

# **Annual Climate Emergency and Sustainability report 2024/25 – template and guidance for NHSScotland health boards**

**15 December 2025**

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## 1. Introduction

This is Healthcare Improvement Scotland's (HIS) fourth annual Climate Emergency and Sustainability Report. The information submitted provides the benchmark from which we can measure improvement going forward.

The planet is facing a triple crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution due to human activities breaking the planet's environmental limits.

The World Health Organisation recognises that climate change is the single biggest health threat facing humanity. Health organisations have a duty to cut their greenhouse gas emissions, a major cause of climate change and influence wider society to take the action needed to both limit climate change and adapt to its impacts. More information on the profound and growing threat of climate change to health: [www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/climate-change-and-health](https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/climate-change-and-health)

Healthcare Improvement Scotland is the national improvement organisation for health and social care in Scotland. Our board has 582 members of staff, (excluding public partners and Board members), and our work programme supports improvement in health and social care services. Our strategy for 2023-28 describes our role in driving lasting, positive and sustainable improvements across the whole health and care system. Our strategy identifies four priorities, listed below, including a specific priority relating to sustainable improvement:

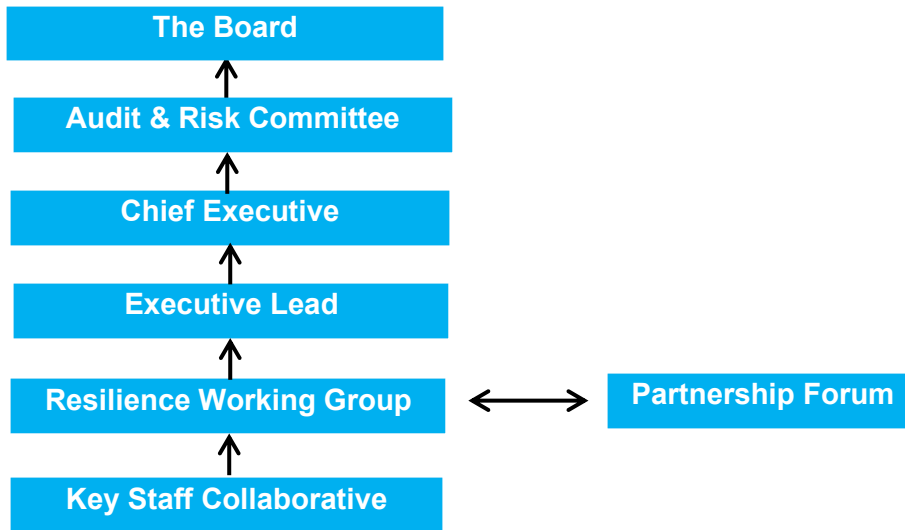
- Enable a better understanding of the safety and quality of health and care services and the high impact opportunities for improvement
- Assess and share intelligence and evidence that supports the design, delivery and assurance of a high-quality health and care service
- Enable the health and care system to place the voices and rights of people and their communities at the heart of improvement to the safety and quality of health and care
- Deliver practical support that accelerates the delivery of sustainable improvements in the safety and quality of health and care services across Scotland

## 2. Leadership and governance

Our Chief Executive has overall responsibility for Climate Emergency & Sustainability. Our Executive Lead for Sustainability, who on behalf of the Board, has a responsibility for sustainability is also our SIRO and Director of Evidence and Digital Services. The board appointed the Employee Director, as our Non-Executive Sustainability Champion.

HIS has a Resilience Working Group, which has overview and governance responsibility for climate change, sustainability, resilience including business continuity and national audits. The group convenes virtually every 6 weeks and is chaired by our Resilience & Sustainability Lead and is attended by HIS Sustainability Champion, Head of People & Workplace, Lead for Finance & Procurement, Risk Manager, Comms Manager, Head of Digital Services, ICT Service Delivery Lead, Lead for Information Governance, Facilities Officer, Resilience & Sustainability Programme Manager.

### HIS SUSTAINABILITY GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE



As part of the governing body for HIS, the Audit and Risk Committee is updated on progress at each quarterly meeting where a combined sustainability and resilience paper is presented incorporating sustainability, net zero, climate change, business continuity and national audit.

Our Sustainability Executive Lead receives monthly progress and activity updates via 1-2-1 meetings with the Lead for Resilience & Sustainability and more formally through receipt and approval of the quarterly Audit and Risk Committee paper.

- *How is the health board showing leadership in tackling climate change and becoming environmentally sustainable?*

On behalf of the board, the Sustainability Executive Lead and our Lead for Resilience & Sustainability are working to embed sustainability into our routine planning and governance infrastructure. Within our adaptation plan we have 23 controls in place to adapt to the changing environment caused by climate change. We have also developed an Active Travel Plan and a Business Travel Policy which include a travel hierarchy for staff to encourage reducing the need to travel and options to choose the most sustainable methods of travel for business purposes. Both documents await final approval.

A sustainability narrative and perspective has been included in the HIS Annual Delivery Plan outlining what we have achieved over the past 12 months and our objectives going forward in the next 12 months. These include plans for an Environmental Management System and actions for decarbonisation. We added the National NHSS Environmental Sustainability training modules which HIS helped develop, onto LearnPro and launched this via our Comms team to increase awareness, education and training for all staff.

We are keen to play a leadership role at national level and our Lead for Resilience & Sustainability chairs the NHSS National Boards Sustainability Groups (NBSG). The group meets quarterly with representatives from all eight National boards. The purpose of these meetings is to provide a knowledge sharing platform and learning space with the aim of adopting a “Once for Scotland” approach to high level reporting. To support this, within the group’s MS Teams channel, we have created a discussion/help section and a sharing & learning space including key documentation with useful tools and resources. We also invite key area specialists to present at each meeting on topics such as Energy, Transport & Travel, Adaptation, Biodiversity and Waste. The head of Sustainability from NHS Assure has also attended and participated in our regional meetings. HIS also attends the National Sustainability board and supports the Regional Leads’ Network.

### 3. Greenhouse gas emissions

HIS aims to become a net-zero organisation by 2040 in relation to the sources of greenhouse gas emissions outlined in the table below. This table sets out the amount of greenhouse gas produced annually by HIS. Note the substantial increase in emissions this year, in response to changing business requirements and which is a result of staff previously working from home, HIS is now operating hybrid ways of working.

***N.B. All data contained in emissions tables within this document was extracted from national systems provided for all NHSS boards to aid measuring, monitoring and setting targets to reduce emissions.***

Source	2023/24 – emissions	2024/25 - emissions	% change – 2023/24 to 2024/25	2025/26 – target emissions	% difference between actual and target emissions – 2025/26
Building energy	10.2 tc02e	12.3 tc02e	+ 7.4%	10.45 tc02e	+ 15%
Non-medical F-gas use	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Medical gases	n/a	Unknown	n/a	n/a	n/a
Metered dose inhaler propellant	n/a	Unknown	n/a	n/a	n/a
NHS fleet use	n/a	Unknown	n/a	n/a	n/a
Waste	9.3 tc02e	12.1 tc02e	+ 31%	11.0 tc02e	- 9 %
Water	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Business Travel	91.58 tc02e	71 tc02e	- 22 %	70 tc02e	- 2%
Total Greenhouse Gases Emitted	111 tc02e	95.4 tc02e	- 14.4%	90.0 tc02e	- 5%
Carbon Sequestration	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Greenhouse Gas Emissions Minus Carbon Sequestration					

### 4. Climate change adaptation

The climate is changing due to the greenhouse gases already emitted into the atmosphere. While efforts to reduce the rate and scale of climate change continue, we must also adapt to new conditions we are facing. The changing climate and its effects are increasing risks to the health of the population and therefore to health services. More information on these risks in the UK can be found in the UK Climate Change Committee’s Health and Social Care Briefing:

[www.ukclimaterisk.org/independent-assessment-ccra3/briefings/](http://www.ukclimaterisk.org/independent-assessment-ccra3/briefings/)

- *What are the main risks from climate change that the Health Board has identified through its Climate Change Risk Assessment?*

HIS submitted its second Climate Change Risk Assessments and Adaptation Plans for both sites in July 2024. We made several amendments from the previous year based on discussions with NHS Assure area experts. There are 345 questions to review each year which help us outline and assess the main risks of the climate emergency affecting the organisation namely Climate Hazard, Assets, Potential Impacts and Measures to introduce all of which are outlined in the attached plan. We also submitted SEPA flood risk assessments for both sites.

- *What actions has the health board taken to reduce those risks?*

HIS has completed adaptation plans and climate change risk assessments along with SEPA flood risk assessments for both sites to allow us to ascertain potential adjustments required to combat the impacts of climate change, including the actions we require to take in order to reduce the negative impacts of climate change, and/or to take advantage of any emerging opportunities. The results of the plan will help develop the NHS Scotland Climate Emergency and Sustainability response action plan. The main areas that have been flagged for HIS within the Climate Change Risk Assessment including measures that have been taken to reduce those risks are listed in the attached plan. The HIS Adaptation Plan and Flood Risk Assessments will be assessed and updated in July 2026.

- *Please see current HIS Adaptation Plan attached at Appendix 1 of this report.*

Our Business Continuity plans are reviewed bi-annually and any new developments or consideration for climate change will be built into these which are due for review in August 2027 (or sooner if any after action reviews identify whether immediate changes are required). Our overarching Business Continuity Plan, Winter Plan and Fixed Site Incident Plan include risk of flood helping us to focus on the organisation's Climate Resilience. Our Executive team reviewed and updated our Business-Critical Services in September 2025 including environmental risks. During 2025 we worked in collaboration with the Information Governance Team, Digital Services, HR, ICT, Procurement and other boards to introduce an Emergency Text Alert System for all staff which was introduced in March 2025, launched and tested in May and will be used to communicate with staff in the event of an incident that prevents us having access to our systems including email, office phones, Microsoft teams or Microsoft 365.

In March 2025 we conducted a resilience exercise/scenario with our Gold commanders and a further scenario with ICT in July 2025. Each exercise consisting of an overall review of our response measures to consider what went well and what processes might be improved. Further HIS-based scenarios are being planned for 2026-27.

## **Collaborative Networking**

HIS attends all climate emergency groups within the NHS and Scottish Government, including the Sustainability board, National Environmental Sustainability Group and the Regional Chairs meetings. HIS chairs the National Boards Environmental Sustainability Group (NBSG), which meets quarterly and is attended by all eight national boards. Chairing the NBSG and any SLWGs allows HIS to provide a platform for support and collaboration while learning and sharing knowledge with each other. This includes discussions for improvement on for example, carbon accounting, net zero targets, adaptation & climate risk assessment, cycle to work and car salary sacrifice schemes, input into the DL38 NHSS 2027-31 Sustainability & Climate Emergency Strategy Approach.

Our Lead for Sustainability, Climate Emergency & Resilience is a member of the new NHS Scotland Adaptation Working Group (NWAG). The purpose of this group is to facilitate cooperation, knowledge sharing and development of practical strategies to adapt to the emerging

health challenges posed by climate change. Its main purpose will be the creation of the NHSS Adaptation Plan. The group will review the findings & recommendations of Adaptation & Resilience SLWG Report in order to develop the new plan working alongside other environmental sustainability policies including for example, net zero, biodiversity, transport & travel, EMS and circular economy.

HIS is continuing to enhance its collaborative networking on sustainability and climate change. We now regularly meet with NHS Assure, Scottish Government colleagues and sustainability managers from the regions and national boards to help develop and implement national sustainability plans while maintaining our statutory duty. Our collaboration and networking include participation with:

- Scottish Government Sustainability and Climate Change Board
- Scottish Government Climate Change and Strategy Group
- NHS Regional Sustainability Chairs Group
- NHS National Environmental Sustainability Group (NESG) (22 boards attend)
- National Boards Sustainability Group (HIS serves as Chair) (All 8 boards attend)
- NHS National Resilience Forum
- NHS Assure groups working on adaptation plans, risk assessment, active travel, biodiversity, energy and learning module development
- NHSS Adaptation Working Group (NWAG)

We are in the process of developing our EMS and once established we will be able to monitor and evaluate the impact of climate actions i.e. our energy usage, waste use, CO2 emissions and other factors that relate directly or indirectly to climate change and adaptation. We are members of the national EMS working group who are providing support to realise our ambitions.

Our Business Travel Policy and Active & Sustainable Travel Plan have recently been updated to reflect our new travel booking system (Corporate Travel Management via Chambers Travel Management) for all staff. The new CTM along with access to the e-Sight system, allows us to measure and monitor our reduction in CO2 emissions much more accurately for rail, air, ferry, taxi and coming soon car hire which will also inform our updated Net Zero Route Map. Staff training for bookers on the CTM system began in early 2025. Once final approval is received, the policy will be in place and a clear communication sent to all staff via the Comms team and Finance with further training for all staff. The policy and plan will be reviewed and revised biannually though both still await final approval.

Our Lead for Resilience and Sustainability chairs the NHSS National Boards Sustainability group and associated SLWGs to collaborate on and take forward any specific areas of climate action e.g. in 2025-26 this group has already begun to take forward our comments and main concerns around risk as a group as part of the consultation process for the Scottish Government's NHSS Strategy for 2027-31.

HIS Top 5 priorities for the year ahead are:

1. Incorporate Climate Change & Adaptation within our Annual Delivery Plan.
2. Working towards Net-Zero targets and updating our Net-Zero Route Map.
3. Implement a Car Salary Sacrifice Scheme for EV cars and review the Cycle to Work Scheme currently in place.
4. Gain board approval of the implementation of our updated Business Travel Policy.
5. Design and implement our EMS.

- *What are we doing to be prepared for the impacts of climate change and increase the resilience of our healthcare assets and services?*

HIS worked in collaboration with the Information Governance Team, Digital Services, HR ICT, Procurement and other boards to introduce an emergency text alert system for all staff. This was introduced in March 2025, launched and tested in May and will be used to communicate with staff in the event of an incident that prevents us having access to our systems including email, office phones, Microsoft teams or Microsoft 365. In March 2025 we conducted a resilience exercise/scenario with our Gold commanders and further scenarios are planned for July 2025 with ICT and with Gold and Silver commanders during 2026.

The HIS Resilience team attends MET office training events, NHS Lothian Sustainability Webinars and Scottish Sustainability Network conferences and events and receive regular NHSS Sustainability Action Newsletters throughout the year to help us better understand the potential environmental risks, how we can respond and raise awareness within our organisation. HIS has also offered to help NHS Assure introduce Business Continuity into the national sustainability environment if requested. HIS staff are well versed in the processes and procedures in response to extreme adverse weather conditions as detailed in our staff instructions plan that dictates our policies and procedures including essential travel, absence reporting, working from home (WFH). Our HR and Comms departments also share regular MET office weather warnings to allow staff to plan travel to and from work safely. Within our staff instruction plans we advise staff about various scenarios that could cause disruption. There are many and varied possible causes for significant disruption to normal service delivery/business, particularly the delivery of key/critical activities.

Each critical business area has an up to date Business Continuity (BC) plan and Business Impact Assessments (BIA) in place. We have a gold and silver command structure in place to manage any major/critical incidences. HIS Resilience team regularly conducts BC scenario sessions testing our plans for improvement e.g. at the beginning of 2025 with our Gold Commanders which includes the most senior of our Executive Team i.e. Chief Executive and Senior Comms Manager. In June 2025 we conducted a BC scenario with ICT. HIS has an overarching BC Plan which includes risk of flood. To support effective response, we have a Fixed Site Incident Plan and checklist of actions.

## 5. Building energy

- *What did we do last year to reduce emissions from building energy use?*

HIS are tenants in Delta House based in Glasgow city centre and Gyle Square in Edinburgh. We sublet a floor within Delta House to increase building occupancy and reduce overall costs. NSS now occupy the 4<sup>th</sup> floor and we are looking into options for the 6<sup>th</sup> floor. NHS Boards are aiming to use renewable heat sources for all the buildings they own by 2038. However, as tenants in both main sites, we are currently unable to commit to this without support from our landlords.

### Building energy emissions, 2021/22, 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25 – tCO<sub>2</sub>e

	2021/22 Energy use	2022/23 energy use	2023/24 energy use	2024/25 energy use	Percentage change 2023/24 to 2024/25
Building fossil fuel use	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
District heat networks and biomass	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Grid electricity	4.9	9.5	10.1	12.3	+ 21%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>9.5</b>	<b>10.1</b>	<b>12.3</b>	<b>+ 21%</b>

**Building energy emissions, 2021/22, 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25 – KWh**

	2021/22 energy use	2022/23 energy use	2023/24, energy use	2024/25 energy use	Percentage change 2023/24 to 2024/25
Building fossil fuel use	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
District heat networks and biomass	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Grid electricity	20,998	40,052	44,710	54,374	+ 22 %
Renewable electricity	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
<b>Totals</b>	<b>20,998</b>	<b>40,052</b>	<b>44,710</b>	<b>54,374</b>	<b>+ 22 %</b>

- *What are we doing this year to reduce emissions from building energy use?*

HIS worked with EDF to install Smart meters in Delta House. However, the pilot process indicated that the building’s construction and height were unsuitable for the installation of Smart meters.

- *What projects are we planning for the longer-term to reduce emissions from building energy use?*

As of 01 April 2024, Scottish Government has revised the energy framework in place for health boards. From this we anticipate potentially negotiating a contract with an energy supplier offering renewable energy. HIS will work with national procurement and other national boards to establish if a better contract is feasible. For example, due to the current energy contract, HIS pays more for its electricity than any other board as it uses the least electricity.

**6. Sustainable care**

**Health boards which do not provide these services should include information about how they are supporting NHS Scotland to deliver more sustainable care.**

The way we provide care influences our environmental impact and greenhouse gas emissions. NHS Scotland has three national priority areas for making care more sustainable – anaesthesia, surgery, and respiratory medicine.

Healthcare Improvement Scotland does not provide direct healthcare and therefore we cannot respond to how our work directly influences our environmental impact and greenhouse gas emissions based on the three national priority areas: anaesthesia, surgery, and respiratory medicine. Within our Sustainability Assessment Tool (HSAT) adapted from the National Sustainability Assessment Tool (NSAT) this area is categorised as N/A for HIS.

However, our work does have a very positive indirect impact. For example, we are responsible for supporting the national Hospital at Home programme. In July 2025 our annual report for Hospital at Home services found that these services across Scotland saved more than £50 million in healthcare costs and prevented around 15,500 people having to stay in hospital for treatment in the last year. Our work on Hospital at Home across Scotland was featured on BBC Scotland’s flagship radio programme, Good Morning Scotland and was the top story on STV’s news website.

## 7. Anaesthesia and surgery

Volatile gases used in anaesthesia contribute to global warming and climate change. VCTs aim to reduce the amount of these gases which are released into the atmosphere. They instead capture the gases, with the intention of recycling them. However, there is some uncertainty around the cost and usability of the devices. HIS is a non-clinical board therefore we do not operate any clinical services or use any volatile medical gases such as Desflurate, Isoflurane, Sevoflurane.

Through improvements to anaesthetic technique and the management of medical gas delivery systems, the NHS can reduce emissions from these sources.

HIS does not provide any patient services and therefore the tables below are not applicable for us. However, The Scottish Health Technologies Group (SHTG) who are a team within HIS were asked to look at volatile capture technologies (VCTs) designed for use in anaesthetic rooms and operating theatres. They were asked to consider the evidence supporting the use of VCTs in reducing carbon emissions from inhaled anaesthetics (isoflurane, desflurane and sevoflurane); we were also asked to determine if these offer good value for money.

## 8. Respiratory medicine

Healthcare Improvement Scotland does not provide direct healthcare and therefore we cannot respond to the tables below.

However, as a board with a role in producing national evidence-based guidance, we have published national guidance to support diagnosis and management of chronic asthma in adults. The Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network (SIGN) which is part of HIS worked with the British Thoracic Society (BTS), and the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) to produce UK-wide guidance for the diagnosis and management of chronic asthma in adults, young people, and children.

Greenhouse gases are used as a propellant in metered dose inhalers used to treat asthma and COPD. Most of the emissions from inhalers are from the use of reliever inhalers – Short Acting Beta Agonists (SABAs). By helping people to manage their condition more effectively, we can improve patient care and reduce emissions. There are also more environmentally friendly inhalers such as dry powder inhalers which can be used where clinically appropriate.

As part of this collaboration, a patient decision aid on asthma inhalers and climate change was published in September 2022 (***Link to PDF is below***) The decision aid explains the options for people who would like to think about reducing the carbon footprint of their asthma treatment. It is intended to help discussions between people aged 12 and over and their healthcare professionals.

- [Decision aid - asthma inhalers and climate change \(PDF\)](#)

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## 9. Travel and transport

Domestic transport (not including international aviation and shipping) is a major contributor to Scotland's greenhouse gas emissions. Car travel is the type of travel which contributes the most to those emissions. NHSScotland is supporting a shift to a healthier and more sustainable transport system where active travel and public transport are prioritised.

- *What did we do last year to reduce the need to travel?*

Our vision for the way we work at Healthcare Improvement Scotland is that “work is what we do, not where we do it.” We ensure we balance the needs of the organisation as well as personal preferences of where we work so we can be a more forward-looking organisation that meets our vision. Our “New Ways of Working” and “One Team” focus means that everyone in the organisation can operate in a hybrid fashion, are provided with all essential IT technology and equipment that allows them to work either at home, in the office or on essential site visits e.g., inspections.

HIS chairs the NHS Scotland National Boards Sustainability Group (NBSG) collaborating and sharing ways in which we can reduce the need for business travel within our boards. In consultation with key services across our organisation and externally with the Transport and Active Travel Sustainability Manager at NHS Assure and our colleagues on the NBSG, HIS established a named lead for Travel & Transport within the organisation and developed a new and updated Business Travel Policy containing a “Business Travel Hierarchy” flowchart which looks closely at alternatives to travel and encourages staff to consider travelling in a more sustainable way. This Policy is awaiting final approval from our Partnership Forum Subgroup. The Plan and Policy were updated and shared with others on the NBSG. The Policy and plan await final approval from the Partnership Forum Policy Sub-group following advice for the need for further consultation.

- *What did we do last year to improve active travel?*

The organisation’s new Business Travel Policy and active travel plan includes up to date public transport links for both Glasgow and Edinburgh including an implementation plan with short, medium, and long-term targets for both sites.

Following submission to the HIS Partnership Forum Policy Subgroup (PFPSG), there will be wider consultation across the board to be arranged by PFPSG. HIS has again received the Cycling Friendly Employer Award for both sites; the Cycle to Work Scheme and staff benefits are clearly displayed for information on our Intranet. Our Active Travel Champions send regular communications to all staff promoting e.g., “Paths for All” walking and cycling, “Love to Ride”, walking routes for Glasgow & Edinburgh; Bike Week and Bike Breakfast were also promoted on our MS Teams Cycle User Group site.

- *What are we going to do this year to reduce the need to travel?*

Substantial updates have been made to the Business Travel Policy in particular and to the Active Travel Plan following further collaboration with HIS Equality, Inclusion & Human Rights Manager, HIS Disability Network, Head of Finance & Procurement, Head of HR, Employee Director & Previous Director of People & Workplace in respect of agreement to resubmit to the Partnership Forum Policy Subgroup for formal approval firstly in August; a decision on approval is awaited after which this will be rolled out across the organisation in early 2026. The policy will be reviewed bi-annually by key representatives from across HIS. We will continue to work closely with our lead for Travel & Transport and senior Finance colleagues to develop more robust ways to measure and monitor our business travel footprint.

It is our intention to continue to work closely with our lead for Travel & Transport and senior Finance colleagues to develop more robust ways to measure and monitor our reduction in business travel both in terms of financial cost and the cost to the environment as well as Sustainability colleagues in other boards and with the Travel & Transport manager in NHS Assure. Alongside this we will launch the policy via our Comms Team accompanied by “Sustainable Travel” awareness information/sessions for all staff ensuring that in respect of equality and diversity, there is absolute clarity around the policy having no detrimental effect or impede the needs of anyone with restricted mobility.

This will be clearly communicated to all staff, clearly highlighted within any existing or new staff processes, and signposted via the staff Intranet. We are also inviting NHS Assure staff

representatives to attend the National Boards Sustainability Group (NBSG) to discuss future transport options.

Senior HIS Finance staff have worked with the Corporate Travel Management (CTM) team to review their upgraded travel booking system for business travel by rail, air, taxi and accommodation. Key members of the Finance team along with two members of our own small team for Climate Change & Sustainability have recently taken part in discussions and engaged in training sessions with CTM prior to rolling out the training to all HIS staff. The new system allows bookers and travellers sight of more sustainable options both in terms of cost and in carbon emissions e.g. air travel -v- rail which is available at a glance within the new system and will be promoted as part of the all-staff roll out. Having everything in one system will allow us to calculate, measure and monitor our future travel emissions in a much easier and more streamlined way to further encourage reduction.

- *What are we going to do this year to improve active travel?*

HIS will continue to work closely with its Active Travel Champions, Healthy Working Lives group, the Comms team and our internal Sustainability Collaborative to promote active travel within the organisation and externally to visitors as part of the Active Travel Implementation Plan and its ambitious targets. We will consider how best to improve the promotion of active travel and will look to developing a staff travel survey to help us measure and monitor the impact/improvements we can encourage to achieve our goals in this area.

- *What are we going to do this year to improve public and community transport links to NHS sites and services?*

HIS does not provide any clinical services making it difficult for us to influence improvement for transport links to our offices. However, information for visitors regarding transport to our sites is detailed on our external website. This is expanded upon in our ASTP that provides more detailed links to train schedules, bus schedules and walking routes for both our sites. The intention is to put this on the VDU in Delta House or alternatively expand the information contained on the external website but requires Comms to look at this more closely to check this is possible and what other alternatives might be. HIS does not have any fleet cars, lease vehicles or bicycles. This will be a great achievement for HIS and as part of our Business Travel Policy we will help implement a standard that all staff who hire vehicles for business travel must follow to ensure we are using the most sustainable methods available.

## 10. Greenspace and biodiversity

### Biodiversity

Biodiversity, or the wide variety of living organisms within an environment, has declined at a rapid rate in the last 50 years. Evidence demonstrates that these trends are attributed to human activities, such as land use change, habitat degradation and fragmentation, pollution, and the impacts of climate change. The State of Nature report published in 2023 has highlighted the decline of nature across Scotland, with 11% of species now classed as threatened with extinction.

Public bodies in Scotland have a duty under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 ([Nature Conservation Scotland Act 2004](#)) to further the conservation of biodiversity, taking care of nature all around us. Furthermore, the Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011 ([Wildlife and Natural Environment Scotland Act 2011](#)) requires every public body to summarise their activities to meet this duty, through the production of a publicly available report.

- *How has biodiversity been mainstreamed across the organisation?*

We created a newsfeed on SOURCE signposting staff to climate awareness raising modules. Again, this was well received, and we will continue to promote sustainability and climate change through various communication methods. We developed and submitted the Delta House and Gyle Square flood risk assessments to NSS NHSScotland Environmental Sustainability Group. Both sites were assessed using the SEPA flood risk assessment tool and the results show we have a 0.1% risk of flooding. This has been shared with staff via our staff intranet the "Source".

- *What partnership working has been undertaken (internally with other boards or external organisation) to benefit biodiversity or sustainable greenspace management?*

Representatives from HIS met with NHS Assure and Scottish Government to discuss Biodiversity reporting for all 22 boards. We were a critical cog in the decision-making process when an agreement was reached that the biodiversity report would no longer be a standalone report but instead there would be three new questions, specific to biodiversity, added to the annual climate emergency and sustainability report. This new template was produced in collaboration by NHS Assure and HIS. In addition, NHS Assure staff representatives have been invited to attend the NBSG meeting to discuss and provide support on how we can improve our actions on biodiversity, transport and energy.

## 11. Sustainable procurement, circular economy, and waste

Earth Overshoot Day marks the date when our demand for resources exceeds what earth can regenerate in that year. In 2024, Global Earth Overshoot Day was 01 August, in 2025 it was 01 April and in 2026 it will be on 26 April all of which were or will be added to our Sustainability page on the staff intranet and highlighted to all staff via the Comms team.

For the UK, the picture is more worrying than what it was in previous years. The current level of consumption of materials is not sustainable and is the root cause of the triple planetary crises of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. We aim to reduce the impact that our use of resources has on the environment through adopting circular economy principles, fostering a culture of stewardship, and working with other UK health services to maximise our contribution to reducing supply chain emissions to net-zero by 2045.

- *What did we do last year to reduce the environmental impact of the goods and services we buy?*

HIS Procurement is delivered through the Scottish Ambulance Service (SAS). In 2024 a weighted tender evaluation scoring for environmental sustainability was introduced in which we provided suppliers additional scoring for offers that encompassed this requirement.

- *What are we doing this year to reduce environmental impact of the goods and services we buy?*

When procuring goods and services, the Procurement team recognise that supply chain sustainability must be considered to help determine the extent of the associated greenhouse gas emissions and social and environmental impacts. Procurement is committed via their 2023-26 Procurement Strategy, to utilising the [suite of sustainable procurement tools and guidance](#) in place. Tenders where possible, now incorporate weighted scoring considering aspects for review and evaluation and can include carbon footprint from manufacture to delivery point, re-useable vs single use product, reduced/bio-degradable packaging. They seek to identify further items which are single use and/or not recyclable and collaborate with suppliers to seek opportunities to switch to a more circular alternative and where possible, work in partnership with stakeholders to identify further areas in which circular economy principles can be adopted. Every tender requires the participating supplier to provide details of their sustainability offer and provision. We will endeavour to reduce the amount of waste we produce and increase how much of it is recycled.

- *What did we do last year to reduce our waste?*

HIS is a very small board compared with the larger territorial boards; therefore, our waste is miniscule in comparison. However, we still try to reduce waste year on year in line with targets through procurement and any other waste streams. Our cleaning contract is with a new company and through engagement with them they have provided the following update on waste reduction:

*“InnuScience products used are certified by Ecolabel and Ecologo as environmentally responsible, DEFRA Govt Buying Standard compliant and certified cruelty free by Leaping Bunny. We will install dilution control centre at your location where our cleaning operatives will pre-mix the product to manufacturer’s instructions & Safety Data Sheets. This means volume, weight, and frequency of cleaning products delivered to us is vastly reduced in comparison to using traditional products. Highly concentrated InnuScience products reduce the amount of liquid being transported in deliveries. We use our dilution control centre to ensure that the correct amount of water is added to these concentrates. Empty spray bottles are returned to the dilution centre for further use, helping to minimise wastage. These products are fully biodegradable - **Nu-Grip Plus** cleaner and power degreaser **Nu-Kleen All** for surface cleaning.”*

- *What are we doing this year to reduce our waste?*

The Facilities team engage with contractors to repair faulty equipment, explore warranty options where possible and maintain an excellent planned preventative maintenance schedule to ensure services along with furniture and fittings are all in good working order.

We continue to ensure all equipment being used for home working is returned to the office when a member of staff leaves the organisation including all ICT equipment and is reused for others where practically possible to reduce purchasing additional equipment for new starts. Any items sent out from the office will be packaged using recycled packaging materials such as boxes, bubble wrap or padded envelopes we have in the office rather than discarding these or purchasing new. As standard, staff are advised to return any used batteries for safe environmental disposal by the Facilities team. At the end of 2025 we have just begun to recycle returns of used chairs and those not fit for purpose coming from storage using Sustain via the Senator Group who are on the National Framework and have their own recycling facility. Once parts have been recycled we will receive a certificate showing how much has been diverted from landfill and will use this to monitor and measure recycling of waste in this area from 2026 onwards.

## 12. Environmental stewardship

- *What steps will we take this year to further develop and implement our EMS?*

Environmental stewardship means acting as a steward, or caretaker of the environment and taking responsibility for the actions which affect our shared environmental quality. This includes any activities which may adversely impact on land, air and water, either through the unsustainable use of resources or the generation of waste and pollution. Having an Environmental Management System (EMS) in place provides a framework that helps to achieve our environmental goals through consistent review, evaluation, and improvement of our environmental performance.

We have a very small team of 3 people and have a large and varied portfolio of work which makes demands on time very challenging. However, one member of the team has successfully completed and obtained a recognised qualification as an ISO14001 Lead Auditor.

In addition, we worked with NHS Assure colleagues and have access to ISO 14001 templates and have representation on EMS Group meetings. We planned to use the templates to carry out the 10-step plan we originally devised for 2025-26 but due to lack of capacity within the team over a considerable period of the year, we will now carry this over into 2026-27 as described overleaf:

1. Develop the scope of the EMS (identify interested parties internal and external)
2. Secure leadership commitment
3. Develop an Environmental Policy
4. Determine roles and responsibilities (identify an EMS Champion and an EMS team)
5. Hold an initial meeting
6. Determine environmental impacts and aspects
7. Identify any compliance obligations
8. Secure support to implement the system and any budget requirements
9. Set environmental objectives and develop an action plan
10. Monitor and measure progress

As the plan is developed and implemented, we will be able to assess our environmental performance and improve on baseline data.

## 13. Sustainable construction

- *What did we do last year to make our construction projects more environmentally sustainable?*

HIS as tenants do not undertake new builds but has in the past refurbished current office spaces. However, we have not undertaken any construction projects in the last 12 months and do not have any plans to do so in the next 12 months.

## 14. Sustainable communities

The climate emergency undermines the foundations of good health and deepens inequalities for our most deprived communities. The NHS touches every community in Scotland and has a responsibility to use our abilities as a large employer, major buyer, and one of the most recognised brands in the world, an 'anchor' organisation to protect and support our communities' health in every way we can.

- *What are we doing to act as an anchor institution for our local community?*

We are working towards developing & implementing initiatives to maximise opportunities to support our local community (staff volunteering, access to knowledge, supporting charities, foodbank at Delta House with regular pick-ups during the year, and shared services with the 3rd sector).

- *What are we doing to improve the resilience of our local community?*

We plan to establish a programme to educate staff, visitors and wider community about the importance of a balanced nutritional diet and benefits of healthy local foods. We want to work with local stakeholders e.g. local authorities, community groups, local and regional Health Resilience Partnerships, Community Planning and Civil Contingency partners in identifying risks posed by weather and the effects of climate change and to review the risks at least annually.

## 15. Conclusion

This is our fourth annual Climate Emergency and Sustainability Report. We will measure future progress using this information. The report states our progress against the areas including:

- Greenhouse gas emissions
- Climate change adaptation
- Building energy
- Sustainable care
- Travel and transport
- Greenspace and biodiversity
- Sustainable procurement, circular economy and waste
- Environmental stewardship

Our aims for the coming year are:

1. Incorporate climate change and adaptation within our Annual Delivery Plan.
2. Working towards Net-Zero targets and updating our Net-Zero Route Map.
3. Implement a car salary sacrifice scheme for electric vehicles & review our Cycle to Work Scheme
4. Gain board approval of the implementation of our updated Business Travel Policy.
5. Design and implement our environmental management system (EMS).

We will also aim to progress our EMS system and provide training for those identified as EMS group members. With the EMS system in place, we hope this will provide us with a platform to record our energy and waste usage and monitor our carbon footprint to enable us to record greater detail in our annual report. Our revised baseline data gathered this year will be our benchmark for improvement and we will continue to work towards achieving the targets set out in our net zero action plan supported by the implementation of our Active & Sustainable Travel plan and Business Travel policy.

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