1 Biodiversity and NHS National Health Board duties

1.1 The statutory framework

Under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act (2004), all public bodies in Scotland are required to further the conservation of biodiversity when carrying out their responsibilities.

In addition, it is required under the Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act (2011) to provide a public report on the actions which they have taken to meet this biodiversity duty.

This report covers the period 2015-2017 for three National Health Boards;

- NHS Health Scotland (HS),
- NHS National Services Scotland (NSS) and
- Scottish Ambulance Service (SAS).

The incentive for publishing a collaborative report is due to a number of reasons. First, SAS Headquarters operations and all of HS operations occupy offices managed by NSS. Second, the three boards have been working closer together in response to strategic, quality and efficiency drivers such as Health and Social Care integration, shared services, mandatory public bodies climate change reporting and sustainable procurement duties. Finally, each of the boards is an active member of national and local sustainability, energy and public health networks and often combines resources for initiatives that benefit staff across all organisations and reduce the environmental impact in our shared office spaces.

1.2 Governance and management for biodiversity

A Policy on Sustainable Development for NHSScotland, CEL 2 (2012), sets out mandatory governance requirements for all NHSScotland Health Boards. Each board is compliant with the mandatory requirements and has an established governance structure supported by a board-level Champion for Sustainability.

In meeting their responsibilities, the boards align their corporate actions with those they undertake in relation to the fulfilment of their statutory duties in regard of sustainable development. However, more broadly, they includes biodiversity as an aspect of all their work in the context of advocacy and development linking health, place and sustainability.

The structures vary in design but provide robust governance for each of the boards based on their operational and strategic responsibilities.
1.2.1 Scottish Ambulance Service

The Director of Finance and Logistics is the Executive lead for sustainability for the Board. A Sustainability and Environment Group has been established to oversee the governance of sustainability and this group is accountable to the Chief Executive and reports to the SAS Executive Team.

Current membership of the group is

- Director of Finance
- Equalities Manager
- Head of Corporate Affairs & Engagement
- Deputy Director of HR
- General Manager Fleet
- General Manager ICT
- Head of Estates and Facilities
- Head of Procurement

The Scottish Ambulance Service is committed to ensuring that it considers sustainability in all its actions and decisions. Sustainable Development is one of the guiding principles in the Service’s Strategic and Operational Planning process.

1.2.2 Health Scotland

Formal reporting to the HS Board is via its Audit Committee (AC). An annual update report is produced for the AC and the HS Board as part of its Sustainability Annual Report. This is in addition to a requirement that all Board papers routinely include a Sustainability Impact Statement.

Figure 1: HS Sustainable Development governance and management structure
1.2.3 National Services Scotland

NSS has an active Sustainability Governance Board (SGB) that is accountable to the Chief Executive and reports to the NSS Executive Management Team (EMT) and the Board’s Performance & Finance Committee.

Figure 2: NSS Sustainable Development governance and management structure

2 Corporate Action (Mainstreaming)

The NSS estate by definition of its function and services to the wider NHSScotland is based within offices, laboratories or warehouse space and has very little green space. The SAS estate comprises of Headquarters based in the Edinburgh NSS offices and 130 operational sites across Scotland. These sites consist of ambulance control centres, ambulance stations, educational and development centres, fleet workshops, three Specialist Operations Response Team bases and administrative offices. The HS estate is split geographically between Edinburgh and Glasgow and is part of existing NSS offices, Gyle Square and Meridian Court respectively.

As part of our ongoing commitment to sustainability, each Board completes a Good Corporate Citizenship (GCC) self-assessment on an annual basis. The results help shape strategic and operational objectives across the organisations that have a direct bearing on reducing our impact, protecting the environment and promoting biodiversity.

The Boards use the results to create Sustainable Development Action Plans and include relevant sections as required to carry out their responsibilities. The current GCC assessment includes:

- Facilities Management & Buildings
- Workforce
- Transport & Travel
- Procurement
- Community Engagement
- Climate Change Adaptation
- Models of Care
NSS and SAS are required to submit annual climate change reports as part of the Public Bodies Duties of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009. The reports are the primary source of climate change reporting for all major public bodies and include information aligned with the following sections.

1. Governance, management and strategy
2. Carbon emissions, targets and projects
3. Climate change adaptation
4. Procurement
5. Other notable activities, e.g. biodiversity, resource use, etc.

The reports for 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 for both organisations are publicly available via: [https://sustainablescotlandnetwork.org/reports/nhs-national-services-scotland](https://sustainablescotlandnetwork.org/reports/nhs-national-services-scotland) and [https://sustainablescotlandnetwork.org/reports/the-scottish-ambulance-service-board](https://sustainablescotlandnetwork.org/reports/the-scottish-ambulance-service-board)

### 3 Actions taken to improve biodiversity conservation

Each of the reporting Health Boards, despite being based in mainly urban, office based environments, takes steps to reduce their environmental impact and positively influence Scotland’s biodiversity. The actions vary across service areas but are a clear indication of the commitment from each Board to meet the public bodies duties.

#### 3.1 Biodiversity, ecosystem services and health

- **Carbon Footprint** – NSS met its 20% reduction target in 2015 from a 2010 baseline as per its Environmental Strategy 2010-15 and set an additional 20% target for 2020 in line with being Carbon neutral by 2035.
- **Staff development** - The Scottish Managed Sustainable Health Network (SMaSH) has taken on greater role in this regard and has been undertaking significant work in supporting staff development in environmental sustainability through its Masterclass workshops.
- **Resource efficiency** - A new waste management contract for NHS Scotland was awarded from 1st October 2016 and the new contractual arrangements will provide the information required to allow for more proactive waste management. SAS have appointed a contractor from the new framework agreement and awarded a contract from April 2017.
- **Procurement** - NSS completed the Flexible Framework to level 3 in March 2017 and have an associated action plan to deliver.
- **Transport** - SAS continues to modernise the fleet of vehicles with the introduction of new Accident & Emergency, Emergency Response, Scheduled Care and support vehicles being Euro 6 compliant.
- **Active travel and health promotion** – Four locations have Cycle Friendly Employer awards and each board offers Cycle to Work schemes for staff.
- **Scottish Health Service Centre** maintained their Gold Awards for Green Tourism and Keep Edinburgh Clean assessments. The venue provides an accessible, wildlife-friendly garden for visitors and staff to enjoy and is one of our four Cycle Friendly Employer facilities.
- **SAS** have recently achieved a National Award for Environmental Excellence at bronze level from Keep Scotland Beautiful. This award covers general administration, internal and external environmental aspects, waste management and community participation. SAS will continue to work with Keep Scotland Beautiful for continuous improvement.

3.2 Partnership initiatives

• Management and leadership through the Scottish Managed Sustainable Health network (SMaSH) with a focus on environmental sustainability and human health co-benefits.

• NSS Procurement have placed sustainable procurement as a standing agenda item on the National Health Boards Procurement Operational Group meeting which consist of 8 National Health Boards.

• HS has continued to support national work on the interfaces between green space, human health and biodiversity by working on air quality projects developing Low Emission Zones for urban areas across Scotland.


4 Partnership working and biodiversity communications

The reporting Health Boards have a national remit and by default have many opportunities to work with and lead on a wide variety of groups and topic areas. In the spirit of collaborative reporting they are listed below with no particular ownership by any board.

• Development of NHS support for environmental sustainability and human health co-benefits through the SMaSH network and on the Environmental Management System with NSS.

• HS have joined the Woodland’s Trust carbon capture scheme that offers a unique opportunity for organisations to invest in local carbon projects in the UK that bring many environmental, wildlife and social benefits.
  o 95,571kg removal of CO2 (new benchmark).
  o 2064.28m2 of new native woodland created by tree planting (new benchmark).
  o HS have contributed to the replanting of 955 new trees planted through the Woodland Trust ([www.woodlandtrust.org.uk](http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk)) and Forest Carbon ([www.forestcarbon.co.uk](http://www.forestcarbon.co.uk)) schemes.
  o NHS Health Scotland attended the Woodland Trust - tree planting day to develop a local 35 hectare local site north of Livingston. 800 trees were planted in one day.

• Deliver and co-ordinate effective advice and support in relation to national facilities that support and improve health and well-being through the Green Exercise Partnership (GEP). A collaboration between NSS, HS, Scottish Natural Heritage and Forestry Commission Scotland to help recognise the benefits of Scotland’s outdoors;
  o better health and well-being,
  o promoting health equalities,
  o preventing chronic disease and
  o using natural spaces for treatment and recovery.
• We have continued to monitor against the Good Corporate Citizenship assessment. However, more importantly HS and NSS actively supported HFS in ensuring the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and health co-benefits are more formally included in the revised GCC framework for Scotland.

5 Biodiversity highlights and challenges

As a public sector bodies, each Board takes seriously their role in promoting biodiversity, which they do within their approach to sustainable development. From 2017/18 onwards NHS Health Scotland, NHS National Services Scotland and Scottish Ambulance Service are committed to taking firmer, swifter action to build on the work already undertaken and ensure not only that we are Good Corporate Citizens, but are advocates for sustainability through:

• The development and implementation of the Scottish Place Standard tool to aid local communities become more aware of green and blue space and its impacts on human health and biodiversity. This will be further developed in the future years. Information on the Standard is available via: https://placestandard.scot/
• Working with Scottish Natural Heritage in the development and adoption of the SNH Commitment before the end of 2017/18
• SAS will continue to work with Keep Scotland Beautiful throughout its Estate to identify opportunities for continuous environmental improvements. They are in the process of engaging with external bodies like the Scottish Wildlife Trust to assess any opportunities to improve their outside space in order to improve their biodiversity at their rural locations.
• SAS has continued to progress towards modernising its fleet of vehicles with the introduction of new Accident & Emergency, Emergency Response, Scheduled Care and support vehicles being Euro 6 compliant incorporating innovative design and new technologies wherever possible. Due to the increasing demand for ambulance services, it will be very challenging to reduce the number of miles travelled in order to provide patient care. Care pathways are continually monitored and improved with the aim of reducing hospital attendance, thus offsetting the increase in patient demand. There are however opportunities to reduce the 1.3 million business miles travelled by the grey fleet. The recently revised lease car scheme emphasises the importance of avoiding unnecessary travel while providing an appropriate solution where there are no alternatives to car travel. The uptake of alternative fuel vehicles on the scheme is incentivised through enhanced employer contributions.
• SAS Procurement will continue to integrate with external suppliers to assess and identify areas of improvement with all aspects of environmental and sustainable development.
• Waste Management. Targets can now be set for 2018/19 to allow SAS to benchmark against their first year of waste recycling data from 2017/18. The overall objective is to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill, and increase recycling.
• SAS will continually monitor its services, how it functions, and how it can improve its environmental impact. This can be achieved with greater involvement with staff, awareness campaigns, investment in our fleet, our estate and changes to supply processes, what we use, how we use it, how we receive it. This will also link to their efficiency, productivity and quality improvement plans.
6 Conclusion

As agencies that take a strategic lead on matters relating to sustainability and health; reducing the inequalities that arise from unsustainable development and seeking to ensure human and planetary health both benefit from its activities, we have a very specific role to play in advocating for actions which also promote and protect our biodiversity.