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## PSNC Briefing 006/14: The Sustainable Development Strategy for the Health and Care System 2014-2020

At the end of January NHS England and Public Health England published [Sustainable, Resilient, Healthy People & Places – A Sustainable Development Strategy for the NHS, Public Health and Social Care system](#). This PSNC Briefing summarises the key points in the strategy and highlights its relevance to community pharmacy.

### Introduction

The Government is committed to sustainable development, which is about balancing social, economic and environmental considerations, meeting the needs of people now and in the future.

It is believed that a sustainable development approach to health and social care will be effective in:

- Improving the quality of life of people who use services;
- Reducing health inequalities;
- Protecting those in vulnerable circumstances;
- Improving the resilience of individuals, communities and services;
- Engaging citizens in creative discussion, planning and designing the future of care;
- Saving money, increasing efficiency and reducing waste;
- Managing risk;
- Enhancing the reputation of councils and CCGs as local leaders; and
- Meeting regulatory requirements.

The current levels of resources cannot continue to be used at the current rate as this will not leave sufficient resources for future generations. Stabilising and reducing carbon emissions is key to living within environmental limits. The NHS has a very large carbon footprint and it is the largest public sector contributor to climate change in Europe. Over the last year there was consultation on an integrated approach across health, public health and social care to reducing duplication, reducing waste of resources and improving patient experience. It is hoped that this will result in energy efficiency and reduced overall energy consumption which can have significant and long term financial benefits.

A commitment to a new sustainable development strategy was included in the NHS Business Plan for 2013-16. An extensive consultation and engagement process was carried out in 2013 and PSNC was one of the many organisations which were part of this process which informed the development of the strategy. A [summary of responses](#) to the consultation is available.

### The Sustainable Development Strategy

The Sustainable Development Strategy for the Health, Public Health and Social Care System 2014-2020 was launched at the end of January 2014 and describes the vision for a sustainable health and care system by reducing carbon emissions, protecting natural resources, preparing communities for extreme weather events and promoting healthy lifestyles and environments.

The strategy is intended to complement the discussions taking place across the NHS, public health and social care about future approaches to improving health and more integrated models of care. Current discussions, including the NHS Call to Action are exploring how to achieve the best possible outcomes within available financial resources and it is important that plans factor in:

- The environmental impact of the health and care system and the potential health co-benefits of minimising this impact;
- How the health and care system needs to adapt and react to climate change, including preparing and responding to extreme events; and
- How the NHS, public health and social care system maximises every opportunity to improve economic, social and environmental sustainability.

The strategy outlines a vision and three goals based on the challenges outlined above to aim for by 2020. The goals identified to support this vision are:

- A healthier environment;
- Community and services are resilient to changing times and climates; and
- Every opportunity contributes to healthy lives, communities and environments.

The purpose of the health and care system is to continually improve health and wellbeing and deliver high quality care when necessary. The challenge is how to do this now and for future generations within available financial, social and environmental resources. Understanding these challenges and developing plans to achieve improved health and wellbeing and continued delivery of high quality care is the essence of sustainable development. The strategy describes the opportunities to reduce environmental impacts, improve the natural environment, increase readiness for changing times and climates and strengthen social cohesion.

To support the delivery of the Sustainable Development Strategy, a number of modules which describe a high level approach have been developed that focus on key areas. Every module explores a different angle to help strengthen action within locally determined priorities and is accompanied by implementation guidance notes to support delivery. The strategy encourages an approach that is based around the local system and the modules support and enable local health and care systems to select applicable areas and actions that match their locally determined priorities. Also accompanying the strategy is a document explaining the statutory and policy drivers for change.

There are five modules available now:

- Leadership, engagement and workforce development;
- Carbon hotspots;
- Commissioning and procurement;
- Sustainable clinical and care models;
- Healthy, sustainable and resilient communities.

Three modules will follow in 2015:

- An integrated metrics approach;
- Innovation;
- Building social capital.

Sustainable Development and carbon management are corporate responsibilities and clear governance is required to provide an assurance process that considers requirements, both in terms of the law and to achieve high quality health and care and sustainable development to be embedded into management and governance processes.

## What are the implications for community pharmacy?

1. The strategy builds on the NHS carbon reduction strategy and now encompasses the entire health and social care system and includes other aspects of sustainable development, rather than just focusing on carbon reduction. It is therefore applicable to all providers of NHS services including community pharmacy;
2. The most frequently recommended high priority areas from the consultation were:

- Models of care;
  - Commissioning; and
  - Pharmaceuticals.
3. Commissioning and procurement are major contributors and sustainable development will be included in all contracts. The 2014/15 NHS Standard Contract already requires all providers to:
    - Take all reasonable steps to minimise adverse impact to the environment; and
    - Demonstrate progress on climate change adaptation, mitigation and sustainable development, including performance against carbon reduction management plans, and provide a summary of progress in its annual report. Small providers whose aggregate annual income for the relevant Contract Year in respect of services provided to any NHS commissioners commissioned under any contract based on the NHS Standard Contract is not expected to exceed £200,000 are exempt from this requirement.
  4. Sustainable development metrics are under development as a further module and inclusion in CCG procurement of services is expected.
  5. Pharmaceuticals are the highest contributor to the carbon footprint in 2012 with pharmaceutical products representing 16% of the entire health, public health and social care system carbon footprint. Medicines waste is highlighted in the strategy; this fits in well with medicines optimisation being part of the solution. One example cited in the strategy is a recycling scheme where inhalers are returned to pharmacies resulted in a substantial carbon saving as propellants in metered dose inhalers account for 5% of the carbon footprint;
  6. By focusing on healthy living, minimising preventable ill-health, self-management of LTCs, early diagnosis and making every contact count, the need for acute secondary care will be reduced;
  7. The four LTC risk factors – smoking, alcohol, diet and exercise – are all amenable to simple early intervention to improve the length and quality of life. These are services community pharmacy can be involved in;
  8. Preparedness for the impact of climate change is highlighted and severe weather plans are to be integrated into the summer heat wave and keep warm in winter plans;
  9. Pandemic, LTC, obesity and dementia management need to be better to provide modern integrated services and all organisations including community pharmacy need to be involved;
  10. The NHS needs to provide services closer to people's homes via service redesign and supporting people to have responsibility for their own health; and
  11. Some areas are already looking at sustainable development in NHS, public health and social care estate and practice, e.g. fuel consumption;

At the strategy launch, Sir David Nicholson (CEO, NHS England) commented on the need to accelerate change through the Call To Action to provide a system for the future and there is an expectation that there will be a complete re-planning of services over the next two years, with sustainable development being key to commissioning and service delivery.

## Useful websites

[www.sdu.nhs.uk](http://www.sdu.nhs.uk) - The NHS Sustainable Development Unit provides organisational development and support on sustainable development and carbon reduction and is funded by NHS England and Public Health England to work across the NHS, public health and social care system.

[www.hpa.org.uk](http://www.hpa.org.uk) - The Health Protection Agency is now part of Public Health England, and provides the evidence base on the health effects of climate change and extreme weather events.

[www.ukcip.org.uk](http://www.ukcip.org.uk) - UKCIP supports adaptation to the unavoidable impacts of a changing climate through tools such as carbon emission scenarios, and guidance to organisations.

If you have queries on this PSNC Briefing or you require more information please contact [Barbara Parsons, Head of Pharmacy Practice](#).