NHS Greater Manchester

The NHS Greater Manchester Green Plan 2025-28 Executive Summary

Version 1.0, July 2025

Part of Greater Manchester Integrated Care Partnership

Executive Summary

Climate change is already impacting the health of the Greater Manchester population, with our most vulnerable populations being the hardest hit. The UK has committed to reaching net zero carbon by 2050, and the NHS has a legal duty to act on the emissions from its activities and an opportunity to go beyond the national ambition as defined in the Delivering a Net Zero NHS report.

In Greater Manchester, we have made significant progress on this over the last three years by delivering system-level interventions to reduce carbon emissions across many areas of our activity, as set out in our 2022 – 2025 Green Plan. We have undertaken a significant process of engagement with our key stakeholders to develop an updated set of priorities for this Green Plan, covering the period 2025 – 2028.

The Green Plan sets out our vision of a healthcare system that is environmentally, socially and financially sustainable, resilient to climate change, and deeply rooted in the principles of climate justice. To realise this vision, we will partner with city-region stakeholders to align our efforts and coproduce solutions.

This includes strengthening alignment with programmes such as GM Live Well, the Multi-Year Prevention Plan, WorkWell Partnership Vanguard, the GM Tripartite Agreement, and the Neighbourhood Model.

Our vision is underpinned by three overarching goals:

1. **Net Zero Carbon Footprint by 2038**, with an ambition to deliver an 80% reduction by 2028-2032.
2. **Net Zero Carbon Footprint Plus by 2045**, for the emissions we can influence, with an ambition to reach an 80% reduction by 2036-2039.
3. **An NHS that is climate-adapted, actively supports nature and health related activities, and promotes interventions that reduce air pollution**.

A detailed annual work programme, guided by our dynamic materiality assessment (see appendix D) and robust governance will drive delivery. Many priorities are interdependent, and some act as enablers for others.

Actions will be prioritised based on impact, resource requirements, feasibility, ability to influence change and alignment with broader strategic goals.

Whilst we have made significant progress to date, substantial work remains to fully integrate this agenda. An engaged and informed workforce is a key enabler, with responsibilities shared across all levels. Interventions must be led by and undertaken within the functions and specialities that are best positioned to act.

The Green Plan support the NHS GM Sustainability Plan, which aims to restore financial balance, across the 5 pillars of cost improvement, system productivity, reducing prevalence, proactive care, and optimising care. Figure 1 illustrates how the Green Plan contributes to these pillars.

Carbon savings also drive cost savings, for example by:

- improving energy efficiency,
- reducing waste, and,
- supporting eligible householders to upgrade their homes and reduce health risks associated with living in cold and damp homes.

Although a fully costed plan is not provided due to the complexity and scale of system-wide priorities, further work will assess investment requirements for specific areas, such as the decarbonisation of the estate.

Together, we can ensure that our healthcare system and the population of Greater Manchester remain sustainable and resilient in the face of climate change.

Figure 1 Green Plan contributions to the 5 pillars of the NHS GM Sustainability Plan

Cost Improvement	System Productivity	Reducing prevalence	Proactive Care	Optimising care
• **Financial Sustainability Plans (FSPs) to achieve financial balance.** • Implementing energy efficiency measures and leveraging funding for estates decarbonisation into the system will reduce utility costs.	• **Multi-provider/system activities will improve the financial position.** • Many of the priorities in the system and Trust level Green Plans have financial co-benefits. For example, reducing medicinal waste will save cost and carbon.	• **Maintaining the population in good health will avoid future costs through prevention.** • By reducing air pollution, retrofitting homes to be more energy efficient and improving green spaces, Green Plans support a healthier population.	• **Addressing the top modifiable risk factors, and delivering evidence based, cost effective interventions.** • Lower carbon diets are healthier, for example, eating less red meat and dairy. Green Plans support programmes such as social prescribing which encourages healthy lifestyles, such as increased physical activity and time spent in nature.	• **Transforming the model of care through system actions.** • Streamlining care pathways reduces cost and carbon. For example, digital health solutions such as virtual wards reduce the need for transport and lower carbon emissions.

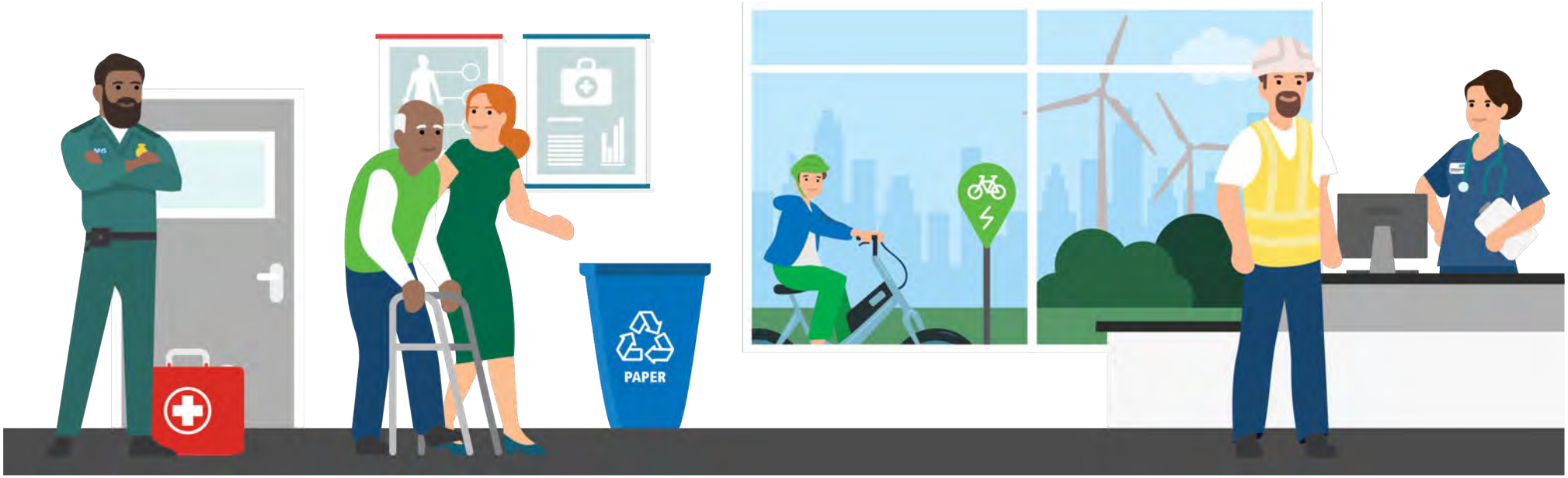
The Green Plan outlines high-level actions across ten focus areas, and a narrative summary is provided on the Green Plan on a Page (page 6). The ten focus areas replicate those in the national 'Delivering a Net Zero NHS' strategy, with the addition of content on nature and health, and air quality to ensure the plan also sets out the NHS contribution to deliver the GMCA's 5 Year Environment Plan 2025 – 2030. Figure 2 provides a high-level summary of the ten focus areas within the plan, the baseline, targets and the key interventions required to deliver the target.

Figure 2 High-level summary of the ten focus areas within the Green Plan

Focus area	Why this focus area is in the Green Plan	Baseline	Target change	Main interventions
Workforce, engagement, and system leadership	To educate, engage, and empower the workforce to act on climate change.	All trusts and NHS GM offer sustainable healthcare training options but there is limited take-up. Some plans, strategies and services consider and embed environmental sustainability requirements, but this is not yet widespread practice.	More staff undertaking sustainability training. More plans, strategies and services embedding environmental sustainability requirements, supporting this through an environmental sustainability impact assessment (SIA) process.	Supporting and advocating for improved integration of environmental sustainability across the strategic landscape. This will include improving promotion of training options, as well as oversight and supportive assurance for delivery of trust Green Plans, underpinned by a collaborative sustainability communications approach.
Net zero clinical transformation	To reduce the carbon footprint of clinical care pathways, including supporting the left-shift from treatment to prevention.	A very small number of care pathways e.g. Adult Asthma and COPD consider environmental factors alongside other areas. In 2024/25 there were over 2,900 referrals into the ECO4 Flex home retrofit scheme via the NHS referral route.	An increase in the number of care pathways including environmental sustainability. An increase in the number of referrals into ECO4 Flex via NHS eligibility.	Inclusion of environmental sustainability in care pathway redesign process. Targeted geographical promotion of ECO4 Flex by area of greatest clinical need.
Climate change adaptation	To support the health system to be more resilient to the current and predicted impacts of climate change.	There is a low level of awareness and understanding of the impacts of climate change on the health sector. Some healthcare facilities are located in flood risk areas and aging infrastructure which is not resilient to climate shocks. In 2023/24 there were 1,388 overheating incidents triggering a risk assessment in GM NHS trusts, with extreme heatwaves increasing the risk of overheating in health facilities.	An increase in the number of climate resilience training hours completed, to improve the level of awareness and understanding in the system. Improved understanding of the vulnerabilities of the healthcare estate and services to flooding events.	Promote climate change adaptation training and awareness. Deliver a system-wide climate change adaptation plan with key actions for the health sector.
Digital transformation, research, and innovation	To maximise the environmental benefits of digital technologies and minimise the negative impacts and remain abreast of key innovations in sustainable healthcare.	The number of virtual outpatient and GP appointments has significantly increased with rates of 9% for outpatient & 29.1% for GP appointments in 2022/23, compared to 1.9% and 15.9% respectively in 2019/20. Innovation for net zero is not assessed at a system-level.	Greener Digital guidance is considered and embedded into the broader digital strategy.	Incorporate environmental sustainability considerations into the commissioning of virtual and digital healthcare services. Identify, support, and promote the collective sustainable healthcare benefits of digital transformation.

Focus area	Why this focus area is in the Green Plan	Baseline	Target change	Main interventions
Travel, transport, and air quality	To reduce the carbon and air quality impacts of NHS-related travel and transport and support more staff to travel actively.	14% of the NHS carbon footprint arises from transport and travel. In 2023/24 10% of GM trust fleet was comprised of zero emission vehicles, with carbon emissions of 2,900 tonnes. Currently the majority of NHS staff travel is by single occupancy car travel, with staff travel survey data from 2023 & 2024 showing 22% of staff use public transport and 14% travel actively.	A measurable change in the composition of all new NHS fleet vehicles that aligns with national priorities for electrification by 2027. A change in modal split towards sustainable travel options, evidenced through travel surveys.	Implement a healthy travel strategy to enable and support increases in active travel (walking, wheeling, cycling) and public transport use for healthcare journeys, and support trust fleet electrification.
Estates and facilities	To support the NHS estate to operate efficiently, reducing carbon emissions and waste, and secure funding to support this.	In 2024/25, GM trusts secured over £10M to support installation of renewable energy generation, installation of new LED lighting, and submetering to increase energy efficiency. In 2023/24, GM trust energy emissions were 476 kWh per m^2, with total energy costs of £77M and carbon emissions of 173,000 tonnes. 51% of the trust estate is covered by LED lighting. 586 MWh of energy consumption is provided by on-site renewables, which is less than 1% of overall energy. In 2023/24, GM trusts generated 9,277 tonnes of clinical waste, costing £5.56M to dispose of. 3,800 tonnes of carbon emissions were generated across all types of waste.	An increase in the funding secured by GM NHS healthcare organisations for estates decarbonisation, with a corresponding reduction in the carbon footprint of the estate and associated waste. An increase in the percentage of LED lighting. An improvement in reported Greener NHS metrics such as waste segregation.	Facilitate best practice in energy, water and waste management across GM trusts, and work closely with GMCA on funding mechanisms.
Medicines	To reduce the carbon footprint of pharmaceuticals and pharmacy practices, with a focus on those with emissions occurring at the point of use such as volatile anaesthesia, nitrous oxides and pressurised metered dose inhalers.	Medicines account for 25% of the NHS Carbon Footprint Plus, with anaesthesia and inhalers together accounting for around 4% of NHS carbon emissions. In 2023/24 the average carbon emissions of salbutamol inhalers was 18.7 kilograms per inhaler, and 53% of non-salbutamol inhalers were prescribed as metered dose inhalers. In 2023/24, over 12,700 tonnes of carbon emissions came from nitrous oxide & gas and air usage.	Reduction in the average carbon emissions of salbutamol inhalers to 13.4 kilograms per inhaler, and a reduction in the percentage of non-salbutamol high emission inhalers to 25%. Measurable reduction in nitrous oxide waste and its associated carbon footprint.	Provide training and support to enable providers to implement the high quality, low carbon respiratory care approach and tackle nitrous oxide waste. Engage with community and secondary care pharmacy teams to support medicines optimisation and reduce the carbon footprint of pharmacy practices.

Focus area	Why this focus area is in the Green Plan	Baseline	Target change	Main interventions
Supply chain and procurement	To minimise carbon emissions from the goods and services the NHS buys through contract management and procurement processes.	Two thirds of the NHS Carbon Footprint Plus comes from the supply chain. Nationally over 700 suppliers have used the Evergreen sustainable supplier assessment and recorded their maturity level. In GM this includes over 50% of the top 100 suppliers.	An increase in the adoption, spread and scale of low carbon supply chain interventions by GM NHS trusts. An increase in the number of suppliers (top 100) using the Evergreen assessment from 50% to 75%. The impact of specific interventions will be monitored and reported.	To hold our suppliers to account for delivering nationally mandated net zero requirements and ensure that environmental sustainability is embedded into our procurement policy.
Low carbon food	To contribute to city-region food policy and support food and drink procurement to reduce carbon footprint alongside supporting the left shift from sickness to prevention, with poor diet linked to many diseases.	7/9 GM trusts report undertaking regular menu reviews and making continuous improvements to the environmental sustainability of their catering offer. All GM trusts measure food waste and in 2023/24 1,138 tonnes of food waste from GM trusts was recorded.	All GM trusts to improve the environmental sustainability of their catering offer, as reported via the Greener NHS quarterly data return.	Integrate environmental sustainability and health considerations into both GM trusts and city-region food policies, and support trusts to integrate sustainable food principles into food and drink procurement.
Nature for health	To maximise the opportunities presented by the healthcare estate to support nature-based interventions.	Greater Manchester's State of Nature Report (2024) outlines key trends and insights about species and habitat decline across the city-region. There is currently no separate baseline for the healthcare system.	An increase in the number of reported schemes in healthcare settings that contribute to the overall priorities for the city-region.	To support delivery of the GM Local Nature Recovery Strategy and the enhancement of green spaces across the NHS estate, maximising the impact of mechanisms such as Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG).



Green Plan on a Page

Figure 3 Infographic showing the Green Plan on a Page