Developing a Climate Emergency and Sustainability Action Plan for NHS 24

November 2022

To achieve these aims we need to *support the energy and enthusiasm of our people* and *give them the resources and backing they need* to make changes

Background

Climate Emergency & Health

NHS 24

Sustainability: '*The needs of the present must be met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*'   (United Nations, 1987)

The **threats to human health from the climate emergency** has been described by the Lancet Medical Journal as:
   '*The biggest global health threat of the 21st century*'

But there **significant health benefits from taking action** - including:

- **Switching to sustainable transport** can increase physical activity, reduce injury and improve physical and mental wellbeing
- **Improving air quality** can prevent diseases such as asthma, pneumonia, heart attacks and stroke;
- **Insulating homes** can save lives and prevent illnesses from cold homes as well as reducing energy consumption;
- **Eliminating pharmaceutical residues** from wastewater prevents harm to biodiversity and limits the growth in antimicrobial resistant bacteria

Tackling climate change can therefore also be viewed as:
   '*The greatest global health opportunity of the 21st century*'

Those living in more **deprived areas and lower income households**, as well as the old, young, and those with chronic conditions, are already likely to be **disproportionately affected by negative impacts of an unsustainable society** – e.g. poorer air quality; increased traffic danger; colder, damper homes; food insecurity.

There are also **more vulnerable to the effects of climate change**, for example from extreme weather events, including heatwaves, storms and flooding.

Taking action to address climate change is essential in order to address current and prevent future widening of health inequalities

NHS 24 can play a key role in reducing the greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to the climate emergency, as well as supporting the resilience of people and places to the adverse impacts of climate change

Impacts in Scotland

NHS 24

The issue is referred to as the '**Global Climate Emergency**' because the rate at which greenhouse gas emissions are happening is unsustainable and the damage could become irreversible if we don't act immediately.

In Scotland, we're already seeing the impacts. Over the past few years we've experienced **summer heatwaves**, **flooding** and extremely **high winter temperatures**. The climate emergency is already on our doorstep. If we don't take action to reduce emissions and prepare for the impacts of climate change, there will be more....

- **Catastrophic flooding** - One in eleven homes and one in seven businesses in Scotland are already at risk of flooding. Around 2000 more properties will be at risk every year due to climate change.

- **Biodiversity loss** – Nature is not just 'nice to have', it's fundamental to life. Invasive non-native species, pests and diseases will thrive and spread under new conditions.

- **Life threatening rainstorms** - it's estimated that by 2050 rainfall in Scotland could increase by 42% in winter and 24% in summer. Our drainage systems could be unable to cope, leading to flooding sudden and severe enough to cause danger to life.
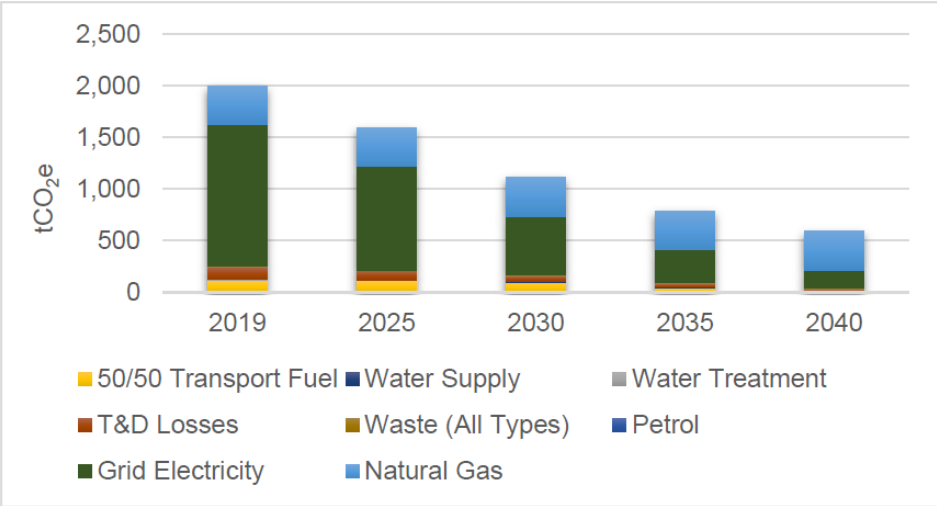
More info at: https://www.netzeronation.scot/the-importance-of-net-zero
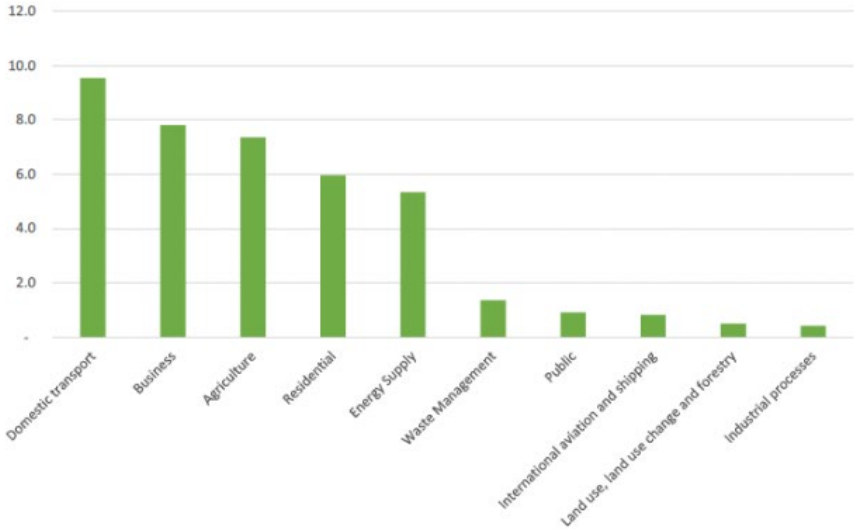
NHS Emissions in Scotland

NHS 24

NHS Source	NHS Emissions (tCO2e)
Building energy	431,000
Inhalers gases	79,000
Transport fleet	60,000 (incomplete)
Anaesthetic gases	27,000
Waste	6,900 (incomplete)
Waste water	3,200
Clean water	1,600
Total	**608,700**

There is a gap in knowledge on the emissions related to NHS supply chain and from staff, patient and visitor travel, however with domestic transport known to be the biggest contributor to emissions in Scotland, and car travel the biggest contributor to transport emissions, these are likely to be substantial

NHS 24 Emissions and modelled reduction path (Ricardo, 2022)

Legend:
- 50/50 Transport Fuel
- T&D Losses
- Grid Electricity
- Water Supply
- Waste (All Types)
- Natural Gas
- Water Treatment
- Petrol

Scottish sources of emissions in MtCO2e (SG, 2020)

NHS Scotland Response

NHS Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy

NHS 24

Ambition to become a service which is both *environmentally* and *socially sustainable*… that *improves the opportunities, life chances, health and wellbeing* … *contributes to a more cohesive, resilient and net-zero society* in a just way that contributes to *population wellbeing and a reduction in health inequalities*.

To do this, NHS Scotland aims to collectively:

- Contribute to **United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals**
- Become a **net-zero** greenhouse gas emissions health service **by 2040**
- Make assets and activities **resilient to the impacts of a changing climate**
- Establish a culture of providing **environmentally sustainable healthcare**
- **Design out waste** and pollution
- Contribute to **restoring biodiversity**

To achieve these aims we need to *support the energy and enthusiasm of our people* and *give them the resources and backing they need* to make changes

Health Board Requirements

NHS 24

Governance:
- Establish **Sustainability Governance Group**
- Establish **Sustainability Development Group**
- Identify **Non-executive Champion**

To ensure Boards:
- Reduces greenhouse gas emissions
- Adapts to impacts of changing climate
- Embeds sustainability as a core value

Background assessment:
- **Net Zero Route Map** – Prepared for NHS 24 by consultancy (Ricardo), April 2022

Commitment to action:
- Develop NHS 24 Climate Emergency and Sustainability Action Plan (by Q1 2023)
    - Informed by existing relevant strategies & staff engagement
    - Principles integrated into Organisational Strategy

Reporting:
- **(New) NHS Annual Climate Emergency and Sustainability Report** (due Jan 2023)
- **Public Bodies Climate Change Duties Act (2015)** annual submission (due Nov 2022)
- **National Sustainability Audit Tool (NSAT)** annual submission (due March 23)
  NHS 24 is currently awarded 'Bronze' status based on 2021/22 submission
- **Biodiversity Report**, every 3 years, joint with other Special Boards (due Dec 2023)
- **Climate Change Risk Assessment & Adaptation Plan,** every 5 years (due March 23)

NHS 24 Response

NHS 24 Climate Emergency & Sustainability Action Plan (1)

NHS 24

It is proposed that we set out our actions in alignment with 5 themes of the NHS Scotland Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy:

Sustainable Land and Buildings:

- Reducing buildings emissions
- Adaptation of estate
- Environmental stewardship
- Reducing waste
- Protecting greenspace
- Sustainable future development

Sustainable Travel:

- Reducing the need to travel
- Promoting active travel
- Promoting public transport
- Decarbonising fleet
- Adaptation to maintain access

Sustainable Goods and Services:

- Circularity and reducing waste
- Reducing supply chain impacts
- Increasing supply chain resilience
- Improving disposal

Sustainable Care*:

- Sustainable care pathways
- Realistic medicine
- Medicines, including inhalers
- Supporting primary care

* Medical gases and green theatres are also covered within this theme in the national strategy, but are not relevant at NHS 24
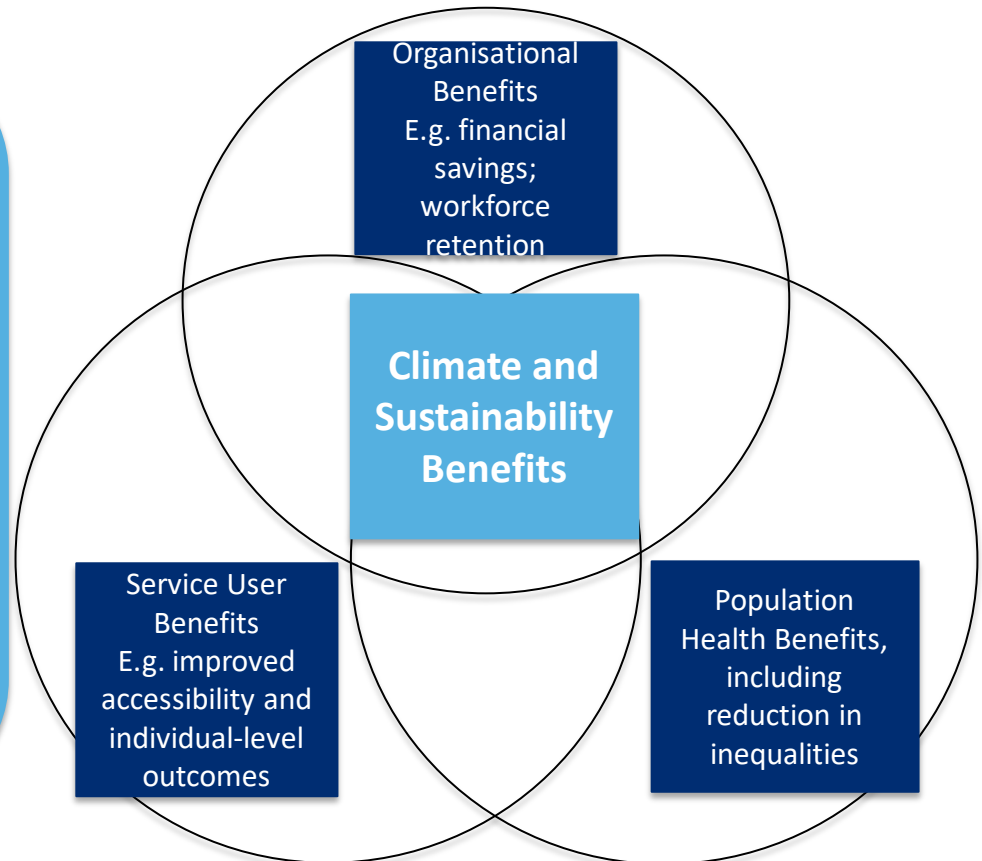
Sustainable Communities:

- Supporting health and wellbeing
- Building community resilience
- Engaging our communities

NHS 24 Climate Emergency & Sustainability Action Plan (2)

Our commitment to take action on climate emergency and sustainability underpins our new Organisational Strategy, drawing on commitments made in existing relevant strategies and plans & gap analysis is currently underway to identify additional opportunities. The climate emergency and sustainability action plan will provide an opportunity to link different areas under the lens of sustainability, as depicted in the graphic below. A draft tool has been developed to improve the consideration of the elements below in decisions in NHS 24.

SG NHS Sustainability Assessment Tool (NSAT) recommends that all boards:

- Review Corporate Strategy, organisational values, mission statement, vision and principles and update to explicitly reflect commitment to all aspects of sustainability (environmental, social and economic)

- Review Corporate Strategy, Operational Delivery Plan, Property and Asset Management Plan, Annual Public Health Report and all other annual reports and plans and ensure they underpin ambitious targets to reduce negative impacts (e.g. greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution) and maximise benefits (e.g. health promotion, illness prevention, climate change adaptation and social value)

Organisational Benefits
E.g. financial savings; workforce retention

Climate and Sustainability Benefits

Service User Benefits
E.g. improved accessibility and individual-level outcomes

Population Health Benefits, including reduction in inequalities

Governance & National Support

- **Sustainability Governance Board** (strategic) function will be delivered by EMT, with Laura Ryan the named Executive Lead
- **Sustainability Development Group** (operational), will meet for the first time on 28.10.22, to be chaired by Dr Laura Ryan, with membership from across all directorates
- **Non-executive Sustainability Champion,** Marieke Dwarshuis, appointed to provide external challenge, receiving regular updates from the Executive Lead
- **Standing agenda item on climate emergency and sustainability programme** to be included on SMT, EMT and Full Board agendas, with sustainability reports taken to **Planning and Performance Committee**
- **Updates on population health / health inequalities / realistic medicine aspects of sustainability work** to be provided to **Clinical Governance Committee** as part of regular reporting on Public Health Framework and Realistic Medicine Action Plans
- NHS 24 are working closely with the wider national NHS Climate Emergency and Sustainability team to ensure NHS 24 benefits from a range of training, support and other opportunities.
- **Programme & Projects** must embed sustainability throughout the governance framework from design phase throughout delivery to evaluation for current and future projects and programmes. Clear measurements must be evident throughout the formal reporting structure, submissions to CESP will be for assurance.

Programme Collaboration – Internal

- NHS 24 Executive Directors
- Senior Management Team (Cross Directorate)
- Sustainability Development Group (Cross Directorate)
- Sustainability Governance Board (Cross Directorate)
- Patient Partner Forum (PPF)
- National Clinical Governance Group (Internal)
- Participation and equalities Manager
- Senior Programme Manager
- Engagement Team
- Evaluation Team
- Web development Team
- Non-executive champion
- **Draft plan of engagement**

Programme Collaboration – External

- Public Health Scotland
- Health Improvement Scotland
- Health Inequalities of primary care
- National Executive Leads sustainability group (CMO)
- National sustainability champions network
- NHS Scotland Environment and Sustainability Group (NESG)
- Scottish Government
- NHS Assure
- SAS Procurement
- Forestry and Land Scottish Government Agency

Engagement

- All NHS Boards in Scotland are required to develop organisational Climate Emergency and Sustainability Action Plans, and there is wider work underway by SG to engage more broadly on the need to take action to achieve net zero (see Climate change - Net Zero Nation: public engagement strategy - gov.scot (www.gov.scot) and Home | Net Zero Nation.

- NHS 24 propose to prioritise engaging internally, and this will be done as part of engagement on the wider Organisational Strategy, an engagement plan is being developed

General prompt questions for thinking about net zero / mitigation / decarbonising

- In your place, what activities use fossil fuels such as petrol, diesel, and gas? What could be done to minimise fossil fuel use by doing these activities less? Or can we do these activities in a different, low carbon way?

- How can your place be developed to allow people to live without fossil fuels?

- What industries, businesses and people could be left behind if we cut out fossil fuels? How can we include everyone in the move to net zero?

- Is there local space for greenspace, tree-planting, and natural habitats (peatlands, wetlands) so that greenhouse gases can be removed from the atmosphere naturally?

Prompts specific to each of the 14 themes can be found in a table in the following pages.

**General prompt questions for thinking about adaptation / resilience to climate change**

- How does this place cope with current hazardous weather events? For example, heavy rain, snow, and high winds, are problems visible already?

- What features (physical, economic, social) make the place vulnerable or resilient?

- How do you think your place can be more resilient?

- Would you describe the community as strong, cohesive, and integrated? Are there divisions and marginalised groups? How could we support people to help each other?

- Climate change events happening somewhere else could impact on your place. Has this happened before?

Prompts specific to each of the 14 themes can be found in a table in the following pages.

Engagement

The Place Standard with a Climate Lens Tool

Next Steps

NHS 24
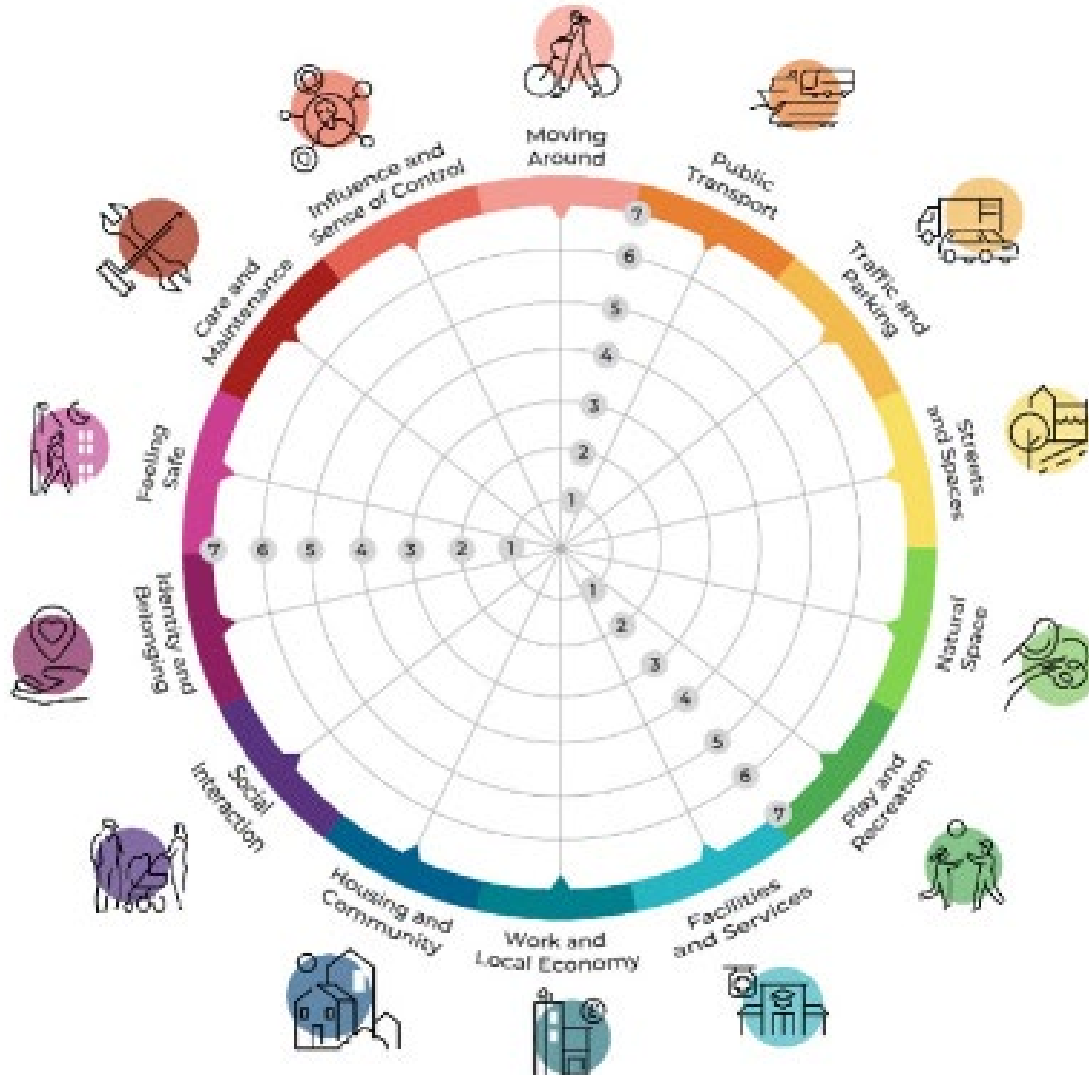
November:

- Internal engagement, in conjunction with engagement on Organisational Strategy
- Climate Change Duties Reporting submitted to SG
- Update to PPC (for assurance) and Board for (approval)
- Update on sustainability workstream to CGC as part of Public Health Deep Dive

January:

- Climate Emergency Annual Report published on corporate website
- Procurement of external expertise to support gap analysis for Action Plan and future deliverables to 2026 and beyond

February:

- Draft Climate Emergency & Sustainability 2023/4 Action Plan to EMT, PPC & Board
- Relevant external funding opportunities identified / applied for

March:

- Climate Change Risk Assessment and Adaptation Plan submitted to SG
- Annual NSAT Reporting submitted to SG

2023-24 (Q1):

- Publication of NHS 24 Climate Emergency & Sustainability Action Plan for 2023/4