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Date: 14 August 2019  
Our ref: K: FOI/Ref: 2019-000279

Dear [REDACTED]

**Freedom of Information Reference: FOI-2019-000279 Climate Emergency Guidance**

I refer to your freedom of information request which we received on 17 July 2019 requesting the following information:

**Has NHS National Services Scotland received any direction or guidance from Scottish Ministers on how to respond to the climate emergency? If so, what did it say, and what was the agency's response? Whether or nor any guidance was received from ministers, what specific measures has NHS National Services Scotland put in place since April to respond to the climate emergency? As much detail as possible would be welcome, as would any guidance or background information.**

I can advise you that we have now completed the search of our records and can provide you with the following information.

- 1. Has NHS National Services Scotland received any direction or guidance from Scottish Ministers on how to respond to the climate emergency? If so, what did it say, and what was the agency's response?**

NHS National Services Scotland has not received any specific direction or guidance from Scottish Ministers on how to respond to the climate emergency. However, NHS Scotland Boards are already leading the public sector with climate change mitigation and adaptation actions.

- 2. Whether or nor any guidance was received from ministers, what specific measures has NHS National Services Scotland put in place since April to respond to the climate emergency? As much detail as possible would be welcome, as would any guidance or background information.**

NHS National Services Scotland, and the other NHS Scotland Boards, welcomes the declaration of a Climate Change Emergency from Scottish Government. However, we have already been working under the auspices of a Climate Emergency for around 10 years. In 2009, the Lancet Commission on Managing the Health Effects of Climate Change recognised that "climate change is the biggest global health threat of the 21 century", and the NHS has worked hard to mitigate the impact of this health threat (as it would with other global health threats).

Within NHSScotland, physical and mental health impacts of climate change include:

- Increase in heat-related illness and mortality



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Chief Executive Colin Sinclair

- Increased prevalence of vector-borne disease associated with species migration
- Illness and premature deaths from poor air quality (mainly due to emissions from transport and buildings)
- Physical injuries and illness associated with increased prevalence of flooding
- Mental health impacts associated with adverse climate events, e.g. flooding.

Therefore, responding to climate change threats effectively will yield positive health co-benefits across NHSScotland. It is interesting to note that the same Lancet Commission cited above changed the nature of their message in 2015 to read: “tackling climate change could be the greatest global health **opportunity** of the 21<sup>st</sup> century”.

### **Progress to Date**

In the context of the Scottish public sector, NHSScotland is regarded as exemplar with regards to reducing our greenhouse gas emissions. Since 1990 (the baseline year of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act), the NHSScotland estate’s energy consumption has reduced by **over 41%** and its associated greenhouse gas emissions have reduced by **over 61%** - well ahead of Scottish national targets. (It should be noted that the above figures relate to fixed building emissions only. They do not include emissions associated with transport and travel, waste arisings, or our supply chain. However, steady progress has been made in these areas also.)

Successes include:

- Eradication of the use of coal, and significant reduction in the use of heavy fuel oil, across the estate. The majority of our estate is now heated by natural gas or lower carbon options in off-gas grid areas, e.g. kerosene, LPG. These efforts alone have reduced our greenhouse gas emissions by over 20%.
- Energy centre upgrades. We have been proactive in retrofitting our energy centres to take advantage of latest energy efficiency technologies. A recent example is the energy infrastructure upgrades at the 3 main acute sites within NHS Tayside. Procured under an Energy Performance Contract (therefore at no upfront cost to the Board), this project saw the installation of the latest Combined Heat and Power technology at Ninewells Hospital, plus downstream energy efficiency measures across other sites. In its first year of operation, more than £2.7million of savings has been realised, and over 12,700 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> saved – equivalent to almost 30% of NHS Tayside’s total energy emissions.
- Lighting upgrades: A large proportion of our estate – internal and external – is now lit by high-efficiency LED lighting. Originally restricted to non-clinical areas due to colour perception issues, the latest technology can now be deployed across the estate.
- Renewable energy: Around 2% of the NHSScotland estate is now heated via renewable technology – mainly biomass.
- National equipment reuse portal: A national contract with WarplT has been procured and this enables NHS Boards to reuse office equipment across our own estate and within other public and third sector estates. To date, use of this portal has saved in excess of £1.6million and avoided over 1,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> and around 800 tonnes of physical waste.
- NHS single plastic charter: We are developing a plastics hierarchy and are moving towards a single-source recyclable plastic for use across all NHS applications.

### **Climate Change Adaptation: A Resilient NHS**

NHS National Services Scotland recently undertook a NHSScotland-wide climate change impact assessment to consider the key climate risks for each NHS Board. This included a flood risk assessment of over 250 NHS sites. Building on these initial studies, NHS NSS have now developed a Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA) tool which enables NHS Boards to assess their climate risks and integrate these assessments into resilience planning at each

site. In addition, NHS NSS has developed a supporting Climate Hazards and Vulnerabilities GIS Tool. This enables NHS Boards to identify specific climate risks and vulnerabilities of their sites and key transport routes by integrating information from different databases, and allows this information to be overlaid onto public health data.

A combination of the tools above enables NHS Boards to identify mitigating actions, including climate change remedial works where required. Work is now in progress across all NHS Boards to transition from their initial impact assessments to full adaptation plans. We expect all NHS Boards to have a fully integrated climate change adaptation plan in place by the end of the current financial year.

## **NHS Board Staff Engagement and Sustainability Performance**

NHS National Services Scotland has recently developed the 'Sustainability Action' branding and campaign. The purpose of 'Sustainability Action' is to promote awareness of sustainability (including climate change) within NHSScotland, and to demonstrate its importance for all NHS stakeholders. All NHS staff - clinical, public health, management, estates – have a part to play in acting sustainably. Anyone working on a sustainability-related topic or wanting to promote change can use the Sustainability Action toolkit to promote their activities. All actions, whether big or small, can make a positive difference to 'Our NHS, Our People, Our Planet'. Local action will contribute to global outcomes by helping NHSScotland to meet the UN Sustainable Development Goals.



The above branding is underpinned by a number of supporting tools and programmes, including the NHSScotland Sustainability Assessment Tool (NSAT). The NSAT assesses NHS Boards' performance across 16 areas of focus relating to 'Our NHS, Our People, Our Planet'.



Baseline scores for each Board have been established, and action plans for improvement are in development. The NSAT's outputs align to both the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the Scotland National Performance Framework.

### **NHSScotland Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy**

Building on the Sustainability Action tagline (Our NHS, Our People, Our Planet), NHS National Services Scotland and NHS Health Scotland are now working on the development of a new NHSScotland Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy. This will set ambitious targets for sustainability performance across NHSScotland, including a commitment to achieve a “net-zero NHSScotland” by 2045 (to align with the aspirations of the Climate Change Act). Further commitments will relate to new NHS buildings, the NHS transport fleet, climate change governance, and the NHSScotland supply chain.

The NHSScotland Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy will set targets and objectives across the 16 areas of focus within the NHSScotland Sustainability Assessment Tool. So this will go beyond climate change and will ensure a truly sustainable future-state for NHSScotland. An engagement event on the draft Strategy is being held in Edinburgh on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2019, and the final Strategy will be published before the end of the current financial year.

Furthermore our NHS National Service Scotland Procurement Strategy for NHS Scotland details our policies in relation to environmental impact assessments as part of the procurement process.

[https://www.nhsscotlandprocurement.scot.nhs.uk/media/13259/nss\\_procurement\\_strategy\\_final\\_2018\\_accessible.pdf](https://www.nhsscotlandprocurement.scot.nhs.uk/media/13259/nss_procurement_strategy_final_2018_accessible.pdf)

NHS National Procurement also issue guidance in relation to the procurement journey for companies considering submissions for tenders.

<https://www.procurementjourney.scot/route-3/route-3-develop-strategy-profiling-commodityservice-sustainable-procurement>

Please also find below a link to the NHS National Procurement Annual Report for additional information in relation to environmental impact assessments.

[https://www.nhsscotlandprocurement.scot.nhs.uk/media/19434/nhs\\_np\\_annual\\_procurement\\_report\\_2018-2019\\_v1\\_0.pdf](https://www.nhsscotlandprocurement.scot.nhs.uk/media/19434/nhs_np_annual_procurement_report_2018-2019_v1_0.pdf)

I trust you will find the information of assistance and if you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

If you are unhappy with any aspect of how we have dealt with your request you can make representations to us asking us to review the handling of your request. Please write to the

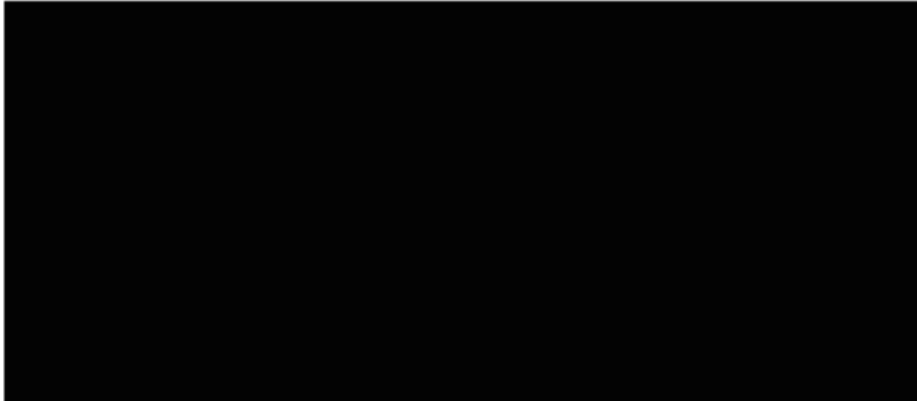
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within 40 working days of the date of this correspondence.

If after a review you are still unhappy, you also have the right to apply to the Scottish Information Commissioner, who can be contacted at Kinburn Castle, St Andrews, Fife, KY16 9DS, or via their [online application form](#).

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact me at the above address.

Yours sincerely



Programme Associate Director