



# Environmental sustainability

## Sustainable development management plan - self assessment checklist



### Background

One of the aims of the HFMA's environmental sustainability special interest group (the group) is to provide information and showcase good practice in the area of healthcare and environmental sustainability.

NHS bodies have varied requirements to take action, and report, on measures to improve environmental sustainability – both strategically and operationally.

This briefing and self-assessment checklist has been developed with input from the group and the HFMA's governance and audit committee.

While every care had been taken in the preparation of this briefing, the HFMA cannot in any circumstances accept responsibility for errors or omissions, and are not responsible for any loss occasioned to any person or organisation acting or refraining from action as a result of any material in it.

### Environmental reporting and targets

At a national level the Climate Change Act 2008 set government bodies legally binding targets for the reduction of carbon emissions. This is reflected in the Greening Government commitments for government departments<sup>1</sup>. These commitments are applicable to the Department of Health and its executive agencies and non-departmental public bodies although NHS bodies themselves are not specifically within their scope. But this does not mean that NHS bodies can ignore the environmental sustainability agenda.

<sup>1</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/publications/greening-government-commitments-2016-to-2020/greening-government-commitments-2016-to-2020](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/greening-government-commitments-2016-to-2020/greening-government-commitments-2016-to-2020)

The NHS long-form<sup>2</sup> standard contract requires the NHS provider body to maintain a sustainable development management plan (SDMP) and provide a summary of progress against that plan in its annual report<sup>3</sup>.

The group have considered what questions need to be asked when considering the quality of the SDMPs and the data used to monitor progress against it. The questions could be worked through by internal auditors, staff who are using the data or staff who are producing the data – none of whom are expected to be experts in environmental reporting. This work is expected to be a first step which may need to be followed up by a specialist in the field of environmental reporting undertaking more detailed work in this area.

The self-assessment checklist has been developed with the SDMP in mind but can be used to look at other parts of the environmental sustainability agenda.

## Sustainable Development Management Plans (SDMP)

The Sustainable Development Unit (SDU) recommends an SDMP<sup>4</sup> as best practice to enable NHS bodies to clarify their objectives on sustainable development and set out a plan of action. The SDMP should set out:

- the NHS body's vision for sustainability
- an action plan for delivering that vision
- metrics that will be used to monitor and review progress against the plan
- the governance and accountability arrangements for ensuring the plan is delivered.

Some NHS bodies will have well developed and clearly articulated SDMPs<sup>5</sup> while, for others, environmental considerations are low on the list of priorities. According to the 2015/16 ERIC returns, 70 out of 238 NHS provider bodies (29%) do not have an SDMP or carbon reduction management plan. The questions included in this briefing will have to be tailored depending where on this spectrum the organisation is.

The SDU publish an assessment<sup>6</sup> of each NHS body's performance against several environmental metrics including whether the body has an SDMP, how good their environmental reporting is and progress against carbon reduction targets. This will be a good place for any review of the SDMP to start. The questions in the table below have been developed for an NHS body which has a less well developed SDMP.

The questions in this checklist have been drawn up using:

- the SDU's *SDMP guidance for health and social care organisations*
- the SDU's *Good corporate citizen assessment*<sup>7</sup>
- the Carbon Trust's *Hospitals – healthy budgets through energy efficiency*<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> This is a requirement of the long-form of the NHS contract which must be used where acute, cancer, A&E, minor injuries, 111 or emergency ambulance services or any other hospital in-patient services are being commissioned

<sup>3</sup> The HFMA's briefing *Reporting on environmental sustainability* summarises the requirements for NHS bodies' annual report and accounts [www.hfma.org.uk/publications/details/reporting-on-environmental-sustainability](http://www.hfma.org.uk/publications/details/reporting-on-environmental-sustainability)

<sup>4</sup> For guidance on the development of an SDMP see [www.sduhealth.org.uk/delivery/plan.aspx](http://www.sduhealth.org.uk/delivery/plan.aspx)

<sup>5</sup> For example, NHS Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust's *Care without carbon* initiative <http://www.sussexcommunity.nhs.uk/about-us/sustainability/> or Barts Health NHS Trust's *Environmental sustainability strategy* [bartshealth.nhs.uk/sustainability](http://bartshealth.nhs.uk/sustainability)

<sup>6</sup> [www.sduhealth.org.uk/policy-strategy/reporting/organisational-summaries.aspx](http://www.sduhealth.org.uk/policy-strategy/reporting/organisational-summaries.aspx)

<sup>7</sup> The *Good corporate citizen* has now been replaced by the *Sustainability assessment tool* [www.sduhealth.org.uk/sdat/default.aspx](http://www.sduhealth.org.uk/sdat/default.aspx)

<sup>8</sup> [https://www.carbontrust.com/media/39216/ctv024\\_hospitals.pdf](https://www.carbontrust.com/media/39216/ctv024_hospitals.pdf)

The list below includes questions which can be asked about the organisation’s engagement with the environmental sustainability agenda, and its use of its SDMP as part of its strategic approach to meeting its overall objectives.

Area	Assessment and supporting evidence
<b>The SDMP</b>	
Does the NHS body have a SDMP or equivalent?	
Has the SDMP been reviewed against the checklist issued by the SDU in the <i>SDMP guidance for health and social care organisations</i> ?	
Is the answer to that question reported accurately in the SDU’s organisational summary <sup>9</sup> ?	
Has it been reported to and reviewed by an appropriate working group/ sub-committee and approved by the governing body?	
Was that approval within the time period covered by the plan? For example, within a 5 year period for a 5 year plan.	
Has progress against the SDMP been reported to the governing body annually or, ideally, six monthly?	
Is there a governing body member responsible for maintaining and monitoring progress against the SDMP?	
Does the SDMP clearly set out the NHS body’s sustainability objectives?	
Have SMART <sup>10</sup> targets been set in the SDMP?	
Is an individual clearly assigned responsibility for achieving each of these targets?	
Is that responsibility included in their annual appraisal process?	
Does each target have a deadline attached to it?	
Is there a sub-committee responsible for oversight of the SDMP?	
Are members from all functions represented on that sub-committee, estates, finance, procurement, HR - as well as board level representation?	
When changes to service provision are being considered, is the environmental impact taken into account?	
Has the NHS body completed the <i>Sustainable development assessment tool</i> <sup>11</sup> ?	

<sup>9</sup> [www.sduhealth.org.uk/policy-strategy/reporting/organisational-summaries.aspx](http://www.sduhealth.org.uk/policy-strategy/reporting/organisational-summaries.aspx)

<sup>10</sup> Specific, measurable, agreed, realistic and timed

<sup>11</sup> [www.sduhealth.org.uk/sdat/default.aspx](http://www.sduhealth.org.uk/sdat/default.aspx)

Area	Assessment and supporting evidence
If so, have the results been presented to the board or relevant sub-committee/group responsible for environmental sustainability?	
Has an action plan been developed to fill any gaps identified by the <i>Sustainable development assessment tool</i> or improve the NHS body's score?	
Is the SDMP publicly available on the NHS body's website?	
<b>Operational</b>	
<p>Has the carbon footprint of the NHS body been determined in all of the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• energy</li> <li>• travel</li> <li>• procurement</li> <li>• commissioning</li> <li>• waste</li> <li>• water?</li> </ul>	
Have staff who commission services and/ or goods been trained in relation to the requirements of <i>The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012</i> <sup>12</sup> ?	
Does the NHS body have clearly documented procedures on how they comply with <i>The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012</i> ?	
<p>Are the following measured and reported on regularly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• building energy</li> <li>• travel carbon emissions</li> <li>• staff miles</li> <li>• changes in modes of transport</li> <li>• waste</li> <li>• water use</li> <li>• utilities</li> </ul>	
Is the NHS body's environmental performance benchmarked against other comparable organisations?	
Is the NHS body's environmental performance monitored against plan/prior periods to identify unusual movements?	
Where anomalies are identified through benchmarking or other monitoring, are they followed up and action taken if necessary?	
Is the NHS body's capital programme developed with environmental sustainability in mind? For example,	

<sup>12</sup> This Act requires commissioners of public services to consider how they can secure wider social, economic and environmental benefits when they are making purchasing decisions

<b>Area</b>	<b>Assessment and supporting evidence</b>
installation or upgrading of insulation, use of current technology to minimise water and energy usage.	
Are marginal abatement cost curves <sup>13</sup> or other tools to assess the environmental and financial impact of options included in all business cases for investment?	
<b>Staff engagement</b>	
Is the NHS body's plans and commitment to sustainability part of staff induction?	
Are responsibilities for sustainability included in all relevant job descriptions? In particular key staff within estates, facilities and transport teams.	
Are measures in place to raise awareness for all staff about sustainability practices? For example, publicity and reminders to do the basics such as switching off lights and other equipment when not needed?	
Can staff easily report issues with lighting, heating, water and/ or waste? For example, leaking taps and reporting when areas are too hot, cold or draughty? Is that report acted upon promptly?	
Can staff easily make suggestions which would have a positive impact on the environment? Are those suggestions acted on?	
Does the NHS body have a sustainable travel plan?	
Does the NHS body have a cycle to work scheme?	
<b>Patient engagement</b>	
Are the NHS body's sustainability objectives communicated to patients? For example, on the website, using posters.	
Can patients easily report issues with lighting, heating, water and/ or waste? Are reports acted upon promptly?	
Can patients easily make suggestions which would have a positive impact on the environment? Are those suggestions acted on?	
Does the NHS body have a sustainable travel plan which is communicated to patients?	
<b>Reporting</b>	
Does the NHS body include a sustainability report in its annual report?	

<sup>13</sup> Marginal abatement cost curve (MACC) is a way of showing which carbon reduction initiative saves the most money.

<b>Area</b>	<b>Assessment and supporting evidence</b>
If so, does that report meet the necessary reporting requirements?	
What data sources are used to develop that report?	
What assurance is obtained to ensure that those data sources are producing reliable, accurate and timely information <sup>14</sup> ?	

The checklist below includes some specific operational questions which could be used to identify areas where specialist input is required. These are simply examples of the questions which could be asked in relation to two areas. Other areas which could be considered include travel plans, waste/ recycling arrangements, procurement, utilities management.

<b>Heating and hot water</b>	
Are thermostats installed appropriately?	
Is use of those thermostats monitored?	
Are temperature controls checked regularly?	
Are areas zoned appropriately? Are the time controls for each zone appropriate and reviewed regularly?	
Are external doors kept shut?	
Are radiators and heating vents checked regularly to ensure they are not blocked?	
Are boilers serviced regularly?	
Has a 'dead band' been set? This is a wide gap between the temperatures at which heating and cooling systems cut in.	
Are air conditioning systems serviced regularly?	
Is energy usage monitored regularly? Is this done at a suitably detailed level (not just overall for the organisation) so that issues arising at specific buildings can be identified?	
Where there has been a change in energy usage – either over time or against expected levels, is it investigated?	
<b>Lighting</b>	
Has there been a recent 'switch it off' campaign?	
Are light fittings regularly cleaned and maintained?	
Is lighting flexible, so only areas that need it are lit?	

<sup>14</sup> See the HFMA's briefing on gaining assurance over the data include in the ERIC returns

Are sensors used so lights turn off in spaces which are not occupied?	
Are efficient modern lighting solutions used where possible?	