

Overview

In October 2020 the NHS became the first national health system in the world to commit to being 'net zero', setting two key national targets:

- For the emissions we control directly we will reach net zero by 2040, with an ambition to reach an 80% reduction by 2028 to 2032;
- For the emissions we can influence we will reach net zero by 2045, with an ambition to reach an 80% reduction by 2036 to 2039.

The NHS accounts for c.4% of the country's carbon emissions, so it has an essential role to play in meeting the net zero targets set under the Climate Change Act.

To support the co-ordination of carbon reduction efforts across the NHS, since 2021/22 Trusts have been required to develop Green Plans to detail their approaches to reducing their emissions in line with the national trajectories. In 2022, given the pivotal role that integrated care systems (ICSs) play, this was expanded to include the expectation that each system develops its own Green Plan.

The [SEL ICS Green Plan](#) was published in April 2022 and details a number of sustainability objectives across 11 areas of focus (see slide 2). The plan is delivered through a collaborative, system level, Executive-led programme which includes input from Trusts, Primary Care and the Integrated Care Board (ICB); for which Chief of Staff Tosca Fairchild leads the programme as Senior Responsible Officer (SRO).

Strengths / opportunities

- The ICS Sustainability Programme has an established governance structure, supported by Executive-level and Sustainability Lead/subject matter expert input – and has continued to deliver in year 2, with 79% of our combined year 1 + 2 objectives delivered partially/fully
- There remains abundant opportunities for delivery of net zero, through the 11 areas of focus detailed in the Green Plan
- Routes to collaborative working across health and social care not yet fully realised; will provide wealth of additional initiatives and opportunities
- Supporting the environment and reducing the ICS carbon footprint helps our residents to live longer and healthier lives
- Residents who are more disadvantaged are often the people who suffer the effects of climate change most acutely. Our mission – to protect and improve our residents' health and reduce health inequalities is supported by this work

Challenges

- Constraints in dedicated sustainability resource across system
- Many initiatives going on outside of the Green Plan/central programme; meaning the totality of all sustainability activity is not identified, recorded and reported
- Measurement of emissions reduction is complex and imperfect and there is no agreed unified reporting on this across the programme
- Primary Care does not have the same experience as Trusts on sustainability and delivery; increased support (or a different support structure) and subject matter expertise may benefit delivery in primary care
- The links between health and social care have not yet been realised. This is improving with Boroughs developing greater autonomy but opportunities for collaboration have not yet been fully explored
- Employee engagement and embedding sustainability as BAU: showing staff how to embed sustainability in everyday delivery without putting the onus directly on them

Our vision and objectives

Our vision

NHS South East London Integrated Care Board will lead a sector-wide programme that will deliver a demonstrable impact on reduction of greenhouse gas emissions through delivery of the objectives set out in the ICS Green Plan. We will work collaboratively with, listen to and learn from our Trusts and from Primary Care colleagues and we will to develop our programme to full maturity; delivering upon multiple Green Plan objectives to support the NHS-wide ambition to be the world's first healthcare system to reach net zero.

Our key objectives – what we want to achieve over the remaining two years of the Green Plan, and beyond

- We will deliver on our sustainability commitments, which are made across 11 areas of focus in the ICS Green Plan:
 - We will embed carbon reduction and sustainability in our core business
 - We will work collaboratively across the ICS to improve air quality in South East London
 - We will reduce and decarbonise our travel and transport while supporting safe and active travel of staff, patients, and visitors
 - We will optimise our resource use and reduce emissions from our estate in line with the national target of 80% reduction by 2032
 - We will review our existing and develop new models of care which will simultaneously improve patient care and community wellbeing while tackling climate change
 - We will use digital transformation to improve the sustainability of healthcare without compromising the quality of our care or exacerbating inequalities in access to care
 - We will reduce the environmental impact of our medicines through optimisation of prescribing, use of low-carbon alternatives, and appropriate disposal
 - We will use our supplies more efficiently, consider low-carbon alternatives, and collaborate on the decarbonisation of our suppliers
 - We will ensure all our inpatients have access to sustainable healthy food, and for food waste to landfill to be eradicated
 - We will mitigate the risks of climate change and ensure climate change does not impact on the ICS's ability to deliver core services and manage population health
 - We will contribute to the improvement of and equal access to South East London's green and blue spaces
- We will deliver the above by continuing to enable all contributor organisations in SEL ICS to work together in a non-hierarchical way, and also by ensuring the provision of mutual support – a structure which allows for identification and escalation of risks, issues and obstacles and also enables sharing of learning, approaches, connections and resources so that delivery is maintained
- Recognising the sustainability/climate change work that Local Authority have been doing for several years, our Place teams are now taking opportunities to work collaboratively with across health and social care through Delivery Partner networks, which are now beginning to develop.

Our priority actions

Our priority actions – what we will do

1

Continued delivery of the ICS Green Plan

Years one and two (combined) of the ICS Green Plan set 85 objectives for delivery; 67 of which (79%) we are delivering against. We will:

- Continue – and build upon - delivery of existing objectives
- Continue to develop implementation plans for the 18 objectives not yet in delivery
- Take collaborative, whole-system approaches towards planning and implementation of the additional 37 objectives which become live in year three of the Green Plan

We will assure continued delivery of the NHS England “minimum foundation”; a set of seven interventions from the NHS Standard Contract, Planning Guidance and *Delivering a net zero National Health Service*, which are to be delivered by each contributor organisation and reported to the London Region Greener NHS Team quarterly.

2

Meet our priority of taking action to improve air quality in South East London

In March 2022, representatives from the ICB (then CCG), the five trusts, the six local authorities and general practice came together in the first ever ‘Sustainability Summit’ in South East London and agreed that a key Area of Focus for health and social care in South East London to collaborate on should be Air Quality. Year one of the ICS Green Plan has focussed on installation of air quality monitoring nodes and the collection/interpretation of the data gathered by these nodes. Years two and three will move us into identifying and delivering interventions based on findings.

3

Ensure the Primary Care Green Plan is supported to be delivered, with consideration of Borough-level approaches

Multiple arising priorities in primary care have been a recurrent barrier to delivery of the Primary Care Green Plan. There are many sustainability initiatives being delivered in Boroughs and practices but not led by – or in full alignment with – the central ICS Sustainability Programme. For 2024/25 we will:

- Review what is required to create sustained delivery of Green Plan objectives in primary care
- Harness the excellent sustainability work happening in our practices and Boroughs. We will explore establishing and supporting Borough-based plans (moving away from the centralised programme model to allow for differentiation and innovation) which will also provide greater opportunity for collaboration with social care

Continued delivery of the ICS Green Plan

- We will continue – and build upon - delivery of existing Green Plan objectives, and develop implementation plans for current year objectives not yet in delivery
- We will take collaborative, whole-system approaches towards the additional 37 objectives which become live in year three of the Green Plan
- We will assure continued delivery of the NHS England “minimum foundation”; a set of seven interventions to be delivered by each SEL contributor organisation

How we will secure delivery

Actions
for
24/25

- Undertake a review of Green Plan delivery at the end of year 2; note the progress made and consider our ability to accelerate agreed actions and the resource required
- Use the oversight and network structures within our programme governance to record delivery progress and to mitigate/remove risks and barriers to delivery
- Undertake review of programme workstream leadership for optimal delivery
- Develop our programme reporting to fulfil our bi-annual assurance requirement
- Develop close working with regional and national Greener NHS and Net Zero teams; using their intelligence and London-wide reach to:
 - stay apprised of priorities and assurance requirements for next business year and embed them in SEL planning for 2024/25
 - be involved in London-wide initiatives that offer greater economies of scale and collaboration opportunities
 - Understand and use the reporting and carbon footprint tools made available

Actions
for
25/26

- Formal retrospective review of delivery of Green Plan over 3-year life and refresh of ICS Green Plan, with consideration of guidance anticipated to be issued towards the end of 2024.

Intended outcomes at end of 3-year Green Plan

- Quantifiable reduction in greenhouse gas emissions/carbon footprints; contribution towards NHS net zero targets and reduction of health inequalities
- Delivery across all Green Plan objectives/actions, supported by quantifiable carbon reductions at objective/area of focus level.
- Sustainability initiatives embedded and established in a way that they are sustainable and continue to contribute to net zero
- Fully functioning programme structure with subject matter expertise resource within each programme workstream, and with links to existing internal and external support structures/groups
- Opportunities for collaborative working across health and social care realised
- Sustainability embedded in core business at sector and organisation levels; especially as part of service reviews, reconfiguration, system transformation, capital estates projects and ICB Board discussions
- SEL workforce educated in importance of sustainability practices at home and in the workplace, and with the confidence to suggest practices to our organisations
- Foundation laid for refresh of Green Plan for in 2025.

Sustainability: priority action #2

Improving air quality in South East London

At a South East London Sustainability Summit held in March 2022 it was agreed that a key Area of Focus for health and social care in South East London to collaborate on should be Air Quality. Year one (2022/23) of the ICS Green Plan has focussed on installation of air quality monitoring nodes and the collection/interpretation of the data gathered by these nodes. Years two and three will move us into identifying and delivering interventions based on findings.

How we will secure delivery

Actions
for
24/25

- Establish Air Quality workstream/working group for SEL
- Consideration of hosting a Clinical Fellow to provide additional leadership and expertise around Air Quality.
- Data from air quality nodes to be reviewed and interpreted; compare baseline air quality with air quality guideline levels and identifying appropriate delivery actions
- Develop relationship with Breathe London (Imperial College London) for subject matter expertise and data interpretation support
- Recognise interdependencies with travel and transport, estates and facilities and green/blue space and biodiversity workstreams and adapt plans to capture collaborative opportunities
- Focus on anti-idling initiatives at major locations
- Seek opportunities for collaborative working i.e. with local authorities, GLA, TfL etc. and use their projects and learning to inform local plans
- Join pan-London active travel workstreams to learn about/adopt London-wide initiatives that contribute to air quality improvements

Actions
for 25/26

- Formal retrospective review of delivery against Green Plan air quality objectives over 3-year life and refresh of objectives in ICS Green Plan, with consideration of guidance anticipated to be issued towards the end of 2024.

Intended outcomes at end of 3-year Green Plan

- Quantifiable improvement in air quality/reduction of air pollutants and thereby contribution towards NHS net zero targets, reduction of health inequalities
- Foundation for reduction of asthma, lung cancers, strokes, cases of CHD and deaths attributed to air pollution
- Contribution to achievement of air quality objectives in respect of the Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) declared across all SEL Boroughs (areas within all Boroughs for Nox, all except Bromley and Lewisham for particulate matter, the whole of Lambeth and Lewisham)
- Delivery reported across all Green Plan air quality objectives/actions, including elimination of vehicle idling at major locations
- Increased uptake of active travel, physical activity and use of green/blue spaces in connection with improved air quality

Sustainability: priority action #3

Primary Care Green Plan delivery

- We need to review what is required to create sustained delivery of Green Plan objectives in primary care, with a particular view to how we embed sustainability when there are consistently multiple priorities in primary care.
- We must also harness the excellent sustainability work happening in our practices and Boroughs. We will explore establishing and supporting Borough-based sustainability plans; which will also provide greater opportunity for collaboration with social care.

How we will secure delivery

Actions for 24/25

- Undertake review of Primary Care Green Plan delivery across years 1&2; note the progress made and consider our ability to accelerate current actions, our options to re-cast priorities and objectives and the resource required for ongoing delivery
- Consider means to expand resource dedicated to delivery Primary Care Green Plan objectives, which may include (but is not limited to) clinical input via Fellowship programmes
- Consider the ICS Sustainability Programme governance structure and how it may be adapted and/or enhanced to provide greater focus on and support to delivery of Primary Care Green Plan objectives
- Exploration of Borough-led initiatives and potential for delegating green planning to Boroughs; may significantly enhance opportunities for partnership working and will more effectively harness the breadth of initiatives already established within Boroughs (outside of the Green Plan and therefore not captured by existing programme reporting)

Actions for 25/26

- Formal retrospective review of delivery against Primary Care Green Plan objectives over 3-year life; establishment of forward plan for 2025/26 and beyond, in consultation with primary care Sustainability Leads and with consideration of guidance.

Intended outcomes at end of 3-year Green Plan

- Delivery across all Primary Care Green Plan objectives/actions
- Sustainability initiatives embedded and established in a way that they are sustainable and continue to contribute to net zero
- Opportunities for collaborative working across health and social care realised
- Opportunities for collaborative working with Trust colleagues realised
- Sustainability embedded in core business across primary care
- Primary care workforce educated in importance of sustainability practices at home and in the workplace, and with the confidence to suggest practices for adoption in their practices and PCNs. Leads to a network for Sustainability Champions across primary care.
- Foundation laid for development of Primary Care Green Plan (or equivalent) for 2025/26 and beyond

Programme/system-wide requirements

- Board-level leads at all SEL contributor organisations – supported by subject matter expert operational leads – to drive the ICS Sustainability Programme and the organisational net zero agenda
- Continuation and development of the SEL Sustainability Network to share best practice and to provide inter-organisational support, especially with barriers and risks to delivery
- Growth of dedicated sustainability resource (notably Sustainability Leads and technical/subject matter experts) over time, in order to deliver the ICS Green Plan in full
- Continued identification of opportunities for clinical fellowships, to support the implementation of the Primary Care Green Plan and sustainable quality improvement (SusQI)
- Review and full establishment of the required programme structure; to drive overall delivery and to ensure that every Green Plan area of focus has dedicated time and collaborative effort
- Continued facilitation of collaborative and/or matrix working opportunities:
 - between primary care, ICB, Trusts and other health partners
 - between health and social care
 - with external organisations (NHS and otherwise, including community groups and third sector)
- Continued support from regional and national NHSE Greener NHS/Net Zero teams, to help identify and share changes in policy and process, assurance requirements and to facilitate involvement in pan-London initiatives and opportunities
- Membership of peer-support groups for sharing of good practice in London and beyond i.e. Greener Practice (primary care sustainability group)
- Continued ability to identify external funding/bid opportunities as and when they arise
- Establishment of realistic and achievable local assurance process unified reporting across contributor organisations
- Development of local process for periodic (annual) review and refresh of the Green Plan and its objectives
- Continual review of our programme model and practices and the opportunity to adapt the model for optimal delivery
- Development of a sustainability communication strategy
- Development of a suite of staff engagement tools/means, including (but not limited to) staff Sustainability Champions, staff forums, comms built around key sustainability events/dates, visible leadership and role-modelling, etc.
- Continued provision of workforce training and education; prior to now focus has been on training Board-level leads – expansion or cascade would further support Green Plan delivery
- Continued input from supporting/interdependent/enabler workstreams i.e. Estates & Facilities, ICT/Digital transformation, Medicines Management – and any external organisation whose support has been purchased i.e. Breathe London (air quality), Turner & Townsend (estates).