

Chairs and Chief Executives of London NHS trusts and PCTs
Chair and Chief Executive of Commissioning Support for London

1st December 2009

Dear Colleagues

Re: Incorporating carbon reduction into our business

Following on from the NHS Carbon Reduction Strategy, *Saving Carbon, Improving Health*, I am writing to you to underline my commitment to the issue and set out expectations for NHS organisations in London on how carbon reduction should be embedded into the way we plan and operate locally.

Evidence on the impact of climate change is clear. Globally, it is estimated that a 50% reduction of 1990 carbon dioxide emissions is required by 2050 to provide a 50% chance of preventing temperatures exceeding pre-industrial levels by more than two degrees, the tipping point for irreversible change.

i) Carbon reduction in the health service

The NHS is responsible for 25% of public sector carbon emissions and 3.2% of total carbon emissions in England. At the launch of the NHS Carbon Reduction Strategy, [Saving Carbon, Improving Health](#), David Nicholson highlighted the 'special responsibility' of the NHS for carbon reduction and how it is core business, congruent with the NHS constitution and other strategies. *Saving Carbon, Improving Health* outlines 10 areas for action to reduce the NHS carbon footprint by 10% by 2015 from a 2007 baseline, a significant challenge given the upward trajectory. [Key points from the Strategy are set out in the Appendix to this letter.]

ii) Embedding carbon reduction in the London NHS

Historically we have had poor engagement on sustainability issues in London, exemplified by the lowest level of sign up to the Sustainability Commission's *Good Corporate Citizenship* programme (29% compared to around 50% nationally and 74% in the North-West). However we do boast significant best practice, such as the Healthy Urban Development Unit and London NHS Travel Network. We must do more to ensure that sustainability is a core part of how we operate. There are three central elements to embedding carbon reduction and implementing the National Strategy that we can all do to support this:

1. *Capital Investment business cases* – All cases must include environmental impact assessments that address carbon reduction.

London Strategic Health Authority

Chair: Sir Richard Sykes

Chief Executive: Ruth Carnall CBE

2. *Board-approved strategies* – All trusts and PCTs must have a board-approved environmental strategy that monitors, manages and reduces carbon by March 2010.
3. *Board and officer leads* – All Trusts and PCTs must have designated carbon reduction leads at board and officer level.

In addition it is hoped trusts and PCTs sign up to the revised [Good Corporate Citizenship](#) programme, and the Carbon Trust's [Carbon Management Scheme](#) and [interest-free Salix loans](#).

We are in challenging times with a plethora of competing priorities, but I am looking to you to incorporate carbon reduction into your decision making. Please can you review, and if necessary, action, the core considerations highlighted above.

iii) Regional support for carbon reduction

I have tasked Dr Simon Tanner (Regional Director for Public Health) to lead a team from the NHS London Estates Division and the Regional Public Health Group to support work at London level. This includes:

- The Regional Public Health Group funding baseline regional carbon footprinting and developing an improved methodology for local footprinting. This will be shared in the new year.
- Developing the existing London Environmental Network to share best practice and funding opportunities.

The team will be in touch with you as appropriate in the months ahead.

Yours sincerely



Ruth Carnall
Chief Executive

cc Sir Richard Sykes, Chair, NHS London
Dr Simon Tanner, Regional Director of Public Health
Peter Brazel, Head of Capital and Investment

APPENDIX: Key points from the NHS carbon reduction strategy for England, [Saving Carbon, Improving Health](#)

i) Background

The UK Government has committed to action on climate change. introducing the Climate Change Act with a statutory target to cut carbon emissions by at least 80% by 2050. Achieving these targets will require a contribution from the NHS.

The NHS generates 18 million tonnes of CO₂ each year; 25% of public sector and 3.2% of total carbon emissions in England. Relative contributions are attributed to energy (22%), travel (18%) and procurement (60%). Despite increases in efficiency emissions are spiralling upwards annually, with a 40% increase since 1990.

ii) Rationale for action

NHS organisations need to act now to understand, manage and reduced their carbon footprint due to:

1. New legally binding Government framework and national targets;
2. Strength of scientific evidence to act now on climate change;
3. Health co-benefits for patients and populations, and for the health system itself;
4. Importance of cost reductions and energy resilience;
5. Willingness and commitment of NHS organisations and staff to act now; and
6. Need for the NHS to be a leading public sector exemplar now.

iii) Target

The strategy commits the NHS to be a leading sustainable and low carbon organisation, and to meet the Government target of an 80% reduction in carbon emission by 2050. It sets an initial target to reduce the NHS carbon footprint by 10% by 2015 (from the 2007 baseline), a significant challenge given the current upward trajectory.

iv) Actions and responsibilities

Saving Carbon, Saving Lives outlines actions and responsibilities for NHS organisations in 10 key areas:

1. Energy and carbon management;
2. Procurement and food;
3. Low carbon travel, transport and access;
4. Water;
5. Waste;
6. Designing the built environment;
7. Organisational and workforce development;
8. Role of partnership and networks;
9. Governance; and
10. Finance.