



# Pilot study: How to Procure Sustainable Clothing in the NHS



## Defra launches a forward-looking study on procuring sustainable uniforms with the NHS – this is your chance to be part of it!

Defra has commissioned a study to investigate how staff uniforms can be procured in the public sector with a greater emphasis on sustainable development (SD). The project will provide expert guidance on including significant aspects of SD in procurement exercises to deliver more sustainable, value for money solutions that do not compromise on quality or function. The project aims to record and understand the impacts of procuring more sustainably: the opportunities; barriers; and lessons learnt; in order that we can produce effective case study material to encourage inclusion of sustainability when procuring uniforms. This Defra study is looking to work with a range of enthusiastic NHS Trusts to trial approaches and capture experiences of sustainable uniform procurement.

### Why your Trust should get involved

Addressing sustainability aspects in uniform procurement can help to deliver carbon savings as well as mitigating risks related to social and environmental issues in the supply chain. However there is a clear need to also meet the demands of cost and product quality. Achieving this balance is exactly what this study is seeking to form a view on. Participation in trials through this project will provide:

- **Expert advice** – access to free expert advice and support will be provided to apply the principles of sustainable uniform procurement within an NHS setting.
- **Assessment of opportunities for financial savings** – we will work with you in applying environmental criteria whilst simultaneously addressing the dual imperative of value for money.
- **Identification lower environmental impact solutions** - participation will help to identify areas within your textiles procurement process where you could reduce environmental impacts and meet supply chain targets.
- **Risk assessment and mitigation plans** – you will gain a deeper understanding of your textile supply chain and a better ability to manage supply risks, such as consistent textile production quality.
- **Support to develop 'Best Practice' Case Studies** – we will provide a succinct, business-facing case study to highlight best practice that can be used to disseminate the results of the pilot to other Trusts and public sector organisations.

### Context

This pilot study builds on work being undertaken by Defra to understand and reduce the environmental and social impacts of clothing consumption, known as the 'Sustainable Clothing Roadmap'. This process is complementary to the EU's Green Public Procurement (EU GPP) initiative. The EU GPP is an on-going programme to develop support for procurement professionals across Europe to buy products, including textiles, more sustainably. It consists of technical criteria and guidance documents for a range of goods and services. EU Member States have set out a political aspiration of procuring at least 50% of their public needs to the level of the EU GPP criteria.

### How it will work

ERM, Brook Lyndhurst and Colour Connections are working with Defra to deliver this project. There are two main approaches: firstly to include consideration of SD into procurement projects; and secondly to assess the benefits of completed procurements that had substantive inclusion of SD.

For the first of these the ERM consortium will work directly with you over six months to develop an approach for uniforms that incorporates consideration of sustainable development aspects. Through an initial meeting, group working and focused support we will help you to work through issues, overcome barriers and realise opportunities in the procurement of uniforms. This will draw on existing knowledge of textiles supply chains, SD impacts and the EU GPP as a starting point.

We will evaluate the ability of markets to deliver against environmental and social criteria, the impacts on costs, quality and function as well as implications for the supply chain, and staff acceptance and opinion. The project will also look at how innovation in the textile industry could be harnessed to realise benefits for the client and sustainability.

### Free expert support

There is no charge for participation in the project as all expert support is funded by Defra. Clearly the success of the project will rely on some time input from staff in the Trust but the support has been structured to be flexible and to minimise these impacts.

### To find out more, please contact:

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