

GREEN PLAN

2024/2026



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Introduction

“Human-induced climate change is causing dangerous and widespread disruption in nature and affecting the lives of billions of people around the world”.

Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change, 28th February 2023

The climate crisis impacts not only globally but locally, it is not only a national priority for the NHS but a governmental priority across the world which everyone must play their part in. As a key element of the Sheffield Healthcare System PCS will use its citywide role to promote, influence and champion green initiatives for primary care, and will ensure that it undertakes these duties in consideration of its wider impact to system partners.

Under its aspirations to provide high-quality healthcare for all, the NHS has now become the largest healthcare organisation in the world to pledge to be net zero by 2040. Whilst this is exceedingly challenging it is also necessary. As part of the NHS' commitment to be net zero it has asked for commitments from all healthcare providers to help it achieve its aims by committing both contractually and in spirit to net zero.

In order to achieve this target South Yorkshire Integrated Care Board has committed to a Sustainability and Green Plan which will determine how local system partners will work together to reduce carbon emissions. “Primary Care contributes around 25% of the 25kT of CO₂e emissions of the NHS. As the provider of at least 89-90% of care in the NHS, it is by far the most carbon efficient sector”. (NHS SY Sustainability and Green Plan).

Not only is the need for this action due to ever increasing damaging weather and climate events, but also due to the direct impact on human health. “The effects of this disproportionately affect poorer communities and exacerbates health inequalities” (SY Green Plan). As such, inaction will worsen the conditions for those most in need, thereby placing additional pressures onto our most vulnerable communities and putting even more pressure on NHS services.

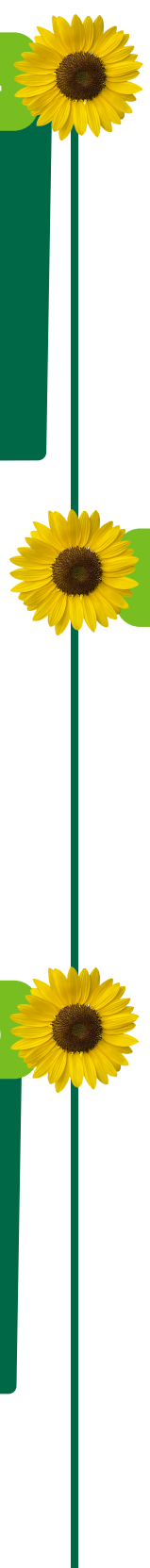
Primary Care Sheffield will be a local champion for green and sustainable practice. As a representative of Sheffield’s network of practices we will commit to wide ranging, short, medium and long-term aspirations to combat climate change, playing a key role in ensuring primary care system can deliver services as efficiently as possible and wherever possible bringing care closer to home to reduce the need for travel.

PCS also recognises the unprecedented demand on services currently, As such, this plan focuses on pragmatic, practical steps to take to support the NHS Green agenda and where possible taking measures to reduce carbon generation whilst supporting the primary care workforce through these challenging times.



The journey 2024-2026

Primary Care Sheffield's green plan is a 3-year commitment to improve our carbon position and meet these challenging ambitions through a structured approach. This plan will ensure that the organisation is in the best possible position to meet Sheffield City councils Carbon reduction plan for 2030 and the NHS ambitions for 2040.



2024

2024 will represent the first year of the plan where we will:

- Collect data to understand our current carbon generation and other environmental impacts.
- Identify areas where efforts should be focused to have the greatest impact.
- Establish early initiatives and the longer-term means to have a sustained impact.

2025

Further develop our carbon reduction policies in-line with the data collected and available intelligence:

- Use data to expand the scale and number of initiatives based on impact.
- Embed best practice throughout our policies, processes and services.
- Develop our offer to ensure where things are working well they are shared wider and where we continue to have challenges work to overcome these.

2026

Laying the foundations to continue to develop our greener practices into the future:

- Review our carbon generation and environmental impact based on the steps taken.
- Refine our carbon reduction policies and schemes to ensure they are fit for the future.
- Design our longer term green plan with clear outlines and plans for how we will establish ourselves as a carbon neutral organisation.

Areas of focus

Workforce and System Leadership

As outlined in the South Yorkshire Integrated Care Board [Green plan](#) and with further detail included in the Sheffield Primary Care Network Green Plan the vast majority of primary care sustainability initiatives will be developed and delivered through the city's Primary Care Networks. As a system leader in the city, Primary Care Sheffield will coordinate this and ensure there are effective forums to share best practice and effective collaboration. This includes the provision of an online 'green space' forum where practice team members can access resources and establish links to strengthen the city's collaborative offer.

The provision of this central space will also link in with the considerable work done within the city by [Greener Practice](#). This organisation have worked for many years across Sheffield, and beyond, to increase the profile of sustainable general practice and offer practical steps to improve this.

Year	Scheme
2024	We will develop and provide a 'Greener Sheffield' space on our website for practices to use to share resources and ask questions of other champions including those in the South Yorkshire 'Greener Practice' group
2024-2026	We will promote and raise awareness of green opportunities and carbon reduction schemes through our South Yorkshire Primary Care provider alliance meetings.
2024-2026	Liaise and work with South Yorkshire Integrated Care Board in a structured approach to establish what initiatives are being prioritised and ensure that where required are implemented and shared collaboratively.
2024-2026	Work with South Yorkshire Integrated Care Board and other pharmacy partners to support work on deprescribing and greener prescribing in a structured approach.
2024-2026	We will continue to work in partnership with South Yorkshire 'Greener Practice' group for guidance, sharing best practice and developing collaborative initiatives

Protected Learning Initiative (PLI)

As the facilitator for PLI events in Sheffield, PCS will ensure that PLIs have a consistent underpinning of sustainability in all that they do. We are collaborating with South Yorkshire Greener practices as our co-provider to consider what options there are available for practices and to aid learning and development of green initiatives. As noted in South Yorkshire ICB's Sustainability and Green plan "Engagement and education of workforce will be a key focus as with secondary care." Primary Care Sheffield aims to be the centre point for this with the cities practices, ensuring that good learning and best practice are shared through our PLIs.

In order to further enhance this commitment it has been agreed that for the 2024/25 financial year there will be a bespoke PLI event delivered focusing on sustainable general practice to further raise the profile across the Sheffield primary care system.

Year	Scheme
2024	We will work with the South Yorkshire 'Greener Practice' group to ensure all PLIs are underpinned by sustainable practice
2024-2026	We will continue to use a hybrid PLI approach to ensure that travel is not routinely required to attend events.



Sustainable Models of Care

PCNs represent a new world of opportunity for providing sustainable, affordable general practice. Ensuring a wider choice of care is available closer to home with less need to travel as people can stay within their communities for a broader range of care needs. This is already happening through Primary Care Sheffield's provision of enhanced access at local hubs.

In order to ensure sustainability underpins all of our care all of our current and new staff, clinical and non-clinical, will receive training on sustainable care provision through our induction process. This training will underpin all other areas of our mandatory and statutory training function ensuring a golden thread throughout what we do. This will ensure that all staff are empowered to flag working practices that aren't sustainable and to work as an organisation to resolve this.

Through our process of understanding our impact, planning how to mitigate this impact, and ensuring long-term changes are enacted to embed changes, we will be able to completely change the carbon impact of our care responsibly and safely.

Year	Scheme
2024	We will conduct a full appraisal of all of our services and whether there are opportunities for improving sustainability such as moving to more reusable equipment or changes in practice to ones generating less carbon
2024	We will refine and redevelop our organisational introduction materials for new starters to ensure there is a focus on sustainable practice from the first day they join the organisation



Digital Transformation

The Covid-19 pandemic forced almost all sectors to implement immediate and significant change in how they operated for both staff and service users. The healthcare sector was no exception to this and we have seen dramatic and wholesale change to how we operate. As the pandemic has become endemic these practices continue to persist though with varying degrees of continued adherence.

We will undertake a comprehensive review of our working practices for staff as well as patients which will include:

- Establishing our hybrid working policy for those who don't need to be at their work site every day.
- Reviewing and adapting our remote offer to patients. With over 30% of the sectors carbon footprint being generated from patient travel this is projected to have a significant impact on carbon generation.
- Move our organisation to a recognised 'Digital first' approach to our administration and patient liaison where paper and materials are only used where required rather than in every case.

Year	Scheme
2024	We will review and refine all of our policies to ensure they reflect a digital first approach which looks to provide paperless services where possible and safe to do so
2024	We will fully articulate our remote service offering to patients to ensure they are aware and understand the impact that reducing patient travel can have for services
2024-26	We will continue to enhance our service offer through the use of software (such as Anima) to provide more services remotely where possible
2024-26	Where colleagues do not need to physically travel to the office every day we will continue to offer a hybrid working approach and support this through our policies and guidance

Travel and Transport

Primary Care Sheffield are proud to be a part of the communities we represent and will be a strong advocate of supporting all of our communities to reduce their carbon emissions.

As part of our PCN green champions initiatives we will ensure that active travel opportunities are flagged across practices and will work with our system partners to share resources and opportunities for this. We will develop a range of resources for practices to utilise as well as sharing a weekly section in our practice communications on new developments as they arise for practices to share with patients.

Year	Scheme
2024	We will conduct our first ever staff travel survey to understand how our colleagues travel to work and the carbon impact this has on Sheffield
2024	We will undertake an active campaign for patients to promote active travel to appointments where suitable for both health benefits and carbon reduction
2025	We will offer a new range of services for colleagues to make active and sustainable travel easier such as salary sacrifice for bicycles and sustainable vehicles



Estates and Facilities

A large portion of our carbon footprint comes directly from the energy our practices use. In order to combat this we will, where possible, move our energy suppliers to ensure they all come from sustainable source providers in order to reduce the carbon footprint of the energy we use.

Within our own sites we will utilise the recently produced greener practice guide which has been co-developed with PCS and system partners to ensure that we are taking relevant steps to reduce our energy usage in our practices. We will support the move for each practice to have a green champion, where they want one, who will be part of our greener NHS PCN work.

Year	Scheme
2024	We will develop a clear understanding of the carbon impact of all of our estate and where possible move to sustainable energy suppliers
2024-25	We will review and where possible make investment into sustainable energy sources such as wind and solar in association with partners to reduce energy costs and carbon emissions
2024	We will ensure recycling options and processes are consistent across our sites
2024-26	We will routinely communicate grants and funding opportunities to practices where they can get funding to make their estate more carbon neutral

Medicines

Prescribing and inhaler usage represent by far the biggest carbon generator in primary care with an estimated 61% of all the sectors carbon footprint coming from medications. As such, no green plan would be successful without addressing this.

However, as with any change this significant this will only be possible through partnership working and collaboration.

PCS are committed to doing this in two ways:

1. **Being a trusted partner, representative of Sheffield's GPs.** We will work with healthcare commissioners and other partners to ensure that consistent messaging on opportunities and developments are communicated effectively and will ensure there are suitable mechanisms by which to ensure two-way communication.
2. **Ensuring our own practices are as sustainable as possible.** We will support and engage with any initiatives which arise to support the decarbonisation of these areas and will use best practice as advised by other partners. We will share any best practice with others to ensure that we consistently challenge ourselves to achieve our aims.

Year	Scheme
2024	Upon completion we will share, promote and utilise the South Yorkshire 'Greener Practice' guide
2024-26	We will continue to take a partnership approach to managing inhaler usage and work with the wider NHS as well as South Yorkshire Integrated Care Board in promoting this
2024-26	We will work with the South Yorkshire 'Greener Practice' group to provide weekly 'Green Bites' for practices to support on challenging changes to medicines and prescribing

Supply chain and procurement

As with any organisation, procurement can have a significant impact on the purchaser's carbon footprint. We are a Sheffield based organisation who are proud of our roots within the city and the many services it has to offer. As such all of our procurements and purchases will consider the carbon impact of this and will always try and source services locally within Sheffield wherever we can. Before signing contracts with any organisations we will ensure that we have completed our due diligence on their decarbonisation work and will not go into any agreements until we are satisfied they are making significant efforts on this front.

Where possible we will look to host sustainable initiatives on behalf of our practices and will coordinate this accordingly. We will offer to be the first point of contact for healthcare commissioners who wish to implement initiatives in primary care and will offer suitable support and input into these initiatives where requested.

Year	Scheme
2024	We will review and refine our policies and procurement documentation to ensure that in all cases our suppliers carbon reduction intentions are clear and positive
2024-26	We will ensure that with every supplier we consider the environmental impact and where possible will always source services as locally as possible
2024-26	We will develop a programme of work allowing practices to purchase services collectively and oversee this process for practices



Food and nutrition

Although food and nutrition is not as significant a carbon generator in primary care as it is in secondary care, there are still important considerations and opportunities within the sector which PCS is committed to supporting.

Our focus in this sector will be around education for both staff and patients in their food choices, ensuring wherever possible these are local.

Year	Scheme
2024-25	All of our dietary and nutrition information will be updated to reflect the potential to reduce carbon emissions by getting food locally sourced and that isn't ultra-processed
2024	All of the fruit purchased by PCS for staff will be seasonal and sourced from local providers



Adaptation

Our plan aims to be ambitious but realistic, and structured but allowing for change and further development. Whilst the plan outlines steps to be taken over the next three years with early commitments in each area, this is clearly subject to change over time and as such, will be updated annually to reflect growing understanding of our impact and the opportunities to mitigate this.

As well as meeting the above commitments we will set up and undertake a number of steps to underpin our commitments and to give us the means to continue to develop our green plan and deliver on it over the coming years.

Green Champions

We will develop a network of champions including:

- PCS staff to drive our green agenda and hold us to account on our commitments
- Our PCS practice and subsidiary staff to ensure that the changes are being felt and realised across our organisation and our full range of services
- PCNs where champions from across the city will have a voice to share best practice, learn from others and have a place to propose wholesale change.

Energy Choices

We will routinely ensure we are adhering to positive energy choices as a routine matter of principle in all we do:

- Ensuring lights are turned off as the last person leaves a room and where possible switching to automatic lights.
- Ensuring heating for our buildings is proportionate to its use and only used when required.
- Providing means for staff to routinely recycle old clothes and items to save them ending up as waste.

Waiting Rooms

We will use our waiting rooms and facilities to influence, learn from and empower our patients and communities to take sustainable choices in their every day lives.

- Where possible all leaflets and guidance will be provided via web/QR code as a first choice reducing the need for paper leaflets.
- We will ensure patients are made aware of the steps we are taking to reduce our carbon impact and the positive benefit this will have in their community.
- We will provide annual updates to the impact of our changes with easy-to-understand comparisons for patients to see the impact that is possible from positive change.

Carbon-Reducing/Off-Setting

In line with Sheffield City Council and NHS plans we will focus on carbon reduction rather than offsetting.

However, in order to meet the challenging targets of carbon reduction needed we will continually review and introduce effective carbon offsetting strategies where necessary.

- Looking at the potential to invest in the 'NHS Forest' scheme
- Scope where we can get resource and funding to invest in other offsetting schemes on behalf of our practices
- Look to work with partners who are funding carbon offsetting schemes such as energy providers.