



*Sustainable
Development Unit*



**ROUTE MAP FOR
SUSTAINABLE HEALTH**





Foreword

This document is a collaborative effort across the NHS and its partners to describe a sustainable health system and the components that are needed to achieve it.

By its nature, the NHS must be sustainable – we must meet the needs of our patients today, while ensuring we have a service fit for tomorrow and beyond.

At a time when we are driving forward significant change to improve outcomes and meet the financial and practical challenges of increasing demand for our services, we have the opportunity to create a truly sustainable NHS.

This is not limited to financial sustainability, but must focus too on social and environmental sustainability, so that the NHS of the future remains in the best possible position to improve quality and to limit its impact on the environment within which it works.

This document sets out a number of ways for organisations to progress towards a sustainable healthcare system and builds on the progress already made to reduce carbon emissions since the launch of the NHS Carbon Reduction Strategy in 2009.¹

We would like to thank everyone for the work already underway to drive real improvements locally and welcome this Route Map to a sustainable future.

Simon Burns MP
Minister of State for Health

Sir David Nicholson
KCB CBE, NHS Chief Executive

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Vision for a Sustainable Health System

Imagine a time when going to hospital is seen as a failing of the health and social care system. Where most of the care and support you need can be offered at home. Where you can get instant medical help online, by phone or at a local health centre. Where health inequalities are low and well-being is key.

Imagine a place where the few buildings that support the health system are in tune with the environment. They use almost no carbon and are integrated into the community and with nature. They are inviting for patients and a pleasure to work in.

Imagine a world where friends, family and society help promote healthy living. Where we all support the local health and social care system to recycle, re-use and minimise waste. Where we know that delivery of services takes the long term financial, social and environmental costs into account.

Imagine knowing that we have done our best to improve health and minimise our impact on the environment.

What does the NHS Sustainable Development Unit (SDU) do?

The NHS SDU works in close collaboration with NHS organisations, the Department of Health (DH), the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC), the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), and environmental groups to support policy direction, recommend research and convene leaders to address opportunities and barriers in the system.

The unit consults widely within the NHS and with its partners. It has published the NHS Carbon Reduction Strategy¹ and many supporting tools to support improved commissioning, procurement, leadership and staff engagement in sustainable services.

The NHS SDU is the sustainable voice of the NHS and has international recognition for its groundbreaking work.

Imagine knowing that we've done our best to improve health and minimise our impact on the environment.

What does sustainable mean?

Something sustainable is capable of being maintained without exhausting natural resources or causing severe ecological damage.

In this document sustainability refers to the balance required between financial, social and environmental factors in order that future generations do not suffer because of the way we live today.

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IT'S NOT UTOPIA

It's a reality

The Route Map is built on the actions described in the NHS Carbon Reduction Strategy,¹ ideas developed in the health scenario publication Fit for the Future² and our collaboration across the regions in England. It reflects the great work that is already taking place in many NHS organisations.

The Route Map is a framework for action to develop a sustainable health system. It identifies the areas that require progress in order to save money and resources, improve health and make changes future proof. It describes the roles we need to play and where we can continue to make a difference.

Above all, it forms the basis for highlighting opportunities and coordinating action so sustainable healthcare can be implemented at a local, regional, national and international level.

The NHS cannot move to a truly sustainable health system on its own. It needs the support of all organisations associated with health and social care. It also needs the backing of society, patients and staff. Working together, we can create opportunities by maximising resources and minimising duplication. This is the reason why your help and leadership is crucial.

This document has been developed in a pioneering and collaborative effort by a wide range of organisations and experts in various fields including healthcare, sustainability, business, local government, the economy, education, future thinking and world affairs. It clarifies what a sustainable health system is and tells you the things you need to do on the way. This document is a high level summary of all the aspects that need to be considered and our website³ hosts more detailed information.

It is possible to reduce the levels predicted in the graph. We can do this by ensuring sustainability principles are paramount when looking at long term financial, social and environmental needs.

The Route Map identifies the key issues that need to be considered immediately in order to make this level of reduction.

The intelligence for this document was gathered during a series of day long workshops where participants reviewed the health system today, then considered what it would need to be like in a high population, low carbon, low oil world of 2050.

The situation is grave. The graph (Figure 1) illustrates the difference between where we need to be in 2020 and where we are likely to be if we continue business as usual. If we are to prepare for the significant cuts required then we need to start acting now.

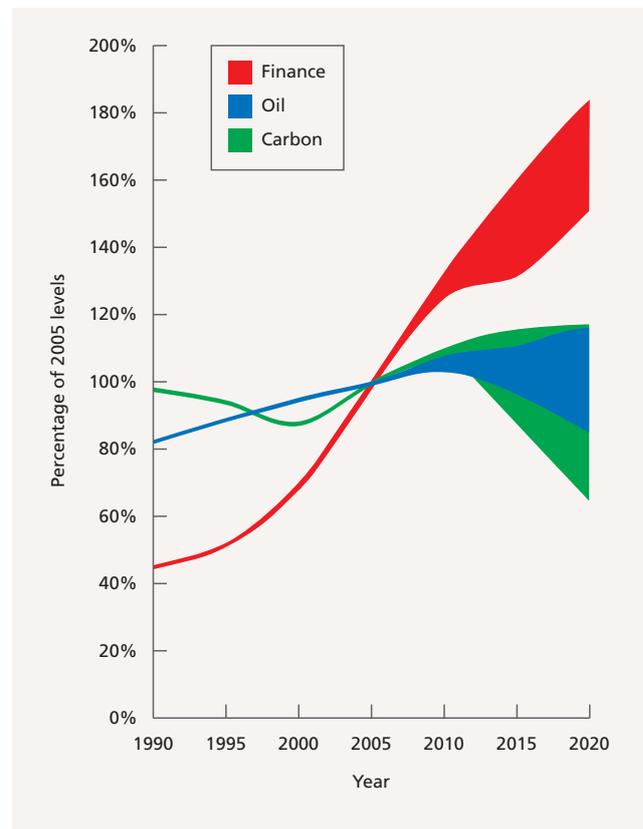


Figure 1 This graph represents NHS financial shortfall, oil production shortfall and carbon reduction requirements until 2020.³

Transformation



The Route Map highlights the scale of the challenge before us.

Helping the NHS to become a sustainable health system will require transformation and a new way of thinking. It envisages many shifts, moving:

From	health care as an institution led service	To	health and social care as part of the community
From	curative and fixing medical care	To	early intervention and preventative care
From	sickness	To	health and well-being
From	professional	To	personal
From	isolated and segregated	To	integrated and in partnership
From	buildings	To	healing environments
From	decision making based on today's finances	To	an integrated value of the future which accounts for the impacts on society and nature
From	single indicators and out of date measurements	To	multiple score card information and in real time
From	sustainability as an add on	To	integration in culture, practice and training
From	waste and over use of all resources	To	a balanced use of resources where waste becomes a resource
From	nobody's business	To	everyone's business



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What does the Route Map tell us?

Leading Transformation

The Route Map clearly highlights that the leaders of today and tomorrow are key to transforming the NHS into a truly sustainable health system. These leaders, you, need the power and skills to take the long term view and make decisions based on sustainable principles whenever services are planned, developed, commissioned and delivered.

Innovation

Models of Care – this refers to the core business of any health system including its purpose, mission and the manner in which services are delivered. Investment in prevention is considered paramount and all sectors work more closely together to provide appropriate care. This means housing, education, support to early years and community networks provide a fully integrated health system. For instance, vulnerable people receive integrated health funds to insulate their homes better. This minimises ill health during winter, reduces hospital emissions and enables savings and a better standard of living.

Vision: Models of care where health is less a medical matter and more about us having control over our well-being.

Technology – investment in low carbon and health technologies will help to drive and deliver some of the transformations required for a more sustainable health system. The Government and financial institutions can help to reduce the risk of investment and adoption of new technologies. This will further improve opportunities for telemedicine and more sustainable and preventative healthcare.

We cannot, however, rely on efficiencies and technological progress to save the day as they will not be sufficient to meet the carbon reduction challenge. Indeed, the health sector needs to partner with all its stakeholders to achieve sustainable goals and invest in low carbon technologies.

Vision: Technology is an enabler of positive societal and environmental change.





Standards

System governance - this requires a standardised approach to measuring and monitoring sustainability, and minimising the use of resources across the health system. A legislative framework is needed, with consistent public reporting as a core organisational indicator. Accounting for sustainability becomes a component of good governance as well as whole life cycle costing. This information is visible to all, in real time, and is incorporated into operational and strategic planning.

Use of resources - this includes all types of resources e.g. human time, commitment and the natural environment - not just oil, carbon and water. Research clarifies how best to use resources. This will help in making appropriate decisions, particularly in business terms. The methodology includes appropriate weightings for the future so the true value and cost of resources are fully taken into account. This will ensure items are reused, waste and packaging minimised, and human time and services are used more efficiently.

Vision: Health and sustainability agendas drive policy which support individuals, society and organisations to behave in a sustainable, fair and health-conscious way.

Vision: We live with the resources that the environment can support, instead of the 2.5 planets that we are currently using.

Behaviours

Societal behaviours and attitudes – this represents the influence that society exerts as we progress towards a more sustainable health system. It reflects on the public engagement with climate change and sustainability, and anticipates society learning to fully appreciate the true value of sustainable products, services and places. This means society recognises the long term financial and social benefits of addressing health inequalities, improving green space and running low carbon services.

Individual behaviours and attitudes – every person now knows what they can do to be healthier and more sustainable. People expect greater personal choice and information so that individuals can make decisions based on both health and sustainable criteria.

People exert influence on others with an expectation that everyone makes sustainable choices. This change in behaviour is similar to the peer pressure and acknowledgement of individual culpability that made drink driving unacceptable.

Vision: A compassionate society living in a high quality environment with reduced health inequalities.⁴

Vision: Values are redefined to encompass health and well-being linked to an acceptance of finite resources.

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Next steps?

By now you should have a clearer vision of what a sustainable health system might look like. We would like your help to achieve it.

Every person, every organisation and every network has a role to play. We would like you to be part of a growing collaboration to help the NHS become fit for the future. We are proposing work streams that start straight away so that everyone can engage with the journey. The process will evolve over time, and a page of our website³ is dedicated to the Route Map and its work streams. The website will be updated on a regular basis so that everyone can assess progress and contribute further ideas and actions. It hosts a complete list of partners, timelines and progress and we would welcome your contributions, ideas and support in taking these forward.

The following is a summary of some of the work streams that you can take action on, starting today.

Innovation:

Appropriate models of care

Every organisation can identify ineffective health processes and foster sustainability through commissioning arrangements at a local level, and by helping build some nationally agreed standards.

Research organisations can support this work by developing the evidence base required to encourage shifts in models of care.

Technology development

Every innovation board, every procurement process, every business case and every strategic planning procedure should include references to the use and development of sustainable technologies. This should relate to the ways in which technology will improve health and well-being and reduce health inequalities. Jointly we can develop criteria to judge success and share progress.

Standards:

Sustainability through the reforms

Every health and social care system can identify the best ways for sustainability to fit into existing and future governance structures. The Department of Health, with our support, are considering how best to position sustainability at a national level.

Efficiency first

Every person and every organisation can be more efficient with their use of resources. This includes energy, carbon, water and people's time on an ongoing and incremental basis. Organisations can report progress systematically and publicly.

Metric development

Every organisation can ensure that the impact on resources and their future value and cost are included in business decisions. These mechanisms need to be refined over time and we suggest setting up a steering group of interested parties to make sure that this element is progressed in a streamlined manner.

Behaviours:

Public, patient and societal engagement

Every organisation can engage with the public and their patients about sustainability and the future of healthcare. We are working nationally on some ways of developing this agenda across England.

For every individual

Every organisation can encourage staff to actively participate in shaping the future by making sure structures and incentives are in place.

We can all support this journey by taking steps in our own lives today.

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Many NHS organisations have already begun the journey that this Route Map sets out. Their efforts prove that the health system does have a will to be more environmentally friendly and more sustainable for the future. The increasing number of organisations with Sustainable Development Management Plans is just one testament to the hard work going on in the NHS.

But we need to think bigger, and the Route Map does just that. It adopts a systems wide approach to achieve the transformational change required for the future. This document gives a broad framework and context to the NHS at a time when the momentum must be maintained and enhanced.

The Route Map aims to be more than a document. It aims to become a living programme of work, gathering momentum and facilitated by the SDU and its website.³

Thank you for supporting this approach and please continue to share your contributions, thoughts and any further case studies with us.

The following documents, available on our website³ will help you with your sustainable journey alongside those listed in the references.

- NHS Sustainable Development Management Plans (SDMP)
- P4CR: Procuring for Carbon Reduction
- Creating a Sustainable NHS
- 5 To Survive series
- Save Money by Saving Carbon
- Sustainable Finances
- Commissioning for Sustainable Development
- Sustainable Development for GP Commissioners

Glossary

Carbon: In the document, the word carbon is used as a generic term for greenhouse gases.

Health System: Refers to all the components that contribute to supporting health and social care including the NHS, social services and public health.

Life Cycle Costing: Also called Whole Life Cycle Costing, this is a costing methodology to establish the total cost of ownership. It is a structured approach that addresses all the elements of this cost and can be used to produce a spend profile of the product or service over its anticipated life span.

Telemedicine: Delivery of health services via remote telecommunications.

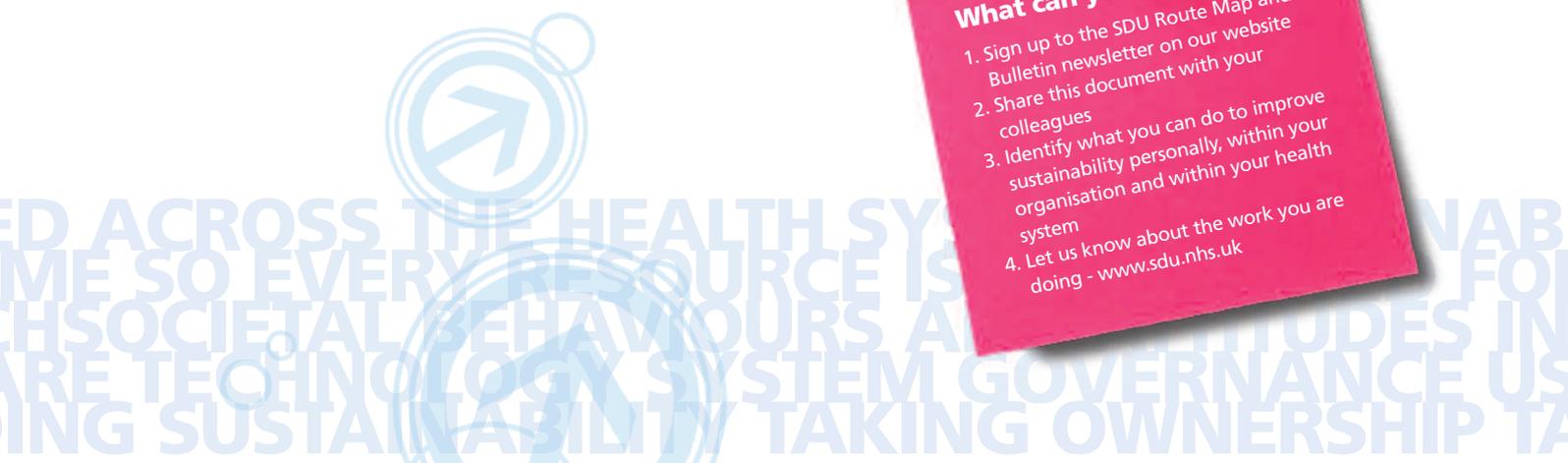
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2. Fit for the Future: Scenarios for low-carbon healthcare 2030, 2009. Cambridge: NHS Sustainable Development Unit & Forum for the Future
3. www.sdu.nhs.uk
4. Fair Society, Healthy Lives: Strategic Review of Health Inequalities in England post 2010, 2010. London: The Marmot Review



What can you do now?

1. Sign up to the SDU Route Map and Bulletin newsletter on our website
2. Share this document with your colleagues
3. Identify what you can do to improve sustainability personally, within your organisation and within your health system
4. Let us know about the work you are doing - www.sdu.nhs.uk





Thank you to all the organisations on this page who have helped develop the Route Map and are supporting this work into the future.

The responsibility for the final product however lies with the NHS Sustainable Development Unit for England.

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UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE PROGRAMME FOR SUSTAINABILITY LEADERSHIP
WHICH?
WORLD BUSINESS COUNCIL FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

NHS Sustainable Development Unit

Victoria House, Capital Park
Fulbourn, Cambridge CB21 5XB

Tel: 01223 597 792
Web: www.sdu.nhs.uk

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