

**NHS 24**  
**BOARD MEETING**  
**19 DECEMBER 2024**  
**ITEM NO 9.3**  
**FOR ASSURANCE**

**NHS 24 CLIMATE EMERGENCY & SUSTAINABILITY ANNUAL REPORT**

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**Action Required:**  
The Board is asked to review and take assurance from the Climate Emergency and Sustainability Programme (CESP) Annual Report 2023/2024 presented at the Planning and Performance Committee on 11 November. The Report is due for submission to Scottish Government in January 2025.

**Key Points for the Board/Committee to consider:**  
Responding to the climate emergency is one of the Scottish Government's highest priorities. CESP activities are part of the annual review for all health boards.

**Governance process:**  
The NHS 24 governance reflects that defined by the Scottish Government National Climate Emergency and Sustainability Programme. The Service Transformation Programme Board monitors the progress of work covered by the CESP to ensure success criteria are met, outcomes delivered, and climate change improvement benefits are realised.

**Strategic alignment and link to overarching NHS Scotland priorities and strategies:**  
The CESP report summarises for Scottish Government the progress towards NHS 24's sustainability strategy.

The paper aligns with the following key strategic priorities:

- NHS Scotland Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy: 2022-2026.
- The Scottish Government (SG) Care and Wellbeing Portfolio and Public health priorities for Scotland are overall strategic reform policies and delivery framework within Health and Social Care.
- Realistic Medicine Action Plans
- NHS 24 CESP Strategy and Action Plan

**Strategic alignment and link to Corporate Delivery Plan activity:**

7.1a: Deliver a programme of activity to support efficiencies improvements that will lead to:  
• Cost reduction, cost avoidance and income generation  
• Service Productivity Improvements

7.1b: Deliver interventions that seek to reduce negative impact to the environment and contribute towards net zero

**Key Risks:**

Risk management is aligned with the standing corporate governance process.

**Financial Implications:**

A key deliverable of the CESP programmed is to identify any potential financial efficiency.

**Equality and Diversity:**

NHS 24 takes account of requirements in relation to equality and diversity in relation to Sustainability Development and environmental matters.

**1. RECOMMENDATION**

1.1 The NHS 24 Board are asked to note the Climate Emergency and Sustainability Programme (CESP) Report for assurance.

**2. TIMING**

2.1 The report is submitted to Scottish Government on an annual basis and will be sent in January 2025. The timing of the report allows boards to collate the data required for the submission.

**3. BACKGROUND**

3.1 Scottish Government created the annual CESP report, requesting all Health Boards complete the submission. This allows Scottish Government to understand the progress being made across the Health Boards and the continuing challenges being faced.

3.2 A number of working parties have been formed allowing Health Boards to share learning, expertise and approached, to the benefit of all.

**4. ENGAGEMENT**

4.1 To ensure accurate information has been provided within the report, engagement has included Service Delivery, Medical, Nursing, Finance and Risk.

**5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 Any savings identified within the CESP work have been captured and reported to the Sustainability and Value Group.

**6. MEASURABLE BENEFITS**

6.1 The benefit of NHS 24 providing the various elements climate data within the report to Scottish Government is to allow a system wide monitoring of progress towards the net zero goal.

**7. NEXT STEPS**

7.1 Work will continue to improve the data capture and monitoring of the various environmental indicators. Action will also continue to reduce the impact of NHS 24 on the environment.

# NHS 24 Climate Emergency and Sustainability Report 2023/2024

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# NHS 24 Climate Emergency and Sustainability Report 2023/2024

## 1. About

The planet is facing a triple crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution due to human activities breaking the planet's environmental limits.

The World Health Organisation recognises that climate change is the single biggest health threat facing humanity. Health organisations have a duty to cut their greenhouse gas emissions, the cause of climate change, and influence wider society to take the action needed to both limit climate change and adapt to its impacts.

It is also recognised that addressing the global climate emergency will improve population health and minimise any impact on those most vulnerable to health inequalities. More information on the profound and growing threat of climate change to health can be found here: [www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/climate-change-and-health](https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/climate-change-and-health)

NHS Scotland has made a commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to Net Zero by 2040. Each Health Board has an obligation to report against Net Zero targets.

## 2. Introduction

This is NHS 24's third Annual Climate Emergency and Sustainability Report. The numerical values and narrative provided will detail the work completed in 2023/24 and our ongoing efforts to reduce emissions and improve NHS 24's environmental position.

NHS 24 supports delivery of a healthier Scotland by providing care, advice and information, all day every day. We do this through the 111-service and through digital services. We employ around 2,000 people and are based across six main contact centre sites and five remote and rural locations across Scotland.

## 3. Leadership and governance

We have appointed a full-time Programme Manager to support the development of our Climate Emergency and Sustainability Programme (CESP). A CESP Strategy and associated Action Plan has been developed, and aligns with the new Organisational Strategy, which was published in Summer 2023: [Our Corporate Strategy 2023 | NHS 24](#).

Staff engagement on CESP was included as part of ongoing engagement on the wider organisational strategy. We have actively sought to engage staff on the CESP agenda and to get their feedback and ideas on how we can proactively make changes within the organisation. The response from this engagement has been positive with staff motivated to make improvements that will help us achieve our sustainability and

efficiency goals. This feedback has helped shape our action plan and we will continue to engage with staff beyond this development phase. We have continued the staff engagement through regular communications and updates.

Governance in relation to the Climate Emergency and Sustainability Programme is as follows:

- The Sustainability Governance Board (SGB) is delivered by the Executive Management Team (EMT) with the Medical Director, the named Executive Lead. Any SGB business is carried out during monthly EMT meetings.
- The Sustainability Development Group is chaired by the Sustainability Programme Manager. The group has been established with membership from all directorates across the organisation and is scheduled to meet regularly with a requirement to provide a status report on each directorate's progress towards their specific CESP actions.

As part of the Service Transformation Programme (STP) this work is aligned with the key strategic objectives and set out in the Annual Delivery Plan. Due to the amount of change and transformation activity across all projects and programmes, careful consideration is given to each initiative to ensure that it can be implemented as planned. As far as possible climate and sustainability elements have been incorporated into the other projects.

- NHS 24 has an appointed non-executive board member Sustainability Champion to provide external analysis, receive regular updates from Executive Leads and Programme Manager and link into the Scottish Sustainability Board Champion network. The NHS 24 Board Sustainability Champion changed in September 2024.
- A standing agenda item on the CESP is included on EMT and Board agendas, with formal decision making conducted at quarterly Planning and Performance Committee meetings.
- Updates on relevant aspects of CESP may be provided to other committees, as and when required.

#### **4. Greenhouse gas emissions**

We aim to become a net-zero organisation by 2040 for the sources of greenhouse gas emissions. The following table sets out the areas of greenhouse gas emissions that NHS Boards are required to report on annually:

<u>Source</u>	<u>Description</u>	<b>Greenhouse gas emissions (tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent, tCO<sub>2</sub>e) 2022/23</b>	<b>Greenhouse gas emissions (tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent, tCO<sub>2</sub>e) 2023/24</b>	<b>Percentage Change 2022/23 – 2023/24</b>
<b>Building energy use</b>	Greenhouse gases produced in providing electricity and energy heat for NHS buildings. Includes Electricity, Gas and District Heating.	730 tCO <sub>2</sub> e	704 tCO <sub>2</sub> e	<b>4% change 2022/23-2023/24</b> 2023/24 <b>target</b> reduction = <b>1%</b> 2023/24 <b>actual</b> reduction = <b>4%</b>  Difference between actual and target emissions = <b>3%</b>
<b>Non-medical F-gas use</b>	Greenhouse gases used for things like refrigeration and air conditioning	Not available but actively working to compile this information.	Not available but actively working to compile this information.	Not available but actively working to compile this information.
<b>Medical gases</b>	Greenhouse gases used in anaesthetics - nitrous oxide (N2O), Entonox (which contains nitrous oxide), desflurane, sevoflurane and isoflurane	Not applicable to NHS 24	Not applicable to NHS 24	Not applicable to NHS 24
<b>Metered dose inhaler propellant</b>	Greenhouse gases used as a propellant in inhalers used to treat asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder (COPD)	Not applicable to NHS 24 – Emissions data provided by PHS for 2023/24 does not include NHS 24.	Not applicable to NHS 24 – Emissions data provided by PHS for 2023/24 does not include NHS 24.	Not applicable to NHS 24 – Emissions data provided by PHS for 2023/24 does not include NHS 24.
<b>NHS fleet use</b>	Greenhouse gases produced by NHS vehicles	Not applicable (no fleet)	Not applicable (no fleet)	Not applicable (no fleet)
<b>Waste</b>	General, recycled and food waste in tonnes.	Not available for this year	<b>40 tonnes</b> (Excludes Aurora House as data is not currently available)	N/A
<b>Water</b>	The greenhouse gas produced from the use of water and the treatment of wastewater	Not available for this year	0.56 tCO <sub>2</sub> e (Norseman House only – unavailable for all other sites)	N/A
<b>Business travel</b>	Greenhouse gases produced by staff travel for work purposes, not using NHS vehicles.	46.29 tCO <sub>2</sub> e	50.23 tCO <sub>2</sub> e	3.94 tCO <sub>2</sub> e (8.5% increase)
<b>Sub-Total</b>		776 tCO <sub>2</sub> e	754.79 tCO <sub>2</sub> e	21.41 tCO <sub>2</sub> e (2.8% reduction)
<b>Carbon sequestration</b>	The amount of carbon dioxide captured per annum by woodland, trees, grassland, and shrubs growing on NHS grounds.	0	0	0
<b>Greenhouse gas emissions minus carbon sequestration</b>		776 tCO <sub>2</sub> e	754.79 tCO <sub>2</sub> e	21.41 tCO <sub>2</sub> e (2.8% reduction)

The base year for energy data is actually 2012/2013; however, we lack recorded information for that period. Our records commence around 2015/16, and even then, not for all sites, which does not allow for a true comparison. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that in 2015/16, the total tCO2e for electricity alone at one site (Norseman) was 1,016 tCO2e. Currently, for our entire estate, encompassing all energy sources (gas, electricity, district heating, and water), the total is 704 tCO2e, reflecting a 30% reduction.

For the Net Zero roadmap, our base year was 2019/20, although this is not a true base year due to the impact of COVID-19. The table covers the last two years to focus on in-year movements, as this will demonstrate a more accurate progression based on the availability and reliability of data whilst annually reflecting on movement since 2015/16.

Enhanced data collection methods now enable us to access almost real-time data for certain locations via live portals. However, our distinctive estate and lease agreements continue to present challenges. Since we don't have direct connections with energy suppliers, we depend on landlords to provide timely information for most sites.

Several landlords have started offering more regular and prompt data, enhancing the precision of our reports. Additionally, we are considering the installation of sub-metering devices, when possible and where not currently implemented, to achieve more direct oversight of our energy usage metrics.

On the whole, there has been improvement in data for electricity, gas, and district heating. Conversely, water and waste data present more complexities. The challenge stems from distinguishing what is covered within the service charge and the breakdown between direct apportionment and common demise apportionment. The methodology to gather this data and ensure its accuracy continues to evolve.

The team is dedicated to addressing these obstacles and is proactively pursuing innovative approaches to guarantee that our data collection methods are strong, efficient, and in line with our sustainability objectives.

## 5. Climate change adaptation

The climate is changing due to the greenhouse gases already emitted into the atmosphere. While efforts to reduce the rate and scale of climate change continue, we must also adapt to new conditions we are facing.

The changing climate is increasing risks for health and health services. More information on these risks in the UK can be found in the UK Climate Change Committee's Health and Social Care Briefing available here: [www.ukclimaterisk.org/independent-assessment-ccra3/briefings](http://www.ukclimaterisk.org/independent-assessment-ccra3/briefings)

We have completed a Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA) and have mitigating actions and resilience plans. The main risks identified through the Climate Change

Risk Assessment relate to extreme cold and heat, flooding, and related impact on our operations.

As an organisation we have robust processes and measures in place and have taken measures to reduce the risks and impacts of these events.

## 6. Building energy

In 2023, NHS 24 has undertaken a series of initiatives aimed at improving energy management across its facilities and operations. These efforts are part of a broader commitment to sustainability and environmental responsibility, ensuring that healthcare services are delivered efficiently and with minimal environmental impact.

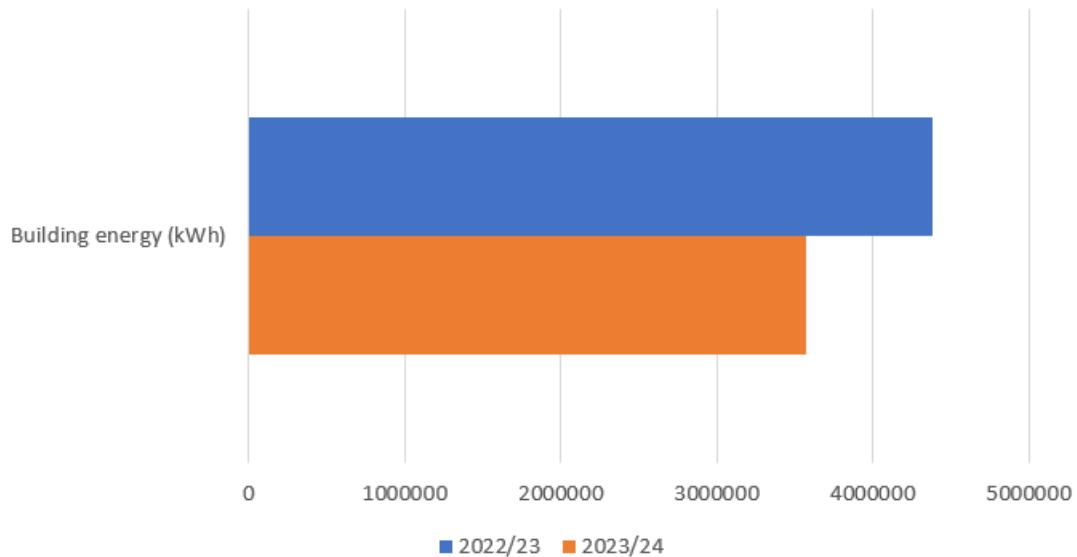
NHS 24 has upgraded to energy-efficient technologies, including LED and sensor lighting to cut electricity use and advanced HVAC systems optimised for energy savings. Managing these systems with controls like temperature set points and timers has been crucial in reducing consumption for 2023/24. Aurora House is connected to water-sourced heat pump as part of a district heating system run by West Dunbartonshire Council's Net Zero initiative.

Recognising the importance of staff involvement in achieving energy management goals, NHS 24 has been raising awareness about energy conservation practices. Employees are encouraged to adopt energy-saving habits, at work and at home, such as turning off lights where sensor lighting is not in place and equipment when not in use and are provided with the knowledge to identify and report energy inefficiencies.

In 2023/24, NHS 24 began formulating an Estates Sustainability Plan (ESP), the key purpose of the ESP is to develop and deliver an effective plan that focuses on reducing NHS 24's carbon footprint and improving staff experience. The plan aims to maximise the estate's utilisation, support the pathway to net zero carbon emissions, and achieve significant potential income generation and financial savings against current baseline property costs.

Among the primary goals of this plan is to reduce NHS 24's carbon footprint and support the journey to net-zero emissions by cutting down on underutilised space, lowering energy use, and decreasing the carbon footprint.

In 2023/24, we achieved an 18% reduction in building energy from 4,381,485 kWh to 3,572,550 kWh (see chart below).



Please note the distinction between tCO2e (tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent) and energy consumption measured in kWh (kilowatt-hours) is crucial for accurate environmental reporting and analysis.

Energy consumption in kWh quantifies the amount of energy used by a facility. This measurement is straightforward and reflects the actual consumption of electricity, gas, or other energy sources.

The tCO2e figure measures the greenhouse gas emissions produced as a result of energy consumption and other activities. It encompasses not only carbon dioxide (CO2) but also other greenhouse gases like methane (CH4) and nitrous oxide (N2O), converted into the equivalent amount of CO2 based on their global warming potential. This metric provides a more comprehensive view of the environmental impact by considering the different gases contributing to climate change. By tracking both kWh and tCO2e, NHS 24 can not only manage their energy consumption but also focus on reducing their carbon footprint and whilst there is a 1% energy reduction target for all Boards its mainly the reduction of carbon of 75% by 2030 we are working towards.

## 7. Sustainable care

The way we provide care influences our environmental impact and greenhouse gas emissions.

## 7.1 Flow Navigation

We can help meet NHS Scotland net zero targets, reduce its overall carbon footprint and mitigate environmental impact on communities throughout our value-based service resilience and operations. We do this by collaborating with other public service partners and NHS Boards. This promotes our approach to the national CESP Programme, realistic medicine, and value-based health care as per our corporate strategy. NHS 24 attended the NHS Scotland Sustainable Care event in September 2023, to talk about the need to recognise and record the full range of value-based healthcare service transformation across Scotland and how that contributes to a net zero society. Their presentation focused on a collaborative study between NHS 24, and NHS Tayside to evaluate the “green’ benefits of Flow Navigation Centres and the national Redesign of Urgent Care Pathway. The use of Flow Navigation Centres in a new pathway for urgent care aims to ensure patients receive the right care at the right time by NHS 24 111 providing triage and appropriate onward referrals, including to the Flow Navigation Centre for remote consultations. This approach contributes to improved quality and experience of care, being patient centred and cost saving for patients, as well as having the potential to be more environmentally sustainable.

In a climate & sustainability evaluation of this pathway, a total of 352 cases from Angus were analysed over a two-week period. Following calculation of miles saved in return trips for avoided ED attendances and attendances at services closer to home – 5134 miles were saved. This would equate to a per annum figure of 133 500 miles saved for Angus patients alone. Using UK average CO2 grams/miles (221 g/m) this equates to approximately 30 tonnes of CO2 emissions saved. This highlights the role of NHS 24 and the potential of new urgent care pathways in contributing to a sustainable health and care system in Scotland. This analysis is now being extended to other areas across Scotland.

## 7.2 Communications

NHS 24 is committed to contributing to a more environmentally sustainable and conscious NHS Scotland. To achieve this, supporting and engaging staff in this agenda is a key priority to becoming a sustainable organisation. The NHS 24 communications team has been proactive in sharing and promoting key actions and activities across five main areas of sustainability: Buildings and Land, Travel, Goods and Services, Care and Realistic Medicine, and Communities. Throughout the year, the team has provided regular updates and communicated essential actions to support net-zero ambitions by 2040. They have highlighted the work of the Climate Emergency and Sustainability Programme (CESP) and its two key groups: the Sustainability Development Group (SDG) and the Sustainability and Value Group (SVG). Efforts

have included promoting active travel, encouraging staff to adopt sustainable travel options, and engaging staff by inviting them to share their ideas and stories related to sustainability. Additionally, a six-week campaign leading up to Scotland's Climate Week was launched, covering various sustainability themes such as Sustainable Travel, Active Travel, Paper Reduction, Energy Efficiency, and Sustainability at Home.

Moving forward, the team will highlight outcomes from COP 29, featuring engaging sustainability content to involve staff. They will also leverage seasonal events to promote waste reduction, the circular economy, and sustainability. The team will encourage staff to make New Year's resolutions centred on sustainability and will follow up on their progress throughout the year. By leveraging internal communication channels, the team has ensured that staff remain well-informed and engaged in collective efforts to address the climate crisis. The dedication to these initiatives underscores NHS 24's commitment to fostering a culture of environmental stewardship and sustainability.

### **7.3 Workforce**

Another example of how NHS 24 is embedding environmental sustainability into the organisation approach is demonstrated in the approach to workforce wellbeing. NHS 24 is committed to providing a healthy, positive, and inclusive work environment for our people that supports, promotes and protects the wellbeing of staff. Our Wellbeing Matters Strategy 2023-25 highlights our key priorities and envisages a workplace where wellbeing extends beyond health, and encompasses work practices, our environment, and social interactions, and creates a sense of belonging. Given that a proportion of our staff work from home some or most of the time, and with opportunities for further hybrid working offered through digital transformation, we recognise the need for healthy working practices to support the wellbeing of staff.

Each directorate within NHS 24 has a tailored Culture and Wellbeing Action Plan, which allows staff within that directorate to feed into, to shape the actions and identify what would improve their experience in the workplace. Actions to continuously improve "ways of working" locally have been identified as the most impactful, with a range of actions to support hybrid working such as improving virtual communication, taking regular "walkaway" breaks between meetings, and agreeing a shared etiquette for the use of MS Teams. Healthy working practices are also communicated regularly to staff through a multi-channel approach, such as the Team Talk newsletter and intranet updates, and local Staff Experience Groups.

## **8. Anaesthesia and surgery**

We do not provide surgery and anaesthesia services, therefore no information on these areas is included in the report.

## **9. Respiratory medicine**

Greenhouse gases are used as a propellant in metered dose inhalers used to treat asthma and COPD. Most of the emissions from inhalers are from the use of reliever inhalers – Short Acting Beta Agonists (SABAs). By helping people to manage their condition more effectively, we can improve patient care and reduce emissions.

As part of our Climate Emergency and Sustainability Action Plan, we have updated NHS inform with information on effective use of inhalers for breathing conditions like Asthma and COPD. In addition, a link to external information from Asthma + Lung UK as well as information on environmental impacts of inhalers (including the need for appropriate disposal) to support patients having conversations with their care provider about the right choice of inhalers for them has been added. This re-iterates the importance of compliance to prevent exacerbations of respiratory conditions that could lead to hospitalisations and a much worse impact on the environment. This is in line with our commitment to the principles of Realistic Medicine, which include reducing waste and harm.

## **10. Travel and transport**

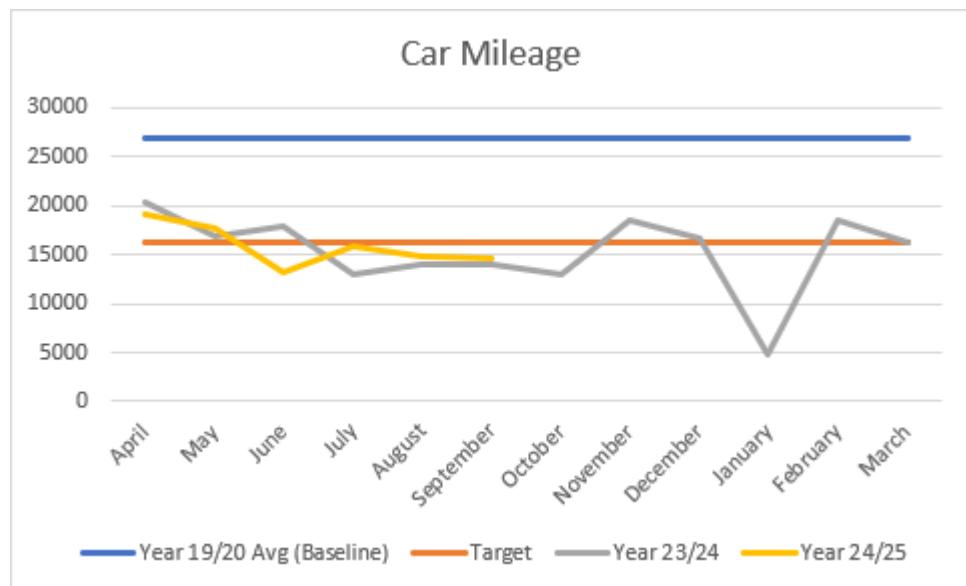
NHS Scotland is supporting a shift to a healthier and more sustainable transport system, in line with the government's commitment to reduce overall car kilometres in Scotland by 20% by 2030. This includes reducing people's need to travel and supporting access to local services and public transport. It will also promote active travel i.e. travel by walking, wheeling, and cycling. Where car use is still required, people will be encouraged to share or combine car journeys, as well as consider new ways of working for example blending home and site based working patterns.

In Summer 2023 we completed a Sustainable and Active Travel survey to help staff understand the benefits of using active travel and public transport. We asked what would support and encourage them to change to a more sustainable active method in the future and a draft Travel Strategy and Action Plan was developed based on this feedback. Some of the key aims and objectives highlighted within the strategy are: increasing the proportion of employees accessing NHS 24 sites by active modes of travel, increasing the proportion of employees accessing NHS 24 sites by public transport, reducing the proportion of single-occupancy car journeys made by employees to NHS 24 sites, and reducing the percentage of miles travelled by employees for business journeys. These findings will inform development of an Active Travel policy in the future.

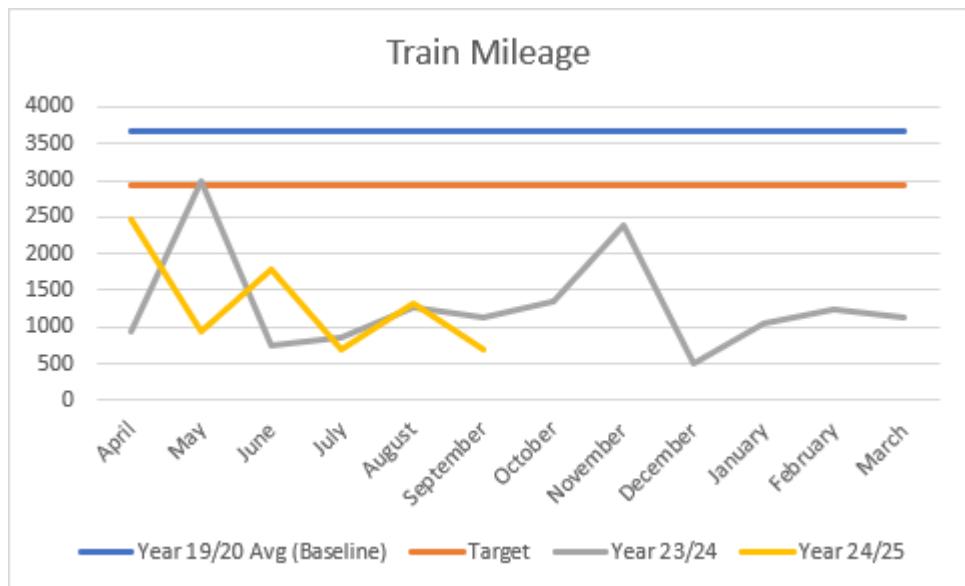
As part of our communications plan in the lead up to Climate Week 2024, there was a focus on promoting active and sustainable travel in our Team Talk publications which are circulated to all staff on a biweekly basis.

Reducing the number of private cars in our communities has wider benefits for individual and population-level health and wellbeing. We are therefore, monitoring our business travel, which reduced during the covid pandemic, to ensure it doesn't go back to pre-pandemic levels. A process has been put in place to review the business travel mileage claimed by each directorate, and local teams are encouraged to consider whether they need to be physically at a meeting, or if it can be done virtually, thus ensuring we are balancing sustainability with our commitment to equality. This can be challenging as a national service where leadership visibility is required. Each directorate has been tasked to reduce their car mileage by 40% over the next 12 months and rail use by 20% based on the figures from 2019/20. Cost of payments for travel mileage is now included within budget statements to raise awareness of the financial, as well as environmental impacts of travel behaviours.

NHS 24 achieved the 40% car mileage reduction in 2023/24 and is currently on target to achieve a 41% reduction in 2024/25. The target car mileage is 16,200 miles per month, totalling 194,000 miles for the financial year, and our year-to-date average is currently 15,900 miles per month. The Executive Management Team continue to encourage the reduction of non-essential business travel within their respective directorates:



In rail mileage we achieved the 20% target in 2023/24 and we're currently on target to achieve a 64% reduction in 2024/25:



We continue to work towards becoming a 'Cycle Friendly Employer' by actively promoting the salary sacrifice scheme for purchase of bicycles and providing suitable workplace facilities to support cycling to work. We recently increased the purchase limit of a bike from £2,000 to £4,000 to allow staff to have the opportunity to buy an eBike. As of September 2024, 146 employees have participated in the scheme since it was introduced in Feb 2020. Locations and accessibility of our centres remain a key consideration within our estates strategy.

Travel and transport are an ongoing priority within our CESP action plan. We have reviewed our existing Travel and Accommodation Policy to ensure it's aligned with our CESP ambitions as well as supporting the Scottish Government's commitment to a 20% reduction in car kilometres by 2030. Over the last two years the number of lease cars has been reduced from six to three at the start of this year. Two lease cars were returned in January leaving one lease car remaining. This car is electric, and the lease car policy is being updated to only offer electric cars as an option.

We currently have no fleet therefore we have no related organisational return.

## 11. Greenspace and biodiversity

Biodiversity, or the wide variety of living organisms within an environment, has declined at a rapid rate in the last 50 years. Evidence demonstrates that these trends are attributed to human activities such as land use change, habitat degradation and fragmentation, pollution, and the impacts of climate change. The State of Nature report published in 2023 has highlighted the decline of nature across Scotland, with 11% of species now classed as threatened with extinction.

Public bodies in Scotland have a duty under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 (Nature Conservation Scotland Act 2004) to further the conservation of biodiversity taking care of nature all around us. Furthermore, the Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011 (Wildlife and Natural Environment Scotland Act 2011) requires every public body to summarise their activities to meet this duty, through the production of a publicly available report.

In addition to health benefits for patients and staff, investment in greenspace around hospitals and healthcare centres helps tackle climate change and biodiversity loss.

NHS 24 has minimal greenspace across our sites; however, we have contributed to a joint Biodiversity Duty Report (2018-2020) in conjunction with five other Health Boards and are actively engaging with them to use some of their greenspace to improve biodiversity. Through our Stakeholder Engagement team, we are also seeking opportunities to enhance greenspace and biodiversity in local communities, in line with the information provided by Nature Scot on 'Our Natural Health Service' and via the Scottish Governments 'Let's Do Net Zero' website.

While greenspace across NHS 24 sites is minimal, NHS 24 is committed to its role as an anchor organisation and exploring opportunities to have positive social and environmental effects with its surrounding communities and greenspaces as well as within NHS 24 workforce.

An example of this is a collaboration with [Design HOPES](#) (Healthy Organisations in a Place-based Ecosystem, Scotland), a research collaboration that aims to exploit the potential of design-led thinking, making, and acting to tackle multifaceted health delivery and net zero challenges efficiently.

NHS 24 has been connecting with the Dundee based community group *Campy Growers*, to support a trial on home food growing with staff at the Dundee centre. This initiative will be evaluated by the team at Design Hopes in the hope of building on this for future years. It is aimed at increasing participants' connection with food and nature, as well as exploring the impact of partaking in home growing exercises on participants' health and wellbeing. It also tests the acceptability of this intervention.

NHS Scotland has sustainability modules for staff and an element of this will be raising awareness of biodiversity. Internally, we are developing a campaign to raise awareness of biodiversity across our 2000+ staff and encourage them to share information with their families and friends. It is due to start in Spring 2024.

## **12. Sustainable procurement, circular economy, and waste**

We will reduce the impact that our use of resources has on the environment through adopting circular economy principles, fostering a culture of stewardship, and working with other health services to maximise our contribution to reducing supply chain emissions.

Procurement of our goods and services is carried out by the Scottish Ambulance Service (SAS) Procurement Team. In the year 2021/22, SAS Procurement improvement priorities focussed on updating strategy, policy, and processes in relation to requirements around ethical procurement; fair work practices; cyber security; data protection and whistle blowing.

SAS Procurement is committed to using the suite of Scottish Government Sustainable Procurement Tools to achieve sustainable procurement outcomes.

We have set up a Procurement Improvement Team to review the contracts we currently have in place. Current plans to improve the climate and sustainability impacts of procurement include:

- Broadening access to contracts for small and medium sized enterprises; the third sector and supported businesses
- Looking for innovation and harnessing more sustainable technologies
- Encouraging suppliers to offer more goods and services with lower greenhouse gas emissions.
- Recently a large procurement exercise has taken place to replace the Contact Centre/Customer Relationship Management system. As part of the tender evaluation, 5% of the total score was focused on sustainability and accessibility.
- Expanding the use of community benefits requirements within contracts
- Embedding fair work practices
- Promoting equality and tackling inequality
- Including of life-cycle impact mapping as part of the sustainability test.

To address waste, NHS 24 promotes recycling by segregating materials like paper, plastics, and metals. This segregation ensures that recyclable materials are appropriately processed and diverted from landfills, contributing to environmental preservation.

A recent focus has been to reduce confidential waste across the estate by reviewing services and cutting down the number of waste consoles and pick-ups. The review involved analysing the volume and frequency of confidential waste generated in various departments to identify areas where improvements could be made. By optimising the placement and usage of waste consoles, NHS 24 was able to consolidate pick-up schedules and reduce the overall number of collections required.

This has led to decreased carbon emissions, as fewer contractor vehicles are needed for waste transportation, thereby lowering the environmental impact. Additionally, less contractor travel means reduced fuel consumption and associated costs. The streamlined processes have resulted in less overall waste, not only in terms of confidential materials but also in reducing the unnecessary disposal of other recyclable

items. These initiatives have culminated in significant financial savings, amounting to approximately £36,000.

Furthermore, the reduced number of waste consoles has simplified waste management for staff, making it easier to comply with recycling guidelines and improving the overall efficiency of waste segregation efforts within the organisation.

In addition, NHS 24 has implemented educational campaigns to encourage staff to actively participate in recycling initiatives. Awareness sessions and informative materials have been distributed to ensure everyone understands the importance of waste segregation and how it contributes to overall sustainability goals.

NHS 24 is exploring the potential and practical application of cutting-edge waste management technologies. The integration of smart bins and tracking systems is under consideration to enhance recycling operations. These advanced solutions not only bolster operational efficiency but also generate critical data, facilitating continual improvement of waste reduction methodologies.

## **13. Environmental stewardship**

Environmental stewardship means acting as a steward or caretaker, of the environment and taking responsibility for the actions which affect our shared environmental quality.

This includes any activities which may adversely impact on land, air and water, either through the unsustainable use of resources or the generation of waste and pollution. Having an Environmental Management System (EMS) in place provides a framework that helps to achieve our environmental goals through consistent review, evaluation, and improvement of our environmental performance.

The Estates and Facilities team has commenced use of the NHS National Environmental Management System (EMS) to ensure that its operations are environmentally sustainable and comply with relevant regulations. The system helps to minimise its environmental impact by managing waste, reducing carbon emissions, and promoting sustainable use of resources. By implementing the EMS, the NHS 24 aims to safeguard public health, enhance operational efficiency, and demonstrate leadership in environmental stewardship.

As part of the Workforce Culture and Wellbeing Action Plan, a range of volunteering opportunities are offered by NHS 24 to its staff. This includes, for example an opportunity to prepare greenspace on one of the sites for winter in support of the Scottish Wildlife Trust.

## **14. Sustainable construction**

At NHS 24 Estates and Facilities, we are committed to the highest standards of design, implementation, and delivery of our construction projects (primarily fit

outs/refits). To ensure these standards are met, we collaborate with Lead Advisors who bring extensive expertise and support to our initiatives.

A key aspect of our construction projects is the integration of sustainable construction practices. Our Lead Advisors are dedicated to embedding sustainability within the scope of works, ensuring that each project not only meets but exceeds environmental standards. This commitment to sustainability encompasses all stages of the project lifecycle, from initial design through to completion.

By prioritising sustainable construction, we aim to minimise environmental impact, promote energy efficiency, and support the long-term health and well-being of our communities. Our approach aligns with best practices and regulatory requirements, reflecting our dedication to creating a positive and lasting legacy through our construction projects.

NHS 24 Estates and Facilities, with the guidance of our expert Lead Advisors, continue to champion sustainability as a fundamental component of our construction endeavours.

## **14.1 Use of SMEs for Sustainable Construction**

The use of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) in the recent Aberdeen relocation project significantly promoted sustainable construction practices. By engaging local SMEs, the project reduced transportation emissions and supported the local economy, ensuring that materials and services were sourced nearby. These businesses often prioritise innovative and sustainable practices, contributing to a construction process that aligned with the highest environmental standards.

## **15. Sustainable communities**

The climate emergency undermines the foundations of good health and deepens inequalities for our most deprived communities.

The NHS touches every community in Scotland. We have a responsibility to use our abilities as a large employer, a major buyer, and one of the most recognised brands in the world – an ‘anchor’ organisation, to protect and support our communities’ health in every way we can.

To ensure our workplaces reflect the people we serve, our talent acquisition and recruitment teams have engaged with local schools in the vicinity of our 6 regional centres to support and attend careers events, student engagement and information sessions to raise awareness of the opportunities for employment in NHS 24 both now and in the future. These sessions have supported students to understand the skills required and pathways to be considered to secure a career with NHS 24.

In addition to the school engagement, over the last 18 months, NHS 24 has engaged with a number of Employability partners and have attended career events, held candidate information sessions and application support sessions with groups of individuals. The purpose of these sessions is to break down the barriers facing candidates and ensuring everyone has a fair opportunity to secure employment with NHS 24. These have been targeted in areas close to our centres. By encouraging applicants from local communities close to our call centres, we can encourage people who live in social housing to apply to work with us, whilst supporting local businesses and transport providers. This in turn reduces the distance travelled by employees, thereby reducing staff travel related emissions.

NHS 24's Employability Lead also works with the National Employability Leads Group to share best practice and to further develop its routes into employment. Engagement is ongoing with organisations including Department for Work and Pensions, Developing the Young Workforce, Princes Trust, Enable, Fedcap, West of Scotland Regional Equality Council and Street League.

NHS 24 are part of the National Armed Forces Talent Programme to support armed forces leavers, veterans, and their families into employment within the NHS through career pathways and resources. The work also increases awareness and understanding amongst NHS Scotland staff of the range and transferability of skills and qualifications this group can offer and to improve and support the application and recruitment process for those seeking employment in the health and care system.

To ensure the promotion of NHS 24 careers extends to Armed Forces community, we attend engagement events, online seminars and created an external guidance document that will support these candidates to understand the opportunities available and where their skills can be transferred. This is shared via the NHS Scotland Careers sites and distributed via CTP and partner organisations via the Armed Forces Talent Programme.

Furthermore, staff from our engagement team have carried out a series of events in the locality of our centres to share key health messages to both our student population during our freshers' events as well as the wider population as part of our annual winter campaign. As an anchor institution we are delivering guide to services booklets to communities across Scotland.

We are collaborating with colleagues in PHS and NSS on merging and aligned the Anchor Progression Framework and NHS Climate Emergency & Sustainability Strategy (NHSCE&SS). The purpose is to "*support HS Boards fulfil their anchor institution responsibilities and contribute to creating net-zero, nature-positive, climate-resilient, healthy and equitable communities across Scotland*", and to develop a model, suitable for NHS Specialist Board. This model is currently being finalised. Once signed off by the Executive teams, the plan is to trial this out in PHS, NSS and NHS 24.

## 16. Conclusion

There have been notable advancements in data collection and analysis for energy management, with the NHS Scotland national system E-Sights proving to be an invaluable tool for effective energy monitoring. However, challenges remain in collecting and segregating waste and water data, particularly at sites where landlords manage waste services. Despite these difficulties, significant progress has been made in gathering information on waste directly managed by NHS 24, including clinical, hazardous, confidential, general, and recyclable waste. Efforts are ongoing to develop a comprehensive and accurate dashboard to facilitate NHS 24's waste monitoring. Additionally, NHS 24 continues to seek innovative solutions for data collection in restricted areas, such as the use of smart bins at the source.

A thorough Demand and Capacity Utilisation review, incorporating triangulation across various directorates, has been conducted. This review has identified opportunities to optimise the NHS 24 Estates footprint. An options appraisal has been completed, and proposals will be presented to the NHS 24 Executive Management Team (EMT) in October 2024 and subsequently to the Planning and Performance Committee in November, with implementation planned from December 2024.

We actively engage staff in the Climate Emergency and Sustainability agenda where they can contribute their ideas and feedback through the dedicated intranet pages. We continue to keep staff informed through our internal communications channels on what we are aiming to achieve through our CES programme, and the importance of their active engagement. Our Organisational Development, Leadership and Learning Team have developed a suite of modules for climate change which are available on our learning site LearnMore24.

Our Communications team have developed digital information screens in each of the contact centres to deliver messages to staff and cut down on the need for emails and paper. The information screens have already been used to deliver information on climate change and sustainability including information on Scotland's climate week from 25<sup>th</sup> September to 1<sup>st</sup> October 2023 and information on small and simple ways staff and their families can get involved. We also regularly have information and tips for staff on climate change in our Team Talk bi-weekly digital magazine for staff.

As the global climate crisis continues, robust communication strategies to raise awareness and foster engagement have been more critical than ever. NHS 24 is committed to leading by example, not only during the regular Climate Week promotions but throughout the year. By leveraging digital resources and involving our staff, we have extended our communication channels and reinforced our dedication to addressing climate change.

While Climate Week is a focal point, NHS 24 recognises the need for year-round communication efforts. We use various digital resources to maintain an ongoing and dynamic conversation on climate change. Monthly newsletters provide updates on

NHS 24's projects, keeping climate change at the forefront of our community's consciousness.

Our intranet site hosts a wealth of resources for staff, including e-learning modules and guides. This platform serves as a go-to resource for those seeking information and tools to combat climate change.

Across 2024, we will finalise our Active and Sustainable Travel Strategy and Action Plan.

We have seen key progress in many areas such as digital and sustainable care models, increasing the understanding for sustainability, moving past traditional estates-based projects, and we aim to continue pressing ahead making the necessary efforts to meet the NHS Scotland and Scottish Government net zero targets.

We are extremely grateful to our workforce and their ongoing commitment and enthusiasm to the Climate Emergency and Sustainability Programme.