

Greener NHS



Delivering a Net Zero National Health Service

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The responsibility and opportunity

- Tackling climate change **has huge health, environmental, social and financial benefits**
- Action on climate change will bring direct improvements for public health and health equity. Reaching the UK's ambitions under the Paris Climate Change Agreement could see:
 - over 5,700 lives saved every year from improved air quality,
 - 38,000 lives saved every year from a more physically active population
 - over 100,000 lives saved every year from healthier diets.
- As the largest employer in the UK (**1.4 million staff**), contributing **4-5%** of UK emissions, the NHS is part of the **challenge and the solution**
- **9 in 10** NHS staff **support** the NHS taking action to reduce its impact on climate change



The implementation journey so far



January 2019: NHS Long Term Plan set out clear ambition to reduce the environmental impact of the NHS



July 2022: NHS became the first health system to embed NZ into legislation, through the Health and Care Act

February 2025: Updated guidance supporting every NHS Trust and ICB to set an updated Green Plan



October 2020: *Delivering a Net Zero NHS* published



June 2022: Every NHS Trust and ICB has a Green Plan



October 2023: Regulation to include sustainability under the “well-led” key question

September 2025: Five year progress report published

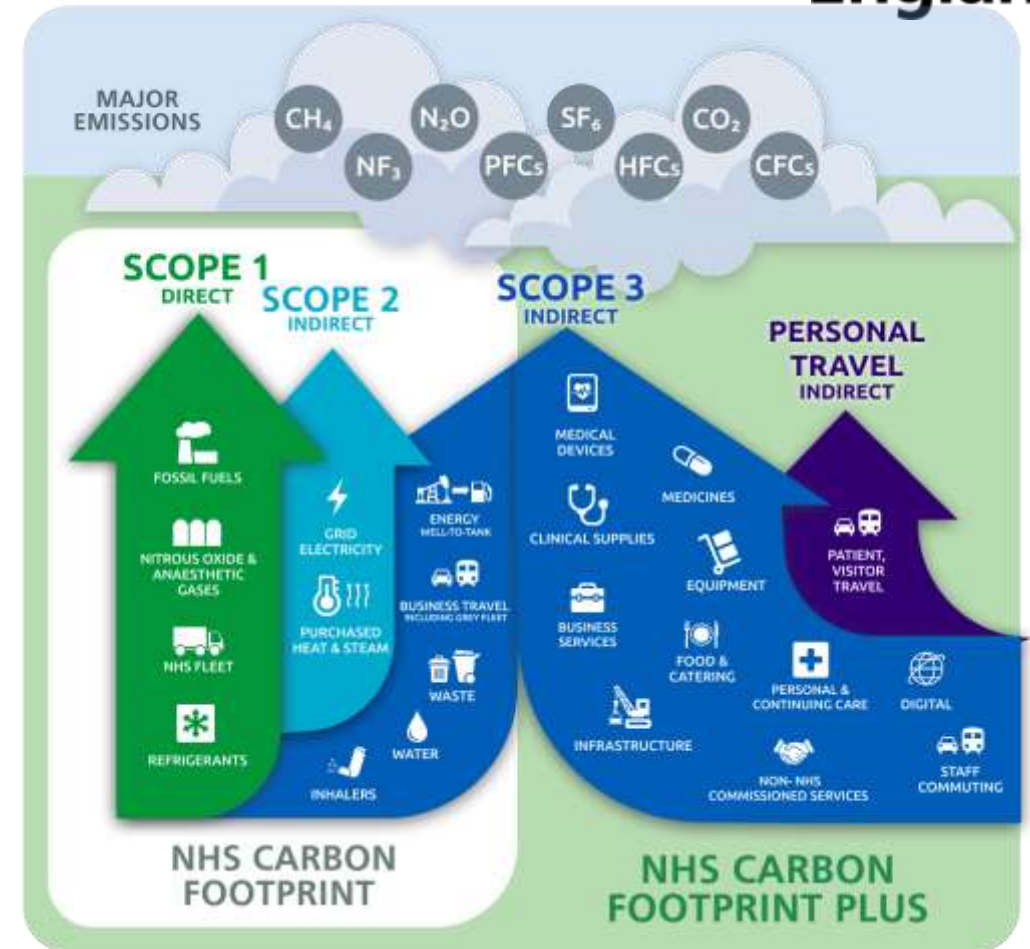


NHS Net Zero Strategy

Reaching net zero carbon:

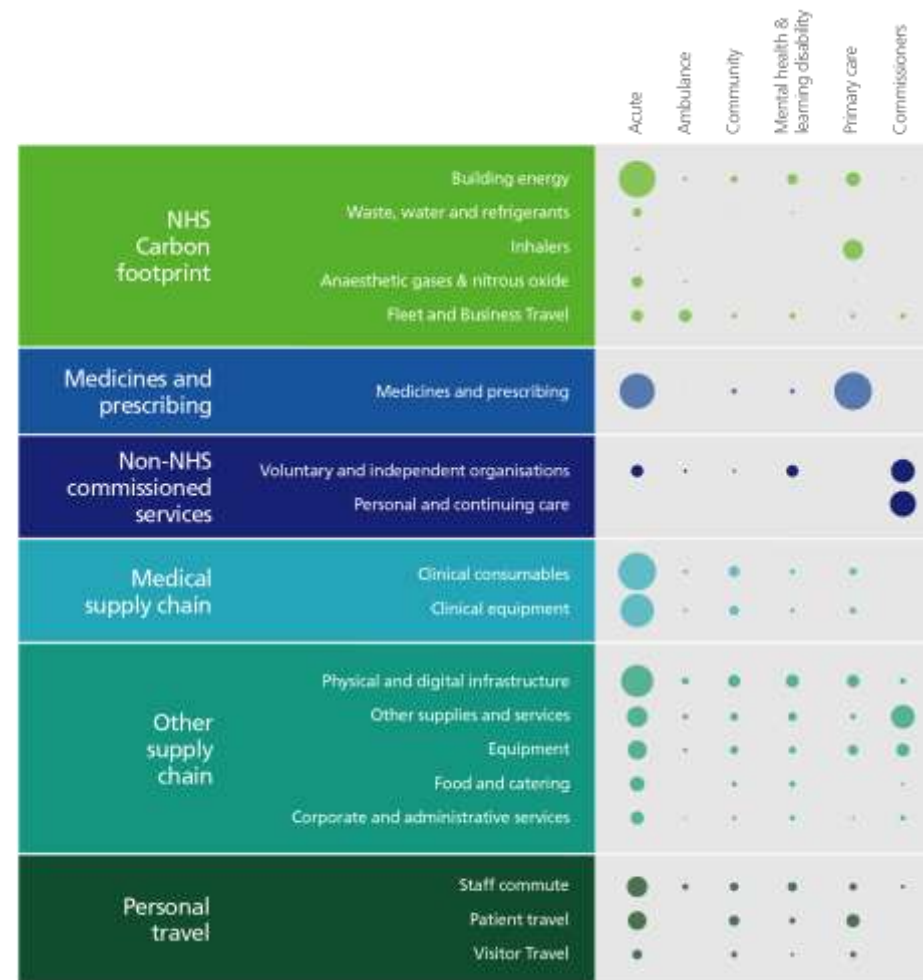
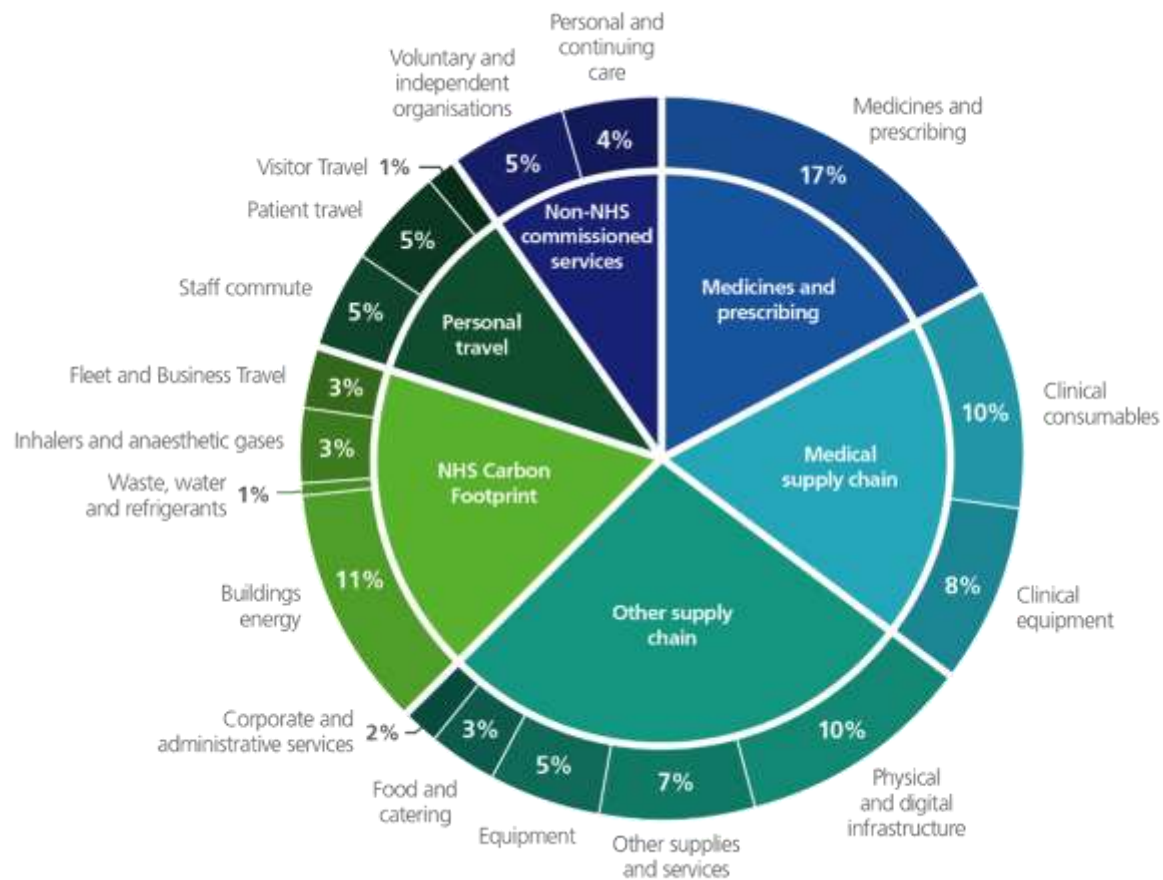
- **by 2040 for the emissions we control directly** (the NHS Carbon Footprint)
 - with an ambition to reach an **80% reduction**, compared with a 1990 baseline, **by 2028 to 2032**.
- **by 2045 for all emissions**, including those embedded in the supply chain (the NHS Carbon Footprint Plus)
 - with an ambition for an **80% reduction**, compared with a 1990 baseline, **by 2036 to 2039**.

The NHS is responsible for around **4 – 5% of England's carbon emissions**, and as an organisation we are part of the challenge and the solution.



Where do we need to act?

Sources of carbon emissions by proportion of NHS Carbon Footprint Plus



Sources of carbon emissions by activity type and setting of care

Methodological improvements

Organisation-level transport spend data

Trust data on waste, by waste stream, and water consumption

Updated emissions factors for buildings energy (aligning with DESNZ)

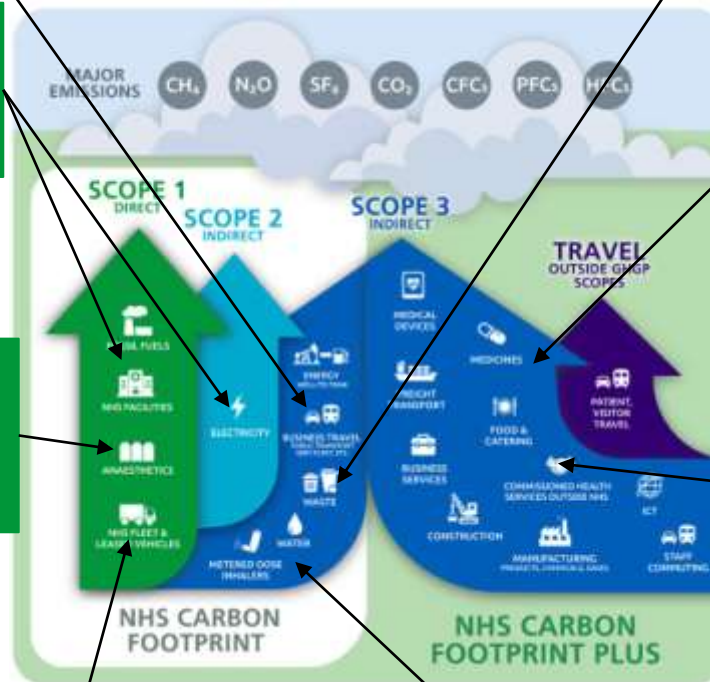
Monthly data directly from suppliers for volatiles and nitrous oxide

New fleet data including vehicle level fuel efficiencies and mileage

Data on every inhaler prescribed in the NHS, and inhaler-specific emission intensities

High quality organisation and category spend data

NHS healthcare intensity factors



Resulting estimates are:

- Based on more specific and granular data
- Less reliant on spend-based approaches
- Using the most appropriate emission factors available

Leading to:

- 30% improvement in overall data quality score
- Improved estimate of 2019/20 NHS Carbon Footprint and NHS Carbon Footprint Plus emissions
- Consistent time series of emissions estimates for 2019/20 to 2024/25
- Better ability to monitor progress over time (particularly for the NHS Carbon Footprint)
- Better ability to reflect organisational variation

Areas of Focus



Estates and facilities



Travel and transport



Medicines



Supply chain



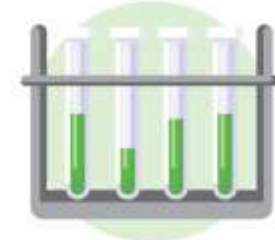
Food and nutrition



Clinical transformation



Governance



Research and innovation



Workforce



Data and analytics



Adaptation

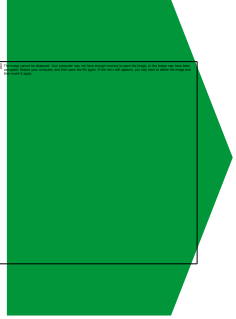
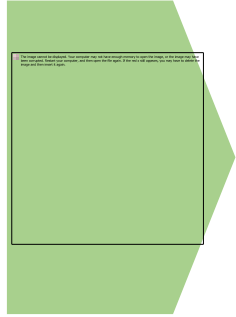
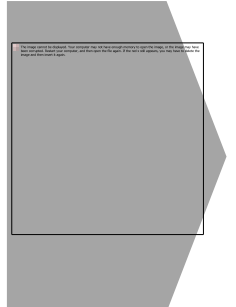


Collaboration

Action to decarbonise our carbon footprint



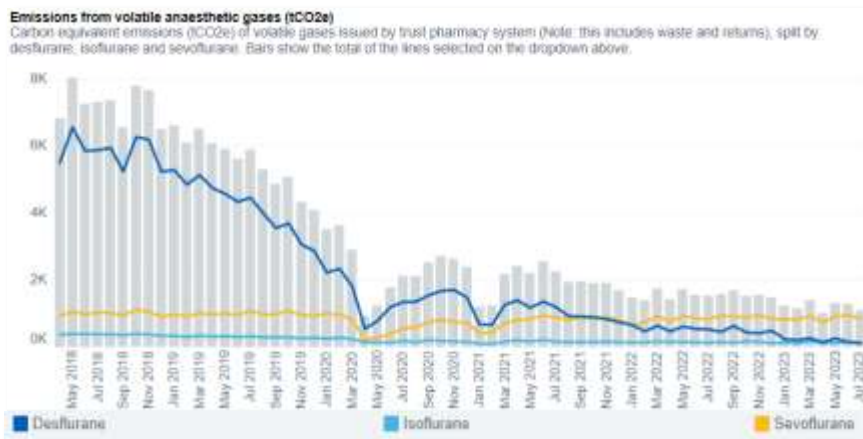
Investing in lower carbon infrastructure to cut costs, reduce emissions and improve resilience

	What is it?	Estimated financial impact	Wider benefits
 NHS Decarbonisation Funding	£66 million enabling the installation of solar panels, battery storage, heat pumps and wider energy efficiency measures across 82 trusts and around 190 sites	These measures will save the NHS almost £30 million a year on energy bills	Reduces energy demand, upgrades ageing infrastructure and supports lower-carbon heat and power across NHS sites
 Great British Energy/NHS Solar Scheme	£155 million capital investment programme to accelerate the rollout of solar PV and battery storage across over 300 NHS sites	Total lifetime energy bill savings for the NHS of up to £360 million – an average of around £35,000 a year for each NHS site	Increases on-site renewable generation, reduce emissions, improves energy resilience and protects sites from future energy price volatility
 NHS Chargepoint Accelerator Scheme	A £22 million investment will deliver over 3,000 electric vehicle charging sockets, enabling the transition to electric ambulances and fleet vehicles and reducing fuel and maintenance costs	Expected to save the NHS £130 million over the next 25 years, with a return on investment in just 4 years	Supports the transition to electric NHS fleets, helping reduce tailpipe emissions, improve local air quality, and strengthen operational readiness for zero-emission vehicles

Reducing medicines emissions

Nitrous oxide

- The NHS has invested £1.5 million since 2023 to reduce nitrous oxide waste, with emissions reductions of **nearly 100 ktCO₂e** resulting in **£2.3 million** in **avoided costs** per annum compared with 2019/20
- Nitrous oxide waste mitigation can lead to measurable cost savings and substantial carbon emissions reductions, whilst improving patient care, choice and staff experience.



Desflurane

- Desflurane is a volatile anaesthetic agent with higher global warming potential than alternatives. Desflurane has been **decommissioned** in favour of safe and clinically appropriate alternatives.
- This has delivered a **41 ktCO₂e (98%)** reduction in emissions since 2020.

The NHS Net Zero Supplier Roadmap



From April
2022

Net Zero and Social Value

All NHS procurements include a minimum 10% net zero and social value weighting. The [Net zero and social value guidance for NHS procurement teams](#) helps to unlock health-specific outcomes (building on [PPN 06/20](#)). Net Zero and Social Value will be applied via the Evergreen assessment for NHS England Medicines tenders.

From April
2023/24

Carbon Reduction Plan

For all new contracts above £5 million per annum, the NHS requires suppliers to publish a [Carbon Reduction Plan](#) for their UK [Scope 1 and 2 emissions](#) and a subset of scope 3 emissions as a minimum (aligning with PPN 06/21).

From April 2024: The requirement is [proportionately extended](#) to cover all new procurements.

From April
2027

Carbon Reduction Plan for all emissions

The NHS will implement new proportionate requirements for suppliers to publicly report targets, emissions and publish a Carbon Reduction Plan for all of their relevant global scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions.

From April
2028

Product-level Requirements

New requirements will be introduced overseeing the provision of carbon footprinting for individual products supplied to the NHS. The NHS will work with suppliers and regulators to determine the scope and methodology.

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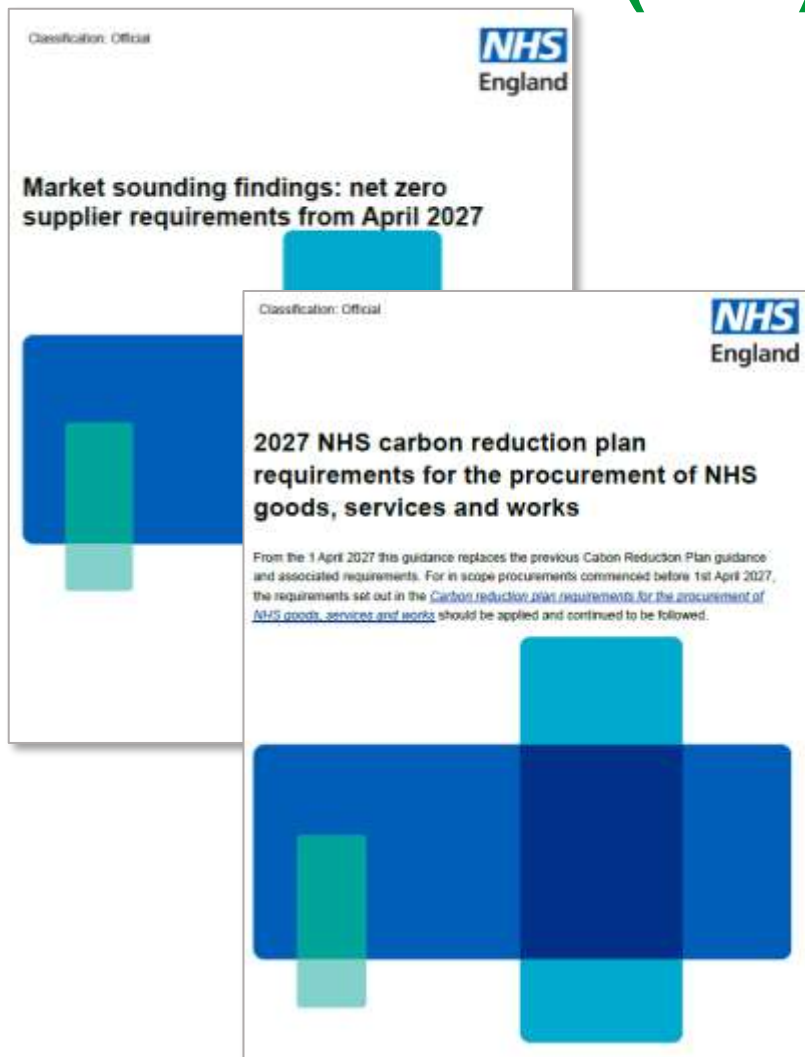
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2027 milestone: proportionately expanding the Carbon Reduction Plan (CRP) requirements to all relevant emissions



- The new requirement will apply to **new high value contracts (over £5m per annum) and new frameworks run for NHS organisations from April 2027**, when proportionate and relevant
- Suppliers in scope will be required to **include all relevant emissions from scope 1, 2 and 3 in their CRP**, irrespective of where they occur.
- Suppliers with new lower-value contracts above procurement thresholds must publish a CRP aligned with the 2024 milestone: UK Scope 1 and 2, plus selected Scope 3 emissions as a minimum.
- This policy was shaped by **extensive market engagement**, including a detailed survey. The survey findings will be published alongside the guidance.

Circular economy in the NHS

Published in 2024, the **Design for Life Roadmap** sets out how the NHS will transition away from avoidable single-use medical technology towards a **circular system by 2045**, maximising reuse, remanufacture and recycling to improve resilience, value and sustainability.



Savings – switching to reusable alternatives for just three products across the NHS - scissors, forceps, and tourniquets - could generate between £5.3-10.6m per year.



Sustainability – circular approaches will support delivery of a net-zero NHS. Reuse of medical devices as opposed to single use is associated with an average decarbonisation of 38-56% within their whole lifecycle.



Growth – an economy-wide shift to circularity (all sectors, not just medtech) is estimated to bring £75bn to the UK economy and create half a million new jobs by 2030.



Resilience and patient safety – during the COVID-19 Pandemic, organisations who employed circular techniques experienced considerably less disruption than those that did not.



Five years of a greener NHS

- NHS Carbon Footprint (direct) emissions have **reduced by 14% since 2019/20**
- Compared with a revised estimate of 14.5 MtCO₂e for 1990 emissions, this represents a **total reduction of 68%** and means the NHS is on track to meet its interim target by 2032.
- NHS Carbon Footprint Plus emissions increased in 2020/21 and 2021/22, driven by COVID-19 pandemic, but returned to pre-COVID levels in 2023/24 and 2024/25.
- Overall, in the last 5 years the NHS Carbon Footprint Plus has reduced by 15% per real pound of the NHS budget, and by 7% per finished admission episode (FAE), which suggests the NHS and its suppliers are making progress.

Five years of a greener
NHS: progress report
September 2025



Next Steps

- NHS Supplier Roadmap:
 - From 2027, the NHS will implement new, proportionate requirements for suppliers to publicly report targets, emissions, and a plan to reduce them for all their relevant Scope 1, 2 and 3 global emissions.
 - In preparation for the 2028 Supplier Roadmap milestone, the NHS is collaborating with suppliers, regulators and international health systems to help co-produce the approach to the product-level carbon footprinting.
- Circular economy in the NHS is beginning to take shape. As an early milestone work is progressing to reduce single-use glove and gown use by 25% by 2030
- Implementation of WHO guidance:
 - In November 2025, to align with COP30, the **WHO published two sets of guidance** on decarbonising the healthcare supply chain and measuring greenhouse gas emissions.
 - **NHS England led the development** of these publications alongside co-authors from other countries and health systems.
 - The task teams are working with the WHO and international partners to implement the guidance documents.



Thank you & Questions

Find out more about the work of the Greener NHS team, and the progress towards the NHS's net zero targets:

- Visit www.england.nhs.uk/greenernhs
- Sign up to our newsletter – www.england.nhs.uk/email-bulletins/greener-nhs
- Follow us on social media - [@GreenerNHS](https://twitter.com/GreenerNHS)