

GM Climate Change Adaptation Plan

2026 – 2031

Executive Summary

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The Greater Manchester (GM) Climate Change Adaptation Plan (CCAP) (2026-2031) sets out a system-wide approach to building the resilience of the healthcare system to the unavoidable impacts of climate change. National evidence published in May 2026 (A Well-Adapted UK, the Fourth Independent Assessment of UK Climate Risk), indicates that current levels of adaptation are insufficient to address the scale of climate risk, reinforcing the need for urgent action.

Climate change adaptation is a statutory requirement for the healthcare sector under the Climate Change Act 2008 and the Health and Care Act 2022 and forms a core component of National Health Service (NHS) Green Plans, which incorporate actions to reduce carbon emissions to limit future climate change as well as adapting to the impacts of climate change that are already locked in. The Climate Change Committee's (2025/26) 'A Well-Adapted UK' report identifies significant gaps in delivery across infrastructure and health.

This plan builds on the summary content in the NHS GM and Trust Green Plans and outlines the healthcare sectors contribution to national and Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) 5 Year Environment Plan climate change adaptation priorities. It will support delivery of the GM Climate Adaptation Strategy, which is currently in development.

The plan provides an evidence base and prioritises actions to build climate resilience across the GM healthcare system. It identifies risks and opportunities from the GM Climate Change Risk Assessment where the healthcare system needs to take action to respond, setting out measures to protect population health, maintain service continuity and strengthen resilience. National evidence identifies health systems and infrastructure as among highest residual climate risks.

Actions cover six categories:

- clinical services,
- estates,
- supply chain,
- supporting infrastructure,
- engagement and awareness,
- governance and finance.

For each action, the part of the healthcare system responsible for delivery is indicated. Climate change adaptation is an integrated agenda, with action required at all levels from globally through to locally.

Investment will be required to deliver against some of the action plan, and there will be opportunities to integrate physical measures into estate redevelopment and refurbishment, as well as considering climate change impacts and opportunities within clinical pathway redesign. Failure to adapt will result in significant financial and social costs, estimated at 2.5% of GM's GDP by the 2050's under current policies. Proactive adaptation, particularly when delivered alongside mitigating measures, will reduce associated financial and social costs, as well as reduce associated health inequalities and improve service resilience.

Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan

This section details the action plan. This contributes to the third overarching goal of the NHS GM Green Plan 2025-2028, and equivalent within Trust Green Plans:

“An NHS which is climate-adapted, actively supports nature and health related activities, and promotes interventions that reduce air pollution.”

NHS GM Climate Change Adaptation Plan Actions

The table (Table 1) in this section outlines specific actions, including the system level responsibility, list of partners/stakeholders, and timeline for completion. Actions have been divided into specific areas of operation, one of: Clinical Services, Estates, Supply Chain, Supporting Infrastructure, Engagement and Awareness, Governance and Report, Finance. Each action has been linked to the healthcare specific risks listed in the Climate Change Risk Assessment.

Each action has also been identified as a type of action: one that builds capacity (including creating the environment required for adaptation action, through producing data and research, governance structures and organisational partnerships) or that directly delivers adaptation actions (including actions which directly minimise climate change vulnerability or take advantage of potential opportunities). We recognise further research and insight is required to determine current progress and actions required to deliver the most population benefit.

We have identified the following outcomes as reflecting the purpose of the actions:

- Protecting population health in GM from the present and potential future impacts of climate change and utilise potential benefits.
- Creating a climate resilient healthcare system that is accessible and adaptable in a changing climate, with a robust supply chain with supportive infrastructure that are resilient to climate change.
- Ensuring communities across GM are equipped with the knowledge, skills and resources to adapt to climate change and extreme weather events.
- Provide quality and accessible healthcare during extreme weather, especially to the population groups most vulnerable effects of climate change.

Table 1 - Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan

Action ID	Action	Further Detail	Responsibility	Partners	Timeline	Area of Operations	Relevant Risk Code	Type of Adaptation Action
CCA1	Build capability of the organisation to adapt and become resilient to the impacts of climate change.	Effective leadership and governance arrangements, and collaboration across teams and services is key to successful adaptation. The NHSE adaptation framework sets out four capabilities for every organisation, with four maturity stages for each of the capabilities. Organisations should assess themselves against the framework and undertake the recommended tasks to improve, as relevant to their context. Each organisation should set their own target for improvement. Some of the tasks will overlap with other areas of the action plan.	NHS GM, NHS Trusts		2027	Engagement & Awareness	H1, H2, H3, H4, I9, H6, GM-H15	Building Adaptive Capacity
CCA2	Strengthen partnerships and collaboration between organisations across the system.	A collaborative multi-stakeholder approach to climate adaptation is essential as no single organisation will hold all of the knowledge, resources and skills. This action involves all partners playing their part in community, locality, city-region and national action. Each organisation should consider the stakeholder landscape in which they operate and how they interface from a healthcare sector perspective to make the most efficient use of available resource and build capacity around adaptation solutions using coproduction principles.	System wide	VCFSE Sector, 10GM, GMCA, LAs	Ongoing	Governance & Finance	H1, H2, H3, H4, H6, GM-H15, E3, E8	Building Adaptive Capacity
CCA3	Integrate climate vulnerability intelligence and improve understanding of climate risks within prevention activities and	This requires strengthening the understanding and ability of services and staff to respond to climate related health risks by utilising and embedding climate vulnerability data and building the understanding of staff that work with the most vulnerable groups. Climate vulnerability datasets can be incorporated into the GM Health and Care Intelligence Hub, prevention programmes can	System wide	NHS GM, Trusts, Primary Care, Clinical teams, NHSE	2027	Clinical Services	H1, H2, H3, H6, GM-H15, BE9	Building Adaptive Capacity

	clinical services.	include climate related risk considerations, and training and resources can be promoted to staff working with high-risk groups.						
CCA4	Monitor the impact of extreme weather events on the healthcare sector, utilising existing information and metrics.	Whilst preparedness should take priority, logging details of specific events builds an evidence base of the consequences of climate change for the healthcare sector and helps build the business case for adaptation. Trusts already report overheating events through the ERIC data returns although there are inconsistencies. Monitoring hospital admissions and excess deaths from heatwaves provides additional context to specific events and flooding incidents can be reviewed for both direct and indirect consequences for the sector.	NHS GM Sustainability Team	Trusts, UKHSA, EPRR teams	Ongoing	Clinical Services	H1, H2, H6, GM-H15, E4	Building Adaptive Capacity
CCA5	Support research opportunities aimed to increase health system climate resilience and understanding of climate change impacts.	This requires proactively providing health sector input into transdisciplinary research and innovation from across the GM system and beyond around Climate Change Adaptation and Health System Resilience. This will include knowledge exchange, sharing of data and providing support for and input into specific programmes. This is essential to inform policy, shape action and address gaps in the understanding of climate issues. Where there is a significant time ask, this will require assessment of available capacity and priorities.	NHS GM, Trusts	GMCA, NIHR Research Hubs, Health Innovation Manchester, Universities	Ongoing	Clinical Services	H1, H2, H6, GM-H15, BE4, BE9	Building Adaptive Capacity
CCA6	Undertake flood risk assessments across the NHS estate, prioritising sites where there are	Flooding is a key risk from climate change and greater assessment of the vulnerability of our estates is required to understand and mitigate this risk, to determine potential impacts on healthcare access and delivery. A wide range of spatial datasets are available to highlight geographical	NHS Trusts NHS GM Sustainability Team (Primary Care).	GMCA, LAs, Environment Agency, NHSPS,	2026	Estates	H1, H6, BE2, I9, E4	Building Adaptive Capacity

	known vulnerabilities.	areas and social vulnerabilities where there is a higher risk of flooding which requires concerted action to address. Delivery of measures to address identified issues will be required across a range of stakeholders.		CHP and Primary Care Networks, Estates Teams				
CCA7	Identify and deliver nature-based solutions on high-risk healthcare sites to reduce vulnerability to the current and expected impacts of climate change.	Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is a statutory requirement and the GMCA Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) is the statutory strategy across all ten districts, with climate adaptation stated as one of its purposes. Nature based and SuDS solutions provide shading, cooling and water management functions to reduce vulnerability. They have broader co-benefits such as providing amenity spaces, sequestering carbon, reducing noise and supporting local biodiversity. This action applies to both planned enhancement of existing outdoor areas and new developments to provide functional green spaces that enhance resilience, moving from ornamental green spaces to those that provide a range of ecosystem services, as part of complying with statutory planning requirements.	NHS Trusts and Primary Care	GMCA, LAs	Ongoing	Estates	H1, H6, BE2, I9, E4	Delivering Adaptation Action
CCA8	Identify and deliver healthcare building adaptations to reduce vulnerability to the current and predicted impacts of climate change.	Building level interventions can help users cope with extreme weather events. For example, reflective surfaces and shading, improved insulation and passive cooling deliver both net zero and adaptation outcomes. Paved surfaces can be replaced with permeable to help manage stormwater. Measures should be considered as part of both building refurbishment and new developments (larger new developments will need to comply with the NHS Net Zero Building Standard). Measures can address particularly vulnerable areas – e.g. medicines storage facilities or whole buildings. Several Health Building Notes (HBN's) are relevant to this action e.g. HBN 00-07 which focuses on a resilient estate.	NHS Trusts and Primary Care	GMCA, LAs	2027	Estates	H1, H6, BE2, BE4, I9, E4	Building Adaptive Capacity

CCA9	Integrate climate adaptation into strategic commissioning process.	As the Strategic Commissioner, NHS GM has a role to play in considering climate adaptation in the commissioning of services and ensuring that providers have taken steps to adapt to the current and predicated impacts and not just mitigate their emissions. This action requires considering the whole strategic commissioning cycle and working with commissioners to integrate adaptation considerations into the process. It is anticipated that this will be delivered in a phased manner, and there are interdependencies with national policy, frameworks and training.	NHS GM	NHSE	2027	Clinical Services	H6, GM-H15, I1, BE2, I8	Building Adaptive Capacity
CCA10	Improve understanding of climate-related supply chain disruptions and use to inform action.	Climate related supply chain disruption will increasingly impact the supply of raw materials, manufacturing and distribution of critical healthcare supplies, compounding existing geopolitical and economic risks. Whilst the assessment of risks and solutions will be led by other organisations, for example, NHS Supply Chain, climate risk should be integrated into local policy and processes. There is an interface with other Green Plan priorities – for example, adopting circular economy principles in relevant procurements reduces the vulnerability to disruptions to the supply of single use products.	GM NHS Procurement Team	NHSE, GMCA, TfGM, LAs	2026	Supply Chain & Supporting Infrastructure	H6, E3, I1, BE2, I8	Building Adaptive Capacity
CCA11	Improve understanding of financial support available for adaptation measures.	Whilst some climate adaptation actions require limited resources, others require substantial financial investment across the system. This action focuses on building the understanding of financing options available and promoting key opportunities.	NHS GM, System wide	GMCA	Ongoing	Governance & Finance	H1, H3, H4, H5, I9, GM-H15, I1, BE2, I2, I5	Building Adaptive Capacity