

# The Development of a Dental Sustainability Engagement Matrix

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## Introduction

The environment plays a significant role in contributing to health inequalities. The Sustainability matrix is aimed at reducing emissions which can lead to health benefits. The Sustainability matrix provides direction to the dental team on what changes will support a more sustainable practice. The matrix is aligned with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2005. The Future Generations Act defines Sustainability Development in Wales a: “The process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the well-being goals.” [2]

The Self-Evaluation matrix enables the team to think about sustainability in 7 domains. These are laid out on a grid and cover the following topi



WASTE



ENERGY



TRAVEL



PROCUREMENT



BIODIVERSITY



PREVENTION & PROMOTION



EDUCATION & TRAINING



Every dimension has several levels. It is designed to support the practice to implement changes within their own financial constraints & practice environment.

## Pilot

- The Tool was piloted in **13** general dental practices with **85** participants.
- This included NHS, mixed NHS/private practices in rural & urban areas.
- Participants gave signed consent.
- The session was facilitated by the Quality Improvement Dental Educator.
- Dental Teams completed the evaluation and feedback.

## Pilot Dental Practices in Wales

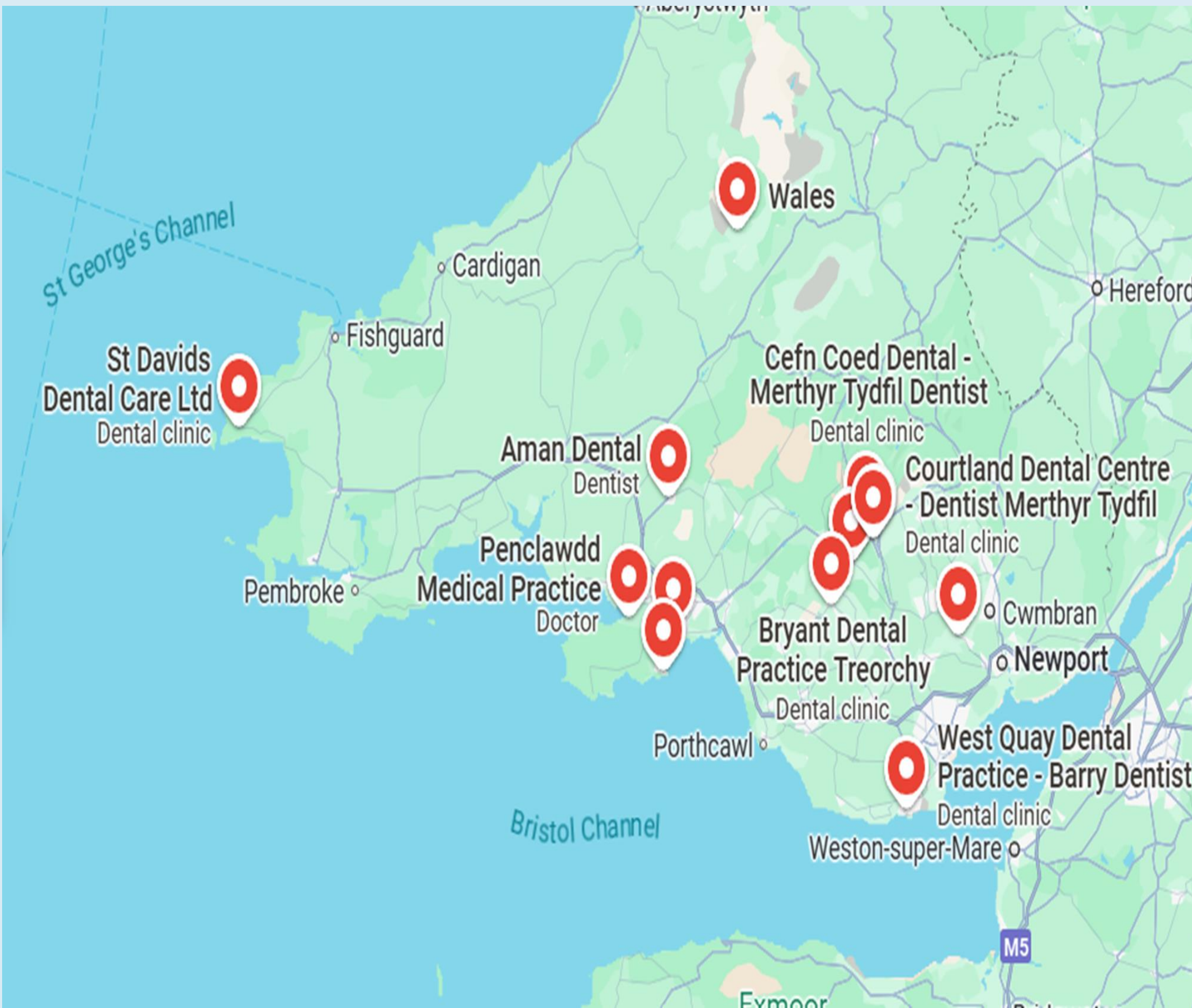


Figure 1. Dental Practices in Wales 2024/2025

### How is the Sustainability Engagement Matrix used?

The whole practice team meets to discuss the matrix and come to a consensus as to what has been achieved and, what areas need improvement, for each dimension. It is important that everyone in the dental team contributes-the discussion should not be dominated by one or two team members. The Quality Improvement Dental Educator will facilitate the meeting and explain how to get the most out of the matrix. This meeting takes about 2 hours.

Following discussion, the areas which need improving, are highlighted on the grid. The team will agree the order of these areas, based on the practice’s position to achieve these goals and how these goals will be met. Different team members can take ownership of these improvements with a target time for completion.

Set realistic timescales e.g., one month, one year or 5 years. Some areas will be quick fixes, but others may take longer. The practice team should repeat the exercise after an agreed time interval to assess your achievements and decide on the direction to take.

## Learning Outcomes

### AIM

To support the whole dental team to critically review their sustainability practice against the 7 dimensions and identify their goals for improvement.

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the facilitated session the team will have:

- Used the Sustainability Engagement Matrix and critically assessed the practice against the 7 dimensions.
- Agreed those dimensions which the practice team identify as areas for improvement and recognise those dimensions where the practice is doing well.
- Identify who will lead on each of the areas for improvement and an agreed timeframe.
- Access to the Resources and References.
- To facilitate the whole practice team to use the Sustainability Engagement Matrix.
- To raise awareness of environmental sustainability in dental practice.
- To promote the goals of the Well-being and Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.
- To help in the attainment of Net Zero in Wales by 2030.
- To ensure team members reflect on the process and complete the evaluation so they receive verifiable CPD.

## Conclusion

Dental teams who have used the matrix report that the meeting and discussions were a useful way to involve all the team members in talking openly about environmental sustainability. The Tool devolves and delegates responsibility to all team members and encourages team working which is essential in sustainability.



The dental teams indicated a high level of satisfaction with the matrix

[1] England, P.H. Review of interventions to improve outdoor air quality and public health. 2019. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-outdoor-air-quality-and-health-review-ofinterventions>.

[2] Llesiant Cenedlaethau’r Dyfodol. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. Essential Guide. <https://www.futuregenerations.wales>.



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