Significant environmental degradation and pollution effects can be attributed to healthcare. Improving the environmental performance of both hospital facilities and wider healthcare services requires healthcare professionals to respond to both challenging and changing environments. It is increasingly evident that regulation is unlikely to succeed in greening healthcare, due, in part, to differences across nations and speed at which new products and processes are developed. Within maternity services, infant feeding actions contribute to resource inefficiency, liquid, solid and electronic wastes such as single use bottles, composite material teats and collars, and breast-pumps. Given that the importance of breastfeeding is well established it should not be assumed that breastfeeding does not incur environmental impacts, as the use of breast-pumps and sterilising equipment has increased over time. The birth of a child, a significant life event, provides opportunities to influence long term behaviour and choices with respect to wider environmental considerations when raising children. Correlations between information provided by healthcare professionals and infant feeding actions among parents reveals the potential extension of this key relationship to drive change. The visibility of environmental initiatives and best practice within maternity services may serve as living laboratories for families to witness and adopt environmentally beneficial measures. Environmental education resources, for new parents and healthcare staff, have potential to deliver both wide and far reaching impacts. This paper identifies opportunities for environmental education within maternity services, assesses delivery modes using case studies, and evaluates potential impacts for both health and environmental sustainability.

Keywords: Education for Sustainable Development, Sustainable Consumption, Green Healthcare, Waste Prevention