

Public views from across Scotland on the NHSScotland Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy

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Introduction

The NHSScotland Climate Emergency & Sustainability Strategy aims for an environmentally and socially sustainable health and care system that improves the health and wellbeing of people living in Scotland. This includes becoming carbon neutral by 2040 or earlier if possible.

The Citizens' Panel survey is the first national population opinion survey focused on issues relating to climate change, sustainability and NHSScotland.

Respondents were informed that their feedback will be considered in future planning to address building a health system that cares for people and the environment.

Method

The Citizens' Panel is a ready-made, representative sample of the Scottish population (1,028 members from across all 32 local authority areas) allowing quick access to public views. Feedback on the NHSScotland Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy was sought between November 2023 and February 2024, achieving a 57% response rate (589 responses). This level of return provides data accurate to +/-4% at the overall Panel level.



References:

1. Healthcare Improvement Scotland. Citizens' Panel for health and social care: Survey on preferred methods of accessing health and care services and NHSScotland Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy. May 2024. Available from: www.hisengage.scot/panel13

www.healthcareimprovementscotland.scot

Results

Opinions on climate change

80% 8 in 10 respondents supported NHSScotland's policy to become Net Zero

75% Three quarters of panel members were very or fairly concerned about climate change

Reduce climate change by taking action related to medical equipment and other aspects

97% support returning medical equipment no longer needed, to be re-used

88% support reusable personal equipment in hospital

73% support using public transport when travelling to health and care services

57% support having a video or telephone GP consultation to reduce travel

70% support considering the environmental impact of their treatment options as part of deciding their treatment with their health professional



Reduce climate change by taking action related to medication

94% support returning unused medicines or empty inhalers to the pharmacy for reuse or disposal

86% support re-issued medicines that have been returned by other patients because they were not used, as long as unopened and safety checked

86% support accepting the exact amount of medication that is prescribed to them without being given any extra

Responsibilities and priorities in relation to climate change



81%

agreed that patients have a responsibility to help the NHS to reduce its impact on climate change and the environment

Conclusions and recommendations

The vast majority of the Citizens' Panel are in favour of NHSScotland pursuing a strategy towards achieving Net Zero. Panel members acknowledge the importance of considering risks from environmental damage, including climate change, in healthcare provision and suggest moving towards a Net Zero approach to reduce environmental impact. However, there was lack of awareness around the NHSScotland objective to achieve Net Zero.

Recommendations include:

- Consider the results of this survey and people's support for NHSScotland to reduce its environmental impact in:
 - medical equipment
 - travel, and
 - goods and services.
- Act on the findings that people are willing to take actions to reduce the environmental impact of NHS care such as medicines use.
- Increase awareness of NHSScotland's Net Zero objective through the likes of TV and social media campaigns.

