



# 15 point climate and nature action plan for primary care in Cornwall: 2023 to 2024

In October 2020, the NHS published the [delivering a net zero NHS report](#) which set ambitions on reaching net zero for emissions controlled directly by the NHS by 2040, and for emissions influenced by the NHS by 2045.

This 15-point plan has been developed by Cornwall Greener Practice Network, based on the 10 point plan developed by the Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG).

The plan is outlined below. Start anywhere and in any order: you decide as a team!

Every positive change you make, however small, will bring benefits to you, your team, your patients, and our planet, both now and for generations to come.

## 1: Declare a practice climate and nature crisis

As health professionals, you can acknowledge the crises; this will demonstrate to both staff and patients that you take their health and future seriously and are taking appropriate action accordingly.



- Create a statement to put on your website, feature in your newsletter, and share on social media.
- See Sustainability [climate emergency declaration guide](#)
- See Sustainability [sample wording for the declaration](#)
- Keep the climate crisis as a standing agenda item which features on every practice meeting.
- [Join your local greener practice group](#).
- Embed sustainability in your practice culture. View all existing and new projects and changes through the lens of environmental impact and choose environmentally friendly options wherever possible.
- Have a look at [what others are doing in Cornwall!](#)

## 2: Optimise inhalers

As health professionals we can signpost and support our patients to medication options which will be better for their physical health and reduce their impact on nature. MDIs have a large carbon impact as a result of their propellant and misuse; using DPIs can significantly reduce this, by working carefully with the patient.



- Read the [Greener Practice's carbon footprint of inhalers](#), which includes a handy crib sheet for easy reference and comparison.
- [Check out our website for more information](#)
- Watch the short GP on the move videos about the environmental impact of inhalers, and examples of switching in practice:
  - [environmental impact of inhalers](#)
  - [optimising asthma reviews](#)
- Use [Green Inhaler resources](#) as an educational tool for both patients and staff.

[Openprescribing.net](#) can show you how we're doing in Cornwall!

## 3: Calculate the team's carbon footprint

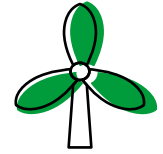
By doing this, you can visualise your carbon impact, and then identify hotspots of carbon emissions for reduction.



- Try the [Free carbon calculator tool](#) available from See Sustainability. There is an option for low detail input available. This does not include carbon calculations for treatments or procedures.
- Create a plan to target and reduce each hotspot identified, such as:
  - swapping to an environmentally friendly stationery company (practices can choose to sign up to access the [NHS Supply Chain](#) to access their frameworks)
  - changing light bulbs to LEDs
  - turning off monitors when not in use to reduce electricity consumption
- Try the [SHAPE tool](#) to assist with data gathering on the patient population.
- See [more on our website here](#).

## 4: Manage your energy!

Where you get your energy from is as important as how much you use!  
And reducing and managing how much you use is even more important than installing new technology.



- As a team, ask whoever it responsible for your energy if they're using renewable energy - there are multiple options these days online
- Contact [Community Energy Plus](#) who can offer a low cost energy audit - with a very high likelihood that they will help you identify energy savings. And the £300 for the audit goes to the charity that is helping your most vulnerable patients cope with energy costs and poor housing. Check out [our website for more information](#)
- You can get lots of energy saving advice on the [Energy Savings Trust site](#) - have a look.

## 5: Consider switching your business or personal bank

Many high street banks are actively investing in fossil fuels, arms and tobacco. Greening your money is the single most effective thing you can do to reduce your personal or business impact on the climate crisis. Check your bank on [www.bank.green](http://www.bank.green) !



- You can find out more about banking investment in the fossil fuel industry and other unethical practices. Find out more about:
  - [best ethical banks](#)
  - [current account ethical banking](#)
  - [current account shopping guide](#)
- This can also apply to private pensions such as NEST. Find out more on the [Make My Money Matter website](#). NHS Pensions is a defined benefit fund and is not invested.
- To learn more about the environmental impact of invested funds, [watch this COP26 talk and short film](#).
- Changing your bank has 21 x more carbon impact than changing diet, travel and energy! This is because banking green means your salary or money is NOT investing in oil or tobacco or arms, and invested instead in sustainable food, energy or housing. Good to know!
- Check [out our website for more information](#)
- Chat to colleagues - it's one of the easiest and most impactful action on climate we can take!
- Consider contacting your business banking provider to find out where they stand, and to ask them to do better if you are unsatisfied with their response. It works ...

## 6: Environmental prescribing and treatment

Green and blue and social prescribing can be hugely beneficial for patient outcomes – and can also enable patients to reduce their personal impact through unnecessary medication, as well as contributing to fantastic green community activities, such as community gardening. Hat trick!



- Consider non-pharmaceutical medical interventions such as [green social prescribing](#) or an [increase in physical activity](#), bearing accessibility in mind.
- Engage with the IIF polypharmacy reviews, including signposting and collaborative working with community pharmacy.
- Engage with the CCG and ICS prescribing incentive schemes.
- Focus on preventative care wherever possible as opposed to reactive care, such as treating prediabetes through lifestyle changes, activity and diet to prevent diabetes.
- [Sign up for bulletins](#) on your team's prescribing trends.
- Follow [Royal Pharmaceutical Society medicines optimisation guidance](#).
- Engage in a low waste prescribing approach:
  - de-prescribe where appropriate
  - stop necessary third party ordering
  - encourage patient-led ordering using the NHS app
- Raise awareness of, and encourage, recycling options
- Avoid unnecessary waste for care home residents and people living independently.
- Continue remote consultations where appropriate.
- Check out [our website!](#)

## 7: Engage, educate, and empower patients to take individual action on the climate crisis for the benefit of their health



Everything we do counts – and taking positive action around a problem is one of the most powerful ways to build our mental health, and deal with the problem before it feels overwhelming.

- Discuss the climate crisis with your patients where appropriate in terms of how it's affecting them – it could be cold or hot housing, stress from extreme temperature, if they wish, help them get involved in appropriate positive community actions or eg access energy cost support through [www.cep.org.uk](http://www.cep.org.uk)
- Engage with your social prescriber on green schemes and discussing climate and health initiatives in your local care community group.
- Encourage balanced plant-based diets and activity for maintaining a healthy weight and reducing car use, and improved physical and mental health.

- Encourage your patients to get involved in green community schemes such as community gardens, tree planting, gardening, and caring for wild flower areas
- Connect to local organisations which offer positive environmental action and volunteering, including [Cornwall Wildlife Trust](#) and [Volunteer Cornwall](#)
- Check out RSPB and NHS Scotland on their [nature prescription pilot](#) ([video also available](#)).
- Point out the extra green benefits of walking and cycling for health.
- Promote self-care practices and education.
- For group education sessions, consider combining these with walking routes.

## 8: Promote active transport for both staff and patients

Walking, cycling and using public transport is another Hat Trick: great for patients, great for good air quality and lower carbon emissions, great for community by making our streets less noisy and polluted and much more pleasant places to be.

- [Sign-up to a bicycle lease scheme](#) for staff and install bike lockers and changing facilities if required.
- Think about how you can get more information into the building on the walls or in the entrance area or the website about how to walk, cycle or bus to the site
- Encourage staff to walk or cycle to work where possible.
- Be aware of local council information on transport schemes available for residents.
- Encourage patients to attend appointments using active transport as opposed to driving. Explain the cardiovascular and respiratory benefits of this, and encourage the adoption of active transport into daily life.
- [Ramblers Walking for Health](#) have many local routes and social groups for patients and staff of all mobility levels.
- Consider installing electric vehicle charging points for cars and bikes at the your place of work
- Check out [our website](#) and [see what other people are doing here on our Green Genius film!](#)



## 9: Embed the '3 Rs' into team culture: reduce, reuse, recycle

Once is not enough! We can all take action on reducing waste and doing more avoiding, reusing and repurposing - from water to paper to furniture to clothing!



- Reduce: use less of whatever you can to save carbon, pollution, packaging and money.
- Use scrap paper and paper clips instead of post it notes
- Treat water as a precious resource
- Try naturally wrapped treats such as satsumas, or snacks with compostable or recyclable packaging

- Reuse: consider how existing or second-hand items can be utilised. For example use an old projector stand as a standing desk; use second hand office furniture and paint it!
- Recycle: sort your recycling in house or sign up to a company who can sort off-site for you. Try and avoid difficult to recycle items or packaging; use chemist recycling schemes and see if you can get a PPE/paper/blister pack recycling box in the building
- [Brother](#) (for genuine Brother parts, high quality items can be refilled and directly reused)
- [Zero Waste Recycling](#)
- [Cartridges For Charity](#)
- [Every Cartridge](#)
- [Office Express](#) (requires purchase of toner through Office Express to become a customer)
- Check out [our website](#) and [see what other people are doing here on our Green Genius film!](#)

## 10: Use the tools we have!

If you're working in, or attached to a practice, check out to see if they're using the Greener Impact for Health Toolkit. Lots of practices are using it in Cornwall - and lots are smashing the silver award level!

- The [green impact for health toolkit](#) is free to use for any GP practice in the UK - is the practice your are most connected to using it? The [Climate Resilience](#) Team can help them.
- We have [loads of help on our website!](#)
- If your health team is co-located with a community sector organisation, they can join the [Voluntary Sector Forum Climate and Environment Alliance](#) and use the bespoke [12 point action plan!](#)

## 11: Biodiversity and nature



We know the world we live in is so important for our mental and physical health, our food, our water, and our quality of life, yet we are actually damaging it with our lifestyles. Seems daft! We can do something about this:

- Encourage colleagues to join a local community gardening group
- See if there is enough room outside for a small planter of [pollinator friendly plants](#) - we might be able to help get a small grant for this!
- You can also get bee boxes in place - easy to make from scrap wood
- Help colleagues see the connection between managing water and energy use and protecting our habitats (using resources without care is one of the drivers of climate and nature breakdown)
- You can see some fantastic examples of other [practices creating their own gardens here](#)
- Check out [our support our website](#) and [see what other people are doing here on our Green Genius film!](#)
- Visit your local community garden! [Contact us](#) if you need to know where it is...

Cornwall Greener Practice Network is here to help: [contact\\_mandab@volunteercornwall.org.uk](mailto:contact_mandab@volunteercornwall.org.uk)

## 12: Food for health, growing for everyone



Good access to good food is good for us; good for our communities and local growers, and good for carbon, habitat and ecosystems. It's a completely crucial underpinning of everything to do with human and planetary health. We know health professionals can make a huge difference on all counts:

- Think about booking a weekly fruit box for staff, to provide great local unsprayed fruit during the day as snacks
- Talk with your social prescribing team to see how they are able to signpost to local community growing spaces - great for patients, great for our environment
- Think about developing schemes to use veggie boxes as part of your prescription...
- Encourage staff colleagues to visit their community garden, to buy local veggie boxes, volunteer, or just go and sit in the garden!
- Sign the [Cornwall Sustainable Food Charter](#): it's common sense and has multiple co-benefits in terms of human and planetary health, and mental and physical health for us all
- See [who else is doing what on our website!](#)
- There are many practices developing their own community gardens and growing spaces - [have a look here and repurpose their ideas...](#)

## 13: Communication and collaboration with our community

This shows colleagues, patients and community that the team know their actions count even more when they're done together with others - and once you set an example, others will follow!



- Find out who is working in your community on climate and nature positive action - such as Plastic Free towns, community food initiatives, low carbon transport, energy resilience, repair cafes - and connect.
- Promote what they're doing in your building and in your work
- Make sure colleagues know they can volunteer and get involved too
- Talk about community action as a means of taking climate action
- Check [out our website for more ideas](#)
- Buy local food wherever possible, and connect to your local community gardens - they often have beautiful fruit and veg for sale!

## 14: Internal communication, learning and training



Keep learning and finding out how you can share ideas, expertise, links and moments of green genius – everyone involved in this Mission is Brilliant at Learning and Fabulous at Sharing!

- Use all the posters we can help you get hold of to share the shared green endeavour.
- Keep the climate crisis as a standing agenda item which features on every practice meeting.
- Join the training and info sharing sessions from Cornwall Greener Practice Network – ask us!
- Set up a local Whatsapp Green Group to share ideas!
- Find [out more about training and events available here!](#)

## 15: Advocating for climate justice



Join the dots between human health and planetary health – and speak up! Our most vulnerable community members are being hit first and worst by extreme weather and rising prices, often affected by supply chains being affected by extreme weather. Bring climate knowledge, and action, into meeting agendas as a normal item, use your role to support people who are already struggling to have a fair shot at a decent life, point out that a healthy community needs a health planet.

- Talk about your role as a fundamental part of the local community, not a separate team
- Keep the climate crisis as a standing agenda item which features on every practice meeting and make the connection with climate justice
- Find ways to connect human health with local transport, housing and green space decisions – local people want to hear from health professionals on these issues
- Work with Community Energy Plus who can help vulnerable community members cope with extreme temperatures in their homes ([www.cep.org.uk](http://www.cep.org.uk))
- Talk to us about [period poverty exemplar projects](#) being developed by practices
- Speak to us if there is a climate/social justice issue you would like us to help with – and [see who else is doing what on our website](#)

Just give us a shout: we're here to help. 😊

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<https://www.healthandclimateresilience.net>

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