



The Green Guide

For Foundation Doctors

Version 2: 2026

SAVE
OUR
PLANET!



*Created by the Sustainability Subcommittee,
North West Foundation Forum*

Contributors:

Dr Kushagra Bisht, FY2
Dr Georgia Allison, FY2
Dr Megan Robinson, FY1
Dr Aimee Russell, FY1

Contact us with any queries at contact.nwff@gmail.com



**Want to feedback to our team?
Click the icon below!**



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Why is sustainability important?

- Why should we care?
- How does sustainability impact health?
- Climate change and the health care system
- Use of personal protective equipment and its environmental impact
- Replacing Single-Use Items

How much does your test cost?

The Net Zero NHS Plan

How can you get involved?

- Personal Lifestyle
 - Transport
 - Healthy eating
 - Meat Free Mondays
 - Work productivity

Quality Improvement Projects

- Frameworks
- Tried and Tested Case Studies
- How to Get Started on your own QIP
 - Medicine
 - Surgery
 - General Practice
 - Anaesthetics
 - Emergency Medicine
 - Psychiatry
 - Paediatrics
 - Obstetrics and Gynaecology

Activism

Post-Foundation Years

QIP Posters - Feel Free to use!



Click to Jump to the Page!

NEW

Check out our Ready Made
QIP Posters at the end of
the Green Guide

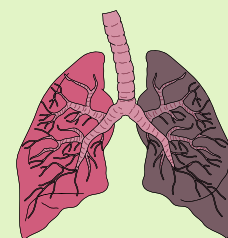


**THINK
SUSTAINABLE**

Why Is Sustainability Important?

Health Preservation

Climate change contributes to diseases like asthma, cardiovascular issues, and cancer. For example, reducing emissions could save over **5,700** lives annually from **improved air quality**

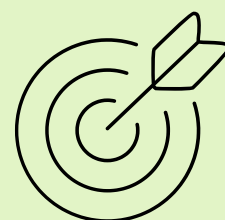


Resilient Healthcare Systems

Sustainability builds resilience against climate-related challenges like heatwaves, which killed nearly **900 people** in England in 2019

Global Responsibility

By aiming for **net-zero emissions by 2040**, the NHS aligns with the UK's Paris Agreement commitments, which could save over 100,000 lives annually from healthier diets



Why Should We Care?

Direct Health Benefits

Transitioning to sustainable healthcare could prevent over 38,000 deaths annually through increased physical activity

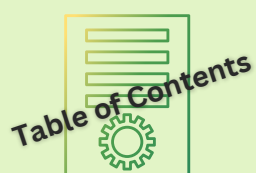
Economic Savings

Upgrading to energy-efficient LED lighting across the NHS could save over **£3 billion** in 30 years



Equity and Justice

Air pollution disproportionately affects deprived communities, and reducing it addresses these inequalities



How Sustainability Impacts Health?

Disease Prevention

Cutting NHS emissions by 62% since 1990 has already reduced respiratory diseases. Achieving net-zero will prevent even more

Mental Well-being

Programs like the NHS Forest, which planted 65,000 trees, improve air quality and mental health

Community Health

Active transport initiatives could save 461 kilotonnes of CO2 annually, promoting healthier lifestyles

Climate Change in the Healthcare Setting

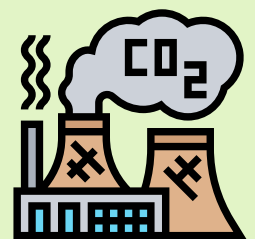
Health care facilities have a considerable impact on the environment: they contribute to greenhouse gas emissions and climate change, release ecologically toxic substances into the environment, produce large volumes of waste material, and contribute to depletion of natural resources such as drinking water.

The NHS is responsible for:

- **4% of national carbon emissions**
- **40% of emissions from the public sector**

Health care is said to contribute

- **~5% of greenhouse gas emissions globally**



Health care systems also work to treat health effects on the individual. Climate change affects air quality, spread of infectious disease, food availability, and population migration – all of which can affect individual health.

As the effects of climate change become more prevalent, there is a greater strain on health care systems to treat them. It would be beneficial to both the systems and the individual to focus on creating more sustainable health care systems.



Guidance for Sustainability

Guidance has been published to help healthcare systems work to become more sustainable in the context of growing concern related to climate change.

The World Health Organisation has specifically developed guidance to target developing climate resilience and environmental sustainability: [WHO guidance for climate resilient and environmentally sustainable health care facilities.](#)

A systematic review was also carried out to examine how healthcare services and institutions are attempting to limit their greenhouse gas emissions and provided a framework to support decarbonisation of healthcare systems:

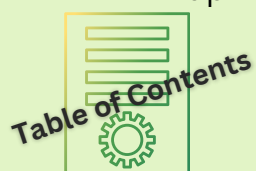
[Strategies and tactics to reduce the impact of healthcare on climate change: systematic review | The BMJ](#)

Use of Personal Protective Equipment & Environmental Impact

Personal protective equipment (PPE) is undoubtedly an important part of delivering safe medical care for both for patients and practitioners. However, the single-use nature of PPE which is fundamental for minimising risk also makes its environmental impact substantial.

How PPE can cause environmental issues:

- **Energy consumption and carbon footprint** - the production processes used in the manufacture of PPE contribute to greenhouse gas emissions, this is even greater if the PPE is required to be sterile
- **Plastic & microplastic waste** - most PPE is made of non-biodegradable products which breakdown over time to produce microplastics we currently have no way of controlling
- **Landfill use** - millions of disposable PPE items contribute to growing landfill waste
- **Incinerator use** - if not disposed off in landfill, a lot of clinical waste is incinerated, producing a high level of pollutants into the air
- **Marine pollution** - PPE waste that is incorrectly disposed of can end up in our oceans and seas, damaging wildlife



How we can minimise the environmental impact of PPE:

- Do not use PPE as an alternative to other infection prevention control measures, such as proper hand washing procedures
- Only use PPE when appropriate. For the most commonly used PPE, generally speaking, this means:
 - **Gloves:** when exposure to bodily fluids, non-intact skin or mucus membranes is anticipated or likely; or when coming into contact with potentially harmful drugs or chemicals
 - **Aprons:** when clothing is likely to become contaminated with bodily fluids or respiratory secretions
 - **Surgical face masks:** during close patient contact with a patient with suspected or diagnosed infective respiratory illness
 - **FFP3 masks:** during aerosol-generating procedures on a patient with suspected or diagnosed infective respiratory illness
- Do not use sterile-standard PPE unless carrying out a sterile procedure

Gloves Off Campaign from Walton Centre

This is a nationwide initiative to help improve infection control measures in healthcare settings whilst also reducing the amount of single use gloves being used. Below is an example of a poster used at The Walton Centre which details when gloves should and should not be used.



Gloves on

When gloves are used unnecessarily, this can increase the risk of cross-contamination. To keep our patients safe, our staff will only use gloves when needed:

- When in contact (or risk of contact) with blood, body fluid or broken skin
- When in contact with chemical hazards such as disinfectants
- Where a patient is infectious or showing signs of infection

Gloves off

Clean, bare hands that are washed regularly with soap and water or alcohol hand rub are just as effective as gloves in these scenarios:

- Taking patients' blood pressure, temperature etc.
- Examining or touching a patient
- Assisting a patient with food and drink
- Giving vaccinations
- Administration tasks near a patient (e.g. answering the phone, using the computer)
- Moving a patient's belongings
- Tidying the bedside

Replacing Single-Use Items

Reducing reliance on single-use items within healthcare is a complex challenge. Any proposed changes must prioritise patient safety, ensuring that all equipment remains sterile and fully compliant with health and safety standards. However, there are several areas where we can explore opportunities to introduce reusable alternatives, reduce unnecessary consumption, or redesign products to improve their environmental sustainability.

Immediate and Practical Improvements

There are simple behavioural and procedural changes that could have an immediate impact:

- Avoid opening items “just in case.” Supplies that are opened but not used can no longer be considered sterile and must be discarded, contributing unnecessarily to clinical waste.
- Appropriate use of PPE. Reinforcing initiatives such as the “Gloves Off” approach ensures that gloves and other PPE are used only when clinically indicated, rather than as routine practice.



Opportunities for Reusable Alternatives

Several commonly used items could be transitioned to reusable options where clinically appropriate:

- Replacing single-use incontinence pads with washable, reusable alternatives.
- Substituting disposable cardboard kidney dishes and emesis bowls with reusable metal versions that can be sterilised after use. Where disposables remain necessary, ensuring correct recycling processes are in place.
- Increasing the use of reusable surgical gowns and drapes. Estimates suggest that we could cut carbon emission from gowns and drapes by 64% by switching to reusable alternatives.
- Introducing patient-specific blood pressure cuffs and tourniquets that can be appropriately cleaned and reassigned during admission.



Areas Requiring Further Innovation

Some items are more challenging to replace due to infection prevention and regulatory requirements, but may still warrant review:

- IV bags and tubing: These represent a significant source of plastic waste and are currently difficult to recycle. Exploration of alternative materials or improved recycling pathways may be beneficial.
- Excessive packaging: Many instruments and consumables are individually wrapped and packaged in multiple layers. There may be opportunities to reduce packaging volume, redesign materials to improve recyclability, or implement reusable transport systems



Overall, while not all single-use items can or should be eliminated, there are meaningful opportunities to reduce waste through behavioural change, adoption of reusable alternatives, and collaboration with manufacturers to improve product design.

How much does your tests cost?

For diagnostic imaging, nationally aligned tariffs exist through the NHS Payment Scheme / Community Diagnostic Centre (CDC) tariffs.

Indicative NHS costs (2024–25):

- Ultrasound (non-contrast): ~£52
- CT scan (non-contrast): ~£133
- CT scan (with contrast): ~£146
- MRI (non-contrast): ~£177
- MRI (with contrast): ~£264



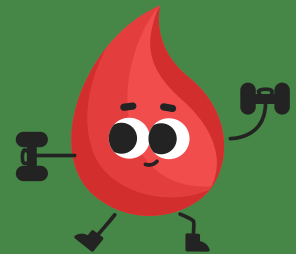
Unlike imaging, there is no current national per-test tariff for individual pathology investigations in 2024–25. This is because:

- Most blood tests are bundled into block contracts or wider activity payments
- Cost vary by region/trust and local labs
- National Cost Collection (NCC) report does not itemise cost

Regardless, older NHS Reference Cost data (pre-2016), can be used to illustrate costs of certain tests.

What is the carbon footprint?

- Full Blood Count (FBC): ~0.1 kg CO₂e
- U&E / Biochemistry panel: ~0.1 kg CO₂e
- Coagulation profile (INR/PT): ~0.08 kg CO₂e
- Arterial Blood Gas (ABG): ~0.05 kg CO₂e



📌 A “routine bloods” panel can generate similar emissions to driving ~0.5–1 km.

(Much higher due to energy use, cooling systems, and standby power)

- Ultrasound: ~0.5 kg CO₂e
- Chest X-ray: ~0.8 kg CO₂e
- CT scan: ~9 kg CO₂e
- MRI scan: ~17–18 kg CO₂e



🚗 Equivalentents

- CT scan ≈ driving 70–80 km
- MRI scan ≈ driving 140–150 km



NHS Net Zero Plan

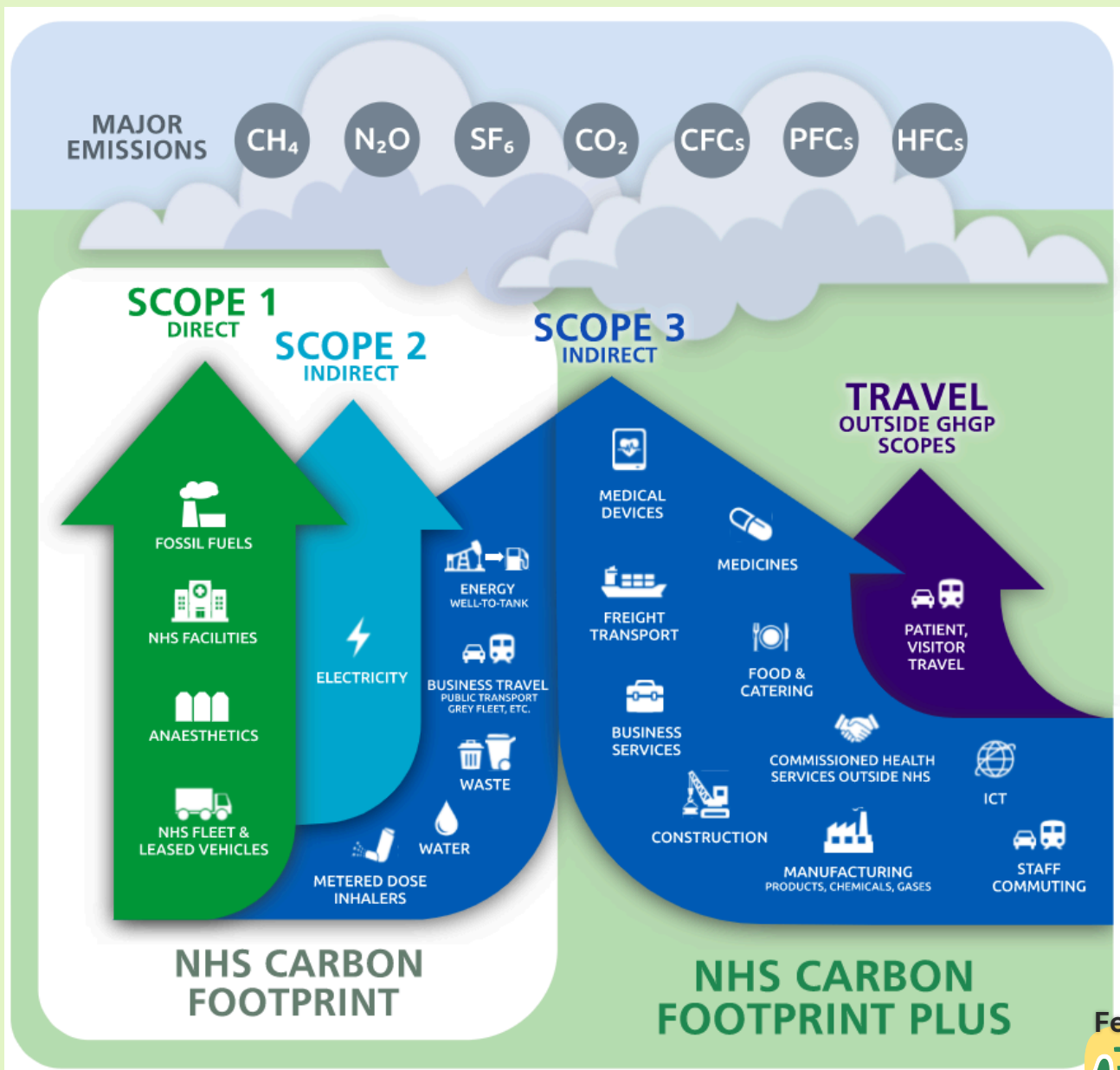
Main two targets of NHS

For the emissions we control directly (the NHS Carbon Footprint), we will reach net zero by 2040, with an ambition to reach an 80% reduction by 2028 to 2032

Or the emissions we can influence (our NHS Carbon Footprint Plus), we will reach net zero by 2045, with an ambition to reach an 80% reduction by 2036 to 2039.

Net Zero Supplier Roadmap now **statutory guidance**.

More can be found at: [Greener NHS » Delivering a net zero NHS \(england.nhs.uk\)](https://www.england.nhs.uk/greener-nhs/delivering-a-net-zero-nhs/).



Ways to Get Involved

Personal Lifestyle



Transport:

- Up to **20%** of the UK's carbon emissions come from cars. Many of us are reliant on cars for commuting to work given the remote locations and anti-social nature of shift work. However, even making 1 journey per week by public transport can have large positive impacts on the environment – it can reduce carbon emission and air pollution, reduce congestion and encourage investment from governments in sustainable public transport options!
- Where possible consider **walking** or **cycling** to work – an easy way to fit exercise into your busy day as well as reduce your impact on the environment.
- If commuting longer distances, where public transport or cycling is not practical, consider **car sharing** – split the cost whilst cutting your emissions and get chance to catch up with a colleague.
- When it's time to purchase a new car, consider looking into getting an electric or hybrid vehicle. **Electric** vehicles produce less carbon emissions over their lifetime and no emissions whilst operating, which significantly improves air quality!
- The **NHS car scheme** offers employees discounts on car leases, including electric vehicles.

Eating Healthy:

- Around 1/3 greenhouse gas emissions are linked to food production, processing, transport and consumption.
- Animal based products such as red meat and dairy produce the highest amounts of emissions whereas foods such as fruit and vegetables, grains and beans produce the least. A plant-based diet produces less carbon emissions than an omnivore diet.
- A simple way to reduce emissions is to trial changes such as 'Meat free Monday' allowing you to cut down your food impact on the planet but without missing out on your favourite foods
- Another way to reduce emissions is to think about how far food has travelled, often known as food miles. Reducing food miles can be done by buying local produce such as locally farmed meat and eggs, and buying seasonal fruits and vegetables which do not need to be imported.



- The app Open Food Facts provides an easy way to make better food choices for the environment when grocery shopping. The app uses the camera to scan barcodes and can give product ratings for the environmental impact and nutritional content of what you're about to buy, helping to make smarter choices for your body, and the planet.



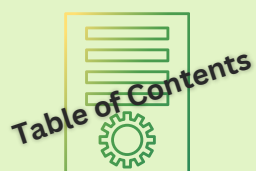
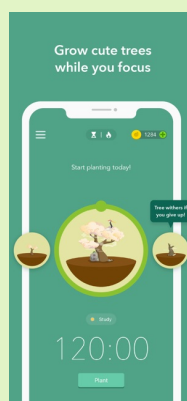
Meat free Mondays:

- Meat-Free Mondays is a campaign introduced in the UK in 2009 to promote improved personal health, animal welfare, and environmental sustainability.
- Completely changing one's diet can be challenging, so replacing meat just one day a week is a more realistic and achievable option for patients and the wider public.
- This approach could be implemented across hospital sites to help reduce emissions and support planetary health, while also being encouraged for individual patients to continue at home with their friends and family.
- The meat production industry contributes to approximately 14.5% of greenhouse gas admissions globally showing that this is a area that we can look for improvements.
- Small dietary changes made by large numbers of people can have a significant positive impact on the environment. Over time, establishing a Meat-Free Monday routine may also encourage people to adopt meat-free meals on multiple days each week, as they discover how easy it can be and find recipes they enjoy.



Work Productivity:

- Looking to stay focused and be more productive? Forest is an app which plants real world trees as a reward for productivity. Plant a tree in the app and set a timer, leaving the app before the timer is done will cause the tree to die. Use Forest to reduce screen time, set study goals or be more present with friends. Forest has partnered with the charity Trees for the Future, which works to plant trees when you plant trees in the app!
- Trees for the Future aims to protect the planet by restoring degraded land, capturing carbon and improving biodiversity.



Sustainable medication choices

Medications also have a carbon footprint, they actually contribute 25% of the entire NHS carbon footprint and we should be aware of this when we are prescribing. Are the higher carbon footprint medications necessary or are there better alternatives?



Oral vs IV paracetamol:

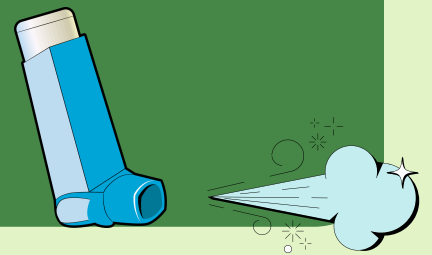
- Iv paracetamol is prescribed too often when oral paracetamol could be used instead
- Oral paracetamol has a carbon footprint of 38g CO₂e per 1g dose
- IV paracetamol has a carbon footprint of 310-628g CO₂e per 1g dose
 - The range is dependent on the type of packaging and administration supplies
- An encouragement should be made towards prescribing the oral alternative

Inhaler choices:

- Inhaler emissions account for 3% of the NHS carbon footprint
- The propellant in metered dose inhalers is responsible for this
- For example one symbicort metered dose inhaler contributes the same carbon footprint as a 115 mile petrol car journey (35 kg CO₂e)
- In comparison, the very commonly prescribed ventolin (salbutamol inhaler) contributes the same as a 96.7 mile petrol car journey (28 kg CO₂e)
- There has been a push towards prescribing alternative inhalers such as dry powder inhalers that are proven to be just as effective
- Dry powder inhalers produce less than 1 kg CO₂e

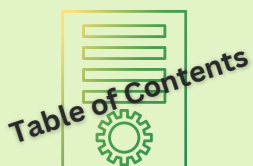
If you cannot get your patients to switch onto dry powder inhalers don't worry! there are other things we can do:

- Getting their asthma under control= less puffs of a reliever inhaler
- Ensure good inhaler technique
- Taking inhalers to pharmacy for proper disposal
- Increase the strength of the inhaler
- Change to a brand with a lower carbon footprint



Green prescribing:

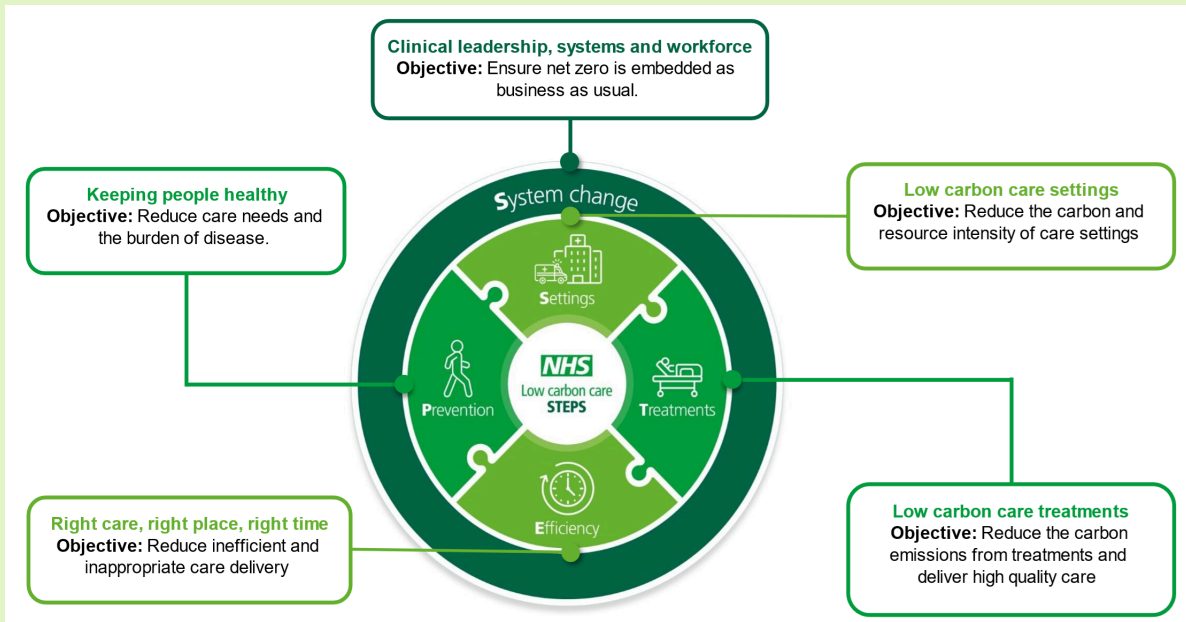
- It is worth thinking about alternatives to anti-depressants and anti-anxiety medications
- Therapy is usually first line but what else can we do to back this up?
- Often green prescribing can greatly benefit mental health
- Examples include: community gardening projects, green gyms, conservation volunteering and, arts and cultural activities outdoors



Quality Improvement Projects

Resources to Help with Sustainable QIPs

How to Prove It Is Relevant to Environmental Sustainability: the Low-Carbon Care STEPS

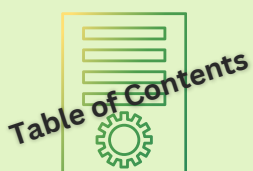


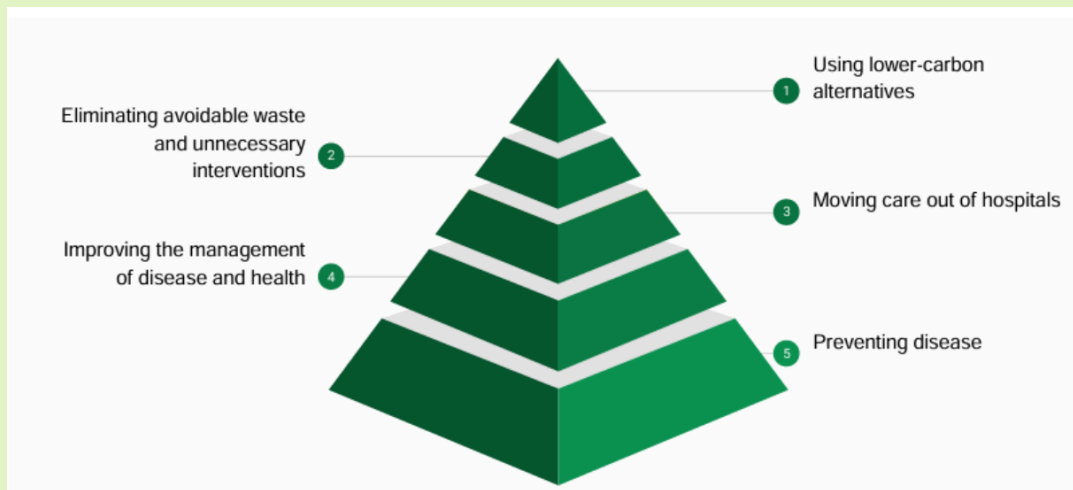
This guidance is intended to help demonstrate and assess how a project meets the net zero assessment criteria. It was specifically developed with NHS England's Net Zero Plan in mind. Although it is not a fully comprehensive or validated assessment framework for meeting the assessment criteria, it is to help increase understanding and provide guidance for both innovators and assessors.

Using the guidance, one can link a quality improvement project to one or more core principles:

1. Settings: low carbon care settings
2. Treatments: low carbon treatments
3. Efficiency: right care, right place, right time
4. Prevention: keeping people healthy
5. System change: clinical leadership, systems, and workforce

Additionally, the framework for low-carbon care can be used to identify which area a project is targeting. These headings are similar to each of the core principles of the STEPS guidance.





Read more here: [SBRI Healthcare - STEPS to Low Carbon Care Delivery - Supporting materials for SBRI Healthcare](#)

Identify the Goals of The Project: the Triple Bottom Line

The Triple Bottom Line is a sustainability framework used internationally across different sectors of business. It is used to highlight goals of an intervention, project, or company as a whole with a focus on environmental sustainability and how it should be equally considered against social and economic impact.

It is becoming increasingly used in healthcare and incorporated into frameworks used within the NHS to evaluate projects. For example, a quality improvement project can be assessed with the following formula using the Triple Bottom Line:

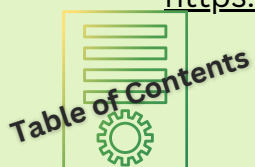


[Read more here:](#)

<https://online.hbs.edu/blog/post/what-is-the-triple-bottom-line>

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/ahp/greener-ahp-hub/understanding-environmental-sustainability/building-on-what-we-already-do/>

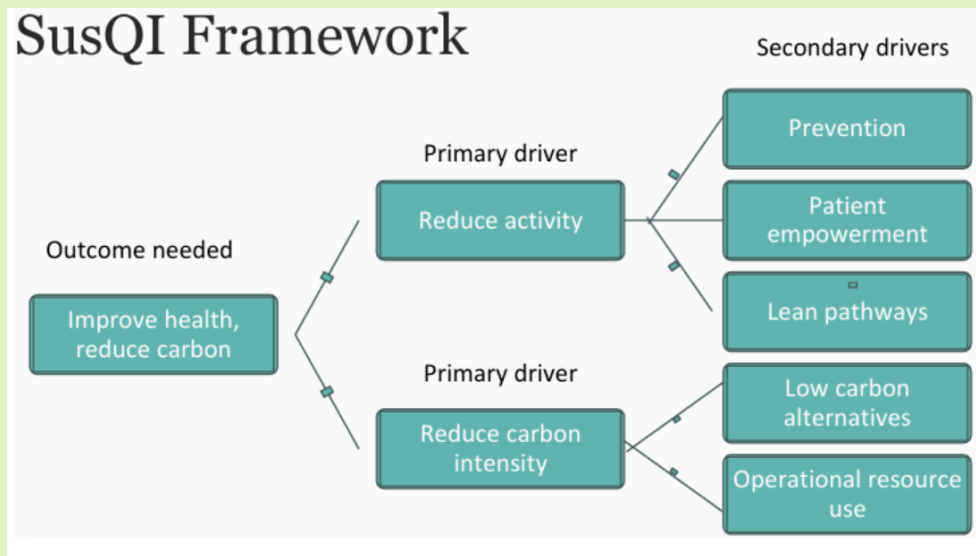
<https://academic.oup.com/intqhc/article/32/1/48/5489139>



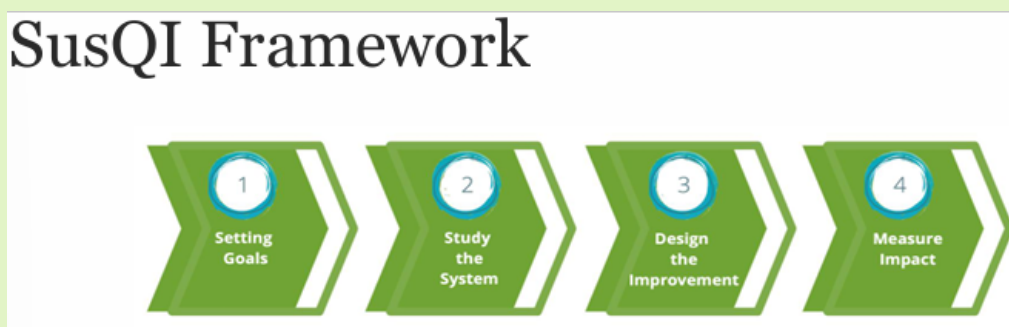
Tools to Plan Projects: SusQI Frameworks

The following frameworks are provided by The Sustainability in QI Academy, run by the Centre for Sustainable Healthcare. They focus on integrating sustainability into existing QI education to help deliver high quality sustainable healthcare. They offer courses and seminars to further educate healthcare professionals on how to incorporate sustainability into quality improvement projects. These tools will help to look at the big picture of a QIP and plan a timeline.

The first is a modified driver diagram with a focus on sustainable medicine:



The second is to help plan the timeline of a QI project and further cycles:



Read more here:

<https://sustainablehealthcare.org.uk/what-we-do/programmes/sustainability-in-quality-improvement-susqi/susqi-academy/>

<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC4952075/>

Tried and Tested Case Studies



Case Study 1: Reducing Routine Blood Testing in Elderly Care Wards
Organisation: South Warwickshire University NHS Foundation Trust
Programme: Centre for Sustainable Healthcare – Green Team Competition

Aim: Reduce low-value and unnecessary routine blood testing for elderly inpatients.

Outcomes:

- 9.8% reduction in test requests (234 → 211 per week)
- Reduced patient distress and bruising
- Improved workflow and reduced discharge delays
- £18,444 annual savings

Environmental impact:

- 937 kg CO₂e saved per year
- Equivalent to ~2,767 driving miles

This case study is an excellent example, targetting overuse rather than rationing. Improves care quality while reducing waste and asily replicable in other wards



Case Study 2: Switching from IV to Oral Potassium & Paracetamol and Standardising IV Giving Sets
Organisation: Liverpool Heart and Chest NHS Foundation Trust
Programme: Green Nursing Challenge – SusQI project (National 2025)

Aim: To reduce unnecessary IV medication use (potassium & paracetamol), improve standardisation of IV giving set hanging times, and support safer, more sustainable medication practices on a 30-bed cardiac critical care unit.

- IV route often used out of habit despite oral being clinically appropriate; no clear guidance existed on choice of route.

Outcomes:

- Reduced patient discomfort and line-related risks
- Reduced nursing workload
- Projected annual savings: ~£56,148

Environmental impact:

- Switching from IV to oral (where clinically appropriate):
- Potassium: 1,167 kgCO₂e saved per year
- Paracetamol: 1,543 kgCO₂e saved per year
- Total carbon reduction: ~2,710 kgCO₂e annually
- Equivalent to ~7,973 car miles



[Find out more! Click Here](#)

How to Get Started

Getting It Right First Time

GIRFT is a national NHS England programme designed to support the NHS net-zero carbon emission target by improving efficiency and reducing unwanted variation in care. Key areas of focus include:

- Optimising elective surgical hubs and day surgery to reduce emissions.
- Implementing sustainable practices in anaesthesia and peri-operative medicine.
- Improving patient pathways and minimising waste in surgical procedures.
- Reducing operating theatre downtime and evaluating minimal surgery kits to cut unnecessary resource use.

[Read more here](#)

[Getting It Right First Time \(GIRFT\)](#)



Medicine

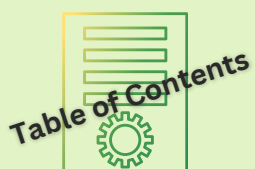
The Royal College of Physicians (RCP) developed a '**Green physician toolkit**' to help physicians navigate through the new sustainability goals outlining actions to mitigate climate change's impact, including:

- Reducing unnecessary prescribing through shared decision-making.
- Minimising waste and unnecessary blood tests.
- Advocating for sustainability in clinical governance.
- Limiting travel emissions.
- Engaging in sustainable quality improvement projects.
- Educating patients on climate-related health risks.



QIP Ideas:

- Minimisation of unnecessary blood tests and imaging aiming to reduce carbon emissions and waste
- Sustainable inhaler prescribing
- Identify and reduce unnecessary long-term medications through deprescribing
- Review of the use of virtual consultations to reduce patient and staff travel



Surgery

The Royal College of Surgeons (RCS) have produced multiple guidelines for helping surgical staff meet the new green targets set out by NHS England, including the following:

- Green Surgery Report. Focuses on prevention, care pathway modifications, theatre efficiency, anaesthetics, and circular economy for surgical products.
- Green Theatre Checklist. Focuses on sustainable practices e.g., energy conservation, waste reduction, procurement. It covers anaesthetics, sterilisation, staff engagement. The implementation tool helps teams assess and improve practices.

QIP Ideas:

- Minimisation of unnecessary blood tests and imaging aiming to reduce carbon emissions and waste
- Review of the use of virtual consultations to reduce patient and staff travel
- Review of theatre efficiency and tools used in operating theatres
- Minimisation of single-use products such as scrub caps



General Practice

The Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) aims to meet NHS England's sustainability goals through:

- Supporting GPs and practices to improve their sustainability and reduce emissions,
- Lobbying governments and decision-makers to deliver change e.g. through the UK Health Alliance for Climate Change (UKHACC),
- Acting at the RCGP aiming to reduce carbon emissions.

The RCGP offers multiple eLearning modules focused on sustainable healthcare practices for GP via the Net Zero Hub.

QIP Ideas:

- Sustainable prescribing - implement strategies to reduce unnecessary prescriptions and encourage eco-friendly alternatives
- Energy efficiency in practices - conduct energy audits and adopt low-energy technologies
- Reducing travel emissions - increase the use of telemedicine to cut down on patient and staff travel
- Carbon footprint awareness - educate patients and staff on the environmental impact of healthcare practices



Feedback



Anaesthetics

The **Royal College of Anaesthetists** (RCoA) focuses on sustainability in anaesthesia by improving energy use, minimising waste, and integrating sustainable practices into training and clinical care.



QIP Ideas:

- Optimising anaesthesia gas usage - reduce the use of high-carbon anaesthetic gases by switching to low-carbon alternatives
- Energy efficiency in operating theatres - implement energy-saving measures in anaesthesia equipment
- Sustainable waste management - reduce disposable items and encourage recycling in anaesthesia practices

Emergency Medicine

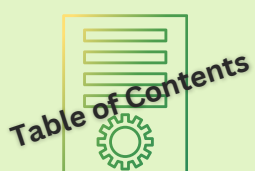
The GreenED initiative by the Royal College of Emergency Medicine (RCEM) focuses on promoting sustainability within emergency departments. It encourages practices to reduce carbon footprints, conserve resources, and improve environmental health in clinical settings. This initiative provides guidance on sustainable healthcare practices tailored for emergency care professionals.

For detailed strategies and further resources, visit the [GreenED website](#).



QIP Ideas:

- Energy-efficient Emergency Departments - implement energy saving practices, such as LED lighting and optimised heating/cooling systems
- Sustainable waste management - reduce medical waste by encouraging recycling and reusing equipment where safe
- Reducing paper use - transition to digital records to minimise paper consumption



Psychiatry

The Royal College of Psychiatrists (RCPsych) is committed to sustainability in mental health, focusing on reducing carbon emissions, supporting the NHS's Net Zero goal, and incorporating sustainable practices into everyday mental health care. They encourage energy-efficient practices, reducing waste, and fostering sustainability in training and professional activities.



QIP Ideas:

- Reducing resource consumption - implement energy-saving measures in mental health facilities
- Sustainable prescribing - encourage eco-friendly medication choices and minimise waste
- Telehealth expansion - promote virtual consultations to reduce travel-related carbon emissions

Paediatrics

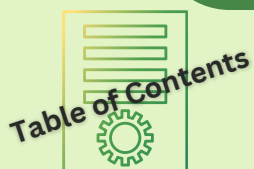
The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child's Health (RCPCH) action plan focuses on reducing the climate impact of children's healthcare, aiming to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2045. It highlights the importance of climate change in child health, advocating for system-wide changes and sustainable practices across healthcare settings. The plan involves educating professionals, incorporating climate change into clinical care, and addressing health inequalities exacerbated by environmental factors. For more details, visit the **RCPCH Action Plan**.



QIP Ideas:

- Reducing emissions in paediatric care - implement energy-efficient technologies and waste reduction strategies in paediatric units
- Eco-friendly child health campaigns raise awareness about the impact of climate change on children's health and promote sustainable lifestyle choices
- Sustainable medication prescribing - encourage prescribing practices that minimise the environmental footprint of medications

Feedback



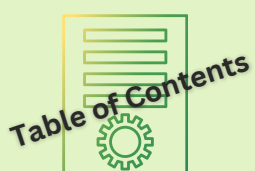
Obstetrics and Gynaecology

The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG) is committed to addressing sustainability in maternity care through the "Taking Collective Action to Deliver Low Carbon, Equitable Maternity Care" project. The initiative focuses on tackling carbon hotspots, reducing inequities, and improving sustainability across maternity services. It engages professionals and individuals with lived experience to ensure innovations benefit all service users equitably. The Green Maternity Challenge aims to mentor multi-professional teams to implement sustainable quality improvement projects.



QIP Ideas:

- Promoting pelvic health - implement antenatal pelvic health advice to reduce long-term waste from continence products
- Waste reduction in maternity care - implement more sustainable practices in use of medical supplies and waste management
- Sustainable postnatal care - develop initiatives that reduce carbon emissions related to postnatal care products and services



Activism

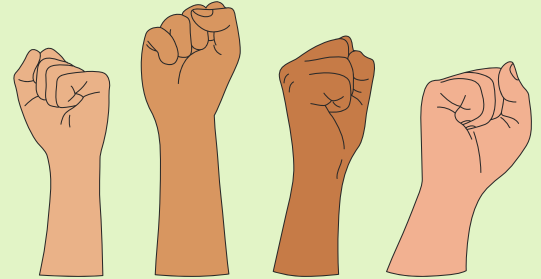
Climate change is one of the greatest threats to human health, and as healthcare professionals, we have a duty to advocate for planetary health.

Activism is a powerful way to raise awareness and push for systemic change, but it comes with risks and responsibilities.

Risks of Activism

Legal Risks:

- Arrest or Incarceration:
 - Example 1 - The JP Morgan Protest
In 2022, six healthcare professionals, including doctors and a nurse, were arrested after cracking windows at JP Morgan's London offices during a protest. Organised by the Doctors for Extinction Rebellion, the action highlighted the health impacts of climate change and the bank's role as a major financier of fossil fuels.
 - Example 2 - Dr. Sarah Benn, a GP, was arrested during an Extinction Rebellion protest for peacefully blocking traffic. Her actions aimed to emphasize the urgent health consequences of the climate crisis, but they also highlighted the legal and professional risks faced by healthcare activists.



Consider the potential impact of legal action on your career and GMC registration.

GMC Investigations:

- Activism leading to legal repercussions can result in suspension or even revocation of your license.
- Example: Dr Diana Warner was investigated by the GMC following her activism efforts, sparking debates about how activism aligns with professional conduct.

Public Confidence in the Profession:

- Actions deemed "unprofessional" in the eyes of the public or media could harm trust in the medical profession.
- Consider how your activism aligns with the values of healthcare advocacy and your duty of care.



How to Engage Responsibly?



Know Your Rights:

- Research laws regarding peaceful protests, trespassing, and civil disobedience.
- Understand potential penalties for actions you take.

Weigh the Risks:

- Decide on your level of involvement based on your personal circumstances, including your professional responsibilities.

Choose Safe Routes for Advocacy:

- Focus on non-confrontational activities like education, petitioning, or lobbying.
- Collaborate with organisations that emphasize lawful and peaceful methods.

Seek Support:

- Join activist groups with legal, emotional, and professional support networks for healthcare professionals.
- Seek medico-legal advice from organisations such as the BMA and MDU.

So How Can You Get Involved?



Join Existing Groups

- Organisations like [Health for XR](#) and [Healthcare Declares](#) provide structured ways to contribute.
- Roles can include education, lobbying, research, or peaceful protest.

Advocate Locally:

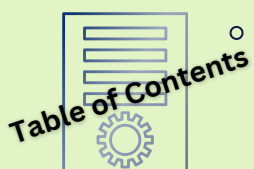
- Push for sustainability within your hospital or NHS Trust (e.g., join or start a Green Team).
- Advocate for your Trust's commitment to their Green Plan goals using QIPs and Audits.

Participate in Peaceful Protests:

- Attend marches, rallies, or events organised by climate and healthcare groups.

Leverage Your Expertise:

- Write letters to MPs or local leaders advocating for greener policies.
- Use social media to raise awareness, share petitions, or educate the public.



Post-Foundation Years

Chief Sustainability Officer's Clinical Fellow Scheme



A scheme developed and sponsored by the Chief Sustainability officer to identify and support clinicians who want to develop as sustainability champions of the future. You'll be working alongside senior NHS leaders to help make a net zero NHS. Leading key projects to change the way care is delivered across the system.

It is a 12 month course, starting in September, that requires a secondment from your current employer to take up the fellowship role. Any allied health professional can apply.

Read more here:

<https://www.fmlm.ac.uk/services-programmes/clinical-fellow-schemes/current-schemes/chief-sustainability-officers-clinical>

Specialty Training Programmes

Unfortunately the NHS does not offer any speciality training programmes specifically in sustainability. This does not mean you cannot undertake sustainability training alongside other speciality training programmes.

The CF scheme and training resources above are great ways to get involved. The NHS leadership academy also has a page dedicated to available sustainability apprenticeships. One example available now is the corporate responsibility and sustainability level 4 with Edward Jenner. This can open doors to other job roles that are less clinical.

[Sustainability Apprenticeships – Leadership Academy](#)



Training Resources

Lancashire and South Cumbria training hub have a whole section on greener NHS resources if you're looking for somewhere to get started. You can access a bulletin which outlines the NHS sustainability targets and will keep you updated on headline sustainability news.

Training events on their page include: e-learning modules on carbon literacy, free sustainability training courses, a greener NHS knowledge hub, and RCGP learning.

There are plenty of resources and ongoing updates available for you to see at all times. See the link here: [Greener NHS – Lancashire and South Cumbria Training Hub \(lscthub.co.uk\)](#)

Other resources include: ELFH have learning in the form of the sustainable healthcare programme, the NHS leadership academy have a sustainability leadership programme and plenty more online.

[Environmentally Sustainable Healthcare - elearning for healthcare](#)



MEAT FREE MONDAYS

What is Meat Free Mondays?

Meat-Free Mondays is a campaign introduced in the UK in 2009 to promote improved personal health, animal welfare, and environmental sustainability.



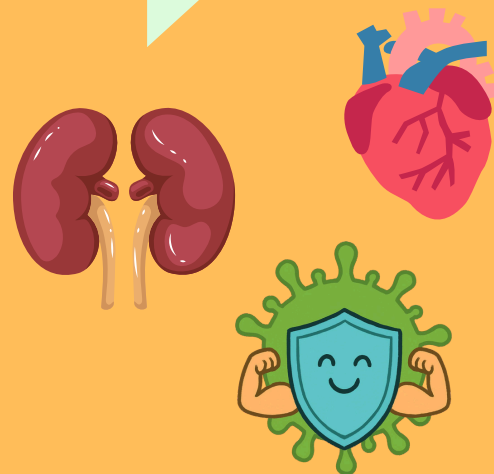
Why should I get involved?

The meat production industry contributes to approximately **14.5%** of greenhouse gas admissions globally.

Producing **1 kg of beef = 99 kgs of greenhouse gases.**

Health Benefits:

Eating less meat and a more plant based diet has lots of health benefits as well as environmental. It can reduce risk of heart disease, reduce cholesterol, help prevent type 2 diabetes, improve kidney function and your immune system as well as helping to support a healthy weight.



How can I get involved?

Its super easy to get involved! Simply switch out your meat of choice on a Monday for a plant based alternative or simply just for some more veggies!

MAKE THE SWITCH

An easy way to reduce our carbon footprint: switching IV medications to oral.

- The carbon footprint of IV medications are in general higher due to the more complex and resource requiring manufacturing, packaging and disposal. As well as the additional equipment required to administer.
- However it is important that we always consider the clinical setting first: is it medically appropriate to switch. If yes or both are appropriate, can we give it orally?

Oral vs IV paracetamol:

- IV paracetamol is prescribed too often when oral paracetamol could be used instead
- Oral paracetamol has a carbon footprint of 38g CO₂e per 1g dose
- IV paracetamol has a carbon footprint of 310-628g CO₂e per 1g dose

Administering IV Meds

- All medications administered IV require cannulation, the drug to be manufactured into that formulation, saline flushes, multiple syringes and needles for drawing up and administering.
- A syringe life cycle can result in 33.3g of CO₂ per syringe.
- The footprint of IV cannulation is 416 CO₂.

We love our planet but we also love our patients. Please make sure to only switch if clinically appropriate and don't be afraid to not switch or even to go the other way if clinically indicated. Patient safety is still our priority!

Your Test, Your Footprint

Does it really cost that much?

Imaging and lab tests aren't free

A CT scan costs ~£133

An MRI ~£177

A routine panel of bloods ~£25*

*Values depend on your region/trust



The Carbon Footprint

A single CT scan emits ~9 kg CO₂e roughly the same as driving **75 miles** in a petrol car. An MRI ~17 kg CO₂e ≈ **150 miles** driven. Even “routine” bloods add up over time.



Does it really cost that much?

Full Blood Count (FBC): ~0.1 kg CO₂e

U&E / Biochemistry panel: ~0.1 kg CO₂e

Coagulation profile (INR/PT): ~0.08 kg CO₂e

Arterial Blood Gas (ABG): ~0.05 kg CO₂e

♦ A “routine bloods” panel can generate similar emissions to driving ~**0.5–1 mile**.



Think Sustainable! Download our
Green Guide to find out more

