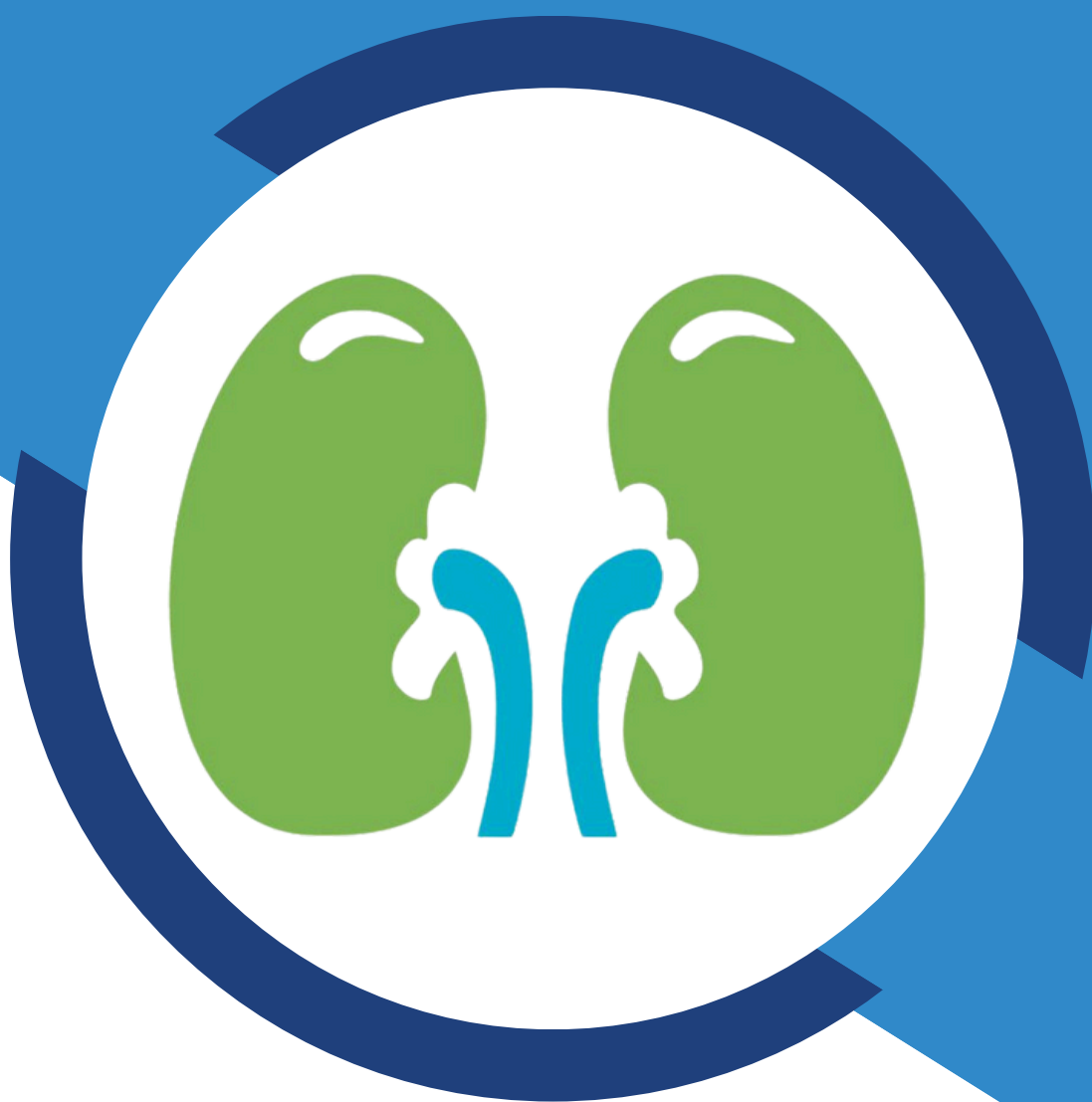# How-to Guide

Sustainable Travel in UK Kidney Centres

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How-to Guide: Sustainable Travel in UK Kidney Centres

Project: Sustainable Kidney Care – Implementing Best Practice

Collaboration: UK Kidney Association and Centre for Sustainable Healthcare

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Although this guide has been developed by experts in sustainability and sustainable kidney care, local teams should use their discretion in its implementation according to local context and requirements

Introduction

Kidney centres generate significant transport-related emissions due to frequent patient visits and routine staff commuting. In alignment with the **Greener NHS programme**, each kidney centre is encouraged to collaborate closely with its organisation's **Sustainability Lead**. Sharing **centre-specific travel data**, such as patient transport patterns and staff commuting behaviours, allows for tailored planning that supports the broader objectives of the **NHS Net Zero Plan** and the **NHS Supply Chain Roadmap** for sustainable travel (Greener NHS, 2022; NHS England, 2023).

This guide provides a practical framework to help kidney centres embed sustainable travel practices into everyday operations through local leadership, partnership, and informed decision-making.

Transitioning to Electric Vehicles (EVs) for Patient Transport

Implementation Steps

- **Fleet Audit:** Analyse vehicle use and emissions using locally available transport data.
- **Phased EV Introduction:** Prioritise replacing high-mileage, high-emission vehicles.
- **Funding Opportunities:** Apply for support from NHS Capital Sustainability Funds or DfT clean fleet initiatives.
- **EV Charging Infrastructure:** Coordinate with Estates teams and local authorities for charging point installation.
- **Contract Revisions:** Update third-party transport contracts to require EV usage.
- **Staff Upskilling:** Train transport staff on EV operation, safety, and maintenance.
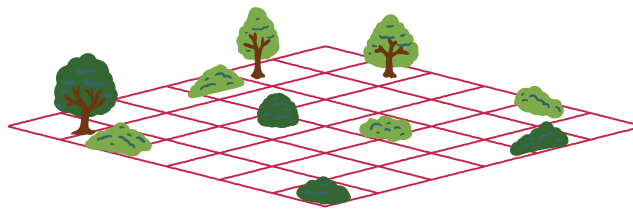
Key Considerations

- Align procurement with Estates and Finance teams to meet capital planning cycles.
- Consider **vehicle-to-grid (V2G)** options to reduce energy bills and build grid resilience (Turner et al., 2025).

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Coordinated and Efficient Transport Services

Implementation Steps for Transport teams

- Deploy **route optimisation tools** (e.g., QRoutes ; ViaVan).
- Partner with nearby NHS providers to **share transport services** where practical.
- Implement **geographically clustered appointment slots** to minimise individual travel burden.
- **Monitor metrics**: journey distance, CO_2e saved, and patient satisfaction.
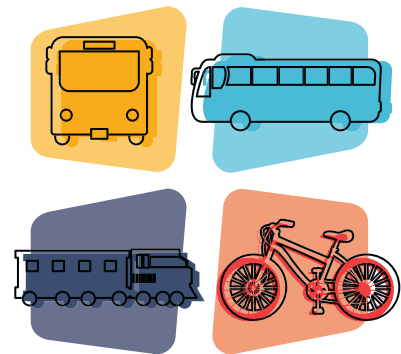
Key Considerations

- Use **GIS mapping** to evaluate regional travel trends.
- Design the system around patient preferences and service accessibility (Greener NHS, 2023).

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Supporting Public Transport Use and Reimbursement

Implementation Steps

- Promote awareness of the **Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme (HTCS)**.
- Provide **digital reimbursement forms** in multiple languages which can be obtained from the HTCS.
- Work with transport providers for **discounted travel schemes** for frequently travelling patients.
- Offer staff **season ticket loans** or salary deduction schemes for commuting.

Key Considerations

Include travel information in appointment letters and patient portals.

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Active Travel and Cycling

Implementation Steps

- Survey staff and patients on barriers to walking and cycling.
- Upgrade infrastructure: secure storage, showers, lockers, and ramps.
- Promote the **Cycle to Work scheme** Trust-wide.
- Introduce **e-bike pools** for community visits.
- Run engagement events such as "Cycle to Dialysis Week."
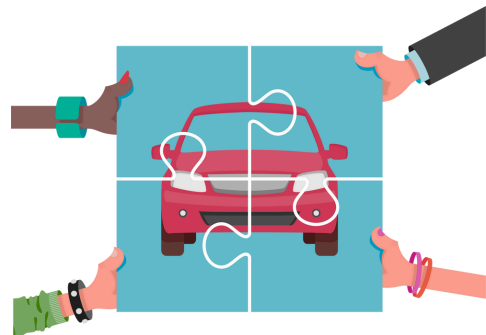
Key Considerations

- Work with local councils to improve off-site cycling/walking access.
- Ensure accessible pedestrian routes and temporary parking for mobility devices.

Car Sharing and Flexible Work

Implementation Steps

- Register staff on platforms like **NHS Liftshare**
- Reserve parking bays for low-emission or car-share vehicles.
- Enable **flexible shifts** to avoid peak-hour congestion.
- Support **remote working** where suitable, especially for admin or virtual clinics.

Key Considerations

- Ensure GDPR-compliant car-sharing policies.
- Track reduction in single-occupancy car use via parking permit data.

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Policy Integration and Leadership

Implementation Steps

- Develop a **centre-specific Sustainable Travel Plan**, embedded within the Trust's Green Plan and aligned to the **Greener NHS guidance**
- Nominate a **local travel champion** within your kidney centre to lead delivery and data collection.
- Incorporate sustainable travel guidance into **staff induction and training**.
- Publish annual updates on travel initiatives and carbon savings.

Key Considerations

- Align with broader Trust objectives for wellbeing, accessibility, and environmental performance.
- Share success stories through Greener NHS regional networks and peer-learning forums.

Conclusion

By actively engaging with the **Greener NHS programme** and embedding sustainable travel strategies, kidney centres can significantly reduce their carbon footprint while improving patient and staff experience. Each centre's contribution—through data sharing, local leadership, and collaboration—will help drive the NHS closer to its Net Zero ambition, with measurable health and environmental benefits.

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