Sustainable Development Management Plan for NHS England 2018-2020

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1   Introduction

As NHS England develops it's approach to sustainable development we have paid close attention to the United Nations (UN) 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the associated Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

We have aligned this Sustainable Development Management Plan to the UK Government's Agenda 2030, published in response to the UN SDGs. This helps ensure that the work we do contributes to national and global ambitions and efforts.

As we further develop our approach over the duration of this Plan, we commit to undertake the Sustainable Development Assessment Tool, developed by the Sustainable Development Unit to help organisations evaluate and plan their work around sustainable development.

2   The scope of our Sustainable Development Management Plan

NHS England leads the National Health Service (NHS) in England. We set the priorities and direction of the NHS and encourage and inform the national debate to improve health and care.

A lot of the work we do involves the commissioning of health care services in England. We commission the contracts for providers of some NHS services, including GPs, pharmacists, and dentists. We also support local health services that are led by groups of GPs called Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs).

The scope of this Sustainable Development Management Plan covers our direct activities and day-to-day operations.

NHS providers and other NHS organisations will have their own plans for sustainable development, in line with the Standard Contract.

NHS England also jointly funds the Sustainable Development Unit, with Public Health England, to lead sustainable development across the health and care sector.

3   Our Corporate Responsibility statement

NHS England believes in health and high-quality care for all, now and for future generations. This means that the way we operate today must meet the needs of the present, without compromising the needs of future generations.

We have a responsibility to ensure the way our organisation operates reflects the needs of our staff, our communities and the environment.

The Five Year Forward View commits the NHS to using its role as an employer to achieve wider health goals.

Our commitment to our Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainable Development is underpinned by this Plan, and wherever possible, we will go beyond our statutory obligations to:

- Operate as a socially responsible employer;

- Create equal opportunity and create an inclusive and supportive environment for our staff;

- Take action to positively benefit the wider community;

- Promote sustainable business practices, for the benefit of the environment.

4   The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

The [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs) are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity. By aligning our Plan to the SDGs, we have identified four key programmes of work, explained below. As well as the four programmes, there are four cross-cutting themes.

This framework illustrates our approach to sustainable development throughout 2018-2020, and allows us to address and support several SDG Goals.

5 The NHS England framework for sustainable development

		Programmes			
		Employability	**Employee Volunteering**	**Our People**	**Environment**
Themes	Carers	✓	✓	✓	
	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	✓	✓	✓	
	Mental Health	✓	✓	✓	
	Smarter Working	✓	✓	✓	✓

5.1 The themes

5.1.1 Carers

Working carers are employees who provide help to partners, relatives or friends who would struggle to cope without their support in the short or long term. Carers provide practical and emotional support related to the health and welfare of the person they are caring for.

NHS England aims to:

- Be exemplary in the way we support colleagues with caring responsibilities.

- Create a positive working environment for colleagues to thrive while managing their caring responsibilities.

- Create a carer-friendly workplace where supporting carers is embedded into our organisation processes, policies, values, behaviours and ultimately our culture.

5.1.2 Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI)

Achieving diversity in the workplace is about ensuring the people who work within and throughout an organisation are representative of wider society. This Plan looks at the context of EDI not only in terms of protected characteristics, but also wider social issues, which can act as barriers to employment.

NHS England's commitment to EDI means:

- Providing a work environment for all that is welcoming, respectful and engaging with equal opportunities for personal and professional development.

- Creating opportunities for people to gain skills, knowledge and experience alongside support to help them into sustainable employment.

5.1.3 Mental health

The Five Year Forward View for Mental Health notes that mental health problems are widespread, at times disabling, yet often hidden. People who would go to their GP with chest pains will suffer depression or anxiety in silence. One in four adults from all walks of life experience at least one diagnosable mental health problem in any given year. Mental health problems represent the largest single cause of disability in the UK and around half of people with a health condition who fall out of work do so because of mental illness.

NHS England is working to:

- Show a positive and enabling attitude to employees and job applicants with mental health issues. This will include positive statements in local recruitment literature.

- Ensure that all staff involved in recruitment and selection are briefed on mental health issues and The Equality Act 2010, and given appropriate interview skills.

- Make it clear in any recruitment or occupational health check that people who have experienced mental health issues will not be discriminated against and that disclosure of a mental health problem will enable both employee and employer to assess and provide the right level of support or adjustment.

- Provide non-judgemental and proactive support to individual staff who experience mental health issues.

- Ensure all line managers have information and training about managing mental health in the workplace.

5.1.4 Smarter working

The CIPD defines smarter working as an approach to organising work that aims to drive greater efficiency and effectiveness in achieving job outcomes through a combination of flexibility, autonomy and collaboration, in parallel with optimising tools and working environments for employees.

NHS England is committed to providing a flexible and supportive working environment for our colleagues. Smarter Working seeks to:

- Support staff in the work they do.

- Enable staff to work more efficiently and effectively.

- Enable staff to have a level of autonomy and flexibility to decide where and how they work.

- Provide staff with opportunities to balance their work life and other priorities around the needs of the business.

- Attract talent to NHS England, where rigid hours and work locations may ordinarily act as a barrier to employment.

- Gain the maximum value from available technology, assets and estate.

5.2 The programmes

5.2.1 Employability programme

NHS England recognises that:

- Work remains the best route out of poverty for working age people.

- Employment is also one of the most important determinants of physical and mental health; the long-term unemployed have a lower life expectancy and worse health than those in work.

- There is also a strong association between income and health, with many health outcomes improving incrementally as income rises.

- Agenda 2030 makes several commitments in support of the employability agenda in the UK. These are outlined below.

5.2.2 Employee volunteering programme

- The Five Year Forward View recognises that volunteers are crucial in both health and social care.

- Three million volunteers already make a critical contribution to the provision of health and social care in England.

- As an employer NHS England is keen to maximise the personal and professional development of its employees and their contribution to society.

- In addition, evidence suggests that volunteering brings health benefits to both the volunteers and the people they help.

5.2.3 Our people programme

- NHS England is committed to being an employer of choice.

- The Five Year Forward View acknowledges that a healthier workforce will reduce demand on the NHS and lower long term costs. We want to ensure that as an employer, NHS England continues to support our colleagues to stay well.

- We are also committed to being an inclusive employer - providing a work environment for all that is welcoming, respectful and engaging with equal opportunities for personal and professional development.

- Our policies and procedures are being continuously developed to ensure they support a positive working environment and promote the themes outlined in this Plan.

5.2.4 Environment programme

- The World Health Organisation called climate change 'the greatest threat to global health in the 21st century.'

- Pollution is the largest environmental cause of disease and premature death in the world today.

- Public Health England estimate that in 2010, 264,749 life-years were lost across England as a result of PM$_{2.5}$ air pollution originating from human activity[1].

- The health impact of PM$_{2.5}$ pollution from human activities in the UK is estimated to cost between £8.5 billion and £18.6 billion a year.

- The Sustainable Development Unit have set a Carbon Reduction Strategy for the NHS in response to the Climate Change Act. The Act sets out the UK Government's ambition to reduce carbon emissions by 80% nationally before 2050.

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[1] PM$_{2.5}$ refers to particles in the atmosphere that have a diameter of less than 2.5 micrometers.

6   Our plans for 2018-2020

6.1   Employability programme

Carers	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	Mental Health	Smarter Working

UN SDG	Agenda 2030 commitments	How NHS England will support this

1 NO POVERTY	**Reforming welfare**
	Work remains the best route out of poverty. We will ensure that everyone who is able to work is given all the support they need to do so.
	
	Disability employment gap
	We have pledged to halve the number of disabled people who are unemployed in the UK.
		• Creating opportunity to use Employee Volunteering leave to:
		  • Deliver pre-employment employability skills workshops.
		  • Give skills, knowledge and experience to organisations supporting people into work and supporting people with disabilities.
		• Providing work experience, work placements and internships, including through our ongoing Apprenticeships Scheme
		• Continuing to be a Disability Confident Employer and Mindful Employer
		• Continuing to promote Smarter Working as a way to reduce barriers to employment.

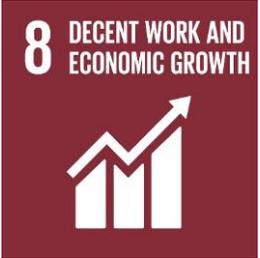| UN SDG	Agenda 2030 commitments	How NHS England will support this

4 QUALITY EDUCATION	**Post-16 skills**
	We are supporting the creation of 3 million new apprenticeships by 2020, so that more young people can access high-quality employment and training.
		• Providing apprenticeship opportunities through our apprenticeships scheme
		• Creating opportunity to use Employee Volunteering leave to:
		    • Deliver pre-employment employability skills workshops.
		    • Give skills, knowledge and experience to organisations supporting people into work.
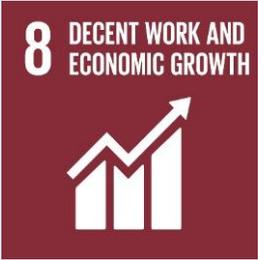
8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH	**Increasing employment** We have an ambition to achieve full employment in the UK with the highest employment rate in the G7, and to halve the disability employment gap. By continuing to provide support to 16-24 year olds not in education, employment or training we aim to abolish long-term youth unemployment in the UK.	• Creating opportunity to use Employee Volunteering leave to: • Deliver pre-employment employability skills workshops. • Give skills, knowledge and experience to organisations supporting young people into work, education and training • Providing work experience, work placements and internships. • Ongoing Apprenticeships Scheme • Continuing to be a Disability Confident Employer and Mindful Employer

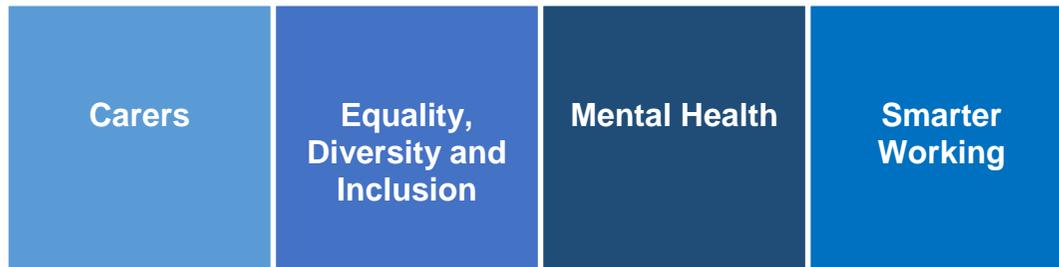| UN SDG	Agenda 2030 commitments	How NHS England will support this
10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES	**Empowering and legislating against discrimination** We will continue to champion equality for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender people. We are halving the disability employment gap; and ensuring greater parity between men and women in the workplace. **Racial inequality** The Prime Minister announced an audit to look into racial disparities in public service outcomes. The audit will review UK Government data to identify racial inequalities in outcomes from contact with all public services, and any gaps in data collection. **Economic growth and participation by all** In October 2016 the UK Government launched a consultation 'Improving Lives' to look at how we can make progress on our ambition to halve the disability employment gap in the. It is fundamental to creating a society based on fairness: people living in more disadvantaged areas have poorer health and a higher risk of disability. It will also support our health and economic policy objectives by contributing to the UK Government's full employment ambitions, enabling employers to access a wider pool of talent and skills, and improving health.	• Continued improvement in the Stonewall Equality Index • Continuing to be a Disability Confident Employer and Mindful Employer • Leading on the Workforce Race Equality Standard for the NHS. This is part of our action to ensure employees from black and minority ethnic (BME) backgrounds have equal access to career opportunities and receive fair treatment in the workplace • Use of Equality and Diversity Representatives to provide independent equality perspectives during recruitment and selection • Creating opportunity to use Employee Volunteering leave to deliver pre-employment employability skills workshops. • Providing work experience, work placements and internships. • Ongoing Apprenticeships Scheme

6.2 Employee volunteering programme

Carers	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	Mental Health	Smarter Working

UN SDG	Agenda 2030 commitments	How NHS England will support this

1 NO POVERTY	**Reforming welfare**
	Work remains the best route out of poverty. We will ensure that everyone who is able to work is given all the support they need to do so.
	
	Disability employment gap
	We have pledged to halve the number of disabled people who are unemployed in the UK.
		• Create opportunities for colleagues to use their employee volunteering leave to:
		  • Deliver workshops in the community to help people develop transferable work-related skills
		  • Provide support with job-searching, application and CV writing and other job-seeking activities
		  • Give skills, knowledge and experience to organisations supporting people into work and supporting people with disabilities.

UN SDG	Agenda 2030 commitments	How NHS England will support this
2 ZERO HUNGER	**Promoting healthy and balanced diets** We are working to reduce England's rate of childhood obesity.	• Create opportunities for colleagues to use their employee volunteering leave to: • Promote healthy and balanced diets and improve understanding of nutrition in the wider community • Give skills, knowledge and experience to organisations who are tackling childhood obesity through the promotion of healthy eating and physical activity.
4 QUALITY EDUCATION	**Quality Education** Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.	• Align the employee volunteering programme to existing learning and development initiatives for NHS England colleagues. • Continue to encourage Employee Volunteering as a way to develop new skills and experience. • Create opportunities for colleagues to use their employee volunteering leave to: • Support educational initiatives for young people • Give skills, knowledge and experience to organisations promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all.

UN SDG	Agenda 2030 commitments	How NHS England will support this
8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH	**Economic growth and participation by all** Creating a society based on fairness: people living in more disadvantaged areas have poorer health and a higher risk of disability.	• Creating opportunity to use Employee Volunteering leave to: • Deliver pre-employment employability skills workshops. • Give skills, knowledge and experience to organisations supporting people into work and supporting people in areas of social deprivation. • Providing work experience, work placements and internships. • Ongoing Apprenticeships Scheme

6.3 Our people programme

Carers	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	Mental Health	Smarter Working

UN SDG	Agenda 2030 commitments	How NHS England will support this
1 NO POVERTY	**Reforming welfare** We will ensure that everyone who is able to work is given all the support they need to do so. **Disability employment gap** We have pledged to halve the number of disabled people who are unemployed in the UK.	• Continuing to be a Disability Confident Employer and Mindful Employer • Disability and Wellness Network (DAWN) staff network and Carers Network • Internal coaching and mentoring programme • Staff support available 24/7 through our Employee Assistance Programme • Continuing to promote Smarter Working as a way to reduce barriers to employment.

UN SDG	Agenda 2030 commitments	How NHS England will support this
3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING	**Mental health support** We are determined to ensure that those suffering from mental ill-health receive the support that they need. **Personal wellbeing indicators** During 2016 the ONS have published an interactive tool, which allows people to see how personal well-being has changed in geographic areas over a five-year period, and to compare local areas to the UK as a whole.	• Continuing to train our staff in Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) to provide peer support across the organisation • Delivering mental health awareness sessions to senior leaders within the organisation • DAWN 'Mental Health Sub-Group' staff network • A dedicated space on the intranet filled with resources to support colleagues with mental ill-health and promote mental wellbeing • Continuing to promote the use of Health Risk Assessments, which allow colleagues to get personalised health reports, set goals and track progress.
5 GENDER EQUALITY	**Empowering and legislating against discrimination** We will continue to champion equality for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender people. We are halving the disability employment gap; and ensuring greater parity between men and women in the workplace.	• Staff Networks: LGBT+, Disability and Wellness (DAWN), Women's Network • Continued improvement in the Stonewall Equality Index • Continuing to be a Disability Confident Employer and Mindful Employer • Continuing to promote Smarter Working as a way to reduce barriers to employment • Gender Pay Gap reporting and delivering an action plan to address the Gender Pay Gap

UN SDG	Agenda 2030 commitments	How NHS England will support this
10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES	**Racial inequality** The Prime Minister announced an audit to look into racial disparities in public service outcomes. The audit will review UK Government data to identify racial inequalities in outcomes from contact with all public services, and any gaps in data collection.	• Black and Minority Ethnic Groups (BME) staff network. • Use of Equality and Diversity Representatives to provide independent equality perspectives during recruitment and selection • Implement a positive action scheme to improve BME diversity at Bands 8C and above.

6.4 Environment programme

Smarter
Working

UN SDG	Agenda 2030 commitments	How NHS England will support this

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES	**Air quality**
	Air pollution can have a significant impact on human health. Tackling air pollution is a priority and that is why we have agreed legally binding UK targets to reduce emissions of key air pollutants by 2020 and 2030.
		• Continue to promote Smarter Working as a way to reduce our contribution to harmful air pollution through:
		   • Business travel
		   • Energy use across our estate
		• Continue to promote sustainable travel options inside and outside of work

12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION	**Waste reduction** We have put Waste Prevention Programmes across the UK in place as required by the Waste Framework Directive. These include a range of measures, which can be applied by government, businesses, third sector, consumers and others to prevent and reduce waste, and encourage greater reuse.	• Work with our primary landlord to baseline our waste and set targets for reduction • Continue to promote Smarter Working as a way of reducing waste and the consumption of finite resources, including paper.

13 CLIMATE ACTION	**Climate Change Act** The UK Government is meeting this goal through the requirements set out by the Climate Change Act (2008). The Act introduced a target for the UK to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 80% by 2050, on a 1990 base year and covers emissions across the economy.	• Work with our landlords to baseline greenhouse gas emissions from gas and electricity use and set targets for reductions

7   Further information

For more information, please contact the NHS England Wellbeing and Corporate Responsibility Team:
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