication while retaining safe downtime options.	
☐	Purchasing decisions have been reviewed for packaging, delivery frequency, product life and supplier environmental commitments.	Compare practical alternatives, ask suppliers about packaging and consider consolidated orders where storage and expiry allow.	
☐	Electronic equipment is maintained, repaired, reused or recycled responsibly where safe and feasible.	Maintain equipment, securely erase data before disposal and use an appropriate e-waste service.	
☐	Staff and patient travel options have been considered in the context of location, access and service delivery.	Consider public transport information, accessible parking, cycling, carpooling, telehealth, coordinated appointments and transport barriers. Select only options that are practical and clinically appropriate.	
☐	The practice has considered environmental impacts associated with medicines and clinical care without limiting appropriate care.	Support appropriate prescribing, medicine review and correct disposal while keeping clinical need and patient choice central.	
☐	The practice has identified which building systems it controls and which matters require landlord or body corporate involvement.	Document leased-premises limitations and raise relevant matters such as lighting, HVAC, insulation or solar with the responsible party.	

3 Reduce unnecessary energy and resource use

	Consideration	What this could look like	Practice notes or action
☐	Heating and cooling settings and operating times are appropriate for the season, comfort and safe care.	Review thermostats, timers and zoning without compromising safe indoor temperatures, vaccine storage or patient comfort.	

	Consideration	What this could look like	Practice notes or action
☐	Heating, ventilation and cooling systems are maintained and filters are cleaned at appropriate intervals.	Retain service records and clarify whether the practice, landlord or contractor is responsible for scheduled maintenance.	
☐	Lights, screens, computers and non-essential equipment are switched off when not required where it is safe to do so.	Use end-of-day checks, automatic sleep settings or labelled responsibilities while keeping essential systems operating.	
☐	Energy efficiency is considered when replacing appliances, lighting or equipment.	Include energy use, expected life, repairability and total operating cost when comparing suitable replacements.	
☐	The practice has considered renewable electricity or building improvements where feasible and within its control.	Options might include a renewable energy plan, solar, shading, insulation or a documented request to the landlord.	
☐	Water leaks are reported and repaired promptly and water-efficient products are considered when replacing fixtures or appliances.	Provide a clear reporting pathway and consider efficient taps, toilets or appliances when replacement is already required.	
☐	Unnecessary printing and paper use are reduced while maintaining privacy, accessibility and reliable downtime processes.	Use duplex or black-and-white defaults, reduce duplicate printing and keep secure paper processes for downtime and accessibility needs.	

4 Improve procurement, waste and recycling

	Consideration	What this could look like	Practice notes or action
☐	Procurement decisions consider need, durability, reusability, packaging, delivery and disposal.	Add a few environmental questions to purchasing decisions without overriding clinical suitability, safety or value.	
☐	Single-use clinical items are used when clinically indicated and lower-impact alternatives are considered only when safe and appropriate.	Do not reuse single-use devices. Consider alternatives only after checking infection prevention, manufacturer and regulatory requirements.	
☐	Clinical waste bins are not used for items that can safely go into general waste or recycling.	Check local waste requirements, bin placement and staff knowledge using a short waste-segregation observation.	
☐	Recycling streams are clearly labelled and team members understand what can be placed in them.	Use labels based on the local recycler's accepted items and correct repeated contamination through team reminders.	
☐	The practice has arrangements for responsible disposal of e-waste, batteries, printer cartridges or other locally recyclable items.	Identify approved local collection points or contractors and store items safely while awaiting disposal.	
☐	Suppliers are asked about reduced packaging, consolidated deliveries or lower-impact product options where practical.	Raise specific questions during purchasing or contract review and record feasible changes or supplier limitations.	

	Consideration	What this could look like	Practice notes or action
☐	Waste and recycling arrangements are reviewed periodically to identify contamination, avoidable cost and improvement opportunities.	Repeat a short bin check, review contractor information or compare waste volumes after an action has been introduced.	

5 Document strategies and measure progress

	Consideration	What this could look like	Practice notes or action
☐	The practice has documented the environmental areas it will focus on and why they were selected.	Choose a manageable number of priorities based on impact, risk, cost, feasibility and the practice's level of control.	
☐	The documented strategies address both direct impacts, such as energy used onsite, and indirect impacts, such as purchased goods, services, waste and travel.	Include at least one relevant direct impact and one indirect impact in the practice's documented approach.	
☐	Each action has a responsible person, realistic due date and intended outcome.	Use the starter action plan and describe the expected change in clear, measurable terms where possible.	
☐	A simple baseline has been recorded where available, such as electricity use, paper purchasing, waste volume or an audit result.	Use information the practice already has rather than delaying action while trying to build a complex dataset.	
☐	The practice has selected simple measures that can show whether an action made a difference.	Examples include bill usage, reams of paper purchased, waste-bin observations, order frequency or completion of an agreed action.	
☐	Progress, barriers, costs and unintended effects will be reported to practice leadership.	Use a brief update in existing meeting minutes or the action plan and escalate safety, access or workload concerns promptly.	
☐	The practice has scheduled a review to decide what will continue, change, stop or be prioritised next.	Set a realistic review date and record the decision, including why an action was not suitable or could not proceed.	

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Starter action plan

Select a small number of realistic priorities. Record what will change and how the practice will know whether it helped.

Priority	Action	Owner	Due	Measure	Review

Useful records to retain

Keep ordinary records that show the practice considered the issue, took action and reviewed the result. Examples include:

- ☐ Named sustainability lead and role responsibilities
- ☐ Documented sustainability strategies or action plan
- ☐ Bills, purchasing data or audit results used as a baseline
- ☐ Progress measures and review findings
- ☐ Completed baseline review or audit
- ☐ Meeting minutes and decisions
- ☐ Completed actions and updated procedures
- ☐ Team communication or education records