



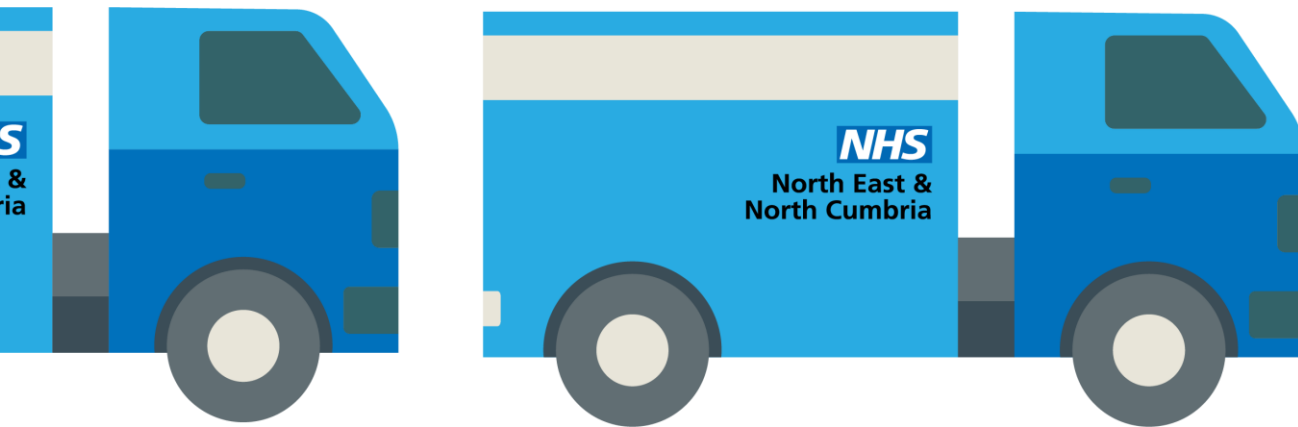
**North East and
North Cumbria**

Decarbonising general practice

North Cumbria, Carlisle, Whitehaven

Your guide to a net-zero action plan for non-clinical
emissions

Travel



Introduction

To achieve net-zero carbon emissions means decarbonising both clinical and non-clinical carbon. This guide covers non-clinical carbon for general practice.

Warning – do not read from cover to cover!

The guide is designed to be picked up; read the section you want to act on and put in place one key action today. Then find another action tomorrow...

- Over time, the number of actions taken will build.
- Make the actions part of a bigger practice wide strategy - they can be ticked off cumulatively.

You are in great company. Other GP practices are:

- becoming carbon literate;
- having their carbon footprint measured;
- already greening their estates;
- increasingly designing green action plans for their own practice;
- signing up to become active practices or already designing active travel plans.

The Green Impact for Health toolkit – a sustainability accreditation scheme for GP practices – has over 1,000 practices taking part. This means more than 15% of all GP practices are using the toolkit!



We can do this!

Disclaimer

This guide is licenced for use in your practice and by your practice staff only. It may not be amended and republished in any form.

It is not to be shared outside your practice without express permission from NENC ICS.

The information in this guide is considered to be true and correct at the date of publication.

The information contained in this guide includes information derived from various third parties that are neither endorsed nor supported by NENC ICS. NENC ICS takes no responsibility for the accuracy, currency, reliability and correctness of any information included in the Information provided by third parties nor for the accuracy, currency, reliability and correctness of links or references to information sources (including Internet Sites) outside of the guide.

NENC ICS have no liability (including liability by reason of negligence) to the users for any loss, damage, cost or expense incurred or arising by reason of any person using or relying on the information and whether caused by reason of any error, negligent act, omission or misrepresentation in the Information or otherwise.

Contents



Going net-zero



Travel



Net-Zero Action Plan

Going net-zero



Let's join the healthcare net-zero movement and decarbonise primary care

Along with the UK government and other businesses and organisations, the NHS in the UK has been proactive in implementing sustainability in healthcare by setting targets and developing the 'Delivering a Net Zero NHS' published in Oct 2020. Wales has a [decarbonisation plan](#), Scotland is process of [developing a plan](#), NI has yet to endorse [their targets](#).

The carbon footprint of the health service is notoriously large – the NHS produces 5.4% of the UK's greenhouse gas emissions. The NHS is also responsible for 3.5% of all road travel in England, producing significant air pollution.

This means all aspects of the NHS are required to take action and this guide is designed to make it easy for you to start taking action on your non-clinical carbon impacts with the target of reducing your impacts by 2045. Although the Greener NHS has a 2045 ambition, the quicker we can reduce our emissions, the greater chance to limit any climate change catastrophe, so aiming for a more ambitious 2025 or 2030 target is ideal!

In each section this guide highlights:

- The quick and easy wins and longer-term changes
- How to take action
- How to monitor and measure your improvements

Dr Matthew Sawyer,
GP and founder of SEE Sustainability



CO₂

The NHS contributes to 5.4% of the UK's carbon emissions.

*The NHS has committed to decarbonising by 2045, however, to prevent the worst impacts of the climate crisis, we should be aiming to decarbonise as rapidly as achievable - by 2025 if possible - and not delay starting to take action.

What could a net-zero practice in 2030 look like?

Imagine your practice with low or no energy bills, fewer asthma patients, healthy staff members who cycle to work daily...

This may sound like a big ask for your organisation, but practices around the country are already taking steps by:

- Reducing their energy use
- Having travel initiatives for staff and patients alike
- Setting up 'green teams' to encourage and inspire behaviour change
- Working with suppliers to look for low carbon and environmentally responsible options

This guide will support you on your journey to make a net-zero practice by 2030 less of a dream and more of a reality.



125,000 lives could be saved each year by 2040 by meeting the minimum climate emissions, according to a study by the Lancet*.

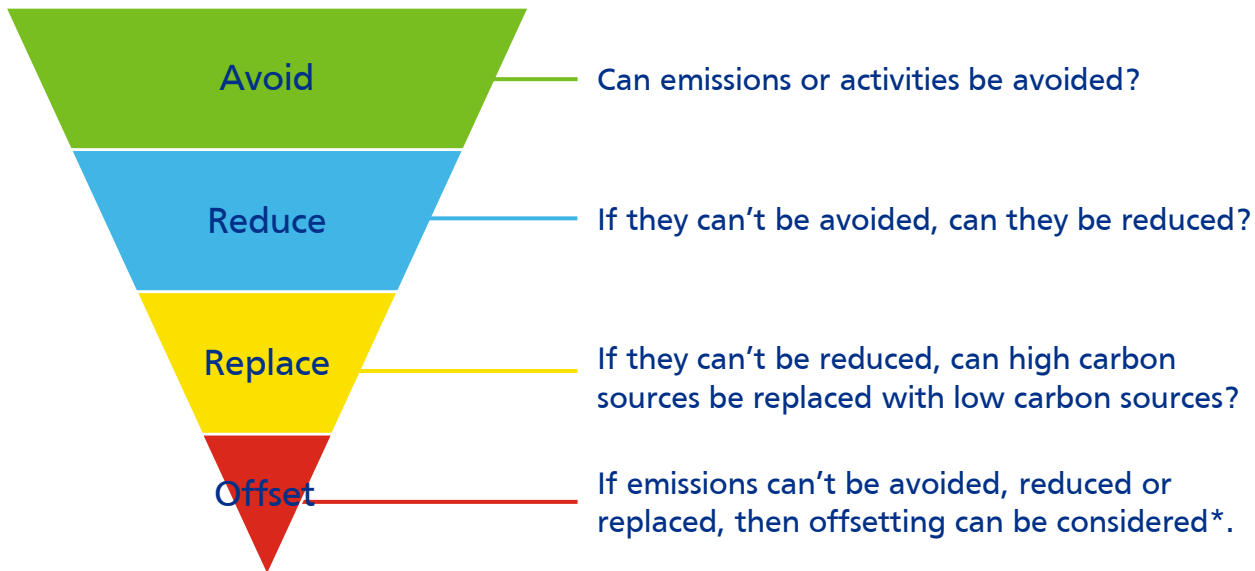
*Source: The public health implications of the Paris Agreement: a modelling study, The Lancet, February 2021, [www.thelancet.com/journals/lanplh/article/PIIS2542-5196\(20\)30249-7/fulltext#seccesstitle10](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanplh/article/PIIS2542-5196(20)30249-7/fulltext#seccesstitle10)



What does net zero mean?

Along with the UK government and other businesses and organisations, the NHS has committed to be net-zero by 2045 and decarbonise its direct emissions from its operation by 80% by 2028-2032. The NENC ICS 2030 vision to be the greenest region in England

Working to net-zero means measuring and reducing as many emissions as possible with offsetting being the last resort. Using a carbon-reduction hierarchy can help:



*Offsetting is controversial and should not be relied upon in a carbon reduction strategy.



GLOSSARY

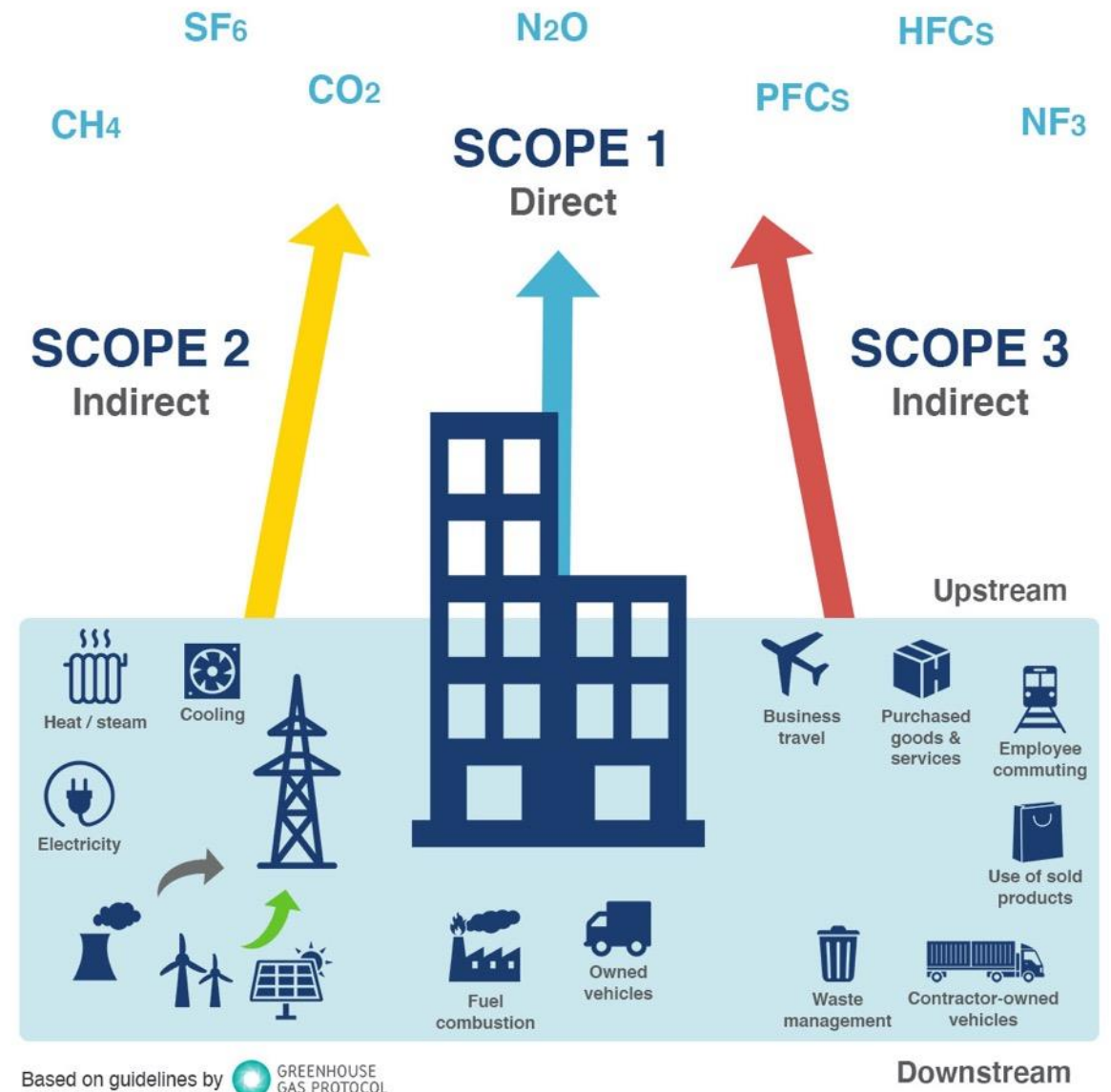
- **Carbon footprint**
The total amount of greenhouse gas emissions released into the atmosphere that is produced directly or indirectly by human activities. The standard unit of measurement for carbon footprints is carbon dioxide equivalents (CO₂e).
- **Net-zero**
A "net-zero" target refers to reaching net-zero carbon emissions by a selected date where carbon emissions are balanced with those being absorbed.
- **Zero emissions**
Zero emissions are when no carbon is emitted resulting in no net release of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere.
- **Carbon negative**
The reduction of an entity's carbon footprint to less than neutral, so that the entity has a net effect of removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere rather than adding it.

What are scopes 1, 2 and 3?

Carbon emissions can be grouped into categories depending on where they arise and where they are used by a business.

The [Greenhouse Gas Protocol](#) has categorised emissions in the following way:

- Scope 1 – direct emissions created by an organisation through fuel combustion and owned vehicles. For primary care, the scope 1 emissions relate to heating and cooling of buildings and any practice owned vehicles.
- Scope 2 – indirect emissions from electricity and energy production.
- Scope 3 – all the indirect emissions from suppliers, purchases, transport. For a practice, this includes medicines and chemicals (the biggest impact for primary care), medical and office equipment and consumables plus staff and patient travel and all the services we use to run our practices.



The biggest carbon impacts from healthcare

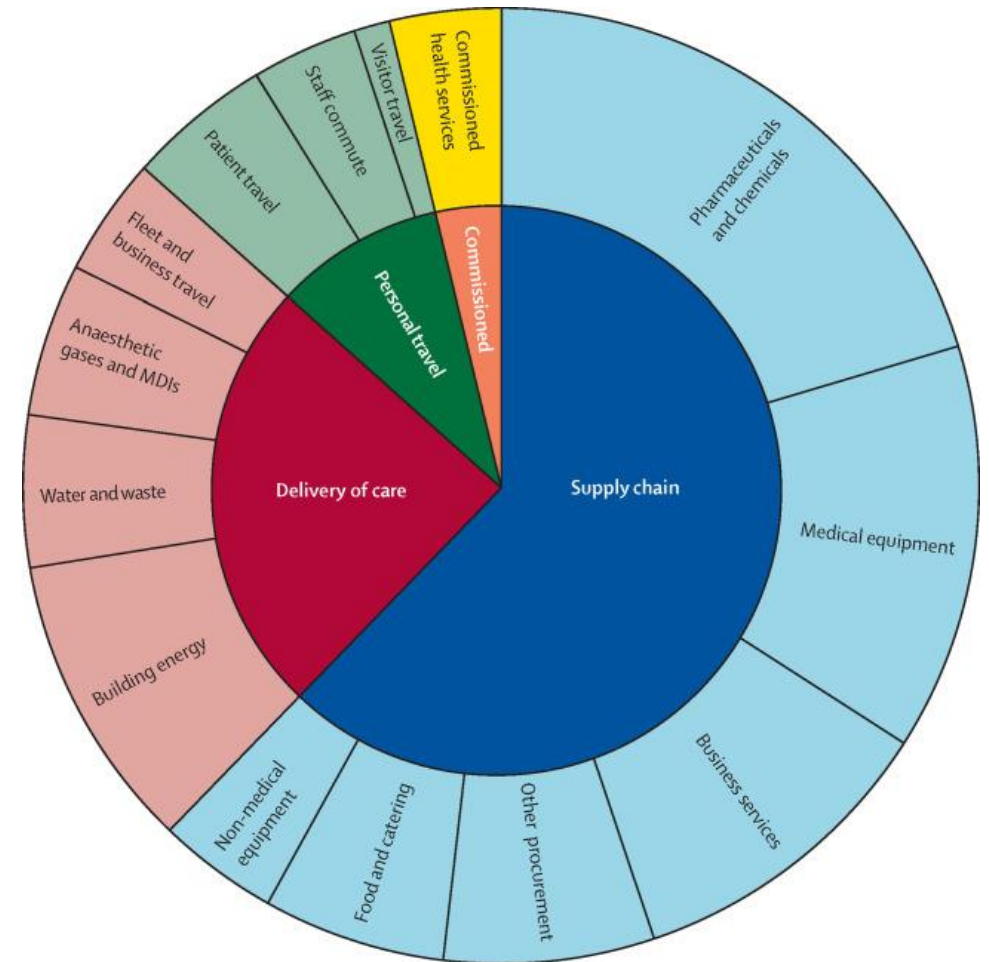
Healthcare has an environmental impact and generates carbon emissions.

In 2020, the Lancet* calculated the whole of the NHS generated 25 megatons of CO₂e, with primary care being responsible for nearly 25% of the emissions.



Globally, the healthcare sector causes a substantial share of the world's emissions of greenhouse gases and air pollutants:

- 4.4% of greenhouse gases
- 2.8% of harmful particulate matter (air particles)
- 3.4% of nitrogen oxides
- 3.6% of sulphur dioxide

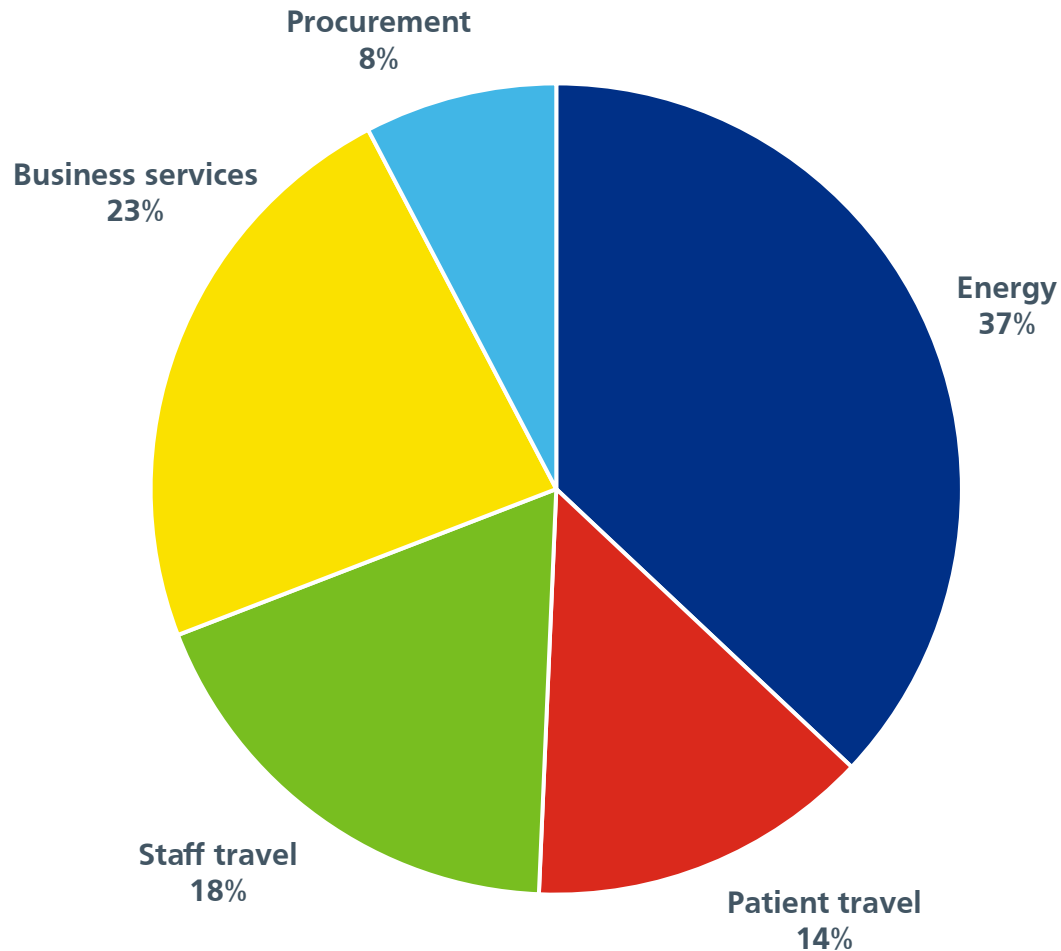


Contribution of different sectors to the greenhouse gas emissions of the NHS England, 2019**

*Source: [www.thelancet.com/journals/lanplh/article/PIIS2542-5196\(20\)30121-2/fulltext](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanplh/article/PIIS2542-5196(20)30121-2/fulltext)

**Source: [www.thelancet.com/journals/lanplh/article/PIIS2542-5196\(20\)30271-0/fulltext](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanplh/article/PIIS2542-5196(20)30271-0/fulltext)

Non-clinical emission hotspots from primary care



In primary care:

- 40% of the emission footprint is due to non-clinical carbon from the running of the practice including energy use, transport of staff and patients, business services and procurement.
- 60% is due to pharmaceuticals and chemicals and gases from inhalers.

The hotspots in primary care for non-clinical carbon emissions depend on the practice list size, location, building type and services provided.

The major emission hotspots will include:

- Energy use – for both gas and electricity
- Travel – for both patients and staff*
- Business services – covering accountancy, IT, waste services etc.
- Procurement – covering medical and non-medical equipment and consumables

Other areas – such as water, food and drink and recycling are responsible for smaller proportions of emissions but can be included in your practice plans.

*pre Covid19



Getting started doesn't necessarily mean tackling the biggest areas. It's a combination of addressing the biggest areas and the easy-wins.

The easy wins also motivate your team and build momentum.

5 benefits of climate action for practices

Taking action has lots of additional co-benefits. If you need to develop a business case for your organisation, these are some aspects to focus on:



1. Positive physical and mental health impacts
on staff and patients



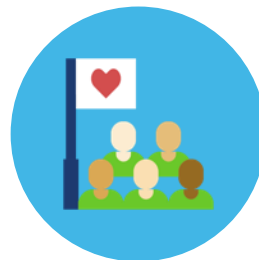
2. Business continuity and resilience
allowing us to continue to provide care to our patients



3. Financial savings
by improving efficiency, reducing waste and changing service delivery models



4. Minimised reputational risk
by demonstrating that we recognise the impact healthcare has on the planet



5. Safer and fairer communities
by recognising and addressing the health impacts of climate change, which exacerbate existing inequalities

“Healthier populations will prove more resilient to future health threats, thus reducing economic consequences. Finally, whole societies profit when disparities between the most privileged and those most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and disease are reduced.”

The Lancet, February 2021

Getting started with net-zero

To get started...

Audit your impacts by establishing your carbon footprint.

If you have not already done so, the first step is to audit your carbon footprint so you know what the big issues are and you can monitor the improvements from your actions and interventions.

There are plenty of carbon calculators and tools to use, for example [SEE Sustainability](#), [Compare Your Footprint](#) or [Smart Carbon](#) who offers a simple and cost-effective way for you to measure the carbon footprint of your operations.

You can use external consultants like SEE Sustainability, use a guide to rough calculation can be found [here](#), or head to each section of this guide monitoring and measuring suggestions.

Examples of carbon footprints conducted at a range of services in Salford CCG are available [here](#).





Developing a business case

Making an ethical case for sustainable business practices is easy. For the good of our species and our planet, we all need to come together to reduce our environmental impact, because the ramifications of failing to do so are dire.

Making a financial case for sustainable business practices is easy. There are many financial benefits for a practice in the long term from taking action to reduce our resource or energy use. Energy savings are recurring so worth a huge amount over the years to come.

Sustainable practices are those that:

1. at minimum do not harm people or the planet and
2. create better outcomes for patients by focusing on improving environmental, social, and governance (ESG) performance of the practice.

Building a business case isn't a one-and-done endeavour, but rather a living and breathing process in which we should position ourselves to be nimble and proactive.

Through regular dialogue with staff and patient, a practice with a sustainability agenda is better positioned to anticipate and react to economic, social, environmental, and regulatory changes as they arise.

Managing risks therefore requires making investment decisions today for longer-term benefits of our patients and staff.

Embedded sustainability efforts clearly result in a positive impact on business performance.

1. Write a simple narrative to demonstrate how providing more environmentally sustainable healthcare benefits the practice.
2. Estimate quantifiable savings and benefits. Identify a process to regularly capture these savings.
3. Intangible benefits – record but don't quantify – yet! Include reputation, staff morale and motivation, productivity, future proofing.
4. Balance against costs of proposed changes.

How to bring your stakeholders on your net-zero journey



1. **Get to know what your team cares about** and look at where sustainability comes into it. It could be small things like a recycling bin or tea bags to big things like procurement and medication.



2. **Set up a green team or green community** with representatives from across the practice.



3. **Discuss the findings** of your carbon footprint audit with the green team or your whole team.



4. **Develop your existing green action plan** or create a net-zero action plan with targets for each impact area. For inspiration use this guide and the resources within it.



5. **Engage your supply chain** – and patients – in setting targets, asking for their input, and creating a sense that ‘we are in it together’.



6. **Meet regularly** to feedback on progress and troubleshoot challenges.



7. **Celebrate** and acknowledge incremental improvements throughout the year. Human brains need short-term rewards to keep motivated for long-term goals.

Engaging your team

Green communities rather than green champions

Change comes when people across the organisation are taking action and feel empowered and motivated. It means collaborating with engaged members from each department to identify ways to reduce your footprint and improve your processes. This does not mean everyone has to become environmentalists overnight.

Start with engaged people from a range of departments and as momentum increases and change happens, others will adopt the new social norms.

People are more likely to act if they feel part of the process and they know there is commitment at a senior level. In the 2020 Edelman Trust survey 73% of workers expected CEOs to take action. And likewise, senior leadership are more likely to act if they know it will improve staff retention and commitment to their organisation.



"We're very good at taking a team approach. We have a group of people that really care and are all working on different areas, and that's starting to gather momentum. I think that's been one of the key things."

Karen Creffield,
Frome Practice and Primary Network Care Manager

A study from [Unily](#) on the 'Future of the Sustainable Workplace' report showed that:

- 65% of new staff are more likely to work for a company with a strong environmental record
- 64% would definitely or possibly turn down a job from a company with a bad environmental track record
- 63% want to learn more green skills to become more valuable in the workplace
- 57% of employees said they need more info. on their company's environmental goals
- 46% said they need more training on environmental goals



TRAINING STAFF

Train and educate your organisation so that they can ensure the net-zero strategy is sustained and considered for all future decisions.

Tips to engage your team



- **We are the champions**

Who are the people in your workplace who are passionate about seeing plastics eliminated? These are the champions. They can help engage work colleagues – the message is far more powerful when it comes from a team-mate.

Give them a support in their role - they could be responsible for making that initial list, regular updates to staff, and generally inspiring others to take the small steps needed.

- **Start small**

All the small actions add up to make a big difference, so make a note of these initial steps you can help staff to get involved in.

Be transparent with your staff about the environmental impact of the products or service they're offered/using, the majority will seek the most sustainable options available (making your decisions even easier!).

- **Communication is key**

The more people involved, the greater the impact. Make sure that staff know what's happening, why it's happening and what you're going to do to make it easy for them to join in.

Take pictures of staff travelling to work, or switching off equipment or recycling before and after, have posters around staff and communal areas with reminders of hints and tips on what they can do.

You do not have to win over all the hearts and minds within your organisation to care about the environment.

You can still engage people with environmental issues without talking about the environment!

Talk about the health benefits of an initiative or the financial savings.

- **Emphasise the benefits of a decarbonised practice**

Decarbonising can also have financial benefits although there may be some initial investment required. Often savings in one area can be used to fund other areas.

Furthermore, there are a wealth of wellbeing and job satisfaction benefits leading to a happier and healthier workforce.

- **Lack of staff engagement?**

Why is your team reluctant to participate? E.g., concerns over extra work, disillusion with green initiatives, not sure how they can get involved...

How can you ensure they have the right support, training and capacity?

Ask the staff!

Engaging your patients

While the pandemic was the centre of conversations in 2020-2021, the climate emergency remains a vital issue that more and more people want to act on.

You don't need to turn everyone 'green'. You can communicate the family, community and individual benefits of low-carbon lifestyles to your patients and work with local stakeholders to transform the infrastructure to make those choices easier for people.

Making Every Contact Count have lots of useful resources for patients-
www.meccgateway.co.uk/nenc/new

48%

of people are more concerned about the planet's health as a consequence of the pandemic*

80%

are willing to make lifestyle changes to stop climate change as big as those they've made for coronavirus**

What steps can people take?



Eat more plant-based food



Cycle or walk short journeys



Switch to renewable energy



Plant trees

*Kearney study, April 2020

**Futerra Sustainable Lifestyle Survey, May 2020

Travel



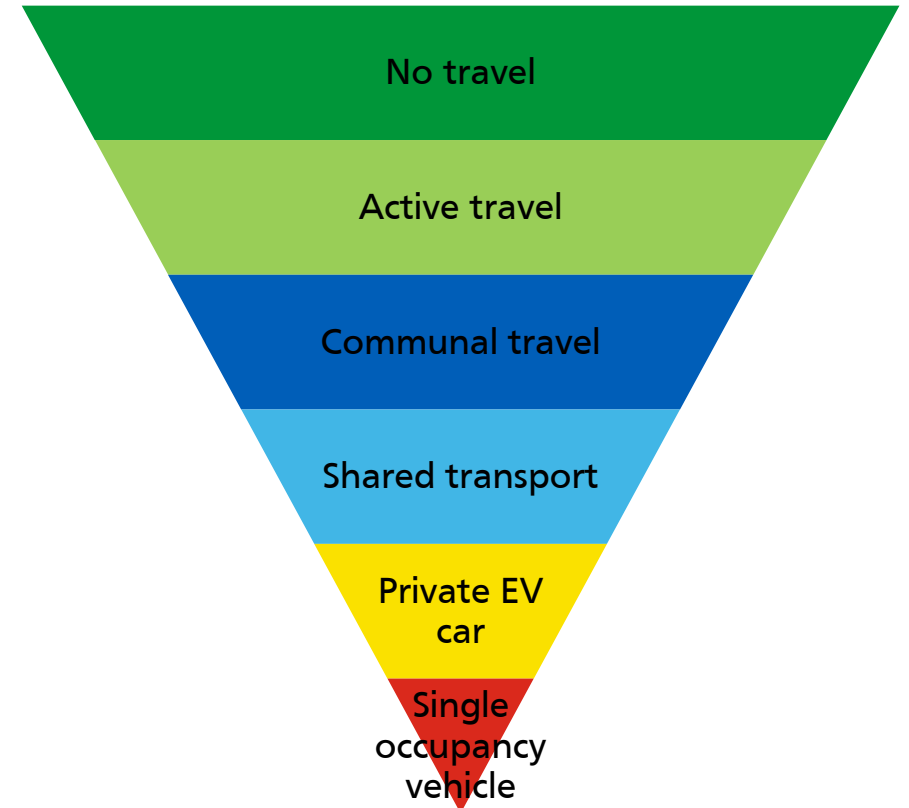
Addressing your travel footprint

Travel carries not only a high carbon cost, but a high health, social and environmental cost.

Petrol and diesel cars generate various pollutants contributing to asthma and respiratory disease, heart attacks and strokes and poor brain development and educational achievements in the young and dementia in the old.

The lack of physical activity due to cars contributes to diabetes and heart disease.

Mike Berners-Lee (the leading carbon footprint guru), in his book 'There is no planet B', calculated that for each mile travelled by a diesel vehicle across a town or city, it costs 12 minutes of life from the community. Each 5-mile trip to the GPs, or the school run, or the supermarket 'costs' the surrounding community one hour of life.



WHY ADDRESS YOUR TRAVEL FOOTPRINT?

1. Big non-clinical impact
2. Health benefits for the individual and surrounding community
3. Transport emissions contribute towards the 40,000 deaths in the UK from poor air quality each year.

OVERCOMING BARRIERS



Patient travel accounts for around 25% of the primary care carbon footprint. A study into patient travel found that the majority (61%) was conducted by car or taxi because of 'convenience', 'time saving', and 'no alternative' for accessing the surgery.

What is your staff's current travel usage?

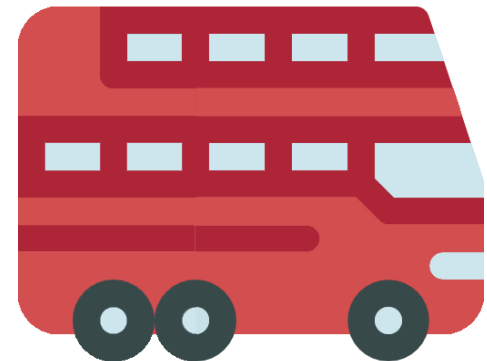
Knowing the current travel footprint - and identifying those who generate most emissions - can help put plans in place to reduce this.

How to monitor and measure:

1. Survey staff on their:
 - a. Monthly or weekly working patterns
 - b. Distance travelled
 - c. Mode of transport(Downloadable form [here](#))
2. Work out their annual mileage by multiplying their weekly or monthly journeys by how many weeks/months they work.
3. Calculate their carbon footprint with the [DEFRA figures](#).



Influencing low-carbon travel and reducing staff travel for work and patient visits will vary depending on your location.



What is your patients' current travel usage?

How to monitor and measure

- 1. Benchmark your pre-pandemic patient travel footprint
 - a. Collate postcode data for a sample of appointments
 - b. Quantify the distance travelled for the sample and get an average
 - c. Times this by the number of appointments
 - d. Work out a % for car journeys.
 - e. Use the [DEFRA car average figure](#) to calculate the carbon footprint

- 2. Annually calculate the number (or ratio/proportion) of telephone and in-person appointments.
 - 1. To get better data on people's travel choices poll people arriving in person on the check-in process asking how they travelled.

Travel	Total miles	Total emissions
Staff		
Patient		



No travel



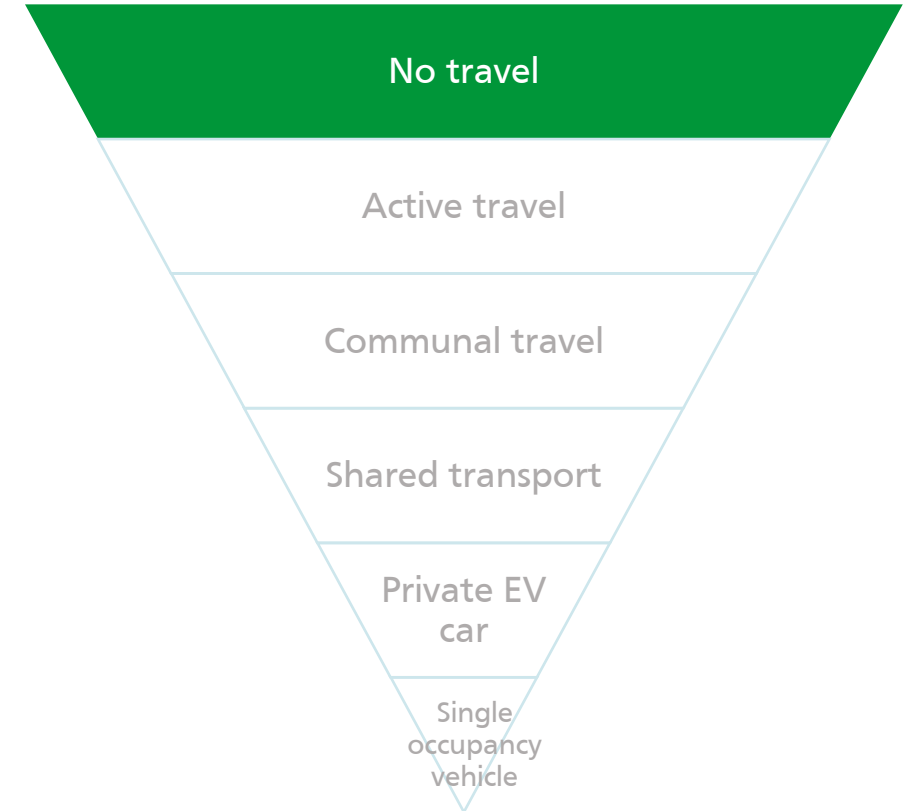
Can high quality healthcare be delivered without patients (or staff) having to travel at all?

The most effective way to change travel behaviour has been demonstrated by the pandemic - default telephone appointments and assessments.

Targets to offer telephone appointments as the default post-pandemic, although obviously not at the expense of patient health. NHSE provide updated guidance – for example. An implementation toolkit is available [here](#) and guiding principles [here](#). These guides are likely to be continually updated.

Other options used during the response to Covid 19 includes video ward rounds of care homes, remote monitoring of patients' health in [virtual Covid wards](#), using e-consultation tools such as AccuRx or similar.

Companies such as [BT](#) are working to reduce the carbon footprint of providing a telephone and WiFi network.



Reduce the need for travel by examining alternative business models for delivering high quality healthcare



Could the practice have a no-travel or active travel target for every staff member?

Understanding what no-travel or active travel can look like for each staff member and creating a bespoke plan, will have benefits for their health and wellbeing as well as their carbon footprint.

Active travel

Staff can be encouraged to decrease their individual (and therefore the practice's collective) carbon footprint with some simple common-sense schemes:

Walking to work would have the lowest carbon footprint and should be the first port of call for staff and patients.

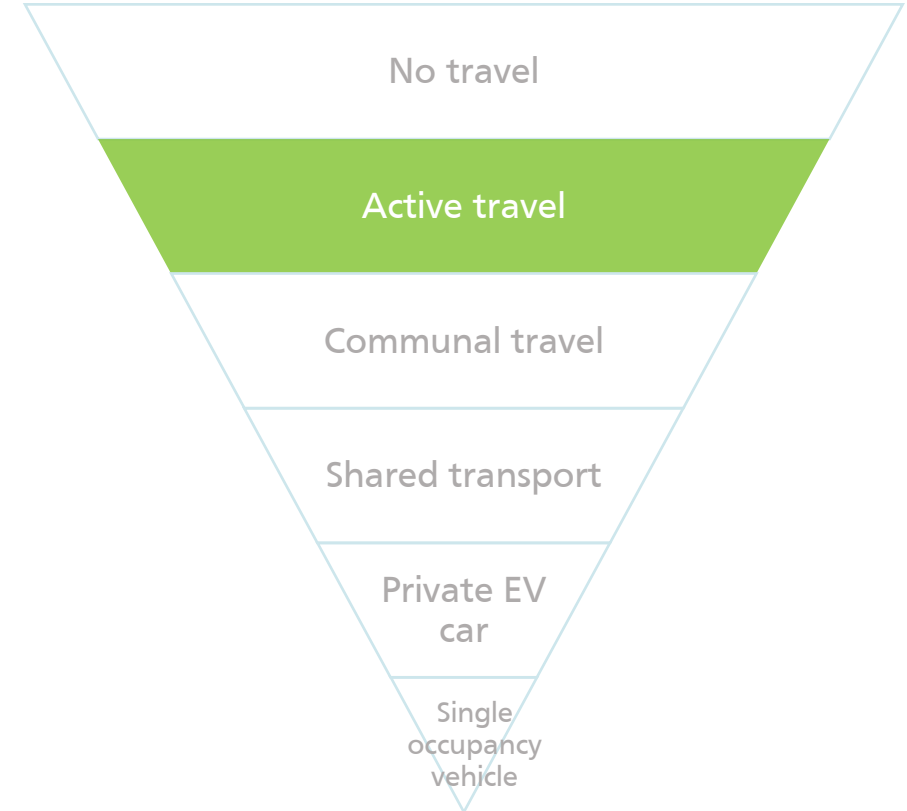
Cycling to work schemes reduce carbon emissions, and also lessens the need for a car park. Provide secure bike storage and have shower facilities available to make this a good option for your staff. And an onsite bicycle puncture repair kit and pump helps too!

Priming active travel

For in-person appointments, patients can be primed with active travel information as part of their text booking reminder including:

- Cycle routes
- Walking routes to the surgery
- Bus timetables and location of bus stops including walking time

Resources are available at www.meccgateway.co.uk/nenc/services/Physical%20Activity



CYCLE TO WORK SCHEME

Government backed salary sacrifice scheme makes buying a bike for work tax free for employees. More details [here](#) or [here](#).



Do you or your staff want to learn to cycle or gain confidence?

Bikeability scheme through local councils may offer 1:1 lessons (bikeability.org.uk/) or courses via Let's Ride at www.letsride.co.uk/beachampion to help champion the cycling cause

Communal travel

Where cycling is not an option, encourage public transport. For example, offer a loan for yearly travel passes at zero interest, or facilitate flexible working patterns to accommodate for public transport timings.

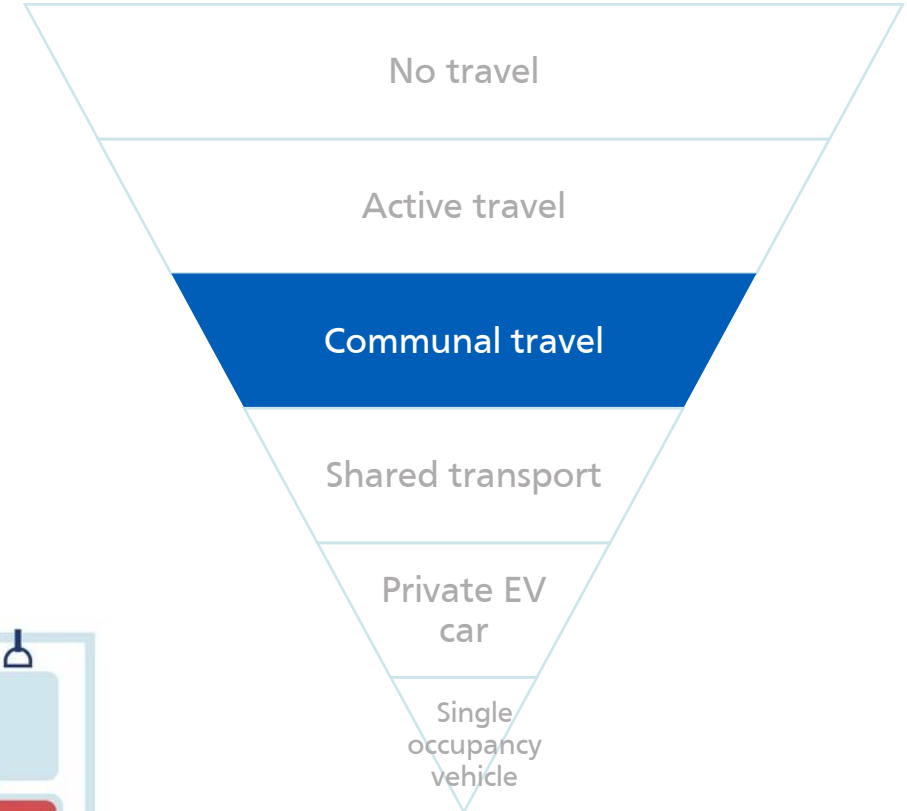
Easy-wins include identifying opportunities to incentivise low-carbon travel:

- Subsidising or loaning staff money for monthly or annual bus/travel passes.
- Publicise the bus routes and bus timetables on the practice website.
- Signpost the path from the surgery to the nearest bus stop.
- Default advice on the bottom of surgery letter to use the bus.

COMMUNAL TRAVEL TARGETS

Could the practice have a communal travel target for patients?

Understanding what public travel can look like for each staff member and creating a bespoke plan, will have benefits for their health and wellbeing as well as their carbon footprint.



Personalised staff travel plans can be very powerful to help staff make changes to their commute.

Shared transport

There are many options to increase the number of staff using shared vehicles.

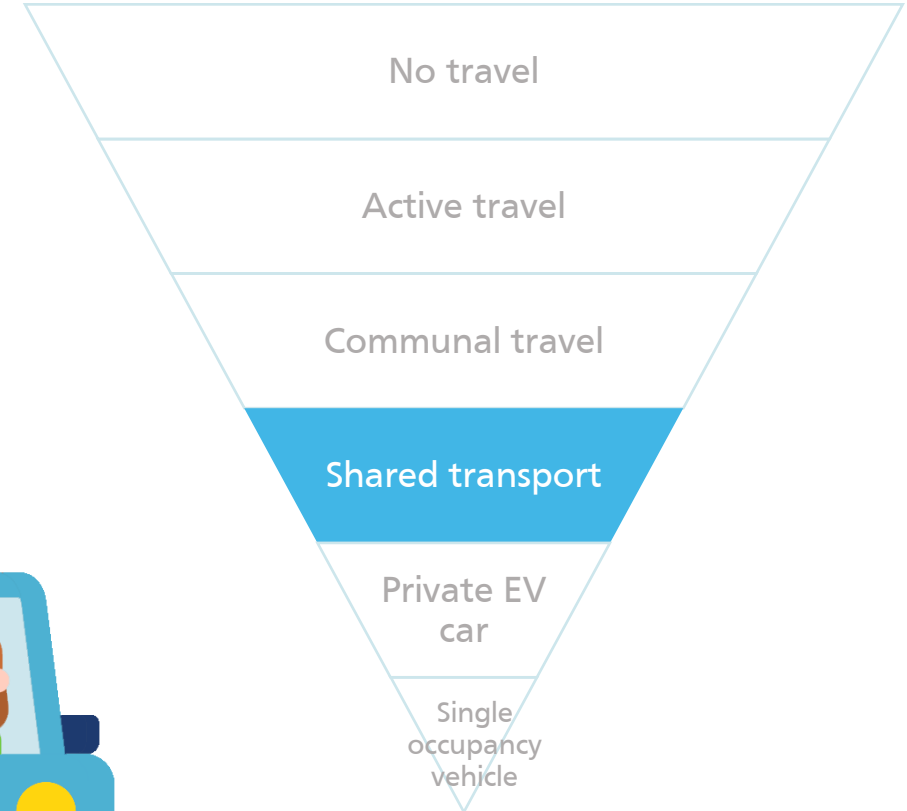
For example:

- Shared vehicles by practice staff (see Case study below).
- Staff car sharing can be incentivised by review shift start times for staff who are geographically close.
- Creating personalised staff travel plans.

CASE STUDY

One practice realised that 4 members of staff all lived close together but travelled in separate cars.

On asking, it was due to the start and finish times of their work being different. When synchronised, they shared cars meaning less fuel costs for them and better staff morale and camaraderie.



Watch a 7-min video on travel footprints for practices [here](#).

Car use

Single occupancy vehicles creates several problems:

- Space used on the road (The UK has around 250,000 miles of paved road!)
- Air pollution from exhaust fumes
- Air pollution from tyre and brake dust

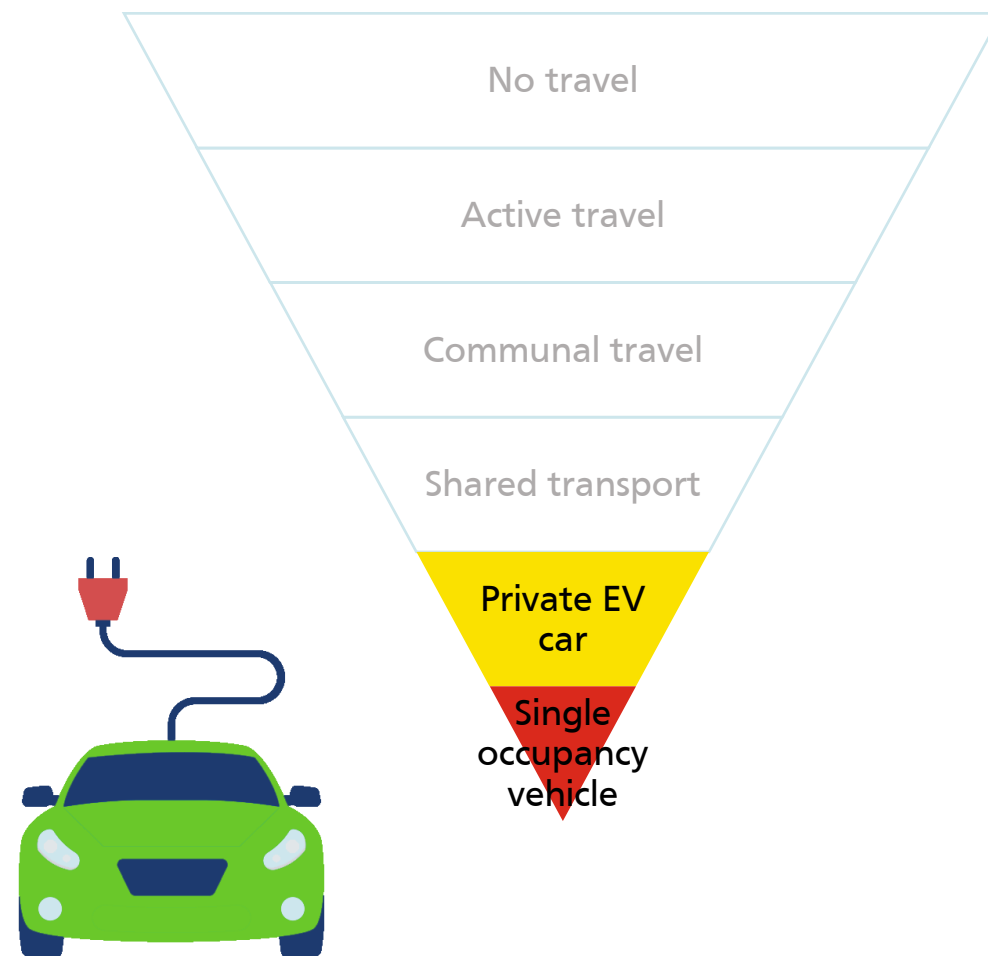
Where cars are used and can't be shared, reducing air pollution from exhausts can be achieved with electric vehicles.

Practices can help overcome barriers for staff and patients to 'go electric':

- Install practice electric charge points for cars.

For larger organisation, deliverables for sustainable development include:

- signing up for a free [Green Fleet Review](#)
- cutting business mileages and NHS fleet air pollutant emissions by 20% by 2023/24. In 2020/21 organisations should:
 - consider reducing air pollution from fleet vehicles,
 - ensure that any car leasing schemes restricts the availability of high-emission vehicles,
 - ending business travel reimbursement for any domestic flights within England, Wales and Scotland.



Install electric charge points for cars for staff and patients in the car park.

Changing behaviour

Modelling behaviour

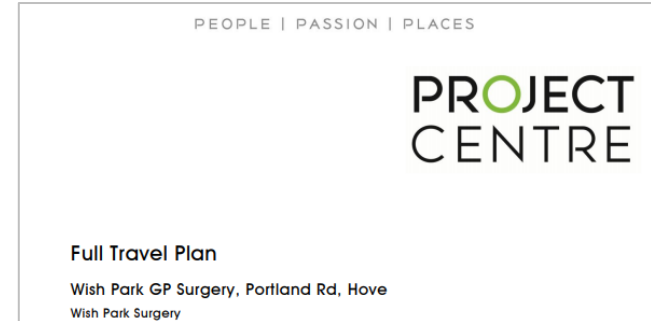
Staff are important positive role models for each other and patients.

Positive images are seeing staff arriving on foot or by bike, staff signing up and promoting local activities e.g., park-runs.

The practice can demonstrate its commitment by signing up to the "Active practice" charter and improving active travel infrastructure.

Improving behaviour

One in four people say they would be more active if it was recommended by a GP or nurse.*



CASE STUDY

Wish Surgery in Brighton examined their modes of travel for staff and patients with the aim of reducing the environmental impacts of travel.

Actions included:

- Encouraging active modes of travel by producing, publicising and distributing 'Walking maps' and 'Cycle maps' showing locations of cycle parking,
- Providing information on cycle training and cycle to work schemes,
- Promotions on the benefits of walking and cycling,
- Public transport was encouraged through maps with walking route to bus stops and season ticket loans for staff.

More information [here](#).

*Source: Health Survey for England 2008: CVD and risk factors adults, obesity and risk factors children

Setting targets



Setting targets can help you deliver the strategic changes that are needed to reduce carbonised travel and carbon emissions.

Regarding travel, practice staff can set their own targets to achieve their goal such as:

- Increase active staff travel by 25% within 3 years,
- Offer all staff loans for public transport passes and/or cycle to work scheme by the end of the year with targets for increased take up,
- Promote active travel for all patients who attend the surgery (see [here](#) for ideas).

Example

Route to reduce		Aim/target					
Area	Current footprint (this year)	3 years time		6 years time		9 years time	
		Total % reduction	How	Total % reduction	How	Total % reduction	How
Staff travel	200,000 miles = 46,000 kg CO ₂ e	25% in carbonised transport 25% inc inactive commute	Incentivise those closest to walk or cycle	50%	Actively encourage bike to work scheme, e-bikes, install facilities	75%	Install EV charge point at surgery, encourage those who travel most to EV
Patient travel	35000 miles = 6500 kg CO ₂ e	20% in use	Promote walking scheme, actively push active travel	80%	Look at practice boundary, install EV charge point for patients.	100%	Arrange with local bus service re requirements

Improving air quality for all

Air pollution is well recognised as an urgent public health emergency: it causes up to 36,000 deaths, over 20,000 respiratory and cardiovascular hospital admissions and 6 million sick days every year in the UK, at an estimated total social cost of £22.6 billion per annum.

- Health organisations can show leadership and minimise pollution within their control
- Health professionals can educate and inform patients about the health risks
- The sector can support policy measures to improve air quality

Solutions to air pollution also have potential wider benefits to our health, as active travel reduces risk of heart disease, stroke, cancer, diabetes and mental ill health.

Videos on air pollution and health or how to talk to patients and downloadable resources are available at www.actionforcleanair.org.uk/health/knowledge-hub-health

Information for patients is available at www.cleanairhub.org.uk



Example of activities to promote active travel

Proposed measure	Description	Potential level of impact	Implementation cost	Patients	Staff
Staff Cycle Parking	Provision of long term secure and covered cycle parking and shower facilities	High	Medium	✗	✓
Patient Cycle Parking	Provision of short term cycle parking conveniently located and accessible with the potential to secure bikes using self provided locks	High	Medium	✓	✗
Cycle to work scheme	Providing staff with a loan to purchase bicycles at a discounted cost	High	Medium	✗	✓
Public Transport Route Maps and Timetables	Making timetables and route maps for buses and trains available on the surgeries website and by providing relevant links	High	Low	✓	✓
Public Transport Season Loans	Travel loans to be offered to interested staff while raising staff awareness of the financial benefits that can be achieved using public transport	High	Medium	✗	✓
Walking and Public Transport Map	Distribution of tailored maps in order to increase local knowledge of the area and encouraging walking and public transport usage while reducing the perceived need to drive.	Medium	Low	✓	✓
Promotion of Walking as a Healthy Way to Travel	Raise awareness of the health benefits associated with regular walking and encouraging its uptake	Medium	Low	✓	✓
Cycle Maps	Increase local knowledge of the area encouraging cycling while reducing the perceived need to drive.	Medium	Low	✓	✓
Promotion of Cycling as a Healthy Way to Travel	Raise awareness of the health benefits associated with regular cycling and encouraging its uptake	Medium	Low	✓	✓
Promotion of Public Transport Benefits	Promotion of benefits that can be gained by public transport use	Medium	Low	✓	✓
Taxi Services	Promotion of taxi services for patients when travelling to and from the surgery	Medium	Low	✓	✗
Cycle Training	Promotion of cycle training courses through the practice website	Low	Low	✓	✓
Car Sharing Scheme	Promotion of car sharing for staff making similar journeys and who are looking to cut the financial cost or environmental impact of car use	Low	Low	✗	✓
Accessibility to the Rail network	Promotion of routes between the surgery and nearby railway stations	Variable by location	Low	✓	✓

How to convert distance travelled into carbon emissions

How to monitor and measure

Staff mileage and calculating the carbon footprint using government conversion factors.

Blank sheets are downloadable [here](#).



	A	B	C	D	E
	Daily distance travelled – return trip (miles)	Yearly distance travelled (miles) (a x days worked x weeks worked)*	Car type and size (petrol/diesel; S/M/L)	Emissions per mile (see table to the right)	Carbon emissions (kg CO ₂ e) (b x d)
Staff					
Anne	5	1,150	Petrol, small	0.239	275 kg
Bill	15	3,450	Diesel, large	0.329	1,135 kg
Claire	25	5,750	Electric	0.00	0 kg

Fuel type**	Engine size	Emissions (kg CO ₂ e/mile)
Petrol	Small	0.239
	Medium	0.300
	Large	0.448
Diesel	Small	0.221
	Medium	0.268
	Large	0.329
Hybrid (PHEV)***	Average	0.113
Electric (BEV)***		0.00

* Assume works 5 days a week, 46 weeks a year

** Source: www.gov.uk/government/publications/greenhouse-gas-reporting-conversion-factors-2020

*** BEV – Battery Electric Vehicle; PHEV – Plug-in Hybrid Electric Vehicle

Resources



Staff data recording form

- [Carbon Footprint of staff travel](#)

Searchable map for local transport services

- www.meccgateway.co.uk/nenc/services/Transport

No travel

- [Does telemedicine reduce the carbon footprint of healthcare?](#)

Active travel

- [Physical Activity and Lifestyle Toolkit](#)
- [Cycle to work scheme](#)
- [The green commute initiative](#)

Green travel planning

- [Scotland and NI](#)
- [Travel plan](#)

Examples of green travel plans

- [The Christie Hospital](#)
- [Walton Community Hospital](#)
- [NHS Travel Planning Forum](#)

Clean air posters and resources

- [Business action on clean air](#)
- [Clean air hospital framework](#)

Carbon conversion factors for transport

- [Greenhouse gas reporting conversion factors 2020](#)

Examples of providers

Active travel	Bike rack resources	Cycling routes	Sustainable Travel Plans Resources
<p>Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport National Active travel and travel planning</p>	<p>Lockit Safe National sales@lockit-safe.co.uk 01472346382 https://www.lockit-safe.co.uk</p>	<p>Sustrans National reception@sustrans.org.uk 01179268893 https://www.sustrans.org.uk</p>	<p>Cumbria County Council Cumbria Pieter.Barnard@cumbria.gov.uk Travel Plans</p>
<p>Walking routes</p>	<p>Turvec National info@turvec.com 08002465484 https://turvec.com/</p>	<p>Active Cumbria Cumbria www.activecumbria.org/activities/cycling/</p>	<p>Investors in the Environment National https://www.iie.uk.com/news/travel-planning/</p>
<p>Sustrans National How to improve bike storage for offices and employees</p>		<p>Visit Lake District Lake District https://www.visitlakedistrict.com/things-to-do/outdoor-activities/cycling-routes-in-the-lake-district-cumbria</p>	<p>Paths for All National https://www.pathsforall.org.uk/mediaLibrary/other/english/walk-at-work-toolkit.pdf</p>
<p>Explore North Pennines North Pennines https://explorenorthpennines.org.uk/inter-active-map</p>		<p>Cycle Streets National https://www.cyclestreets.net/journey/</p>	<p>Living Streets National https://www.livingstreets.org.uk/workplaces</p>
<p>Active Cumbria Cumbria https://www.activecumbria.org/activities/walking/</p>		<p>Explore North Pennines North Pennines https://explorenorthpennines.org.uk/inter-active-map</p>	<p>Transport for Greater Manchester National https://assets.ctfassets.net/nv7y93idf4jq/4TrmhSr8JGEyEquWI8eakU/00aeb128e1fce188064a01fe2f9bf65a/TfGM-Walking-workplaces-Toolkit.pdf</p>
<p>Cycling UK National https://www.cyclinguk.org/groups-listing</p>		<p>Google Maps You can change the settings to highlight the cycle routes on the map. Go to 'Layers' and click on 'Cycling'.</p>	

This is not an exhaustive list and due diligence must be applied when choosing a supplier.

Examples of providers

Bike shops		Cycle to work schemes	Cycle training
Arragons Penrith info@arragons.com 01768 890344 https://www.arragons.com	Bike Seven Carlisle info@bikeseven.co.uk 01228 792497 https://www.bikeseven.co.uk	Sustrans National The cycle to work scheme explained	Bikeability National https://www.bikeability.org.uk
Brompton National https://bromptonhire.com	Palace Cycles Carlisle 01228523142 https://palacecycles.co.uk	Cycle Scheme National https://www.cyclescheme.co.uk	Electric bike resources Sustrans National How to look after your e-bike battery: charging and maintenance
4Play Cycles Cockermouth 4playcycles@gmail.com 01900 823377 http://www.4playcycles.co.uk	Scatby Cycles Carlisle store@scotbycycles.co.uk 01228 546931 https://www.scotbycycles.co.uk	Green Commute Initiative National https://www.greencommuteinitiative.uk	Hurrecane e-bikes National https://hurrecane.bike/
Whinlatter Bikes Keswick whinlatterbikes@gmail.com 017687 73940 https://www.whinlatterbikes.com		Halfords National cycle2.work@halfords.co.uk https://www.cycle2work.info	Bike support groups Cycling UK National https://www.cyclinguk.org/groups-listing
Locate a bike shop near you: Green Commute Initiative https://www.greencommuteinitiative.uk/gci-registered-bike-shops/			

This is not an exhaustive list and due diligence must be applied when choosing a supplier.

Examples of providers

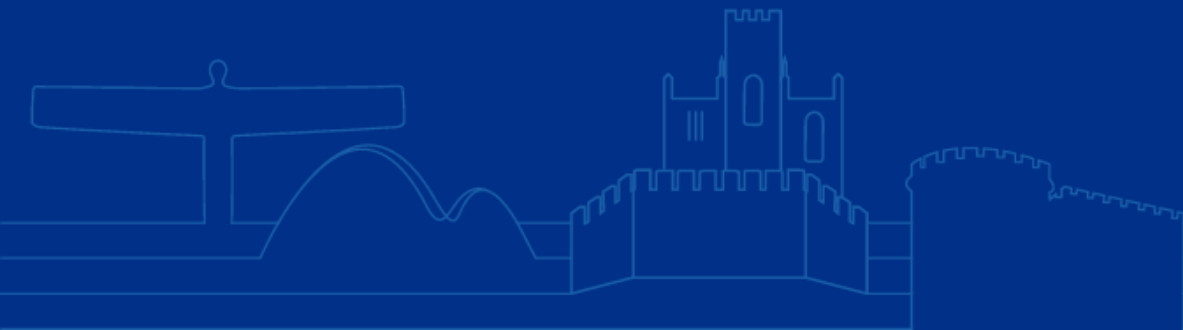
Bike ability courses / learn to ride	Bike repairs and services	Bus services and routes	Community travel services
<p>Cyclewise North Cumbria support@lovetoride.net bookings@cyclewise.co.uk 01768 898775 https://cyclewise.co.uk/specialist-cycling-services/adult-bikeability-cycle-training/</p>	<p>Arragons Penrith info@arragons.com 01768 890344 https://www.arragons.com</p>	<p>Cumbria County Council public.transport@cumbria.gov.uk 0871 200 22 33</p> <p>Carlisle https://www.cumbria.gov.uk/buses/carlisle</p>	<p>Cumbria Community Transport North Cumbria carlisle@cumbriact.org.uk 01228402811 https://www.cumbriact.org.uk/</p>
<p>Watchtree Wheelers Carlisle 01228 712 539 https://www.cyclinguk.org/cycle-centre/watchtree-wheelers-carlisle</p>	<p>Whinlatter Bikes Keswick whinlatterbikes@gmail.com 017687 73940 https://www.whinlatterbikes.com</p>	<p>Allerdale https://www.cumbria.gov.uk/buses/Allerdale</p> <p>Copeland https://www.cumbria.gov.uk/buses/Copeland/default.asp</p>	<p>Voluntary Social Car Scheme - Cumbria County Council integrated.transport@cumbria.gov.uk 0333 240 69 65 https://cumbria.gov.uk/roads-transport/public-transport-road-safety/transport/commtrans/voluntarycars.asp</p>
<p>Cycling resources</p>	<p>4Play Cycles Cockermouth 4playcycles@gmail.com 01900 823377 http://www.4playcycles.co.uk</p>	<p>Eden https://www.cumbria.gov.uk/buses/Eden</p>	<p>Rural, Village, and Community Wheels North Cumbria integrated.transport@cumbria.gov.uk 01228 221055 https://cumbria.gov.uk/roads-transport/public-transport-road-safety/transport/commtrans/ruralwheels.asp</p>
<p>Active Cumbria Cumbria www.activecumbria.org/activities/cycling/</p>	<p>Bike Seven Carlisle info@bikeseven.co.uk 01228 792497 https://www.bikeseven.co.uk</p>	<p>Nexus Carlisle & Penrith 0191 20 20 747 https://livemap.nexus.org.uk/#/liveDepartures</p>	
<p>Bike Hiring</p>	<p>Whinlatter Bikes Keswick whinlatterbikes@gmail.com 017687 73940 https://www.whinlatterbikes.com</p>		

This is not an exhaustive list and due diligence must be applied when choosing a supplier.

Examples of providers

Bus route planning resources	Electric vehicle charging point installers	
<p>FirstBus National https://www.firstbus.co.uk</p>	<p>Bob Lancaster & son LTD North Cumbria info@boblancasterandsonltd.co.uk 01228 409485 https://www.boblancasterandsonltd.co.uk</p>	<p>E-Verve Energy North Cumbria info@e-verveenergy.co.uk 01925 873 155 https://e-verveenergy.co.uk</p>
<p>Arriva Bus National https://www.arrivabus.co.uk/arriva-uk-bus-app</p>	<p>SJD Electrical Services North Cumbria info@sjdelectrical.com 01228 317474 https://www.sjdelectrical.com</p>	<p>Logic EV-Charging North Cumbria 01228 598 000 https://www.logic-group.co.uk/ev-charging/introduction-to-ev-charging</p>
	<p>Wykes-Group North Cumbria info@wykes-group.co.uk 01228 380845 https://www.wykes-group.co.uk</p>	

Net-Zero Action Plan



What is a 'Net-Zero Action Plan'?

A Net-Zero Action Plan can cover as many areas as the practice wishes. However, the major hotspots for non-clinical emissions for primary care to include in their plan are:

- Energy,
- Travel for patients and staff,
- Business services including IT and waste,
- Procurement covering medical and office equipment and consumables.

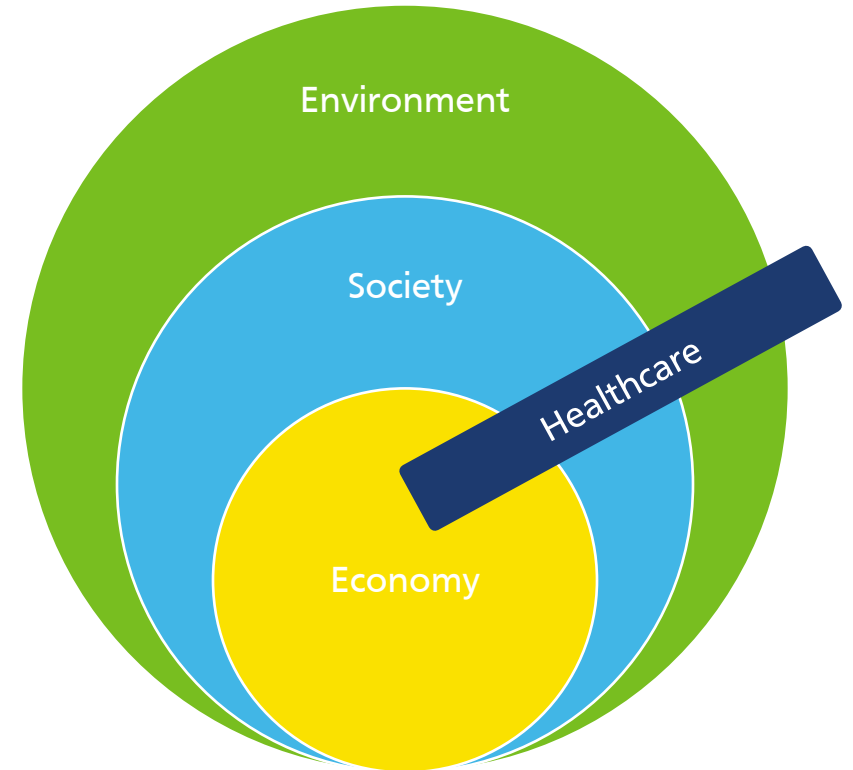
BEFORE YOU START

What is already in place?

Look at the practice and identify good and great behaviour, ideas and systems that already exist.

Who needs to be involved?

Ultimately the aim is to involve all employees but at the start you need to decide who is best placed to lead the development of the practice plan.



Healthcare straddles all the above areas. It is influenced by the environment and impacts upon it; it is part of society, and it impacts on the economy both directly and indirectly.

Monitoring and measuring your impacts

As with all actions on a green action plan, you will need to build in a monitoring and measuring process to calculate how well your actions are leading towards your goals. This can fit with your annual QoF cycle.

Monitoring your actions is vital to make sure you are on the right trajectory and are on target to reach net zero as soon as feasible.

There are audit and other analysis tools available for each section of energy use, staff and patient travel, waste production, procurement and spend on business services.

There are plenty of carbon calculators and tools to use, such as [SEE Sustainability](#), [Compare Your Footprint](#) or [Smart Carbon](#) – who offer a simple and cost-effective way for you to measure the carbon footprint of your practice. There is no need for external consultants or additional specialist knowledge.

TARGET SETTING

You can use SMART planning to have Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely goals so you know the aims to achieve and by when.



IMPLEMENT YOUR PLAN

1. Use the audit tools to identify carbon emissions for each aspect of non-clinical emissions
2. Set a reduction strategy based on your priorities using SMART planning and
3. Complete the expandable guidance plan [here](#).

See [Frome Case Study](#) as an example.

Visit SEE Sustainability for a [downloadable action plan](#).

Develop your Net-Zero Action Plan

Area	Current footprint	Aim/target					
		3 years time		6 years time		9 years time	
		% reduction	How	% reduction	How	% reduction	How
Energy – electricity							
Energy – Gas							
Travel – staff							
Travel – patient							
Business services							
Procurement – Medical							
Procurement – Office							
Total							

Forms can be downloaded [here](#).

Case study: Frome Medical Practice Plan to reduce its footprint

Frome Medical practice have had its carbon footprint calculated and have worked on reducing their emission hotspots. An extract is below.

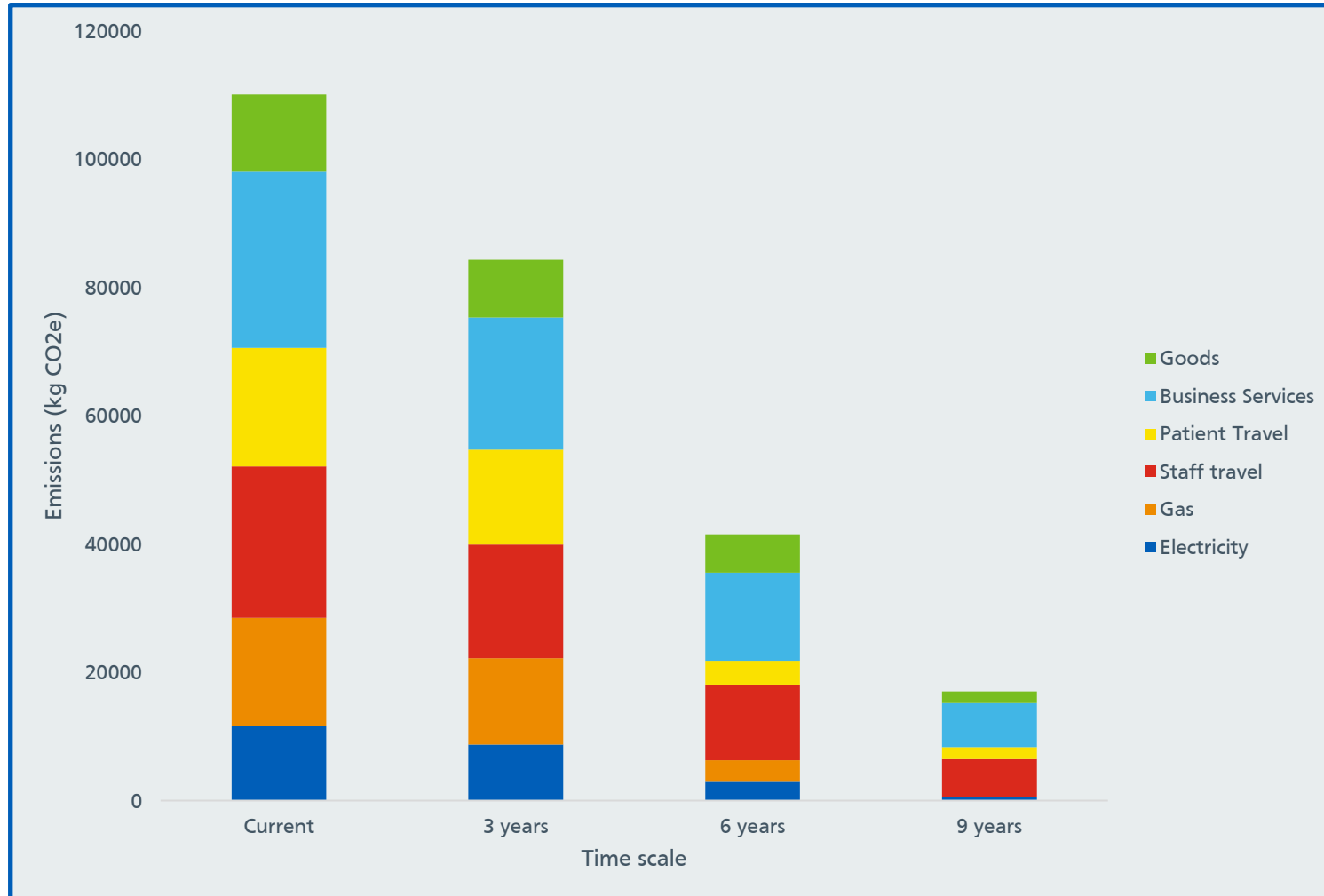
Area	Action
Measure Patient travel Staff travel (via travel survey completed in March) Energy Procurement	To work with SEE sustainability to measure our current carbon footprint, collate all data Spring 2021 and submit for analysis. To evaluate our report in summer 2021 and focus on any additional changes.
Staff travel	To look at plans to reduce carbon from travel to work through exploring alternatives, home working where appropriate. To measure NHS miles and reductions we can make through adoption of virtual meetings. Exploring electric bike and car options.
Patient travel	Promoting active transport. Encouraging less visits to the practice through telephone triage, video calls etc. Focusing on Chronic disease "one stop" clinics.
Procurement	Continued work to improve the knowledge of our supply chains and make improvements which reduce carbon.
Energy	To look at how we make the practice carbon neutral for energy. We currently have 100% renewable energy supplier and solar panels. The next step is look at alternatives with our landlord such as air source heat pumps.
Carbon literacy	To have a carbon literate workforce with 75% having completed training and working towards accreditation in this area so we maximise organisational impact and individual impact.

Example of a low carbon general practice

What could a practice look like in the process of decarbonising their non-clinical emissions?

Area	Current footprint (kg CO ₂ e)	Aim/target					
		3 years time		6 years time		9 years time	
		% reduction	How	% reduction	How	% reduction	How
Energy - Electricity	46,000 kg CO ₂ e	25% in use 100% green	Green team, behaviour change, energy audit. Change to 100% renewable.	50%	Install on site generation, more efficient equipment.	75%	Intelligent building management system for heating.
Energy – Gas	37,000 kg CO ₂ e	20% in use	Improved insulation, reduced losses.	80%	Replace with ASHP/GSHP.	100%	Gas free premises.
Travel – staff	46,000 kg CO ₂ e	25%	Incentivise those closest to walk or cycle.	50%	Actively encourage bike to work scheme, e-bikes, install facilities.	75%	Install EV charge point at surgery, encourage those who travel most to EV.
Travel – patient	24,000 kg CO ₂ e	20% in use	Promote walking scheme, actively push active travel.	80%	Look at practice boundary, install EV charge point for patients.	90%	Arrange with local bus service re requirements.
Business services	30,000 kg CO ₂ e	20% in service use 25% fall in carbon	Identify services which are no longer needed. Use lower carbon services in the biggest hotspots.	50% reduction in carbon	Actively identify further low carbon services; using only services with a decarbonisation plan in place.	At least 75% reduction in carbon	Use only carbon neutral suppliers for all new suppliers. Audit and press current suppliers to achieve carbon neutrality.
Medical procurement	24,000 kg CO ₂ e	25%	Audit and identify medical equipment and consumables. Manage stock better.	50%	Identify alternative clinical pathways to reduce single use.	75%	Identify reusable medical equipment; remove single use; 100% at end of life to refurb service.
Office procurement	20,000 kg CO ₂ e	20% in use	Paper free with digital as default for communication.	50%	Use recycled equipment as default via Warp-it etc.	100%	Remove all single use materials; only use suppliers with net zero policy.
Total	227,000 kg CO ₂ e						40,900 kg CO ₂ e – 82% reduction

Carbon reduction analysis



Implementing actions now leads to benefits both now and in the future.

Reducing non clinical carbon emissions as per the previous plan and using average practice emission data, a reduction at each 3 year review point is shown.

Over 9 years, a reduction of 80-90% is achievable while maintaining high quality patient care.

How to use your influence

Anna Lappe is quoted as saying "Every time you spend money, you're casting a vote for the kind of world you want". We can use our purchasing power for our energy, business services and procurement.

In addition to the power of our choices, we also have the power of our voices, and this is another one that we underestimate.

- Use your voice – ask your suppliers for better, demand change.
- Seek our suppliers who have measured their footprint and who have put in place positive changes
- Tweet brands and retailers to let them know if you're not happy with something (and indeed if you're really happy with something!).

We already influence our patients through our work, but we can use our trusted voices to help reduce carbon emissions for our practice, our staff, our patients and their families and the wider community we work in.

Tell others if you declare a climate emergency as a practice. Help to declare is [here](#).

Climate change is 'odd' as a challenge as we are all the villains but also all are potentially the heroes.

It's why it can be such a hard sell as it requires everyone to look inward as well as outward.



Summary

What can I do first?

1. Measure your emissions
2. Set a decarbonisation target to zero
3. Make an action plan and take action

What could I prioritise?

1. Reduce energy use and decarbonise what is used
2. Make active travel default choice for staff and patients and decarbonise the rest
3. Reduce all procurement and use low carbon options for what is used

Declaring a climate emergency





Climate emergency declaration

A guide for primary care

The climate crisis is a health crisis

As a GP, my training has equipped me with the skills needed to diagnose illnesses and prevent ill health. We see the young and the old, care for the dying and help people make lifestyle changes. Our wider role is to promote wellbeing, reduce inequalities and support patients to thrive within their communities.

I therefore understand that to do this successfully, we must fight for our piece of limited - usually financial - resources, and when we get them, we cannot afford to be profligate with them.

The planet also has finite resources, and we cannot afford to be wasteful with these either.

I believe we should arrange healthcare as if each of us were going to live on this planet forever. An important step to taking climate action is to declare a climate emergency. What does this mean?

1. Telling the truth – acknowledging this is an emergency.
2. Acting now – taking radical steps in our personal and professional lives to halt biodiversity loss and reduce greenhouse gas emissions to zero by 2040*.
3. Stronger together – working with others to create new solutions.

Dr Matthew Sawyer,
GP and founder of SEE Sustainability



*The NHS has committed to decarbonising by 2040, however, to prevent the worst impacts of the climate crisis, we should be aiming to decarbonise as rapidly as achievable - by 2025 if possible - and not delay starting to take action.



Who in healthcare is declaring a climate emergency?

It has been a momentous few years for climate change. We've seen an increasing number of practices and healthcare trusts, councils, organisations as well as the NHS and the UK Government take action and declare a climate emergency.

In 2020, the NHS became the first healthcare organisation in the world to commit to achieve net zero carbon emissions.

Cornwall Health Care Partnership led the way with a commitment to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2040:

"In declaring a 'Climate Change' emergency, the NHS recognises the threat faced to public health as a result of global warming and seizes some of the opportunities to lead and work a more sustainable life that has been presented during the pandemic."

Cornwall and Isle of Scilly Health Care Partnerships; NHS Kernow Clinical Commissioning Group, the Royal Cornwall Hospitals NHS Trust (RCHT) and Cornwall Partnership Foundation NHS Trust (CFT)

Healthcare is beginning to take climate action. All of us must recognise our role and potential impact and contributions on a personal and professional level. These impacts can often be bigger than we think.



"We enjoyed a close working relationship with our local community and town council, and we were inspired when they were one of the first in the country to declare a climate emergency in 2018.

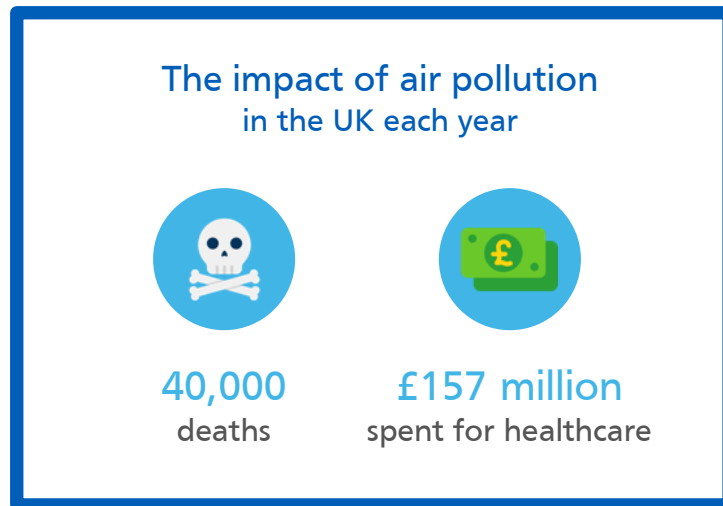
In March 2020, we were delighted to be joined by Portishead Medical Group, Hankham Health, Aberfeldy Practice and Kintbury and Woolton Hill Surgeries to declare an emergency."

Karen Creffield,
Frome Practice and Primary Network Care Manager

Why is primary care declaring a climate emergency?

In primary care our staff teams, communities and patients have been significantly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, but the next crisis is just around the corner. In fact, you are already experiencing the impacts of climate breakdown.

Climate breakdown is a health crisis, and primary care is on the frontline as its impacts are already affecting our communities from flooding, heatwaves and air pollution.



"As a doctor, I feel a duty to act on climate change. As well as opportunities for carbon and cost saving measures, overall this is about good clinical care; improving asthma care, access to green spaces and reducing health inequalities.

This is beneficial for patients and should not be seen as asking people to do more."

Dr Tamsin Ellis,
General Practitioner in London



"Air pollution causes the condition of people with asthma and breathing difficulties to get worse and particularly affects poorer communities. It is also an attributable risk factor for cardiac problems and lung cancer.

As doctors, we have a role to prevent these things from happening. Fortunately, the benefits of taking action to prevent climate change also lead to better health."

Dr Murugesan Raja,
GP, respiratory specialist and member
of Manchester's Climate Change Board



98,000 lives saved
through flexitarian diets
100,100 lives saved
if the UK focused on health gains

21,500 lives saved
through active travel
38,400 lives saved
if the UK focused on health gains



3,500 lives saved
through improved air quality
5,800 lives saved
if the UK focused on health gains

The benefits of climate action for health

Reducing our carbon emissions isn't only good for the health of our planet and of wildlife; it will significantly benefit our health.

A piece of research* published in The Lancet in February 2021 demonstrates the potential health benefits of climate action. It found that if the UK achieved its 2040 climate targets, each year we could save 98,000 lives through better "flexitarian" diets, 21,500 lives by people taking more exercise and 3,500 lives from reductions in air pollution.

By going further and focusing on the health gains from addressing the climate crisis, every year 100,100 lives could be saved through dietary changes (with 50% adopting flexitarian diets and 50% going vegan) and 38,400 lives from more active travel, with 75% of people walking or cycling over the course of a week). Cutting air pollution could save 5,800 lives a year.

Blue: Number of lives saved per year by 2040 if the UK meets its climate targets
Green: Number of lives saved per year by 2040 if the UK went further and focussed on health gains from climate action

*The public health implications of the Paris Agreement: a modelling study, The Lancet, February 2021, [www.thelancet.com/journals/lanplh/article/PIIS2542-5196\(20\)30249-7/fulltext#seccesstitle10](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanplh/article/PIIS2542-5196(20)30249-7/fulltext#seccesstitle10)

5 benefits of climate action for practices

Taking action has lots of additional co-benefits. If you need to develop a business case for your organisation, these are some aspects to focus on:



1. Positive physical and mental health impacts
on staff and patients



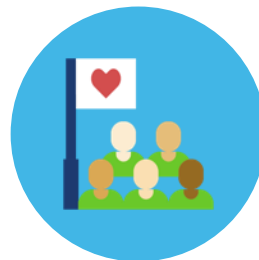
2. Business continuity and resilience
allowing us to continue to provide care to our patients



3. Financial savings
by improving efficiency, reducing waste and changing service delivery models



4. Minimised reputational risk
by demonstrating that we recognise the impact healthcare has on the planet



5. Safer and fairer communities
by recognising and addressing the health impacts of climate change, which exacerbate existing inequalities

“Healthier populations will prove more resilient to future health threats, thus reducing economic consequences. Finally, whole societies profit when disparities between the most privileged and those most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and disease are reduced.”

The Lancet, February 2021

Why make a declaration if you are already addressing your carbon footprint?

As a respected body in your community, you have agency and the ability to engage and inspire strong action from other businesses and organisations. Primary Care trusts have partnered with local councils and others on their declaration and for collective action.

You also have the power to connect the dots between the impacts of climate change on human health, engaging a wider audience who may not feel climate change is affecting them or their families.

Imagine your community more resilient to floods and extreme weather conditions, meaning less mental health issues. Imagine reduced air pollution from community car-free zones and walking initiatives, leading to less asthma and respiratory problems.



Greater Manchester was the first “integrated care system” – NHS bodies and council social care working together to declare a climate emergency.

They have a bold ambition for the city region to be one of the globe’s healthiest, cleanest and greenest city-regions and to be carbon-neutral by 2038.



What to include in your green action plan

If you already have a green action plan in place, this needs revisiting to ensure it reflects the urgency of the climate emergency and these commitments:

- Working towards decarbonise and achieve net-zero by 2040 or sooner if possible.
- Addressing the carbon footprint of all impact areas of the organisation including:
 - Prescriptions
 - Travel (staff and patients)
 - Energy usage
 - Services used
 - Purchases
 - Waste reduction

For more guidance on net-zero and carbon reduction, you can find resources [here](#).

The NHS contributes to 5.4%* of the UK's carbon emissions.

In 2020, it emitted 25 million tonnes of greenhouse gases - emissions equivalent to that of a small country*



Monitoring and measuring your impacts

As with all actions on a green action plan, you will need to build in a monitoring and measuring process to calculate how well your actions are leading towards your goals. This can fit with your annual QoF cycle.

Monitoring your actions is vital to make sure you are on the right trajectory and are on target to reach Net Zero as soon as feasible.

You can use SMART planning to have Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely goals so you know the aims to achieve and by when.

There are plenty of carbon calculators and tools to use, such as [SEE Sustainability](#), [Compare Your Footprint](#) or [Smart Carbon](#) – who offer a simple and cost-effective way for you to measure the carbon footprint of your practice. There is no need for external consultants or additional specialist knowledge.



All you need to declare a climate emergency

Regardless of where they are at on their Green NHS journey, any practice or GP can start the process to declare an emergency now. These are the first steps.

1. Know the facts

- Read the latest medical papers on 'Climate crisis is a health crisis'.
- Visit the links in the [Resources section](#).
- Get carbon literate by taking our [Health Carbon Literacy course](#).

2. Build a green team

Bring together people from different departments to implement change. You may feel concerned that not everyone is environmentally motivated, but sustainability is about people, planet and profit, so people should care about one of these!

3. Develop a green action plan

Creating a plan may seem overwhelming, but you don't have to find the solutions at once. To get started, identify your priority areas and the easy wins. We have templates and guidance to support you [here](#).

4. Set carbon reduction targets

Targets are important because they will give you a clear direction, they'll motivate your teams and will allow you to measure progress. Read the NHS' targets [here](#).

5. Monitor and measure

This will allow you to identify if you have made improvements, gather baseline data and annually check for reductions.

6. Involve senior staff

Senior staff, partners and practice managers are instrumental to success as they are often aware of the anticipated health impacts of the climate crisis on staff, patients and the successful delivery of healthcare. Involvement from the early stages can help set the aims and goals for the whole team while inspiring and enthusing everyone to take part.



"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."

NHS England, Delivering a net zero NHS

Engaging your team

Declaring a climate emergency and acting on climate change means collaborating with engaged members from each department to identify ways to reduce your footprint and improve your processes.

You do not have to win over all the hearts and minds within your organisation to care about the environment. Many of the steps you will take have other benefits, which you can talk about:

- Financial savings
- Improved patient wellbeing
- PR and community engagement opportunities

Get to know what your team cares about and look at where sustainability comes into it. It could be small things like a recycling bin or tea bags to big things like procurement and medication. Convening regular meetings with your 'green team' to work on key areas and support each other will keep the momentum going.



"We're very good at taking a team approach. We have a group of people that really care and are all working on different areas, and that's starting to gather momentum. I think that's been one of the key things."

Karen Creffield,
Frome Practice and Primary Network Care Manager

Engaging your patients

While the pandemic was the centre of conversations in 2020-2021, the climate emergency remains a vital issue that more and more people want to act on.

You don't need to turn everyone 'green'. You can communicate the family, community and individual benefits of low-carbon lifestyles to your patients and work with local stakeholders to transform the infrastructure to make those choices easier for people.

48%

of people are more concerned about the planet's health as a consequence of the pandemic*

80%

are willing to make lifestyle changes to stop climate change as big as those they've made for coronavirus**

What steps can people take?



Eat more plant-based food



Cycle or walk short journeys



Switch to renewable energy



Plant trees

*Kearney study, April 2020

**Futera Sustainable Lifestyle Survey, May 2020

How to write your climate emergency declaration

It should include two main messages:

- Your acknowledgement of the climate crisis and of the role your sector can play in providing solutions;
- Your pledge to take action.

To make it easy for you to get started, there are already approved templates, you can find one [here](#).



EXAMPLE DECLARATION

1. We recognise that the climate and ecological emergency is a health emergency.
2. We recognise that the health impacts of climate change are unfairly distributed and exacerbate existing health inequalities.
3. We will act in both a professional and personal capacity to reduce the severe risks to public and global health.
4. We will communicate the importance of these threats to health to our colleagues, decision-makers and the public.
5. We will call on our organisations and government to tell the truth, respond fairly, and act in keeping with the urgency of the threat.

Further examples can be found on the [Health Declares website](#).

Sharing or publicising your climate emergency



Doctors have a duty to benefit the health of the wider community. Raising awareness about climate change and sharing your own manageable, positive actions is a great way to encourage change.

To maximise impact with your climate emergency declaration, you can share it with:

- Local journalists
- All your suppliers and stakeholders
- On all your social media channels
- Other local health organisations

Here are some tips for powerful communications:

- Aim to personalise the story for your local community, highlighting how you are already seeing the impacts of climate change on your patient's health in your region, which is motivating you to take action.
- Call on other local institutions and health organisations to declare, sharing your learnings and resources.
- Spread the word to influence national health organisations such as Royal Colleges, trade unions or defence organisations.
- Join local groups to support change.

The NHS contributes to 5.4% of the UK's carbon emissions.*

CO₂

Further support

You are not alone in your journey! There are many others taking these steps and a lot of guidance is available on these issues.

- SEE Sustainability, Resources for primary healthcare: seesustainability.co.uk/blog/f/useful-sustainability-resources-for-primary-healthcare
- Carbon Literacy Project: carbonliteracy.com
- Centre for Sustainable Healthcare: sustainablehealthcare.org.uk/courses
- Doctors for Extinction Rebellion: doctorsforxr.com
- Green action plans: sap.sustainablehealthcare.org.uk
- Greener NHS: www.england.nhs.uk/greenernhs/
- Greener Practice: greenerpractice.co.uk
- Health Care Without Harm, Global road map for health care decarbonization: healthclimateaction.org/roadmap
- Health Declares: healthdeclares.org/
- The Lancet, The public health implications of the Paris Agreement: a modelling study: [thelancet.com/journals/lanplh/article/PIIS2542-5196\(20\)30249-7/fulltext](https://thelancet.com/journals/lanplh/article/PIIS2542-5196(20)30249-7/fulltext)
- UK Health Alliance on Climate Change, Carbon Literacy guide: ukhealthalliance.org/carbon-literacy-guide
- Green Impact for Health: www.greenimpact.org.uk/GIforHealth
- Clean Air Framework www.globalactionplan.org.uk/business-clean-air-taskforce/business-for-clean-air



UK HEALTH
ALLIANCE ON
CLIMATE CHANGE

nus
green impact

Who are SEE Sustainability?



I'm Dr Matt Sawyer, a GP in the Northeast of England and the founder of SEE Sustainability, an environmental consultancy focusing on the decarbonisation of small and medium sized businesses with specific expertise in the health service and primary care.

I split my time between general practice and sustainability consultancy, working with primary care trusts and surgeries to develop their 'net zero plans' and help identify financial savings along the way.

I also deliver regular climate literacy training and have a host of on-demand training courses online.

Contact

 info@seesustainability.co.uk

 [@SEESustainability1](https://twitter.com/SEESustainability)

 seesustainability.co.uk

 [Dr Matthew Sawyer MB, MSc, BSc, GradIEMA](https://www.linkedin.com/in/matthew-sawyer-123456789/)

"My vision: for all GP practices to become carbon literate, have a green action plan in place and declare a climate emergency."