

Sustainability in the NHS

Future Leaders Programme



Introduction to sustainability

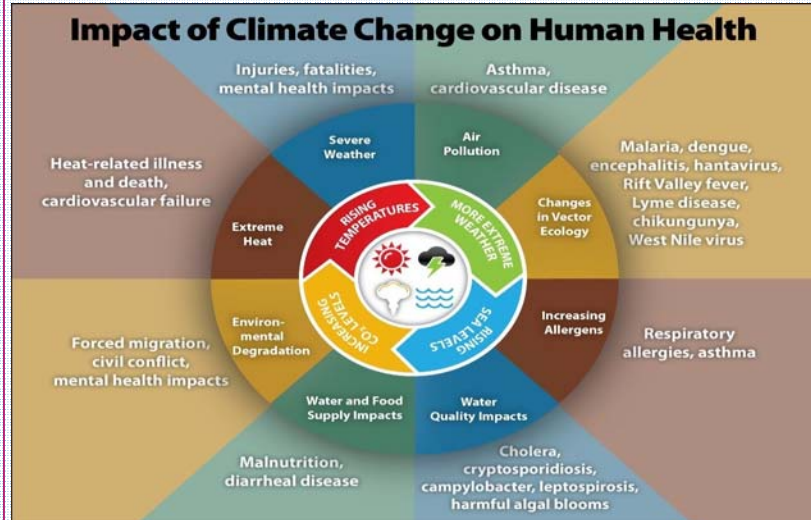
There are different ways of thinking about sustainability.

- 1. Environmental** – does it avoid damage to the natural environment / reduce CO2 emissions?
- 2. Financial** – is it affordable now and in the future?
- 3. Social** - is it accessible for all? Does it support good quality of life for all? Is there sufficient engagement and opportunity for the change to be kept going beyond the initial effort?



Why is it important?

The health sector is **vulnerable**



What is sustainable healthcare?

Sustainable healthcare incorporates all three of the dimensions above; ensuring high quality care for all in the present but not at the sacrifice of care for generations to come.

1. PREVENTION

Promoting health and preventing disease by tackling the causes of illnesses and inequalities

3. LEAN SERVICE DELIVERY

Streamlining care systems to minimise wasteful activities



2. PATIENT SELF-CARE

Empowering patients to take a greater role in managing their own health and healthcare

4. LOW CARBON ALTERNATIVES

Prioritising treatments and technologies with a lower environmental impact

Mortimer, F. The Sustainable Physician. Clin Med 10(2). April 1, 2010. D110-111.



AND part of the problem

<p>HEALTH CARE'S CLIMATE FOOTPRINT</p> <p>Carbon footprint of global healthcare sector is 2 Gt CO2e</p>	<p>Outdoor air pollution kills 4.2 million people worldwide.</p>	<p>2% global plastic production is medical plastic; increases by 6.3% per year</p>
<p>Deforestation: rubber plantations for surgical gloves</p>	<p>Scarcity of resources: conflict minerals in medical equipment</p>	<p>Antibiotics found at 65% of 711 river sites worldwide</p>

NHS Net Zero Target

The NHS produces 5% of the UK's greenhouse gas emissions. In July 2022, the NHS became the first health system to embed net zero into legislation, through the Health and Care Act 2022, targeting an 80% reduction in direct emissions by 2032. This will require action by all healthcare providers.

- [Delivering a 'Net Zero' National Health Service, 2020](#)

What can I do?

Increase your knowledge and awareness

- Sign up to a Centre for Sustainable Healthcare [course](#).
- Join a [sustainability network](#) in your speciality.
- Complete the HEE Sustainability in Healthcare Programme [e-LfH](#).

Professionally

- Apply the [Principles of Sustainable Clinical Practice](#), conduct [Sustainable Quality Improvement projects](#) and educate your patients.

Make lifestyle changes

- E.g. reduce meat & dairy consumption, switch to renewable energy, insulate your home, walk or cycle rather than driving, avoid flying, change your bank to a more sustainable option, buy second-hand.

