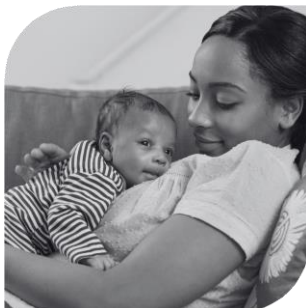




North Central London
Health and Care
Integrated Care System



NCL Green Plan

2025-2028

Our plan to improve health and wellbeing through sustainable healthcare

June 2025

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Foreword



Josephine Sauvage
Chief Medical Officer,
NCL ICB, Executive
Sponsor for Greener
NCL

As Chief Medical Officer for North Central London Integrated Care Board, I am proud to introduce our Green Plan for 2025-2028 - a bold and necessary step in our journey toward a healthier, more equitable, and environmentally sustainable future.

The climate crisis is not a distant threat; it is a present and growing public health emergency. Its impacts are already being felt across our communities - through rising levels of respiratory illness, heat-related health risks, and widening health inequalities. As a health and care system, we have both a responsibility and an opportunity to lead the way in responding to this challenge.

This Green Plan sets out how we will do just that. It builds on the strong foundations laid since 2022, with a proven governance model, a committed workforce, and a shared vision for a Greener NCL. It reflects the collective ambition of our NHS partners, local authorities, voluntary sector organisations, and residents to embed sustainability into every aspect of how we deliver care - from clinical transformation and digital innovation to medicines optimisation, travel, estates, and procurement.

Our approach is rooted in prevention, equity, and collaboration. We are

shifting care closer to home, reducing unnecessary interventions, and designing services that are not only clinically effective but also low in carbon. This aligns directly with the NHS's 10-Year Health Plan and our commitment to delivering a neighbourhood health service - where care is integrated, personalised, and delivered in the heart of our communities.

Digital innovation will be a key enabler of this transformation. By embedding sustainability into digital pathways - from virtual consultations to AI-supported diagnostics - we can improve access, reduce emissions, and ensure care is delivered in the most efficient and environmentally responsible way.

Crucially, this plan recognises the power of place. By working closely with local authorities and voluntary sector partners in our neighbourhoods, we have a unique opportunity to redesign services in ways that are kinder to our local environments, reduce harm to biodiversity, and maximise the co-benefits to health and wellbeing that come from living in greener, more resilient communities.

This plan is ambitious, and rightly so. Achieving Net Zero will require courage, innovation, and relentless focus. But it also offers us a unique opportunity: to reimagine a health and care system that is not only resilient to the challenges of climate change but actively contributes to a healthier planet and population.

I invite all our partners, staff, and residents to join us in delivering this vision. Together, we can create a legacy of sustainable healthcare for generations to come.

Foreword



Paul Fish
Chief Executive
Officer, Royal National
Orthopaedic Hospital,
Senior Responsible
Officer for Greener
NCL

We are proud to present the North Central London Green Plan 2025–2028—our collective roadmap to delivering a healthier, more equitable, and environmentally sustainable future for the communities we serve.

The climate crisis is not a distant threat—it is a present and growing challenge that directly impacts the health and wellbeing of our population. From air pollution and extreme weather to the rising burden of disease, the effects of environmental degradation are already being felt across our health and care system. As leaders in healthcare, we have both a responsibility and an opportunity to act.

This Green Plan builds on the strong foundations laid since 2022. It reflects the dedication of our staff, the strength of our partnerships, and the shared ambition across North Central London to embed sustainability into every aspect of our work—from clinical care and digital transformation to estates, medicines, travel, and procurement.

Our approach is rooted in collaboration. We have adopted a distributed leadership model that empowers teams across the system to lead change, supported by robust governance and a growing network of green staff champions. Together, we are creating a culture where sustainability is not an

add-on, but a core part of how we deliver high-quality care.

The next three years will be critical. We must accelerate progress, deepen integration, and ensure that every decision we make—clinical, operational, or strategic—considers its impact on people and the planet. This plan sets out clear actions, measurable goals, and a renewed commitment to transparency and accountability.

We are grateful to all those who have contributed to shaping this plan and who continue to drive forward our vision for a Greener NCL. With determination, innovation, and collective effort, we can build a health and care system that is not only fit for the future—but one that helps shape a better one.

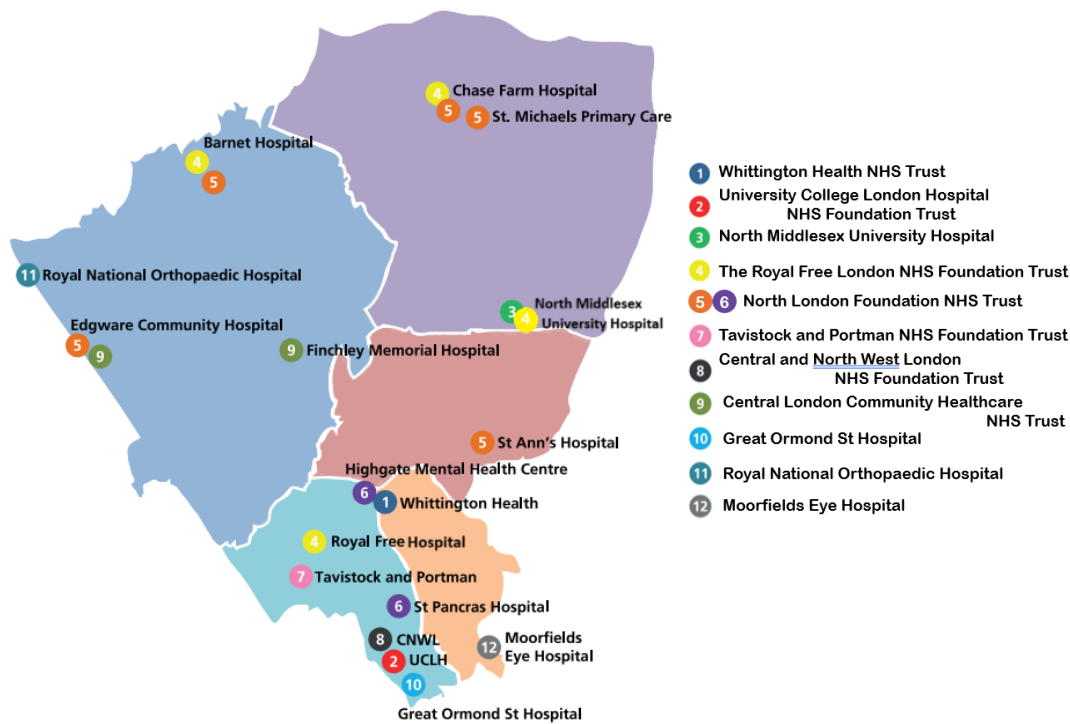
A man with curly brown hair and a beard is smiling broadly while talking on a silver smartphone. He is wearing a light blue button-down shirt. The background is blurred, suggesting an outdoor setting. A green rounded rectangle is overlaid on the bottom left of the image, containing the text.

Introduction

About North Central London

North Central London Integrated Care System

About us



437,371 registered population 389,300 resident population
Barnet

354,822 registered population 333,587 resident population
Enfield

331,754 registered population 264,200 resident population
Haringey

280,828 registered population 215,667 resident population
Islington

284,807 registered population 210,100 resident population
Camden



North Central London ICS: Neighbourhood Health Service Driving Greener, Healthier Futures

At the time of refreshing our NCL Green Plan for 2025–2028, North Central London Integrated Care System (NCL ICS) is strengthening its commitment to a neighbourhood model that brings health, care, and wellbeing closer to where people live and work. By designing services around communities rather than organisations, we are shifting away from a reactive, medical model toward a more proactive, preventative approach—supporting people to live well in their local areas, reducing the need for unnecessary travel, and fostering joined-up, sustainable care.

Going further and faster on climate action

The neighbourhood health service model provides a practical and powerful framework for accelerating delivery of the Green Plan. Locally delivered care, rooted in prevention and early intervention, helps reduce avoidable journeys and clinical activity, lowering emissions and resource use. Social prescribing, digital access, and community-based models of support all contribute to reducing our environmental footprint while improving patient experience and outcomes. By embedding sustainability principles within neighbourhood working, we are able to take more targeted and impactful action, tailoring solutions to local context and supporting communities to play an active role in the transition to net zero.

Building broader, stronger partnerships

Neighbourhood working enables us to build and strengthen partnerships across local authorities, primary care, community providers, housing, and the voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector. These partnerships are central to tackling the wider determinants of health and ensuring our places are resilient in the face of climate impacts. This cross-sector collaboration means our sustainability ambitions are shared, not siloed, helping us make more effective use of local assets, avoid duplication, and deliver change that is socially, economically and environmentally sustainable.

Co-benefits for communities and the system

Our neighbourhood approach delivers multiple co-benefits:

- Reduced emissions through fewer hospital visits, more active travel, and greener care models
- Healthier communities through prevention, connection to local support, and access to nature
- Greater resilience through locally driven solutions that adapt to changing climate and demand
- System efficiency through reduced pressure on acute services and more coordinated local care

By embedding the Green Plan within our neighbourhood model, NCL is creating the conditions for faster, more inclusive and more sustainable progress—benefiting people, communities, and the planet.

A photograph of a woman with short, vibrant red hair, smiling warmly as she holds a baby. The woman is wearing a white ribbed turtleneck sweater and a small earring. The baby, dressed in an orange and white striped long-sleeved shirt and grey pants, looks directly at the camera. The background is softly blurred, showing a home interior with a plant and a colorful cushion. A green rounded rectangle is overlaid on the bottom left of the image, containing the text 'Our delivery model' in white.

Our delivery model



Our Delivery Model

Workforce and leadership

Our people are crucial to leading and delivering the green agenda across NCL, whilst equally being a key stakeholder group whose wellbeing is influenced by green policy. Staff across NCL are increasingly enthusiastic and committed to delivering more sustainable health and care. With further support and training, there is real potential to embed sustainable thinking into everyday decision-making. Strengthening this capability can help reduce the system's carbon footprint in areas such as commuting, business travel, and digital tool use.

Workforce is a key enabler for the successful implementation of the NCL Green Plan 2025–2028. Our people, whether in clinical, operational or support roles, are central to driving the cultural and behavioural change required to deliver a more sustainable health and care system. Equipping, empowering, and engaging staff will be essential to meeting our environmental goals while continuing to improve population health and reduce inequalities.

We are committed to fostering collaboration across organisational boundaries, supporting staff to build the knowledge, skills and behaviours necessary to deliver healthcare that is environmentally, socially, and financially sustainable.

Progress to date

The North Central London (NCL) Green Plan is led at a system level and reflects the collective ambitions and activities of organisations across the Integrated Care System (ICS). Each NHS Trust within NCL will have its own individual Green Plan, which complements and aligns with the wider ICS approach to sustainability.

Dr Jo Sauvage, Chief Medical Officer, serves as the ICB Board Executive accountable for the NCL Green Programme. Paul Fish, Chief Executive of the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital (RNOH), is the Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) for Greener NCL and chairs both the NCL Green Programme Oversight Board and the NCL Green Partnership Board.

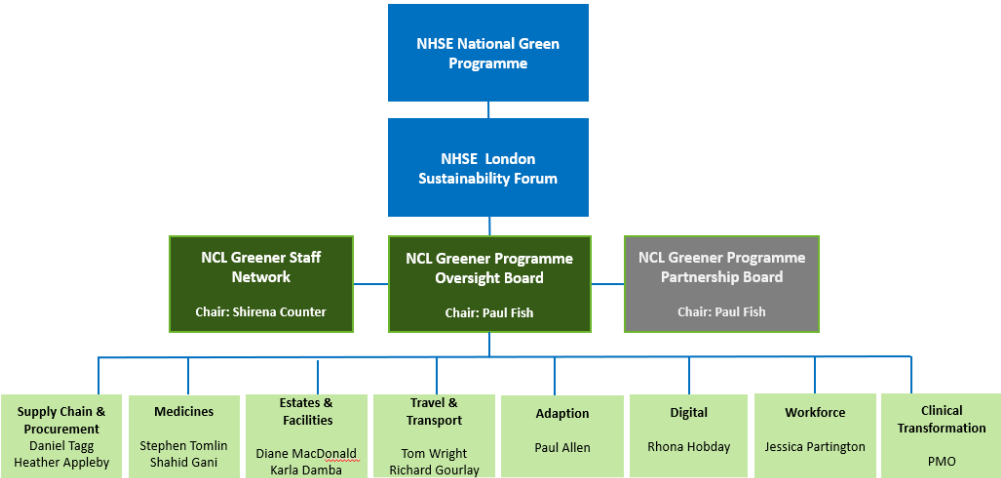
Established in September 2021, this governance structure brings together leaders and partners from across the system, united by a shared vision for a Greener NCL.

The delivery of the 2022–2025 NCL Green Plan was underpinned by a distributed leadership model, with each priority area co-led by senior leaders from across NCL organisations. This reflects our commitment to a collaborative, system-wide approach. Many of these areas were further supported by sub-groups reporting into the Programme Oversight Board, providing strong coordination and accountability

Oversight and Escalation

Delivery Assurance

Area of Focus Subgroups



at every level.

This model has laid a robust foundation for the 2025–2028 Green Plan, where we will continue to strengthen this structure, deepen integration, empower leadership at all levels, and accelerate delivery across the system.

In parallel, all organisations within the NCL Integrated Care System, including the ICB, have established or are actively engaged in Green Staff Networks. These networks are instrumental in driving staff engagement, supporting shared learning, and embedding sustainability into everyday practice.

Where we can make an impact 2025-2028

The 2025–2028 NCL Green Plan builds on a well-established and effective leadership and governance model that has guided our sustainability journey to date.

Strategic oversight remains with Dr Jo Sauvage, Chief Medical Officer, who continues as the ICB Board Executive responsible for the NCL Green Programme.

Paul Fish, Chief Executive of the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital (RNOH), continues as the Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) for Greener NCL and chairs both the Green Programme Oversight Board and the Green Partnership Board.


The 2025–2028 Plan will be delivered through the proven distributed leadership model, enabling shared ownership and cross-organisational collaboration across all areas of focus.

Together, this leadership and governance framework provides the clarity, accountability, and system-wide coordination needed to deliver on the priorities of the 2025–2028 Green Plan, ensuring sustainability is embedded at every level of the NCL system.


While delivery of the workforce area of focus under the 2022–2025 NCL Green Plan was largely driven by individual organisations, there is now a clear and shared ambition to adopt a more joined-up and coordinated approach. This renewed focus will support greater alignment, enhanced collaboration, and more consistent progress toward our collective sustainability goals.

Key workforce objectives


Our aim is to build capability and confidence at all levels of the workforce, embedding sustainability into everyday practice across the system. To support this, we will:




Collaborate with leads for each Green Plan area of focus to assess the skills, roles, and capacity required for effective delivery by identifying current strengths, gaps, and opportunities for development.




Use this insight to identify and map relevant specialist training opportunities for key staff groups, such as board members, procurement, finance, estates and facilities teams, and clinicians, which can be signposted and promoted system-wide and nurses for children and young people



Work closely with system workforce and sustainability leads to develop a coordinated, system-wide approach to building sustainability capability. This will include promoting the uptake of core training modules available through the Greener NHS Training Hub.



Assess workforce capacity and skill requirements for delivering the green plan, considering good practice examples, such as the development of hybrid sustainability roles, green apprenticeships, fellowships to help shape a future-ready, sustainable workforce.



We will work to develop a set of metrics to measure the impact of workforce sustainability initiatives. These may include engagement with shared content, uptake of e-learning modules, the number of sustainability-focused events delivered, and the reach of bespoke communications and engagement activities.



Areas of Focus

Our plan for the next three years



Net Zero Clinical Transformation

Introduction

Clinical care accounts for around 40% of the NHS's carbon footprint, making it a critical area for decarbonisation. Without embedding carbon reduction into clinical decision-making and service redesign, we risk missing key opportunities to provide more sustainable care — such as switching to low-carbon treatments, avoiding unnecessary procedures, and optimising patient pathways.

In North Central London (NCL), we are focused on three system-wide shifts: shifting care from hospital to community, advancing technology from analogue to digital, and transitioning clinical models from a focus on sickness to one centred on prevention. These are not only essential for transforming services and improving population health outcomes, but they are also fundamental to our net zero approach

Progress to date

Significant progress has been made on net zero clinical transformation across North Central London (NCL). We have embedded Patient Initiated Follow-Up (PIFU) pathways across a range of specialties, empowering patients and reducing unnecessary appointments. The expansion of Advice and Guidance has enabled primary and secondary care clinicians to collaborate more effectively, supporting timely decision-making and avoiding avoidable referrals.

In addition, we have introduced new digital pathways that minimise face-to-face appointments and reduce the need for patient travel, contributing to a lower carbon footprint. The Long-Term Conditions Locally Commissioned Service (LTC LCS) has further strengthened our approach, with multi-disciplinary teams (MDTs) working together to streamline appointments, reduce duplication, and better coordinate care around the needs of patients. Collectively, these changes are supporting more sustainable models of care while improving patient experience and outcomes.

Areas of opportunity for 2025-2028

NCL is committed to delivering care that is more proactive, preventative, and closer to home. Over the next three years, we will continue to shift towards out-of-hospital and digitally-enabled care where clinically appropriate, while placing greater emphasis on preventing ill health and tackling health inequalities.

Net zero clinical transformation means embedding sustainability into the way we design and deliver services, ensuring that care is high-quality, preventative, and low in carbon emissions at every stage of the patient journey.

To support this ambition, we will focus on the following actions by 2028, these priorities reflect our ongoing commitment to delivering healthcare that supports both people and the planet.

Action	Description	Deadline
Reduce emissions across patient pathways	Continue to work collaboratively across primary, secondary, community and voluntary sector services to identify and reduce carbon emissions throughout entire patient pathways	By 2028
Embed Net Zero in all service changes	Collaborate as a system to agree and apply a clear set of Net Zero principles that support teams to consider environmental sustainability in the planning of all service changes, reconfiguration programmes, and pathway redesigns—making it a core part of clinical and operational decision-making	By 2028



Digital Transformation

Introduction

We recognise that strong digital foundations are essential for transforming care by improving access, quality, and productivity while delivering against the NHS's net zero targets. Digital innovations, including virtual consultations, remote monitoring, and AI-driven diagnostics, play a critical role in ensuring efficient delivery, careful resource use, optimising workflows, and improving operational and clinical efficiency.

However, we are also mindful of the environmental impact of digital services, particularly the energy demands of data storage, electronic patient records and the carbon footprint of outdated digital infrastructure. We are committed to adopting energy-efficient technologies, leveraging cloud-based solutions with lower emissions, and ensuring that digital advancements contribute to both improved patient outcomes and environmental stewardship. Therefore, a strategic focus is needed to maximise the sustainability benefits of digital transformation while mitigating its unintended consequences.

Progress to date

In 2024/25, NCL had the opportunity to participate in the national Greener by Design programme. Through funding secured via a competitive process, a 10-week qualitative research study was established to support the development of a digital sustainability assurance framework for digital investments in the NHS, with NCL as a test case. As part of the process, information was captured on the wide range of sustainability initiatives taking place across NCL. It is envisaged that learning from these projects will provide a platform to identify which could be successfully adopted cross-sector in the future. This work creates a strong foundation to build on in the 2025–2028 Green Plan, where digital sustainability will have an increasingly important role.

Areas of opportunity for 2025-2028

Action	Description	Deadline
Leverage digital transformation	Maximise the benefits of digital transformation to reduce emissions and improve patient care, for example, by reducing the use of paper and providing virtual pathways where clinically appropriate	By 2028
Embed sustainability in digital services	Supported by the Digital Maturity Assessment, consider opportunities to embed sustainability in digital services, such as by: using circular and low-carbon approaches to IT hardware management, which may include longer device lifetimes, leasing models, buying refurbished or remanufactured equipment and PC power down configuration; considering low carbon hosting; promoting good data hygiene (such as deduplication and archiving); and engaging digital suppliers	By 2028



Medicines

Introduction

Medicines contribute to 23% of North Central London's (NCL) carbon footprint, with the majority of these emissions resulting from the procurement of medicines. However, the prescribing, use and disposal of medicines also represent a significant opportunity to reduce emissions and embed sustainability across health and care.

At a national level, medicines account for around 25% of total NHS carbon emissions. A small number of medicines are responsible for a disproportionately large share of this footprint. For example, inhalers contribute approximately 3% and anaesthetic gases around 2% of the NHS's total emissions.¹

In addition to their carbon impact, challenges such as overprescribing, inappropriate use and poor disposal of medicines contribute to environmental harm and resource inefficiency. Pharmaceuticals entering water systems also raise concerns around pollution and antimicrobial resistance.

To meet NCL's net zero ambitions, we must reduce unnecessary prescribing, switch to lower-carbon medicines where clinically appropriate, and support better use and disposal practices. Embedding sustainability into medicines optimisation not only reduces emissions but can also enhance patient care and reduce waste across the system.

Progress to date

Over the duration of the 2022–2025 North Central London (NCL) Green Plan, we have made significant strides in embedding sustainability into medicines optimisation. Across acute, community, and primary care settings, our system-wide commitment has translated into meaningful reductions in emissions from high-impact medicines, alongside improvements in prescribing practices and patient care.

¹ NHS England (2020) Delivering a 'Net Zero' National Health Service. [Online] Available at: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/greenemhs/a-net-zero-nhs/>

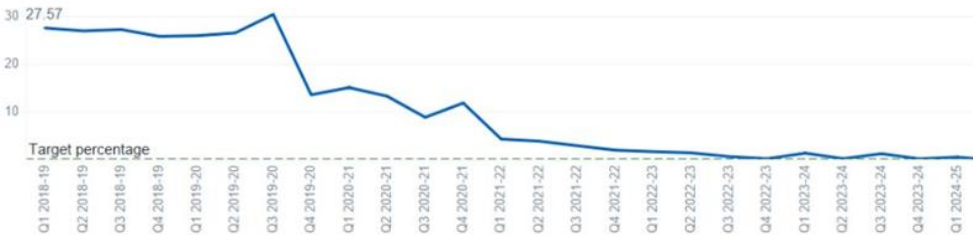
The following initiatives illustrate the tangible progress made in this critical area:

Volatile gases: desflurane reduction

Anaesthetic gases are routinely used in everyday surgeries, with desflurane being one of the most common administered in the NHS. However, desflurane has a disproportionately high environmental impact, its global warming potential is around 20 times greater than that of other commonly used anaesthetic gases.

In response, all NCL trusts committed to reducing its use to below 5% of total volatile anaesthetic gases by December 2022. This target was met ahead of schedule, and usage has remained consistently below this threshold since Q1 2021/22, reflecting a proactive and sustained shift to lower-carbon anaesthetic options.

The below graph shows desflurane as a percentage (%) of all volatile anaesthetic gases: litres of desflurane divided by the litres of volatile anaesthetic gases issued by trust pharmacy system (note: this includes waste and returns). A downward trend shows a lower usage of desflurane.



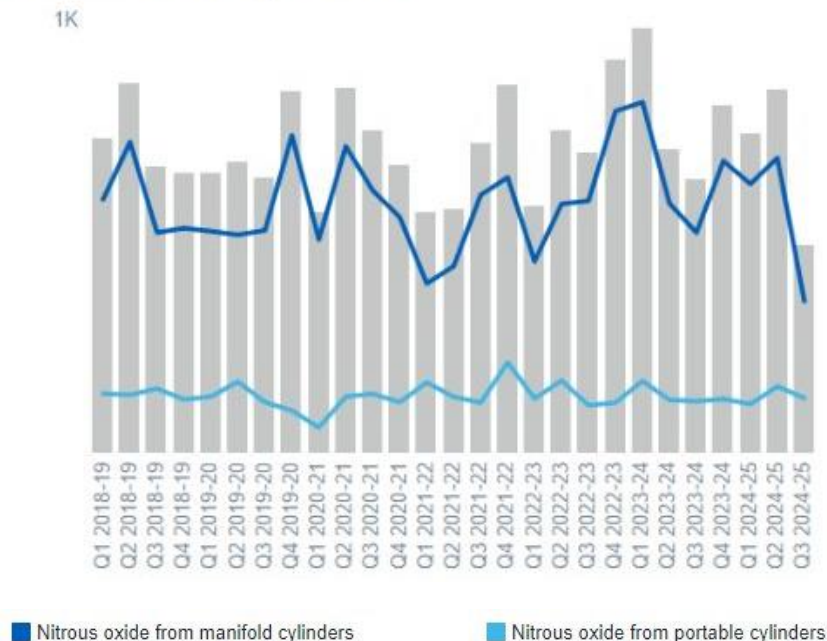
Volatile gases: nitrous oxide reduction

Nitrous oxide is another widely used anaesthetic gas. Although its global warming potential is lower than that of desflurane, it still has a significant environmental impact, accounting for 75% of emissions from anaesthetic gases and around 2% of NHS England's total carbon footprint.

Trusts in NCL aimed to reduce nitrous oxide use by 40% by December 2023. While the formal target has not yet been fully achieved, significant progress has been made. A major enabler has been the transition away from manifold-based systems, which has now been completed in most NCL trusts. This infrastructural change is expected to yield a notable reduction in emissions, with full impact data to follow in the next reporting period.

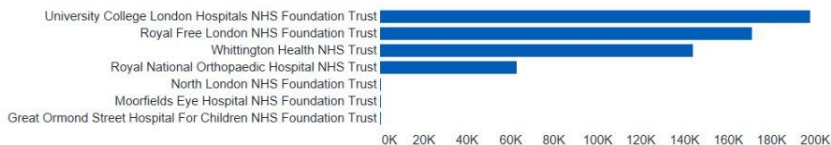
Emissions (tCO₂e) from nitrous oxide

The carbon equivalent emissions (tCO₂e) of nitrous oxide procured to trusts, split into manifold and portable cylinders. A downward trend in manifold cylinders is likely to indicate a reduction in waste. Bars show the total of the lines selected on the dropdown above.



Volume of nitrous oxide from manifold cylinders by provider

Jan-Mar 2022



Nov 2024 – Jan 2025



Sustainable inhalers

We were set an ambitious target to reduce carbon emissions from inhalers by 50% by 2028, based on a 2019/20 baseline. This equates to an annual reduction of approximately 6–7%, which has been consistently achieved each year of the 2022–2025 planning cycle. These reductions have been driven by increased prescribing of dry powder and soft mist inhalers, clinician education and patient engagement initiatives to support the transition to lower-carbon respiratory care pathways.

NCL carbon reduction from inhalers target

50% reduction by 2028, from a 2019/20 baseline

Year	Annual reduction	Cumulative reduction	NCL reduction achievement*
2019/20	Baseline		
2020/21	6.3%	6.3%	
2021/22	6.3%	12.5%	
2022/23	6.3%	18.8%	
2023/24	6.3%	25.0%	29.4%
2024/25	6.3%	31.3%	34.7%
2025/26	6.3%	37.5%	
2026/27	6.3%	43.8%	
2027/28	6.3%	50.0%	

* Data from PresQIPP dashboards

Areas of opportunity for 2025-2028

Action	Description	Deadline
Nitrous oxide	Work with trusts to reduce nitrous oxide use by 40%	By 2028
Greener respiratory care in primary care	6-7% carbon reduction annually from inhalers	By 2028
Tackling overprescribing and oversupply	Develop a project plan to address overprescribing using shared decision-making	Initial project plan by 2025/26 Project plan to be refreshed on an annual basis
Reducing medicines waste – community	Increase yellow bin use by 5%	By 2028
Reducing medicines waste – hospital	Decrease yellow bin use by 5%	By 2028
Promoting environmentally friendly formulations – hospital	Embed pill-swallowing support programmes to reduce liquid medicine use by 5%	By 2027
Promoting environmentally friendly formulations – community	Pilot community-based pill-swallowing support for one drug, aiming for 10% reduction in liquid formulation use	Pilot to begin by 2026
IV-to-oral switch	Develop and implement guidance for timely transition from IV to oral formulations where clinically appropriate	Guidance implementation by 2026
Reducing the use of paper-based medicines information	All hospitals in NCL to offer scannable, digital medicines information accessible to patients via smartphones or bedside devices	By 2026



Travel and Transport

Introduction

The NHS accounts for 3.5% of all UK road traffic, with patient, staff, and supply chain transport generating significant emissions and air pollution. Addressing this is a priority for NCL if it is to achieve its net zero targets. We need to transition to more sustainable travel options for staff, patients, and goods but there are economic, behavioural and structural barriers that makes this difficult.

At the time of this Green Plan refresh, an updated carbon footprint measure is not available. However, progress has been made in transitioning to an electric vehicle fleet and promoting electric vehicles through staff salary sacrifice schemes. In addition, a proportion of outpatient consultations has shifted to virtual appointments, helping to reduce the need for patient travel.

Progress to date

- Completion of staff travel surveys that have helped shape ongoing sustainable travel action plans
- 14% of the vehicle fleet is now zero emission vehicles and the majority of providers (four of six) that own or lease vehicles have now restricted future leases or purchases to ultra-low emission or zero emission vehicles
- 140 electric charging points implemented across the system at provider level
- Two supply chain vehicles removed from deliveries as review of consolidated distribution model from Enfield
- All providers are delivering at a minimum 20% of their outpatient consultations via virtual or digital means. This will continue to be embedded across organisations
- Introduction of Brompton bicycles for hire at Whittington Hospital to encourage more active commuting and community

travel. Expansion of electric bike available to services at Central London Community Health for community visits

- We have established links with Transport for London (TfL) and local authority colleagues through the NCL Travel & Transport Working Group, with contributions focused on information sharing and mutual insight. While formal joint programmes are not yet in place, strengthening these connections remains a priority as we work towards more integrated, system-wide approaches to sustainable travel

Areas of opportunity for 2025-2028

The action areas below include those set out by NHSE in its Travel and Transport Strategy 2023.

Action	Description	Deadline
Sustainable travel plans	Every NCL provider will have developed and published a sustainable travel plan in line with NHS England guidance	By 31 December 2026
Salary sacrifice car lease schemes	100% of all salary sacrifice car lease schemes across NCL providers will only offer zero-emission (EV) vehicles	By 31 December 2026
New owned/leased vehicles	All newly purchased or leased vehicles by NCL providers will be zero-emission vehicles (excluding ambulances)	From 31 December 2027
NHS fleet transition	90% of the NHS fleet across NCL providers will consist of ultra-low emission or zero-emission vehicles	By 31 December 2028
Partnerships	Form partnerships with local authorities and local transport authorities to maximise funding and infrastructure opportunities on behalf of the ICS member organisations	TBC

Staff travel survey	All NCL providers will complete a staff travel survey at least every two years, with the first new survey completed by December 2025	By 31 December 2025
Active travel promotion	Mileage rate for bicycle travel: All NCL providers will offer a mileage reimbursement rate for business travel by bicycle equivalent to the car mileage rate (currently 59p per mile)	By 31 December 2027
	Secure e-bicycle charging: All NCL providers will have installed secure electric charging points for approved e-bicycles at provider sites	By 31 December 2028
	E-bike hubs and active travel events: Install at least one e-bike hub (e.g., Lime/Forest) at each NCL provider site and hold a minimum of two active travel promotion events annually	Starting in 2026
Electric vehicle charging points	All new parking infrastructure projects initiated after April 2025 will allocate at least 10% of spaces to electric vehicle charging, with plans for expandable capacity	By April 2025
Non-emergency patient transport services (NEPTS)	Ensure that at least 80% of non-emergency patient transport vehicles across the five re-procuring providers are zero-emission vehicles	By 31 December 2028
Remote care	Increase virtual outpatient consultations by at least 20% compared to the 2024 baseline, ensuring digital inclusion is maintained	By 31 December 2027
Carbon footprint reduction	TBC	TBC



Estates & Facilities

Introduction

The NHS estate plays a pivotal role in achieving a greener, more resilient health system. Estates and facilities are by far the largest contributors to NCL's carbon footprint, with energy use alone accounting for 13% of our total emissions. This makes decarbonising our buildings not only an environmental imperative, but a strategic priority for our region's sustainability efforts.

Much of our estate infrastructure is aging, and it is not energy efficient or designed to cope with the increasing frequency of extreme weather events. This creates significant challenges for both reducing emissions and ensuring the reliability and sustainability of our healthcare services, emphasising the need for adaptation plans that address these risks and enhance long-term resilience

At the same time, we must also ensure that we are using our spaces more efficiently by maximising utilisation, reducing energy waste, and addressing void and underused areas across the system.

Supporting the decarbonisation of primary care estates and facilities is also critical. Improving their sustainability not only reduces emissions but also enhances the resilience, efficiency, and quality of care delivered at the community level. We must be mindful, however, that some interventions cannot be funded by the NHS due to the Premises Cost Directions (2024), which set out eligible expenditure.

To meet our net zero goals, we must take a coordinated and ambitious approach to transforming our estate, both to reduce emissions and to prepare for the environmental challenges ahead.

Our refreshed Green Plan aligns with the ICS 10-year infrastructure strategy, ensuring that sustainability is embedded into long term planning, guiding our efforts to create a resilient, low carbon healthcare estate for the future.

Progress to date

Net Zero commitments are part of the NCL's Estates and Infrastructure Strategy. These commitments have already driven tangible progress across the system, with organisations taking action to reduce emissions.

Trust estates

Across our Trust estates, progress has been made across several key areas. These include improving energy efficiency through the installation of LED lighting, replacing traditional heating and energy systems with low carbon alternatives, phasing out the combustion of fossil fuels where feasible, and increasing on site renewable energy generation through the installation of solar panels.

For new builds and refurbishment projects, low and zero carbon modern construction methods are required, supported by a whole life costing approach to ensure long term sustainability, flexibility and value.

Trusts have also taken steps to maintain and expand green spaces, with attention to protecting biodiversity wherever possible. Green spaces contribute not only to environmental goals but also play an important role in supporting the wellbeing of both patients and staff.

Further details on each Trust's progress can be found in their individual Green Plans. In addition, initial discussions have begun with local councils to explore potential opportunities for connecting NHS sites to local heat network systems.

Primary care estate

A key area of focus for the ICB has been supporting the decarbonisation of primary care estates.

We have carried out a comprehensive baselining exercise in understanding our primary care premises and identifying where decarbonisation opportunities exist. This baselining approach was later adopted across London as a model of best practice.

Practices categorised as 'flex estate' were identified. This is estate that is of an acceptable quality, where investment can be secured long-term. Out of these 'flex' practices, fourteen were selected as vanguard sites to initiate targeted work in developing them into 'core estates' - good quality, fit for purpose and future proof estate that aligns with NHS's estates sustainability ambitions.

Each site underwent an energy audit, which informed the development of bespoke energy and decarbonisation plans. Additional support was provided to assist practices in identifying and applying for relevant funding opportunities.

System wide

An NCL wide analysis on EPC ratings is also underway, due to the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard (MEES) requirements – requesting all non-domestic privately owned properties to have EPC B by 2030.

Across both our primary and secondary care estates, assessments have been undertaken to identify underutilised and void spaces, which will inform future planning on how best to repurpose and optimise these areas for improved efficiency and service delivery.

Areas of opportunity for 2025-2028

Action	Description	Deadline
Collaborate via Estate Board	We will continue collaborating with local partners via our system-level Estate Board to ensure estate decarbonisation efforts are aligned with local priorities and infrastructure plans, and support trusts where needed, to develop applications for funding opportunities such as PSDS funding	By 2028
Support primary care decarbonisation	Building on the progress to date, we will continue to support primary care through our decarbonisation programme, working with flex estates to aid their transition into core estates, while also engaging and supporting other primary care providers to actively participate in decarbonisation efforts	By 2028



Supply Chain & Procurement

Introduction

Over 60% of the NHS's carbon emissions are linked to its supply chain, influenced by factors such as carbon-intensive manufacturing, single-use products, and logistical inefficiencies. In North Central London (NCL), procurement practices often involve suppliers who may not yet have clear Net Zero commitments, which can make it more challenging to align fully with NHS sustainability ambitions.

While the Integrated Care System has made meaningful progress, there are ongoing challenges, including limited visibility of Scope 3 emissions and continued reliance on disposable items.

To meet national sustainability targets and build long-term resilience, it will be important to continue strengthening sustainable procurement policies and deepening engagement with suppliers.

Progress to date

Public Sector Supply Chain Excellence Award

- NCL ICS won the 2023 Public Sector Supply Chain Excellence Award for its innovative personal, protective equipment distribution hub and sustainability-focused logistics, with over 1.8 billion items distributed through the new hub, reducing waste and improving efficiency.

NCL Courier Procurement

- A system-wide courier procurement was completed in 2023 for provider trusts across NCL, with a 10% sustainability and social value weighting
- The contract was awarded to eCourier, with implementation supported by the social value monitoring tool
- In December 2024, eCourier provided its first review of social value performance progress
- In April 2025, a project group was launched to streamline courier services through route consolidation and demand management, with

expected sustainability benefits under development

10% sustainability and social value weighting in procurement

- A 10% weighting is now embedded across relevant procurement processes as part of business as usual.
- Supplier engagement workshops have been held to communicate NHS Net Zero expectations

NCL ICS social value procurement framework

- NCL supported the development and adoption of a social value tool, a project led by the London Procurement Partnership (LPP), for use throughout the tendering and contract management process

NCL supply and distribution model

- The NCL Distribution Hub at Unit 2 Chalk Mill Drive is now operational, consolidating NHS supply chain deliveries
- A shared supply chain vision and objectives is in place, and further delivery consolidation opportunities are being explored

Inventory management

- A roadmap has been implemented, enhancing traceability and reducing over-ordering

Radio frequency identification medical device asset tracking pilot

- This pilot was completed in Whittington Health and Great Ormond Street Hospital, demonstrating improvements in compliance, resilience, and efficiency
- A 'Blueprint on a Page' was published to share outcomes via the FutureNHS Collaboration Platform
- The workstream has since been stood down, and trusts are now progressing local business cases independently

NCL waste training package

- A harmonised waste induction and refresher training package has been developed and agreed for local adoption by Trusts across NCL. This supports consistent standards and awareness across the system

Catering and food procurement subgroup

- A dedicated catering/food subgroup has been established under the NCL Facilities Procurement Group. The group is actively sharing best practices and exploring quick-win sustainability projects

Areas for opportunity for 2025-28

Action	Description	Deadline
Embed NHS Net Zero supplier roadmap requirements	Integrate roadmap criteria into all procurement processes and track compliance via KPIs	Ongoing, with full implementation by 2026
Encourage supplier participation in Evergreen Assessment	Promote and support supplier completion of the Evergreen Sustainable Supplier Assessment to benchmark sustainability performance	80% supplier participation by end of 2026
Expand NCL PPE and NHS supply chain distribution hub model	Replicate the successful distribution hub approach in other procurement categories to drive efficiency and sustainability	Begin expansion in 2025; complete rollout by 2027
Implement circular economy principles	Introduce initiatives such as product take-back schemes and remanufacturing to reduce waste and emissions	Pilot schemes by mid-2025; scale by 2027
Scale inventory management and Scan4Safety	Accelerate rollout of the Scan4Safety programme and robust	100% ICS adoption by 2026

	inventory management, building on over 1.5 million items scanned	
Prioritise reusable and low-carbon alternatives	Replace single-use items with reusable and low-carbon options where clinically appropriate	Ongoing; measure uptake through KPIs annually
Leverage ICS collective purchasing power	Use joint ICS procurement to influence supplier practices and drive adoption of sustainable solutions	Strategy in place by end of 2025; review impact annually



Adaptation

Introduction

Climate change poses an urgent and increasing threat to the NHS' ability to deliver safe, effective, and equitable care. It is already placing growing pressures on services, affecting health outcomes particularly vulnerable populations such as the elderly, those with respiratory and cardiovascular conditions, and people living in deprived areas.

The rising frequency and severity of extreme weather events, such as flooding, heatwaves, cold spells, and episodes of poor air quality, introduce both direct risks (like injury, heat stress, and service disruption) and indirect risks (including vector borne diseases, food safety from hotter weather, and impacts on mental health). Without proactive planning and swift action, these challenges will further undermine health outcomes, deepen existing inequalities, and place additional pressure on our health and care system.

In North Central London (NCL), we are particularly vulnerable to extreme heat events due to urban heat island effects in central areas, which exacerbate the risks posed by rising temperatures. This makes our region especially susceptible to heat-related health issues, such as heat stress and respiratory complications.

Air quality levels in NCL are generally consistent with the broader London area, which in turn tends to have poorer air quality compared to many other regions in the UK. There are also specific pockets within NCL, particularly in areas of higher deprivation, where pollution levels are significantly worse. Air quality is both a driver and consequence of climate-related health risks. Poor air quality is a significant public health issue linked to heart and lung disease, childhood asthma, and premature death. By aligning with and supporting efforts that tackle root causes, such as emissions from transport, energy use, and industrial activities, this not only reduces environmental impact but also leads to tangible health co-benefits.

We are working collaboratively with our statutory partners to build climate resilience into the fabric of healthcare planning and operations. By aligning efforts at both the system and place levels, we can reduce climate change impacts, protect vulnerability and at-risk communities, and deliver services that are more responsive to a changing climate. This requires a shift from

reactive responses to a more proactive and preventative model, ensuring we anticipate risks and embed resilience into everyday decision-making.

Progress to date

The NCL Green Plan 2022-25 actions on adaptation focussed on building our partnership arrangements to incorporate issues about responding to the impact of climate change. Some of the progress we made were:

We have strong partnerships with Emergency Preparedness, Resilience and Response (EPRR) leads across the system, including borough-level collaboration through local resilience forums. Our EPRR leads also participate in daily System Coordination Centre (SCC) meetings to monitor resilience and coordinate responses. This enables a consistent, system-wide approach to cascading weather-related health alerts in line with the government's Adverse Weather and Health Plan.

- Within our EPRR team, preliminary work has begun on using AI to help predict extreme weather events, through analysing historical weather patterns and emergency department attendance spikes
- Our system has also largely adopted the [NHS Standard Contract](#) requirements with our providers to support business continuity during adverse weather events
- The need for climate change risk assessments (CCRA) were absorbed into resilience and emergency preparedness planning and contractual requirements with our partner organisations, which includes all our trusts
- We have established a multi-agency dedicated NCL ICS Climate Adaption, Resilience and Air Quality (CARAQ) Sub-Group which brings together a network of sustainability/climate adaptation, air quality, public health and emergency preparedness leads in both NHS organisations and councils to collaborate and aligning strategies
- Through collaboration with our estate colleagues, we have been working to embed climate resilience into NCL's Infrastructure Strategies, across both trust and primary care settings. Sustainability improvements have been made to our trust and primary care and estates over the last 3 years, and further details will be under the

Estate and Facilities chapter, and each of the trusts' green plan

- London City Hall's 2016–2024 Air Quality Report showed significant improvements across the city. Our collective efforts in NCL have also contributed to these positive changes

Areas of opportunity for 2025-2028

Action	Description	Measure	Deadline
Support climate change risk assessments	Support organisations to complete climate change risk assessments to inform local adaptation plans. Work collaboratively across partners to agree a consistent approach to climate adaptation risk assessment and planning	Number or % of climate change risk assessments completed	By 2028
Strengthen mutual aid arrangements	Identify interdependencies between services and organisations, and clarify mutual aid arrangements to minimise risk of service disruption during climate-related events	Number of mutual aid agreements in place	By 2028
Enhance climate risk knowledge sharing	Continue sharing findings, learning, and risk information through the CARAQ Sub-Group and local resilience forums, ensuring integration into broader	Evidence of regular updates shared via CARAQ Sub-Group and local forums	Ongoing to 2028

	emergency and adaptation planning		
Coordinate public messaging on extreme weather	Coordinate communications on extreme weather responses across sectors, focusing on reaching vulnerable populations. Prioritise heatwave awareness and response as a key area for NCL	<p>Number of communications distributed (e.g. for heatwave, air quality awareness)</p> <p>Number of communications targeting vulnerable groups</p> <p>Change in A&E attendances or 111 calls related to heat exposure</p>	Annually reviewed to 2028
Strengthen education on climate and health	Work with partners to improve education and awareness for health and care professionals on the health impacts of climate change.	Evidence of climate-health training programmes or modules introduced	By 2027
Support emissions and air quality improvements	Work closely with estates, travel, and transport teams to reduce emissions from buildings and vehicles. Collaborate with local councils on air quality improvement campaigns.	NO ₂ concentrations around trusts and ICB offices	Annual reporting to 2028

