[Open Medical]

# [Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust Drastically Reduce their Carbon Footprint with PathpointⓇ VFC]

## Topic Area

## Please identify (more than one option may be selected)

| Adaptation | ☐ | Communications and engagement  | x | Estates and facilities (energy, waste, water) | ☐ | Food, catering and nutrition  | ☐ |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Funding and financial mechanisms  | ☐ | Medicines | ☐ | Research, innovation and offsetting | ☐ | Strategic ambition  | ☐ |
| Supply chain and procurement | ☐ | Sustainable models of care | x | Travel and transport | x | Workforce, networks and system leadership | ☐ |
| Green/blue space and biodiversity | ☐ | Digital transformation | x | Sustainability education | ☐ |  |  |
| Other (please specify):  |

*\*Topics aligned with the 12 Greener NHS workstreams (NHS England) are shaded.*

##

## Key message / aim

The NHS is a significant contributor to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. To address this issue, the NHS has set a goal to become net-zero by 2040, which requires innovation and commitment from all members of the NHS community.

Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust (SASH) have demonstrated their commitment by implementing an innovative green initiative to reduce their GHG contribution that aligns with their Green Plan. By leveraging Open Medical's PathpointⓇ Virtual Fracture Clinic (VFC), SASH was able to improve the way they deliver orthopaedic trauma care, fostering sustainable care for patients, staff, and the environment.

## What was the problem?

The fracture clinic at SASH receives an average of 1,000 referrals per month from local emergency departments (ED). Their previous system was unable to accommodate such a substantial influx of patients efficiently, nor could it capture referral information effectively.

Due to the lack of information on referrals, when patients were discharged from the ED, they were automatically scheduled for an in-person follow-up consultation around two weeks later. But patients then had to deal with a full waiting room and appointments running up to two hours behind schedule. Yet, the vast majority of referral patients from the ED did not gain anything from coming to the clinic in person.

Patients were investing valuable hours of their lives in attending unnecessary follow-up appointments, while the clinical team was grappling with the burden of managing appointments that held no necessity. On top of this, SASH would send approximately 5 single-sided papers to their patients, in addition to keeping other paper documents that were not sent to patients

This proved unsustainable for patients, healthcare providers, and the organisation itself. The cumulative effect of unnecessary patient travel and appointments, as well as the distribution of paper, led to a considerable carbon footprint.

## What was the solution?

SASH sought a solution to enhance fracture care while also aligning with their Green Plan. They needed a solution that would integrate into their workflows, boost efficiency, optimise resources, cut emissions, and ensure patient safety. They found their answer in Open Medical’s cloud-based platform, PathpointⓇ Virtual Fracture Clinic (VFC).

The success of digital innovation relies on meeting user needs and promoting environmental sustainability. Failure risks reverting to outdated practices or compromising sustainability, efficiency, and satisfaction. Open Medical recognises this and therefore collaborated with SASH to ensure the VFC platform would fit seamlessly within the trust's clinical environment. Pathpoint VFC was swiftly rolled out across SASH's five sites in a day and integrated with Oracle Cerner in eight days.

The transformation achieved with Pathpoint VFC streamlined processes, enhanced collaboration, and reduced emissions while maintaining high-quality care. Specialists can now provide virtual care, accessing referrals and pertinent patient data through the platform. Moreover, the addition of Pathpoint SafeView enables direct communication via SMS/email for decision outcomes, improving patient engagement with more informative leaflets and minimising the need for paper material.

## What were the results/Impact?

The impact of Pathpoint VFC at SASH is truly remarkable. Since the launch of Pathpoint VFC in 2020, SASH has saved a total of 118,906 kg of CO2. That’s roughly equivalent to driving to the moon and back.

By enabling the safe discharge of patients, SASH was able to avoid 12,957 unnecessary patient visits. And so, of this total reduction, a significant portion of 46,164 kg of CO2 can be attributed to minimising patient travel. However, SASH's commitment to environmental conservation doesn't stop there. The implementation of a secure cloud-based platform that enables digital patient engagement and communication significantly reduced paper usage and resulted in an additional saving of 474 kg of CO2. Moreover, by being more efficient and optimising resources, SASH was also able to save 72,268kg of CO2 in operational emissions.

Additionally, it’s important to remember that this new process also allowed the fracture care at SASH to be more sustainable for its patients and staff.

The positive environmental impact of the platform at SASH is undeniable and serves as a shining example of what the healthcare industry is capable of achieving through digital transformation.

## Next steps

Open Medical offers a comprehensive suite of software solutions, with Pathpoint serving as the interface, which, much like VFC, greatly enhances efficiency and contributes to carbon emission reductions. To date, Pathpoint has been deployed at over 150 NHS and HSE sites, solidifying its widespread adoption and positive impact.

Open Medical is taking their commitment even further by integrating sustainable functionalities into their user-friendly platform, Pathpoint SurgiCare, to mitigate the significant carbon footprint associated with surgeries. They were recently awarded £798,923 as part of a [Small Business Research Initiative](https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/patients-benefit-from-18-pioneering-innovations-also-accelerate-%3FtrackingId%3DlCoMrxQOQhWm%252FPboPWgbtA%253D%253D/?trackingId=lCoMrxQOQhWm%2FPboPWgbtA%3D%3D) Phase 2 grant for this project.

SurgiCare, a cloud-based interface, transforms the elective care model by streamlining clinical workflows and facilitating coordinated regional care pathways. By achieving efficiency savings and enhancing patient care, it represents a transformative step forward. The goal is to measure, promote, and enable sustainable decisions in surgery.

By embracing digital innovation and integrating environmental considerations into decision-making whenever feasible, the healthcare sector can spearhead the journey towards a better and more sustainable future for all.

Want to know more?

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