

Our journey to sustainable healthcare: 2023-2024 Swansea Bay University Health Board



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1 Introduction

Swansea Bay University Health Board (SBUHB) is proud to be an ‘anchor institution’ in the Swansea Bay region. Our ambition as a major employer, commissioner, provider of health and care services and key contributor to the reduction of health inequalities is to deliver Better Health, Better Care, Better Lives for the population we serve.

We aim to keep people healthy, support them to avoid ill health and be there for them with excellent healthcare, delivering outstanding patient experience and outcomes. However, the Health Board is also aware that the public sector, as one of the largest emitters of carbon, also has a detrimental impact on population as well as environmental health.

This report summarises how the Health Board has been addressing sustainability, through the Well-Being of Future Generations Act. Our vision is for a more sustainable healthcare system, which is resilient to future climatic changes and supports future generations. We are delivering this through three key approaches:

1. Embedding sustainability into our activities and services
2. Engaging our people in this journey
3. Enabling our people to be agents of sustainable healthcare

As a Health Board, every day we face the challenge of meeting the needs of our communities and supporting them to thrive and prosper within the constraints of our available resources. Building sustainability into our services and ways of working has the potential to reduce inequalities, improve health and well-being, improve the environments in which we live and work as well as increasing the resilience of our workforce and communities. Thus, reinforcing our role as an anchor institution in the region.

2 Sustainability and SBUHB

2.1 Sustainability and healthcare

Sustainable healthcare is defined as:

Sustainable healthcare delivers high quality care without damaging the environment, is affordable now and in the future and delivers positive social impact
(Centre for Sustainable Healthcare)

In Wales, sustainable healthcare is driven through the Well-Being of Future Generations Act (2015) (WBFGA).

This act gives Public Sector organisations the ‘ambition, permission, and legal obligation to improve our social, cultural, environmental, and economic well-being’, broadening the traditional sustainable development triple bottom line of sustainability to four, by including culture. This is enacted through the Health Board’s Well-Being Objectives.

Three key areas the Health Board is working on include:

1. Climate change
2. Foundational economy
3. Circular economy

Climate change

As a Health Board we are working to reduce the environmental impact of our activities, through understanding our emissions and what we can do to reduce them. Work on adaptation, through national groups and the Public Service Boards (PSBs) have commenced considering what we need to do to adapt to climate changes now and in the future.

This supports 'A Globally Responsible Wales', 'A Prosperous Wales' and 'A Resilient Wales' in the WBFGA.

Foundational economy

Using our position of 'Anchor Institution', being a major employer and provider of healthcare, to support reversing the deterioration of employment conditions reducing the leakage of money from communities and addressing the environmental cost of extended supply chains.

This supports 'A Prosperous Wales', 'A Wales of Cohesive Communities', 'A Healthier Wales' and 'A More Equal Wales' in the WBFGA.

Circular economy

The circular economy seeks to eliminate waste through keeping materials in use for as long as possible, moving away from a 'throwaway culture' and allowing us to have maximum benefit and reducing the negative environmental impacts over time (WRAP¹). Designing out wastes, as far as safely possible, can be achieved through existing Health Board work including Quality Improvement and Value Based Health Care.

This supports 'A Prosperous Wales', 'A Resilient Wales' and 'A globally responsible Wales' in the WBFGA.

¹ [WRAP and the circular economy | WRAP](#)

2.2 Population health

SBUHB has a corporate responsibility for the health of its population – not just those we see through routine or clinical practice. We know, however, that people’s experience of health is not the same across the population. For those living in Swansea Bay there are significant and concerning differences in health outcomes that need to be addressed.

In 2023, our Board adopted the first Swansea Bay Population Health Strategy, setting out the guiding principles by which SBUHB and its partners will seek to improve the overall health and well-being of the local population while reducing the gap between our least and most deprived communities, with a focus on prevention and tackling the ‘causes of the causes’ of ill-health.

Using an approach first set out by Sir Michael Marmot in his 2010 report ‘Fair Society, Healthy Lives’, this approach identifies six key areas for action to improve health and tackle inequities. These initial actions are now joined by the need to tackle racism as a specific form of discrimination linked to health inequity and the need to address environmental sustainability.

There is strong alignment between the Population Health Strategy and the principles underpinned by the WBFGA.

Sustainability was a key theme emerging from the process of engaging with partners, recognising that a sustainable approach needed to deliver improved population health requires system-wide ways of thinking and acting. To embed these ways of working there is a need to develop an approach to prioritisation of activities from a population health perspective, whilst recognising the wider context and backdrop of pressures which have, and will continue, to change over time, such as the pandemic response, urgent care demand and flow and the cost-of-living crisis.

2.3 Understanding our emissions

The 2022-23 data set for the Public Sector Emissions reporting tool, utilised by Welsh Government, was the most complete submission to date. The tool has estimated that the Health Board's emissions total 142,396.38 tonnes CO₂e (Figure 1). Since 2019/20 there have been emissions reductions in natural gas (-9%), gas oil (-86%), fleet vehicles (-11%), electricity (-24%), business travel (-42%), and water (-62%).

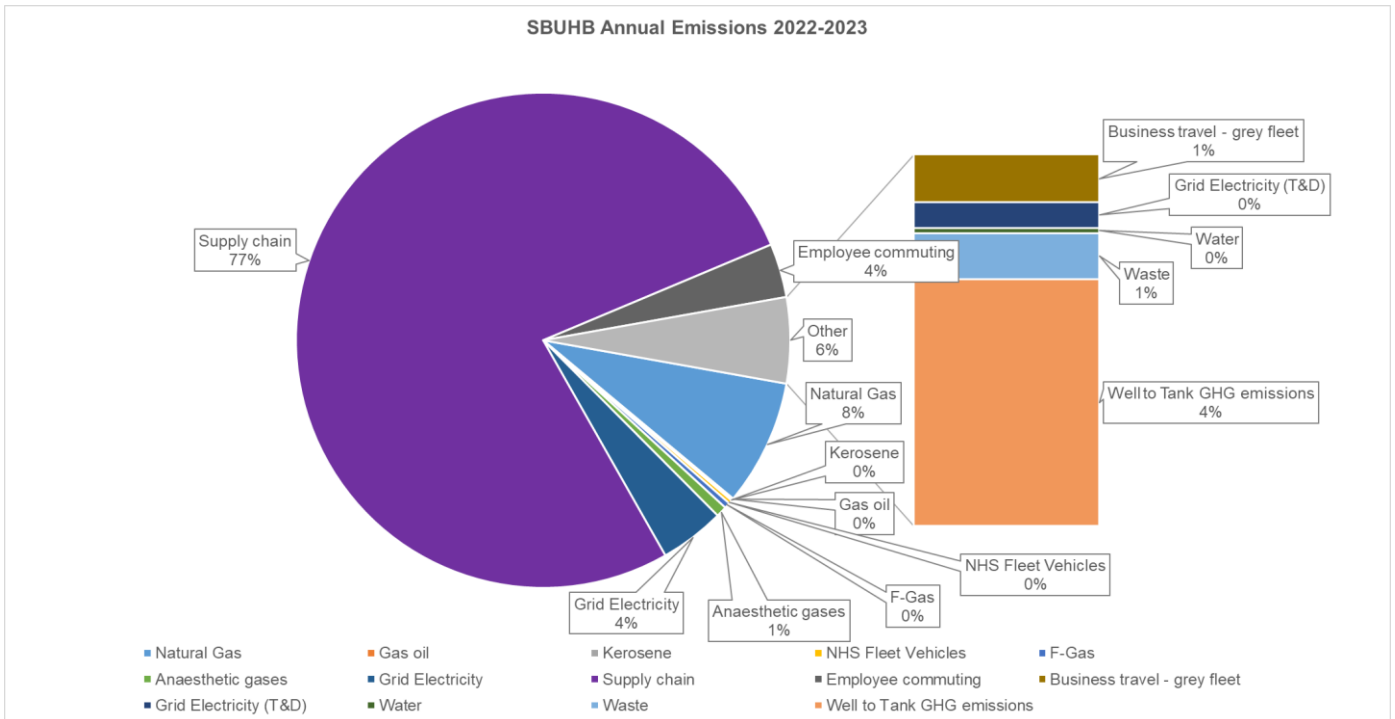


Figure 1: SBUHB emissions 2022/23

77% of our emissions are from what we buy and use from our supply chain

13% of our emission are from how we heat, cool and power our estate

4% of our emission are form how we travel: fleet, commuting & business travel

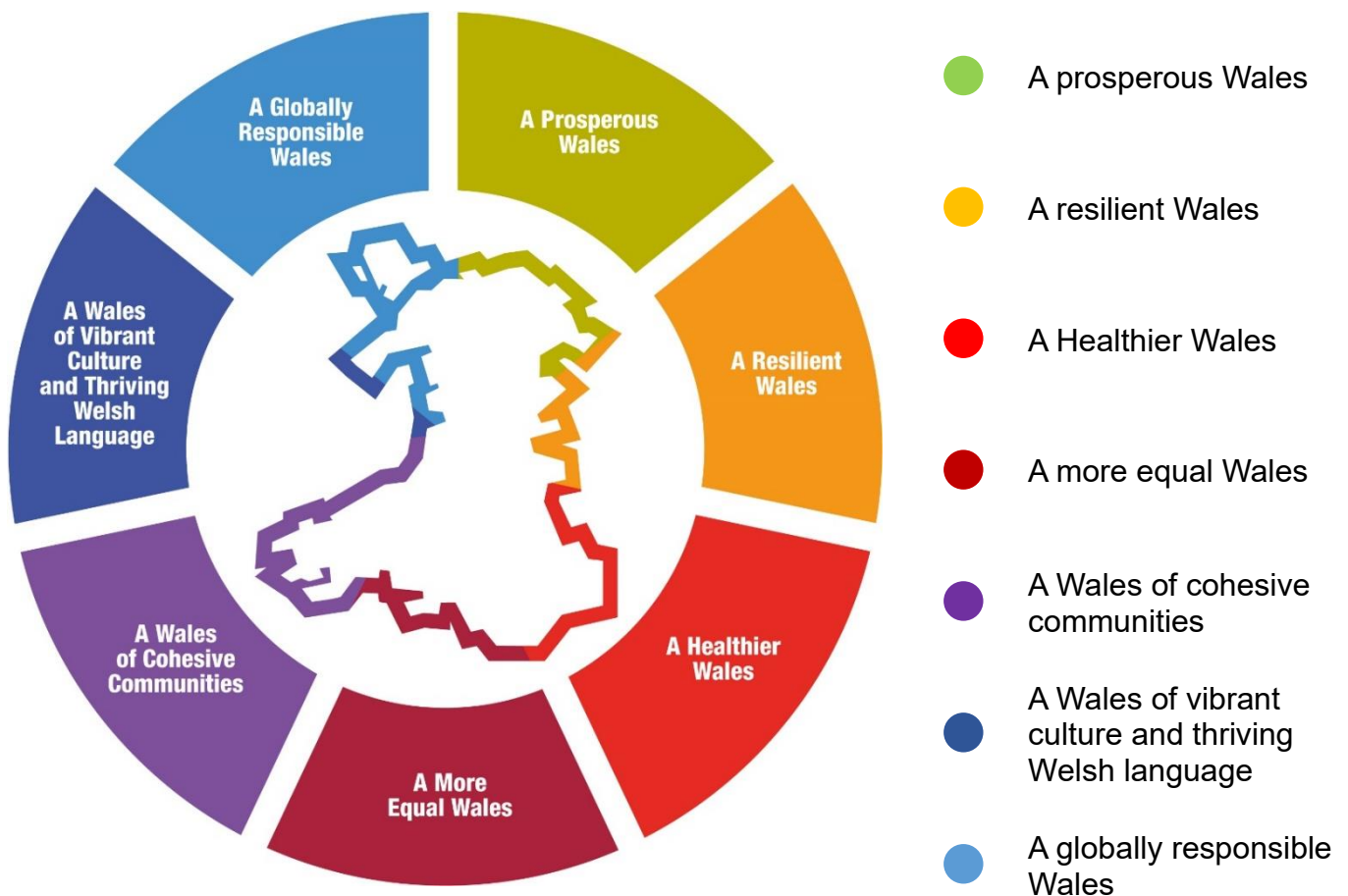
With a better understanding of what our emissions are, we are now able to take meaningful action to reduce.

- NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership (NWSSP) are working with suppliers to understand supplier-based emissions factors, reducing our emissions in 2022/23 by 18,091 tCO₂e from 93 suppliers
- Delivering the Climate Action Plan (CAP) with a greater emphasis on how we delivery our services
- Sharing case studies and seeking to spread and scale successful pilots, giving our staff permission to act

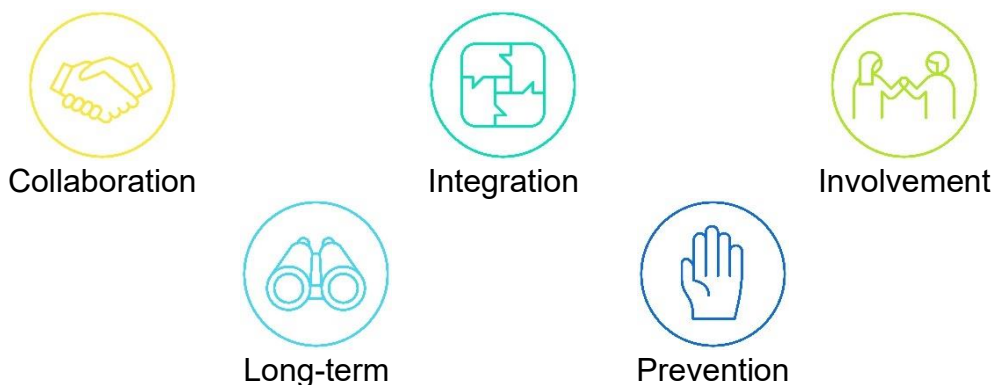
3 How this report works...

To show which goals our work is supporting, all projects have coloured circles, representing the colours of the Well-Being of Future Generations Act (2015), a key is provided below. The HB's approach of 'Embed', 'Engage' and 'Enable' all support each of the five ways of working.

The seven goals:



The five ways of working:



More information of each of the goals and ways of working can be found via the following link:

- <https://www.futuregenerations.wales/about-us/future-generations-act/>

4 EMBED

Ways of working:



4.1 Example of success- Irritable Bowel Syndrome Service

The Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) service aimed to develop a digitally enabled, sustainable IBS Dietetics service fit for the future. Through utilising on-line tools such as Teams, and phone calls 101 of a cohort of 102 patients were able to receive treatment and support remotely. Using this preventative service has led to reductions in GP appointments, endoscopic investigations, pharmaceutical prescriptions, and access to Gastroenterologists.

Utilising the Value Based Healthcare principles the team have been able to understand the financial savings, emissions savings, and obtain positive feedback from those utilising the service.

Table 1: Summary of savings


Service	Cohort saving*	Est. per patient
GP appointments	£28,426	£278
Endoscopic investigations	£4,788	£47
Pharmaceutical prescriptions	£16,626	£163
Access to Gastroenterologists	£4,535	£44
Emissions	15,300 kgCO ₂ e	150 kgCO ₂ e





*Based on 102 patients, one of whom required face to face sessions

The service is now looking at how to reduce paper use even further through digital communications.

WBFGA: 

4.2 Our other achievements

Project	Summary	WBFGA
Sustainable Procurement	Over 70% of the emissions comes from our supply chain. Our Procurement Team has developed materials to support staff in understanding their responsibilities when procuring items. This has created an animation in English and Welsh, supported by an e-booklet for suppliers.	
Procurement Team	Working with Welsh suppliers resulted in 42% of spend in 2022/23 with Welsh companies, supporting foundational economy. The Procurement Team also include mandatory questions relating to The Foundational Economy, Social Value and Decarbonisation in all Tender opportunities.	

Project	Summary	WBFGA
<p>Decarbonisation realisation register</p> <p>Capital Planning</p>	<p>Developed a Decarbonisation Realisation Register to capture both the potential decarbonisation and wider sustainability benefits associated with our major capital business cases. Demonstrating benefits of decarbonising the Estate.</p>	
<p>Developing the Climate Action Plan</p> <p>Sustainable Swansea Bay Steering Group</p>	<p>The Decarbonisation Action Plan was refreshed in 2023, with a change in name to the Climate Action Plan (CAP). Decarbonisation was not a known term within the Health Board, whereas climate was well received. The CAP was informed by staff survey findings, input from over 80 staff participating in workshops, and benchmarking. The scope was broadened to include work on climate adaptation planning and wider engagement across the Health Board.</p>	
<p>Solar farm extension and new battery</p> <p>Estates</p>	<p>The solar farm – which was the first of its kind in the UK to directly power a hospital – is having a 1MW extension and a special battery which will be able to store any excess solar power generated on the brightest days, for use after the sun sets. The facility, based in nearby Brynwhilach Farm, has reduced the health board’s carbon footprint since October 2021, with a saving of 1,933 tCO_{2e} – the equivalent in miles of 521 flights from Cardiff Airport to Sydney - underlining the positive environmental impact.</p>	
<p>Neath Port Talbot (NPT) Hospital Theatres Project</p> <p>Capital Planning</p>	<p>The Health Board developed a modular Elective Orthopaedic and Spinal Surgical Theatre at NPT Hospital. The new theatre facility was designed to the latest Welsh Health specification, with patients at the heart of the plan to ensure improved patient experience, contributing to ‘A Healthier Wales’.</p> <p>The facility was designed using a Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) solution. Adopting an MMC approach into the design and construction of new buildings supports the NHS Wales Decarbonisation Strategic Delivery Plan and Net Zero Carbon (NZN) targets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standardising the construction approach and thereby minimising construction waste and transportation of machinery. • Championing incorporation of low carbon heating and cooling – this facility provides a ‘green energy’ engineering solution with no fossil fuel being utilised. • Off-site fabrication providing just-in-time delivery to minimise construction related carbon emissions. <p>The NPT Theatres project embodies ‘A Prosperous Wales’ through delivery of a high-quality, clinical solution which has demonstrated benefits of decarbonising the Estate.</p>	

5 ENGAGE

Ways of working:



Collaboration



Integration



Involvement



Long-term



Prevention

5.1 Example of success- Sustainable Healthcare Measures in Obstetrics Conference

In June 2023, the Obstetrics & Gynaecology Department organised a ‘Sustainable Healthcare Measures in Obstetrics’ conference open to staff and students. It was funded by Obstetrics and Gynaecology Society of Wales (OGSW). The day had speakers from across NHS Wales and the Centre for Sustainable Healthcare, with more than 40 people attending either on-line or in-person (Figure 2).







Figure 2: Sustainable Healthcare Measures in Obstetrics Conference (June 2023)

Topics covered during the day included ‘Climate Changes Impact on Human Health and Benefits of Sustainable Healthcare’, actions the Health Board is taking, impact of anaesthetic gases and ‘Enhancing Healthcare through a Holistic Approach with SusQI’.

The conference organised by Dr Manju Nair & Dr Anangsha Kumar has led to them receiving additional funding to develop an e-learning module for Sustainable Quality Improvement projects in Obstetrics and Gynaecology. Coordinating multiple contributors from across NHS Wales.

5.2 Our other achievements

Project	Summary	WBFGA
<p>Great Big Green Week</p> <p>Green Group</p>	<p>In June 2023, the Green Group coordinated pop-ups across the Health Board to raise awareness of Great Big Green Week. Staff received free seeds, met staff from Estates with information on waste & recycling, and got to share their ideas on how the Health Board can be greener. Green Group developed top tips for both staff and patients in becoming greener. There was even a visit from the Cycle2Work provider to Headquarters with bikes for staff to try!</p>	
<p>Libraries as knowledge hubs</p> <p>Libraries Team</p>	<p>Library staff at Cefn Coed, Morriston, NPT & Singleton Hospital have put on Wellbeing Days, enabling engagement with over 500 staff. Libraries have developed collections regarding sustainability to further educate staff and have distributed books from Biophilic Wales. The libraries offer a space for staff without internet access to work/spend time. The libraries offer recycling points for batteries and other recyclable materials as well as offer water fountains for staff to use to cut down on plastic waste. There have been several initiatives such as reducing the number of black-bag bins, stopping to cover books in plastic and the switch to using paper barcodes instead of plastic library cards.</p>	
<p>NEW Sustainability in Healthcare' award covering Health Board's Living Our Values (LOV) Awards</p> <p>Workforce & Organisation Development</p>	<p>The annual LOV awards had a new category for the 2022/23 awards, with the introduction of 'Sustainability in Healthcare'. This award was created to acknowledge the amazing achievements of staff implementing changes across the Health Board, whilst striving for a greener future for the NHS. With 10 nominations, there was a shortlist of three projects including the Charity & Wellbeing's cycle racks, green theatres group, and decarbonising pharmacy (winner).</p>	
<p>Therapies and Health Sciences Learning Event</p> <p>Therapies & Health Sciences</p>	<p>Therapies & Health Sciences ran a 'Sustainable Healthcare' learning event in November 2023. The event sought to inform staff about what sustainable healthcare is, why it is important and how they can get involved. The session has resulted in several projects being developed, with a follow-up to be held in 2024/25.</p>	

6 ENABLE

Ways of working:



Collaboration



Integration



Involvement



Long-term



Prevention

6.1 Example of success- Moving to sustainable travel

Realising sustainability requires collaboration with partners across geographical areas the Health Board has initiated a programme of work to promote sustainable travel. This has been led by Joanne Jones, Head of Support Services, and the Sustainable Travel Group.

The Health Board's approach was approved in 2023 with the 'Sustainable Travel Strategy' which seeks to shift how staff, patients and visitors get to our sites (Figure 3).

Further work that has been completed to support this includes:

- Developments at Singleton, Morriston and NPT Hospitals:
 - Installation of bike maintenance stations for basic bike maintenance
 - Conducting Dr Bike sessions to support staff in bike maintenance
 - Publishing site maps showing sustainable travel facilities & links
- Increase the limit on the Cycle 2 Work scheme, facilitated by the Occupational Health & Staff Wellbeing Service, to enable staff to access electric bikes
- Participation in the Healthy Travel Charter, working with local partners
- Working with Sustrans to provide free e-bike loans to staff to trial
- Achieving a 'Gold' Cycle Friendly Employer accreditation at Singleton, Morriston and NPT, and 'Silver' accreditation at Gorseinon Hospital to demonstrate support for active travel (Figure 4)
- Working with public transport to improve services, incl. earlier bus to enable people to get to work on time



Figure 3: Sustainable travel hierarchy



Figure 4: Cycle friendly employer accreditation

6.2 Example of Success- Arts in health

The SBUHB Arts & Heritage Team explores, facilitates, and promotes use of the Arts to improve our services and support a healthier, happier population. Appreciation of art and creativity is central to being human, offering stimulation, joy, reflection, and escape. An example of this is the award-winning initiative 'Sharing Hope'.

Sharing Hope is a therapeutic arts project available to all SBUHB staff. It highlights the power of sharing stories, capturing COVID recovery, processing moral trauma and the de-stigmatisation of mental health. The project aims to improve staff wellbeing and retention. To maximise the opportunities for early recognition of anxiety and depression and prevent escalation. It is a collaboration between Arts and Heritage and Suicide Prevention Quality Improvement leads and received funding from the Arts Council Wales and The Baring Foundation as part of their national Arts and Minds programme, improving mental health through the arts.




Figure 5: Arts in Health event






In the first 18 months, more than 1000 members of staff engaged with artists who facilitate a wide variety of high-quality activities. This fantastic initiative also won the Nursing Times Award for Best Staff Wellbeing Initiative.




The Musical Hospitals initiative has now commenced, inviting musicians from BBC National Orchestra Wales, Welsh National Opera and Royal Welsh of Music & Drama to perform on a weekly basis at NPT. Giving staff and patients an opportunity to take a moment and provide respite from the day. By bringing art into health settings, we can improve the lives of service users and staff.

WBFGA: 

6.3 Our other achievements

Project	Summary	WBFGA
<p>Cae Felin Community Supported Agriculture</p>	<p>Despite numerous challenges this year, the project has come a long way with Health Board volunteers, who work across dietetics, physiotherapy, neuro-rehab, domestic services and endoscopy, building beds, planting trees and supplying material to construct vegetable beds. Volunteers have benefited by developing new skills and enjoying the therapeutic benefits associated with gardening activities. They have helped plant more than 1,500 hedgerow trees, a green house, over 150 fruit and trees along with a rainwater system and compost bays. The small first crop has now been shared with them as a thank you for their efforts, ahead of growing future crops for the hospital and local community.</p>	

Project	Summary	WBFGA
<p>Greener Primary Care</p> <p>Primary care</p>	<p>Health Board participation in Greener Primary Care scheme, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 Dental Practices • 6 General Practices • 1 Optometrist • 2 Community Pharmacists <p>This has been supported by a Public Health Wales funded position where Oliver Newman, Assistant Divisional Manager, was working with the Clusters to support sign-up and implementation.</p>	
<p>Food ordering app pilot</p> <p>Catering Team</p>	<p>2023 saw the Catering Team piloting a patient food ordering app to reduce food waste. It is estimated the app has saved around 6,000 meals in the 10-month trial at Singleton and NPT Hospitals.</p>	
<p>Bring Nature into Health Board Buildings' project</p> <p>Estates</p>	<p>Estates have worked with Biophilic Wales to improve patients access to nature through remote access cameras on our wards. Live linked video feeds at National Botanic Garden of Wales are streamed to Cefn Coed Hospital and Ty Olwen Hospice. Hedgehogs, bees, and birds are among the animals that are being picked up by 25 cameras based around the gardens in Llanarthne.</p>	
<p>Sustainability Clinical Leads</p> <p>Strategy</p>	<p>2023 saw the appointment of three Sustainability Clinical Leads- Sue West-Jones (Consultant in Emergency Department), Elana Owen (Consultant Anaesthetist), and Alex Strong (NAU Manager). Their roles seek to drive sustainability in clinical areas with initial successes in nitrous oxide cylinder scheme, funding for reusable textile trial, and funding for implementing the GreenED framework.</p>	
<p>Staff Wellbeing</p> <p>Wellbeing Team</p>	<p>Wellbeing services offered by the Health Board to support staff include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to 1:1 Wellbeing Support • Physical (MSK) health issues: Physiotherapists provide advice and signposting, plus undertake Work Assessments following completion of a Display Screen Equipment (DSE) checklist. • Mental/emotional health: A small multi-disciplinary team of Occupational Therapists, Staff Counsellors and Psychologists provide signposting and short-term support for mild to moderate mental health. • Physical & Mental Wellbeing Support: the service provides a range of workshops and courses to support physical and mental health of our staff 	

Project	Summary	WBFGA
<p>Sustainable laboratories</p> <p>Laboratory Medicine department</p>	<p>Two sustainable lab schemes were established in the Health Board labs. Looking to reduce the environmental impact of running the service. The tools reviewed the way the spaces, equipment and consumables are used, engaged staff with the impact of laboratories and provided techniques for reducing environmental impact. The project was implemented by Manjot Gill.</p>	
<p>Regional Partnership Board (RPB)</p> <p>Strategy</p>	<p>The Health Board has worked with the RPB to create regional strategies for Carers, Emotional & Mental Wellbeing and Learning Disabilities. These are collaborative strategies that are focused on engagement and participation, in addition the emotional & mental wellbeing strategy is focussed on prevention and enabling the population to access support in a variety of ways and close to home.</p>	
<p>Public Service Boards (PSB)</p> <p>Strategy</p>	<p>The Health Board is involved in work with both Swansea and NPT PSBs. This includes the Safer Swansea Partnership and NPT Community Safety, as well as the Healthy Relationships strategy in NPT.</p> <p>The Health Board are leading the work programme to support the transformation of Early Year's services, with a focus on developing a strategic approach to integration.</p>	

7 On the horizon

With climate change becoming increasingly evident there are several work streams that are likely to develop in 2024/25, driven by both increased interest from stakeholders and legislative requirements of Welsh Government.

1. Climate Change Adaptation Planning

Planning for how climate change will impact the Health Board's operations and patients has been highlighted by Welsh Government. Ensuring that our response aligns with the way our regional partners are planning too. A health and social care specific framework to be published in April 2024.

2. New waste and recycling regulations

All public sector bodies will be required to segregate five waste streams, as well as ensure food is responsibly managed. The Health Board current infrastructure does not support this. Bedded facilities have two years to implement the regulations.

3. One Health

One Health is an integrated, unifying approach that aims to sustainably balance and optimize the health of people, animals, and ecosystems. The Chief Medical Officer (CMO) for Wales 2021 report recommended that Wales should adopt a whole of society 'One Health' approach to several difficult issues, including climate change, antimicrobial resistance and emerging infectious diseases. A One Health subgroup has been established to sit underneath the CMO's Health Protection Advisory Group to provide leadership and oversight for One Health, with further details around priorities and plans to follow.

4. Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act

From 1st April 2024 the Health Board will be required to adhere to the new 'Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act'. This requires the Health Board to involve Trade Unions in setting objectives and making decisions. This seeks to:

“strengthening the role of social partnership within strategic decision-making. Involving both employers and workers in key discussions regarding improvements to well-being recognises and values the unique contribution and expertise brought by those directly engaged in public service delivery when addressing shared challenges and seeking innovative solutions.”

An annual report at the end of each financial year is required to demonstrate how this has been achieved and must be agreed with the Trade Unions.

5. Climate-Related Financial Disclosure

Welsh Government are reviewing the approach to Climate-Related Financial Disclosure in the public sector. This will potentially be an additional reporting area, as part of the Annual Report.

8 Next steps

Actions proposed for 2024/25 include:



EMBED

- Further embed in core business, including business cases, planning, and service change
- Implementation of the Health Board's Climate Action Plan
- Embed in existing change processes for staff, including Quality Improvement
- Undertake a review of the 'Ways of Working' assessment, a coordinated benchmarking exercise using the Future Generations Commissioner's Office tool to assess how we can move to a transformational approach.



ENGAGE

- Enhance awareness of existing training
- Build on the sustainability communications to reach more people
- Work with Green Group to challenge and stretch Health Board approach



ENABLE

- Showcase the Sustainability Clinical Leads work
- Share what we are doing, best practice and case studies
- Support spread and scale
- Link groups internally & externally for maximum impact
- Give staff 'permission to act'

9 Acknowledgments

This report was co-ordinated by Hayley Beharrell, the Health Board's Sustainability Planning Manager, which was made possible by a collaborative effort involving passionate staff from across the Health Board. Thank you to all the staff and wider teams who are enabling this amazing response and truly living the Well-Being of Future Generations Act. Thanks to all those who have shared their work and agreed for it to be included in this report, this includes:

- Procurement Team with how they are engaging staff in sustainable procurement
- Capital Planning in building decarbonisation into all their projects
- Sustainable Swansea Bay Steering Group for providing a forum and support to the sustainability agenda
- Green Group for being innovative and challenging the Health Board to do more
- Dr Manju Nair (Obstetrics And Gynaecology) & Dr Anangsha Kumar (Junior Doctor) and all the speakers at the event and contributors to their new training tool
- Library Services for providing a space to communicate and engage with staff
- Workforce and OD for developing the Sustainable Healthcare LOV award
- IBS service for working with us to understand how your service avoids emissions, as well as what other things you can do
- Alison Clarke (Deputy Director of Therapies and Health Sciences) and Susan Wilson (Stroke Consultant Therapist) from Therapies & Health Sciences for running a great learning event that encouraged your staff to act
- Michelle Davies (Head of Strategic Planning) and all the staff involved in working in our partnership spaces, especially through the Public Service Boards and Regional Partnership Board
- Johan Skre (Arts Coordinator) & all those involved in the amazing Arts in Health projects across the Health Board
- Sustainable Travel Group, led by Joanne Jones (Head of Support Services), who are making a difference and enabling staff to travel in a more sustainable way
- Cae Felin, the Brain Injury Unit & Swansea University in all the work supporting patients, staff, and the local community
- Primary Care for taking on the Greener Primary Care challenge, particularly Richard Thomas who has been a leading light
- Catering for sharing their experience in how to reduce food waste on a massive scale
- Estates & Biophilic Wales for providing inspiring and nature friendly spaces at our sites
- Sustainability Clinical Leads for joining the journey, and hitting the ground running
- Wellbeing and Swansea Bay Health Charity for completion of the lockable cycle racks
- Manjot Gill (Trainee Clinical Scientist) and the wider Laboratory Medicine team for implementing sustainable laboratory schemes