

## **CASE STUDY**

# Facilitating Inter-Departmental Sustainability Innovation

Timothy Ho, Abby-Louise Matthews  
Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust

### **Case Setting**

Building on the momentum gained from the Green Sustainability Challenge (2021), the Leeds Emergency General Surgery team are hosting an inter-departmental challenge to identify and implement sustainable solutions to surgical practice. This initiative, named SOCIAL (Sustainable Operations Challenge: Introducing a Legacy), aims to encourage collaborative innovation across multiple surgical disciplines including: breast, colorectal, gynaecology, pancreas, plastics, upper GI and vascular surgery.

### **Intervention**

Seven teams from these surgical specialties will participate in the SOCIAL challenge which ran for six weeks in early 2023. Teams will be competing to identify key areas in their patient pathways to improve clinical, environmental, and financial outcomes. Successful initiatives will be incorporated into an overall list of initiatives for adoption by the participating specialties.

### **Measurement**

Outcomes from the SOCIAL challenge are twofold: to aggregate the cumulative outcomes proposed, and to evaluate the common approaches, successes and pitfalls experienced by participants. The “Triple Bottom Line” of Environmental, Clinical/Social and Financial outcomes are to be measured by each team to evaluate the impacts of their proposed initiatives. Teams are also encouraged to report anticipated consequences (i.e. prolonged inpatient stay) to encourage a more holistic assessment. Assessing the cumulative impacts and feasibility of all seven teams proposals provides a prime opportunity for cross-discipline learning and implementation, which can generate even greater impacts. The challenge’s coordinators will support teams with their efforts and have designed a framework based on

the SDU's "Sustainable Care Pathways". This provides guidance to identify the key hotspots in patient care. However, teams retain considerably autonomy to set their own boundaries and scope.

### **Challenges and Enablers**

In keeping with the Triple Bottom Line approach, we believe that long-term sustainable change must be supported by an understanding of the context that affects the implementation of sustainability. Pre and post-challenge surveys of team members will gather their perspectives and experiences from the challenge. This data is crucial to enable a wider discussion and recognition of the common challenges and enablers of sustainable surgery, and the design of future measures to propagate success.

### **Additional Remarks**

As of submission, this programme is ongoing therefore the full depth of outcomes is yet to be fully identified. However, this serves as a case-study of implementing a multi-disciplinary sustainability initiative that can propagate regional action.

[See detailed SOCIAL Team Guide here.](#)