

How to produce a Green Plan*

***formerly known as a Sustainable Development Management Plan (SDMP)**

Published by:

The Sustainable Development Unit and NHS England and NHS Improvement

The Sustainable Development Unit is funded by and accountable to, NHS England and NHS Improvement and Public Health England

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Version number: 2

First published: January 2020
Publishing Approval Reference 001208

Classification: Official

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This information can be made available in alternative formats, such as easy read or large print, and may be available in alternative languages, upon request. Please contact the SDU on england.sdu@nhs.net

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Introduction

This guide is aimed at sustainability leads in health organisations, commissioners and providers.

The health and care system aims to continually improve health and wellbeing, and deliver quality health care. The NHS has a responsibility to provide high quality health care whilst protecting human health minimising negative impacts on the environment. A Green Plan is a mechanism for organisations to take a coordinated, strategic and action-orientated approach to sustainability. Green Plans form a key part of sustainable healthcare delivery to ensure services remain fit for purpose today and for the future.

The NHS Standard Contract is mandated by NHS England for use by commissioners for all contracts for healthcare services other than primary care, the contract mandates that all healthcare services are required to have a Green Plan in place. Public Health England also view these plans as evidence of an organisation's commitment to local public health outcomes. The number of local organisations with Green Plan's is an indicator in the Public Health Outcomes Framework (PHOF).

The purpose of this document is to provide an outline to how to development a Green Plan (formerly known as a Sustainable Development Management Plan or SDMP).

Whilst many providers and CCGs have a Green Plan/SDMP in place and a plan to deliver the sustainable development related NHS Long Term Plan commitments; in future all providers and CCGs should have a Green Plan that includes actions to deliver the sustainable development related NHS Long Term Plan commitments. All NHS organisations must consider environmental sustainability as an element of all operational planning.

Green Plan guidance will be updated following the publication and outcomes of developing the Net Zero Plan.

What is a Green Plan?

A Green Plan is a Board approved, current live strategy document outlining the organisation's aims, objectives, and delivery plans for sustainable development. This should include implementation of the NHS Long Term plan deliverables.

Developing a Green Plan will help your organisation to:

1. Deliver on the Long-Term plan
2. Improve the health of the local community
3. Achieve its financial goals
4. Meet its legislative requirements

A Green Plan may be valid for 3 to 5 years and should be reviewed at least once in the interim period. To ensure a Green Plan has impact, progress against the commitments set out, plans are expected to be reported to the Board or Governing Body on an annual basis. A Green Plan should be submitted to relevant partners and communicated to staff and the public via intranet, newsletters and the organisation's website.

What should your Green Plan include?

The [Long Term Plan for the NHS](#) sets out the following deliverables for environmental sustainability in the NHS. At a minimum your Green Plan should set out your plan to:

- a. Reduce carbon, waste and water: including by
 - Phasing out coal and oil fuel as primary heating
 - Switching to lower carbon asthma inhalers
 - Reducing the carbon footprint from anaesthetic gases
- b. Improve Air quality: including by
 - Cutting business mileages and fleet air pollutant emissions by 20%
- c. Reduce the use of avoidable single-use plastics

The draft 2020/21 NHS Standard Contract is currently being consulted on. It sets out key deliverables for NHS organisations to support delivery of the NHS Long Term Plan commitments. To keep up to date with the Standard Contract text, please see this [link](#). The NHS Operational and Planning Guidance for 20/21, will also include sustainable development deliverables for NHS organisations. For further information please visit this [page](#).

To ensure that the scope of your Green Plan is appropriate for your organisations scale and type, we have previously published resource documents, as highlighted below, to guide and support the creation of your plans. Note that some of the documents still refer to SDMPs but are equally valid for a Green Plan.

1. Workbook A: Writing your SDMP - a practical guide on how to write your SDMP and what to include. This document is aligned with the National Sustainable Development Strategy¹ of NHS England and Public Health England.
 - d. Annexe A: supporting excel resources. (SDAT Framework)
2. Workbook B: a guide to assessing your organisational priorities through assessing its materiality impact
 - a. Annex B: supporting excel resources.

The SDAT self-assessment can support the development of an Action Plan and helps organisations understand their strengths and weaknesses in embedding sustainability, progress to date and progress with previous SDMPs (if applicable).

¹ Sustainable Development Strategy ; <https://www.sduhealth.org.uk/policy-strategy/engagement-resources.aspx>

Building blocks

A Green Plan is comprised of 3 key elements: Organisational Vision and Objectives, Action Plan, and Measurement & Reporting. They are underpinned by effective governance and accountability arrangements – please see below for a suggested template.



Engagement & communication

During development of a Green Plan, it is advisable to engage closely with colleagues across the organisation. Senior leadership support is essential. To ensure that the plan and actions are owned across the organisation it is advisable to allocate relevant actions to the appropriate department, such as procurement, communications or HR.

Engaging with local networks and forums to receive feedback and learn from others will help ensure that the plan is outward facing. Once the plan is signed off by the board, it should be well publicised to staff, local CCGs/providers, patients and the public. A Green Plan should be made accessible online, via the intranet and shared during service commissioning. It should be considered as evidence of:

- Commitment to innovation, sustainability and efficiency
- An institutional approach to public health and prevention
- Patient safety, e.g. adaptation to heatwaves or reduction of on-site air pollution

Sharing your Green Plan helps spread good practice. A Green Plan should be engaging and attractive in both content and design. Using branding / colours and visuals to support the narrative and aims of the plan will make it more engaging and aesthetically pleasing.

Governance & reporting

Approval: Green Plans are expected to be approved by the Board or Governing Body.

Reporting (Board and Commissioners): An annual progress review should be provided to the Board to ensure that implementation is on track. This may include a dashboard of key targets, compliance levels and anticipated or realised benefits/health outcomes e.g. pollution reduction.

Mid-term review: Green Plans typically should have a term of 3 to 5 years. It is recommended that Green Plans are reviewed half way through their life cycle. This review should consider whether the ambitions, content and context continue to be relevant.

Evaluation: At the end of its term, the Green Plan together with the process followed and progress against targets should be carefully examined and evaluated before a new Green Plan is developed.

Our support to you

The Sustainable Development Unit and NHS England and NHS Improvement have jointly written this practical guide. Each NHS region has a Sustainable Development lead. To find out who your local or regional lead or for further information on reducing single-use plastics, waste, water and carbon, cutting air pollution, or having a more sustainable estate please email england.sdu@nhs.net. The Sustainable Development Unit is working with regions and local areas to support the national implementation requirements to reduce avoidable single-use plastics use, air pollution, and carbon.

Green Plan guidance will be updated following the publication and outcomes of the Net Zero Plan.

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