

10-point green plan for practices 2022 to 2023

In October 2020, the NHS published the [delivering a net zero NHS report](#) which set ambitions on reaching net zero for emissions controlled directly by the NHS by 2040, and for emissions influenced by the NHS by 2045.

This 10-point plan has been developed by the Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) climate change task force primary care sub-group, comprised of CCG and primary care colleagues. The plan helps guide practices to reduce their environmental impact in line with the NHS' net zero ambitions. For feedback or suggestions, please [email Grace Marshall](#).

The plan is outlined below and detailed on subsequent pages. Actions can be delivered in any order, so please customise to best suit your practice.

Whilst the idea of reducing your environmental impact may seem daunting, every positive change you make, however small, will bring benefits to you, your practice, your patients, and our planet, both now and for generations to come.



1. Declare a practice climate and nature crisis



2. Optimise inhalers



3. Calculate the practice's carbon footprint



4. Consider switching to a 100% renewable electricity provider



5. Consider switching your business banking provider to a green bank



6. Environmental prescribing and treatment



7. Engage, educate, and empower patients to take individual action on the climate crisis for the benefit of their health



8. Promote active transport for both staff and patients



9. Embed the '3 Rs' into practice culture: Reduce, reuse, recycle



10. Use the green impact for health toolkit

1. Declare a practice climate and nature crisis

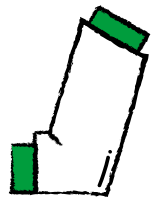
This will demonstrate to both staff and patients that the practice takes their health and future seriously.



- Create a statement to put on your website, feature in your newsletter, and share on social media.
 - See Sustainability [climate emergency declaration guide](#)
 - See Sustainability [sample wording for the declaration](#)
- Keep the climate crisis as a standing agenda item which features on every practice meeting.
- [Join your local greener practice group](#).
- Embed sustainability in your practice culture. View all existing and new projects and changes through the lens of environmental impact and choose environmentally friendly options wherever possible.

2. Optimise inhalers

- Read the [Greener Practice's carbon footprint of inhalers](#), which includes a handy crib sheet for easy reference and comparison.
- Watch the short GP on the move videos about the environmental impact of inhalers, and examples of switching in practice:
 - [environmental impact of inhalers](#)
 - [optimising asthma reviews](#)
- Reduce the number of metred dose inhalers (MDIs) prescribed and review progress regularly, for example:
 - [review a subset of patients](#) with particularly high carbon inhalers prescribed (for example Flutiform MDI, Symbicort MDI, Ventolin Evohaler MDI)
 - review a subset of patients with a high number of reliever inhalers (for example SABAs) prescribed annually; start with 12 plus per year, and work downwards
 - switch suitable patients to dry powder inhalers (DPIs)
- Consider environmental impact at each respiratory review:
 - [use the NICE patient decision aid](#)
 - respiratory review resources are currently being developed by Greener Practice
- Encourage patients to return old or unwanted inhalers to pharmacies for environmentally safe disposal through reminders and promotions.
- Encourage the use of appropriate inhaler technique, for example using placebo devices and promoting the [Rightbreathe website](#) and app.
- Use [Green Inhaler resources](#) as an educational tool for both patients and staff.



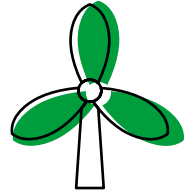
3. Calculate the practice's carbon footprint

By doing this, you can identify hotspots of carbon emissions for reduction.



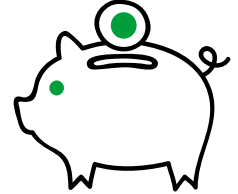
- [Free carbon calculator tool](#) available from See Sustainability. There is an option for low detail input available. This does not include carbon calculations for treatments or procedures.
- Create a plan to target and reduce each hotspot identified, such as:
 - swapping to an environmentally friendly stationery company (practices can choose to sign up to access the [NHS Supply Chain](#) to access their frameworks)
 - changing light bulbs to LEDs
 - turning off monitors when not in use to reduce electricity consumption
- The [SHAPE tool](#) can be used to assist with data gathering on the patient population.

4. Consider switching to a 100% renewable electricity provider



- Your local integrated care system (ICS), may be considering a mass tariff as part of their green plan; consider contacting them to find out.

5. Consider switching your business banking provider to a green bank



Greening your money is the single most effective thing you can do to reduce your personal or business impact on the climate crisis.

- Many banks directly invest in the fossil fuel industry and may have other unethical practices. Find out more about:
 - [best ethical banks](#)
 - [current account ethical banking](#)
 - [current account shopping guide](#)
- This can also apply to private pensions such as NEST. Find out more on the [Make My Money Matter website](#). NHS Pensions is a defined benefit fund and is not invested.
- To learn more about the environmental impact of invested funds, [watch this COP26 talk and short film](#).
- Consider contacting your business banking provider to find out where they stand, and to ask them to do better if you are unsatisfied with their response.

6. Environmental prescribing and treatment



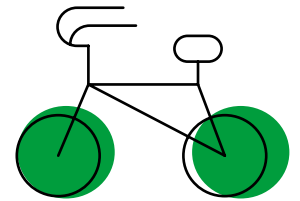
- Consider non-pharmaceutical medical interventions such as [green social prescribing](#) or an [increase in physical activity](#), bearing accessibility in mind.
- Engage with the IIF polypharmacy reviews, including signposting and collaborative working with community pharmacy.
- Engage with the CCG and ICS prescribing incentive schemes.
- Focus on preventative care wherever possible as opposed to reactive care, such as treating pre-diabetes through lifestyle changes to prevent diabetes.
- [Sign up for bulletins](#) on your practice prescribing trends.
- Follow [Royal Pharmaceutical Society medicines optimisation guidance](#).
- Engage in a low waste prescribing approach:
 - de-prescribe where appropriate
 - stop necessary third party ordering
 - encourage patient-led ordering using the NHS app
 - raise awareness of, and encourage, recycling options
- Avoid unnecessary waste for care home residents and people living independently.
- Continue remote consultations where appropriate.

7. Engage, educate, and empower patients to take individual action on the climate crisis for the benefit of their health



- Discuss the climate crisis with your patient participation group and get them involved in practice actions as identified through discussion and carbon foot printing.
 - Engage with your social prescriber on green schemes and discussing climate and health initiatives in your local care community group, including schemes run by your local hospital trust.
 - Encourage balanced plant-based diets and activity for maintaining a healthy weight and reducing car use, and improved physical and mental health.
 - engage with and promote green community schemes such as community gardens, tree planting, gardening, and caring for wild flower areas
 - there are a range of organisations which have schemes running locally, including [The Wildlife Trusts](#) and [The Conservation Volunteers](#)
 - RSPB and NHS Scotland ran a [nature prescription pilot](#) and have shared their results ([video also available](#)).
 - Include environmental rationale when prescribing treatment such as increased exercise.
 - Promote self-care practices and education.
 - For group education sessions, consider combining these with walking routes.
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8. Promote active transport for both staff and patients



- [Sign-up to a bicycle lease scheme](#) for staff and install bike lockers and changing facilities if required.
 - Encourage staff to walk or cycle to work where possible.
 - testimonial from a Cheshire GP: “About 2 years ago I gave up my car for work and got on my bike. The main reason was concern about the environmental and health impact of driving lots of short distances in a car and to see if cycle commuting and visits were a viable option. Since then, I’ve cycled to work every day and done home visits by bike or on foot. My GP bag clips on my bike rack, but a colleague uses a small backpack instead. The rainfall Radar app on my phone helps me time showers if it’s raining. After visits I come back to the surgery refreshed and energised. The look on patient’s faces when I turn up on my bike is always worthwhile and it means that I can truly preach what I practice. As well as keeping me fit I hope it inspires others to look at what is possible.”
 - Be aware of local council information on transport schemes available for residents.
 - Encourage patients to attend appointments using active transport as opposed to driving. Explain the cardiovascular and respiratory benefits of this, and encourage the adoption of active transport into daily life.
 - [Ramblers Walking for Health](#) have many local routes and social groups for patients and staff of all mobility levels.
 - Consider installing electric vehicle charging points for cars and bikes at the practice. Your local ICS may be considering charging solutions at scale as part of their green plan; consider contacting them to find out.
 - [Sign up to become an Active Practice](#). Assistance may be available from locally commissioned services for eligible practices.
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9. Embed the '3 Rs' into practice culture: Reduce, reuse, recycle



- Reduce: Consider alternative options rather than buying new items. This can also apply to consumption of energy and other resources.
 - use scrap paper and paper clips instead of post it notes
 - reduce the number of blood forms which are printed and save time and paper waste by saving forms electronically and only printing when the patient requests the form for collection or attends for their test
 - this can also apply to office snacks, try opting for naturally wrapped treats such as satsumas, or snacks with compostable or recyclable packaging
- Reuse: consider how existing or second-hand items can be utilised. For example use an old projector stand as a standing desk.
 - [reusable IIR masks](#) have been successfully trialled and adopted across the country
 - national free PPE suppliers have been contacted, and reusable options are currently being considered
- Recycle: sort your recycling in house or sign up to a company who can sort off-site for you. Consider how to recycle hard-to-recycle items, such as:
 - lotion tubes or pumps (Boots and Superdrug offer recycling schemes)
 - medicine blister packets (Superdrug offer a recycling scheme)
 - printer toners using existing schemes such as:
 - [Brother](#) (for genuine Brother parts, high quality items can be refilled and directly reused)
 - [Zero Waste Recycling](#)
 - [Cartridges For Charity](#)
 - [Every Cartridge](#)
 - [Office Express](#) (requires purchase of toner through Office Express to become a customer)

10. Use the green impact for health toolkit



- The [green impact for health toolkit](#) is free to use.
- It contains many useful large and small ideas to follow and can be used as best fits the practice. Many of which are included in this plan so you will be off to a good start in achieving an award!
- The toolkit can be completed by volunteers; either formal volunteers, PPG members, or willing friends or family (know any bored students during school or university holidays?).

Additional resources

- [Royal College of General Practitioners](#)
- [Centre for Sustainable Healthcare](#)
- [Greener NHS](#)
- [Sustainable network knowledge hub](#)
- [UK Health Alliance](#)



Your local ICS green plan should be available after 31 March 2022. This plan should bring together the green plans for all hospital trusts in your area, as well as green ambitions from CCGs and primary care, to set the direction of travel for your system going forwards into a sustainable future.