

Smith+Nephew and Vic Coupland

Working together to build a greener supply chain

Smith+Nephew is one of the world's biggest medical technology companies and has been working with Hull-based electrical and mechanical contractors Vic Coupland for around 40 years.

Both are members of Oh Yes! Net Zero and form the 'big brother/little brother' team in one of our first Carbon Clinics. The two businesses are very different in terms of size and resources, but both are benefitting from the partnership.

The initial carbon calculation undertaken by Vic Coupland showed the scale of the issue and the potential for change. "Most of our emissions come from fuel, but we never really kept track of it that much. It's a necessity, so we just paid the monthly invoice," says Matthew Dodson, the company's director.

"But when we pulled out the spreadsheets and analysed what we'd spent and what our fleet of vehicles were using, it was eye-watering, really. It sets alarm bells ringing: is this how much fuel we really use? And what do we need to do to try and save that?"

The business had started to swap over to electric for the office cars and already had a 20kW solar system installed, which provides power for the office and enables some to be sold back to the grid.

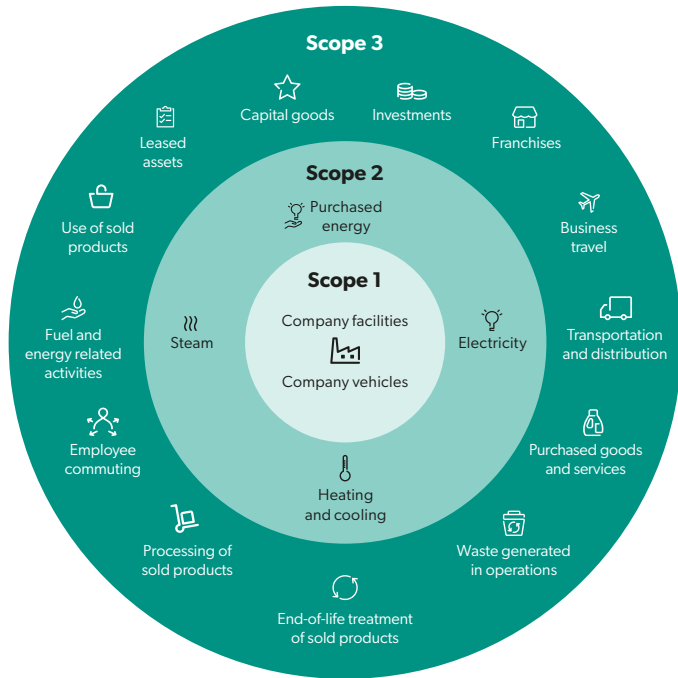
But increasing the fleet of EVs means more electricity is having to be bought at today's higher tariffs. "So, it's not all as simple as it seems," reflects Matthew.

Understanding the scope of emissions

Oh Yes! Net Zero brokered a Carbon Clinic collaboration between Matthew and Paul Andrews, Smith+Nephew's Director of Global Energy.

"It opened my eyes to the scale of carbon produced every day," admits Matthew. "As Paul said, even drinking a glass of water produces a carbon footprint, because it's got to be pumped and so on. You don't fully appreciate the impact everything has."

Paul says that getting involved in a Carbon Clinic as the 'big brother' is not a top-down process and they benefit from being able to work more closely with their supply chain on environmental issues.



Scope 1 (Direct)

Emissions from owned or operated assets

Scope 2 (Indirect)

Emissions from purchased energy

Scope 3 (Indirect)

Emissions from everything else – suppliers, distributors, product use, etc



Paul Andrews
Director of Global Energy

Smith+Nephew

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“Organisations are under similar pressures,” continues Paul. “Smith+Nephew is a big company. We’ve set our net zero targets. Addressing our scope 1 and 2 emissions – what we do about energy efficiency, where we buy it and so on – is within our control. But most of our emissions are in scope 3 – those generated by our suppliers.”

The two businesses have worked together to reduce Smith+Nephew’s energy usage, because it’s the right thing to do, says Paul. “Matthew and his team devised a solution for the LED lighting in our clean rooms that we’d not thought of, and that’s because of collaboration and shared objectives that have been a benefit to both organisations.”

Factoring ESG and decarbonisation into the decision-making process helps businesses reach their environmental goals but can also mean they save more money than they may have anticipated.

“We speak to clients who just want to fit an LED light hoping to save energy, but we tell them they could probably save another 50% on their energy costs by fitting a sensor on that light,” says Matthew. “People don’t realise that.”

‘Paying it forward’ is key to Carbon Clinics. The collaborating partners are just two links in the supply chain and can influence suppliers further down the chain and clients further up it.

Size matters

The value of Oh Yes! Net Zero is that it gives SMEs like Vic Coupland the ability and resources to explore decarbonisation in a separate environment from the one where they have to get on with running their business, serving customers and making a profit.

“Smith+Nephew is a big corporation with people like Paul who are dedicated to improving sustainability and net zero performance. I’m in the middle. I’m trying to do it whilst I’m doing everything else,” says Matthew.

“But then you have our supplier, perhaps someone doing deliveries in their own van, who doesn’t even think about it. If you can help them become more aware and make changes, everyone benefits. Because all our scope 3 emissions are huge – it’s everyone’s supply chain and we’re trying to narrow that scope 3 down.”

“We can’t influence the big corporations in our supply chain, but we can work with our SME suppliers to help them decarbonise. Sharing knowledge and expertise between large corporates and SMEs helps build robustness and sustainability through the supply chain, because the pressures are the same for us all, just on a different level.”

Paul Andrews
Smith+Nephew
Director of Global Energy

At the top of the chain for Smith+Nephew and Vic Coupland are organisations like the NHS, which has very challenging carbon targets for itself and its suppliers. “In a few years you won’t be able to work with the NHS if you don’t have a carbon reduction plan and report your numbers,” says Paul. “It’s our duty to work with our suppliers and certainly with our SME base, because we need that sustainability in our supply chain.”

“Organisations that recognise not just carbon, but wider ESG issues are normally more robust, have better planning and are able to look forward to changing markets.”



Matthew Dodson
Director



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