

NHS

**North East
Ambulance Service**
NHS Foundation Trust



North East
Ambulance
Service

Green Plan

(2021-2026)

June 2021



Introduction

Climate change is now viewed as one of the most serious threats to the continued health and wellbeing of millions of people worldwide. The worst aspects of climate change will inevitably impact greatest on those within society who are most vulnerable and least able to cope. It is therefore vital that action is taken at all levels to implement effective strategies not only to reduce carbon emissions, but also apply the broader principles of sustainable development.

It is now six years since we published our Carbon Management Plan for the Trust. In that time our sustainability journey has progressed from an initial carbon-focused strategy to a more holistic sustainable development model. Caring for our patients in a sustainable manner and being aware of the social impacts of our actions will help achieve the goals of caring for the environment, reducing long term expenditure and building a supportive base in the society in which we operate. This Green Plan celebrates our progress to-date and outline our plans for the next five years.

North East Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (NEAS) operates across Northumberland, Tyne and Wear, County Durham, Darlington and Teesside. We provide an Unscheduled Care Service to respond to emergency calls, and a Scheduled Care service which provides pre-planned non-emergency transport for patients in the region. The Trust covers an area of approximately 3,230 square miles and employs more than 2,500 staff, serving a population of 2.7 million.

Since 2013 we have delivered the NHS 111 service for the region to provide urgent medical help and advice, and we have been able to demonstrate how this service can run alongside the 999 service to provide a seamless access point for patients. The Scheduled and Unscheduled Care along with 111 services are supported by the Trust's 3 Emergency Operations Centres which manage in excess of 1.5 million calls per annum.

All NHS provider organisations like us are required to have a Board Approved Green Plan under the standard contract from Commissioners. Green Plans are considered a measure of a 'well led organisation' and form a key part of sustainable healthcare delivery, ensuring that services provided today are fit for purpose in the future. NEAS acknowledges that as a major provider of services to the community, our activities and operations will inevitably have an impact on the environment in which we serve.

This Green Plan outlines projects and activities which will evidence continual improvement in sustainability performance throughout the Trust, covering areas such as staff awareness and engagement, through to projects aimed specifically at reducing the carbon emissions associated with our service delivery, how we transport our patients and operating our estate. The Green Plan will detail how the Trust understands, commits to, and will meet its responsibilities in relation to the sustainability agenda. This Green Plan is an update of our previous Carbon Management Plan which was approved by the Board in 2015. This plan will be accompanied by a Sustainability Action Plan. The progress of which will be reported to the Board via the Environmental Compliance & Sustainability Group on an annual basis. The action plan is intended to be constantly changing to reflect the continual improvement that is made. An ever-changing action plan will evidence that the Trust is environmentally responsible, contributes to reducing the impact of climate change and increases the protection of natural resources.

Drivers



The drivers for change can be summarised into five key categories; legislative requirements, mandatory requirements, international guidance, UK guidance and health specific requirements along with reputation and branding of the Trust. These requirements underpin the delivery of long term environmental and financial sustainability.

The NHS Long Term Plan was published in January 2019 and outlines some very clear sustainable development commitments to which all Trusts must subscribe:

- Reduce the carbon footprint and environmental impact of providing care
- Reduce air pollution and contribute to a cleaner environment
- Reduce the use of single use plastics where appropriate and feasible
- Ensure that prevention and wellbeing are the focus of all healthcare activities
- Develop sustainable clinical practices in all specialities & services
- Prepare and respond to climate change, including weather events and supporting vulnerable people.

In 2019 The UK Government became the first major economy to pass a net zero emissions by 2050 law. The target requires the UK to bring all greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050, compared with the previous target of at least 80% reduction from 1990 levels.

This has been incorporated into the 'Delivering a Net Zero NHS' document published in October 2020 by NHS/IE; where by the NHS commits to net zero by 2040.

Regionally the sustainability agenda is driven through the North East & North Cumbria (NENC) ICS Sustainability Group. NEAS plays an active role in this group, leading the travel & transport workstream. An NECC ICS Sustainability strategy is due for publication in Spring / Summer 2021.

Our Sustainability Vision

The Trust has adopted the following Sustainability Vision which is detailed in NHS England's Sustainable Development Strategy for the NHS 2014-2020, Public Health and Social Care system:

'To operate a sustainable health and care system which works within the available environmental and social resources, protecting and improving health now and for future generations'

We acknowledge that adopting sustainable practices is critical for us to deliver efficient and effective services, both now and in the future.

To do this we will ensure that we create and embed sustainability throughout our operations, and ensure that our estate is efficient, sustainable and is as resilient as it can be.

The implementation and delivery of this plan will ensure that we:

- Reduce our environmental, social and economic impact;
- Increase resilience;
- Consider our local impact both positively and negatively;
- Create social value;
- Drive innovation and new technologies; and
- Lead by example

In order to demonstrate how the sustainability agenda links into every aspect of our service delivery, the targets & objectives in the action plan have been mapped against the Trust's four ambitions:

- People – a great place to work and grow
- Performance – deliver outstanding performance every time
- Partnerships – collaborate & innovate with partners
- Quality & Safety – safe and compassionate care, every time

Sustainability achievements to date

The Trust has delivered over 150 'Invest to Save' energy reduction projects which have created a 30% and 56% reduction in electricity and gas respectively, with a cumulative financial saving of over £390k since 2012/13.

These projects include LED lighting across the estate, Solar PV, renewable heating schemes and wind turbines, along with low cost / no cost good housekeeping projects. This equates to £3.2million in cost avoidance over the lifetime of the projects, plus guaranteed income generated through both Feed in Tariff (FIT) and Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) schemes for 20 years.

The overall carbon savings from the projects implemented have been outstanding, with over a 1,400 tonnes saved. The Trust has gained Carbon, Waste & Water Saver Gold Standards after a 3rd party audit, these have now been recertified in 2018 and 2020.

As a result of the level of sustained savings achieved with a proactive Invest to Save plan along with improvement in waste management, the Trust has won several accolades:

- Finalist in the 'Improving Environmental & Sustainability' category at the 2015 HSJ Awards
- Winner in both the 'Waste' and 'Transport' categories at the 2016 NHS Sustainability Awards
- Winner in both the 'Energy' and 'Finance' categories along with a 'Highly Commended' in the 'Waste' category at the 2017 NHS Sustainability Awards

- Finalist in the 'Energy' category at the 2018 Sustainable Health & Care Awards
- Winner in the 'Energy' category at the 2019 NHS Sustainability Awards

We have eliminated oil heating across the Trust in favour of renewable alternatives.

The Trust has eliminated single use plastic cups and cutlery in our HQ. There are plans to roll this out to other NEAS sites in 2021 and identify other areas for reducing both plastics and single use equipment.

We have had much initial success with reducing emissions from the fleet through several projects; telematics in the form of driver monitoring and speed limiting. DCA's and PTS vehicles were restricted to 56mph when not on blues and RRVs to 70mph; this had both H&S, environmental and financial benefits.

In 2015 the trust gained OLEV funding for 5 electric support service cars and 10 electric charge points at strategic locations across the trust. Hybrid & electric vehicles now make up around 25% of our support services car and van fleet.

NEAS has worked closely with the Energy Savings Trust over a number of years to identify suitable alternatively fuelled vehicles to replace our current diesel vehicles as well as on a large multi trust project to reduce the impact of our grey (business mileage) fleet.

All environmental and sustainability work is overseen by the board level Environmental Compliance & Sustainability Working group which meets once a quarter and has representation from across the trust.

Areas of focus

The following ten areas are aligned with the elements of the Sustainable Development Assessment Tool (SDAT) and form the basis of the Trust's Sustainability Action Plan:

1. Corporate Approach
2. Asset Management and Utilities
3. Travel and Logistics
4. Climate Adaptation
5. Estates Strategy
6. Green Space and Biodiversity
7. Sustainable Clinical Models
8. Our People and Culture
9. Sustainable use of Resources
10. Carbon Emissions and Green House Gases

NEAS SDAT scoring

Figure 1: NEAS Sustainability Assessment scoring over time



Corporate Approach

This section outlines our approach to sustainable development. It will evidence how we will communicate and engage with staff, patients and services users and will confirm how progress will be reported to the Board. It will also detail how we will benchmark ourselves against other trusts.

Asset Management and Utilities

This section addresses the management of organisational assets. This includes large assets such as buildings and critical operational plant and equipment e.g. boilers and chiller plant, through to smaller assets such as laptops and mobile phones. It will also include mobile assets, such as our fleet. The aim of the objectives detailed within this section will be to:

- Reduce operational resource use and cost e.g. water and energy
- Replace existing assets with more energy efficient alternatives
- Where possible include an energy evaluation as part of the sustainability section in the Trust's business case template.

This section also considers behaviour change of our staff through targeted campaigns and modification to our current utility purchasing methodology to buy renewable sourced electricity only.

Travel and Logistics

This section evaluates the impact of staff travel and the logistics associated with Trust activities and service provision. The Health Outcomes Travel Tool (HOTT) can be used to evaluate and report our impact from these activities and as we improve our understanding in these areas.

Much of this work will focus on moving away from fossil fuel-based vehicles and increasing the number of alternatively fuelled vehicles within our fleet; initially through our support service vehicles but working towards front line. NEAS are working alongside other ambulance trusts as well as manufacturers on developing a front line EV DCA by the end of 2021.

There will also be a further drive to reduce business travel from both trust owned pool vehicles and personal vehicles; also known as 'grey fleet'.

We are also working nationally in partnership with

all of the other trusts to support LAS in their 2-year project to build an EV DCA. This project started in Jan 2021 and has the full support of NHSE/I.

Linking in with our Health and Wellbeing agenda active and sustainable travel activities and initiatives will be promoted including cycling and walking along with agile working.

Adaptation

This section outlines the Trust's approach to climate change adaptation which will be linked directly to a Climate Change Adaptation Risk Assessment. This will provide a means of assessing the risks on our register against the readiness of our estate and infrastructure to respond to a severe weather event e.g. a heatwave, cold weather or localised flooding.

- A review of the NEAS Estate has taken place to identify at risk flood areas with reference to <https://www.gov.uk/check-flood-risk>), most of which have undertaken a flood scenario based exercise whilst validating Business Continuity Arrangements
- An "Adverse Weather Plan" has been developed as a result and each site has an action card based upon a flooding scenario
- The NEAS Adverse Weather Plan can be found in Annex 2 of REAP

Estates Strategy / Capital Projects

This section addresses the acquisition of new property and refurbishment projects and the environment and sustainability considerations within. It details our approach to the identification and implementation of resource and energy efficiency (including energy, water and waste), the use of natural materials and the redesign of space to support the delivery of sustainable models of care.

The Trust is working with other ambulance trusts at a national level to develop standardisation in the design of new ambulance accommodation which include a concept for a carbon neutral. Subject to funding this will enable the rationalising of older, inefficient properties and enable a move towards larger "hub" style sites.

NEAS will continue to invest in the improvement and upgrading of energy efficient technologies within its existing premises. The internally funded Invest to Save Programme will explore opportunities to lower our carbon footprint via refurbishment programmes that utilise efficient lighting, heating and water technologies.

Agile working increased in 2020 as a result of the Covid pandemic, how the trust utilised their properties changed, as well as increased use of technology for meetings and the associated reduction in commuting travel & business mileage. This has created a blueprint for how the trust will work going forward.

The trust currently co-locates with partner organisations at 16 properties and going forward estate efficiencies may be possible as part of the One Public Estate stream of work.

Green space and Biodiversity

It is widely known and reported that green space and biodiversity play an important role in health and wellbeing. This section looks at the potential integration of green spaces into the Trust's estate.

This section will also encourage compliance with the Government Buying Standards for food and catering services, identifying other areas for improvement such as associated certifications and accreditations.

Sustainable Care Models

This section looks at the way clinical services are currently delivered and considers whether they make best use of our internal resources, finance and infrastructure whilst delivering the best care and outcome for our patients.

Sustainable models of care cut across organisational boundaries and look at the co-benefits of transformative care delivery e.g. hear and treat and see and treat, without the need to convey a patient to hospital. This has clear benefits for NEAS and patients, as well as reducing congestion and local air pollution in the area and pressure on hospital trusts.

Our People

Our workforce is essential to ensuring that the Trust delivers sustainable healthcare, and everyone has a part to play within this whether it is affecting large scale changes such as designing services differently or championing efficient and effective behaviours within teams.

This section sets out our approach to how we do business, what our expectations of staff are, and the responsibilities placed on them and our appointed contractors in relation to this.

Key to this will be the measures we take to improve staff understanding of the Trust's sustainability agenda through recruitment, selection, induction and appraisal.

Sustainable use of Resources

This section looks at our approach to the use of resources such as water, waste, fuel and materials. Its purpose is to set out how we will reduce our impact by managing waste effectively in line with the waste hierarchy, reduce consumption of single use plastics and use locally sourced goods and services.

Carbon/Green House Gasses (GHG's)

This section addresses how we will measure and report the carbon impact of our activities and services. This will include - but will not be limited to - emissions from:

- Building energy use
- Building water use
- Waste generation and treatment
- Travel and transport activities
- Procurement
- Commissioning

The Trust's carbon footprint will be calculated on an annual basis and reported into Environmental Compliance & Sustainability Group in the annual cycle of business as well as being published in the Annual Report.

Reporting



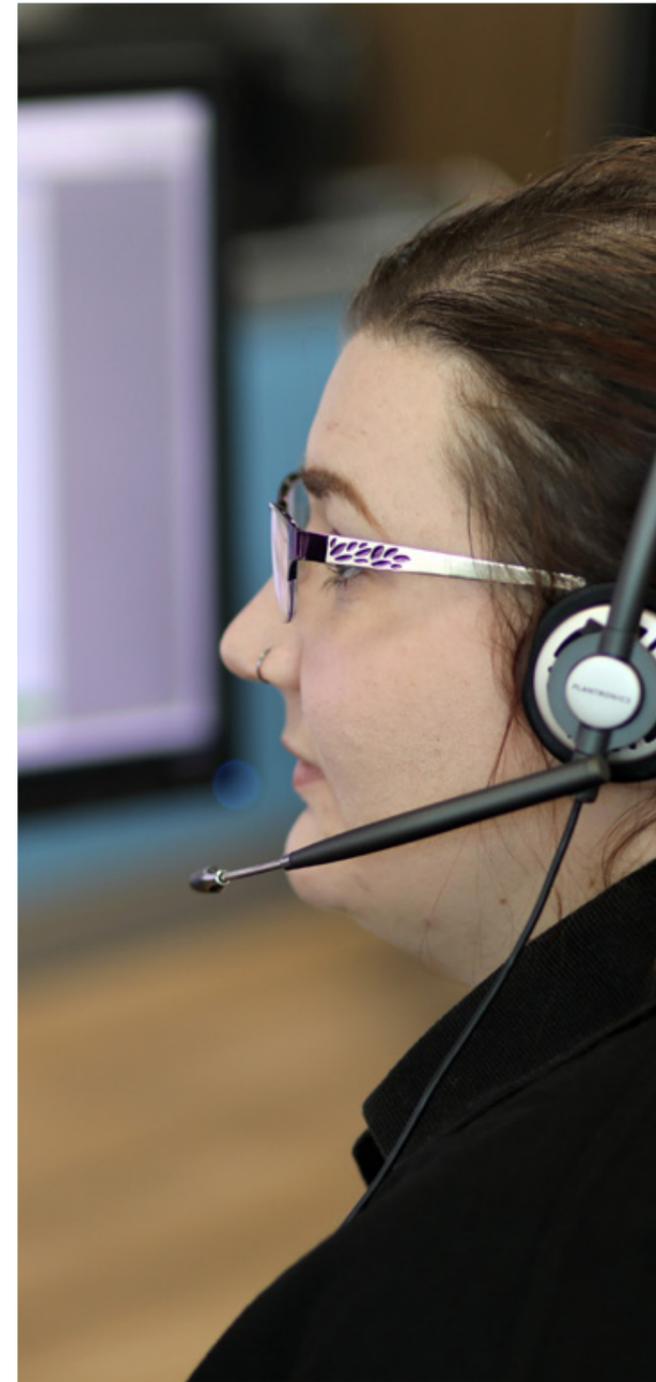
The Green Plan and associated Sustainability Action Plan has been put together in conjunction with the key stakeholders at the Environmental Compliance & Sustainability Group. The first draft was presented to Trust Board in February 2021 as part of a development session.

The structure of this Green Plan has been aligned to that of the NHS (NHS Sustainable Development Unit) Sustainable Development Assessment Tool (SDAT). This has been done for ease of measurement, monitoring and reporting. The Sustainability action plan will make a commitment to benchmark our own performance year on year but also benchmark ourselves against other providers through completing the NHS SDAT on an annual basis.

Progress against the objectives detailed in the Sustainability Action Plan will be reported in the following way; to Capital Management Group on a quarterly basis with an overview going to the Board on an annual basis. Any objectives achieved will be replaced by a new objective which will have been discussed and agreed at the board level Environmental Compliance & Sustainability Working Group. This approach will ensure that continual improvement is made in our environmental and sustainability performance and will be reflective of the ever-changing nature of our service provision.

The Trust's Annual Report will include an 'Environmental Matters' section that provides an overview of activities undertaken during the previous financial year. Current NHS guidelines and templates will be used for this to ensure consistency in approach and adherence to sector best practice for reporting.

Governance



The Environmental Compliance & Sustainability (ECSG Working Group co-ordinate the implementation of the Green Plan. This is a quarterly board level meeting; with the minutes being presented as an agenda item at Performance & Finance Committee.

The Sustainability Steering Group is comprised of the following members:

- Environmental, Sustainability & Facilities Manager (Chair)
- Head of Estates, Facilities & Environment
- Fleet Operations Manager (Vice Chair)
- Non-Executive Director
- Head of Procurement, Contracts & Logistics
- Infection Prevention & Control Manager
- H&S Manager
- Dispatch Manager
- Head of Commercial Development
- Capital Accountant
- IM&T Systems Manager
- Clinical Operations Manager

The Green Plan and associated Sustainability Action Plan will be monitored and co-ordinated by the Estates, Facilities & Environment Department.

Date: June 2021

Author: Dr Clare Winter, Environmental, Sustainability & Facilities Manager

Board Strategy Champion:

Kevin Scollay, Director of Finance & Resources

Green Plan

North East Ambulance Service