



**NHS**  
Eileanan Siar  
Western Isles



**NHS WESTERN ISLES**

**CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND  
SUSTAINABILITY REPORT – 2022/23**

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***Environmental health and human health  
are one and the same***

## INTRODUCTION

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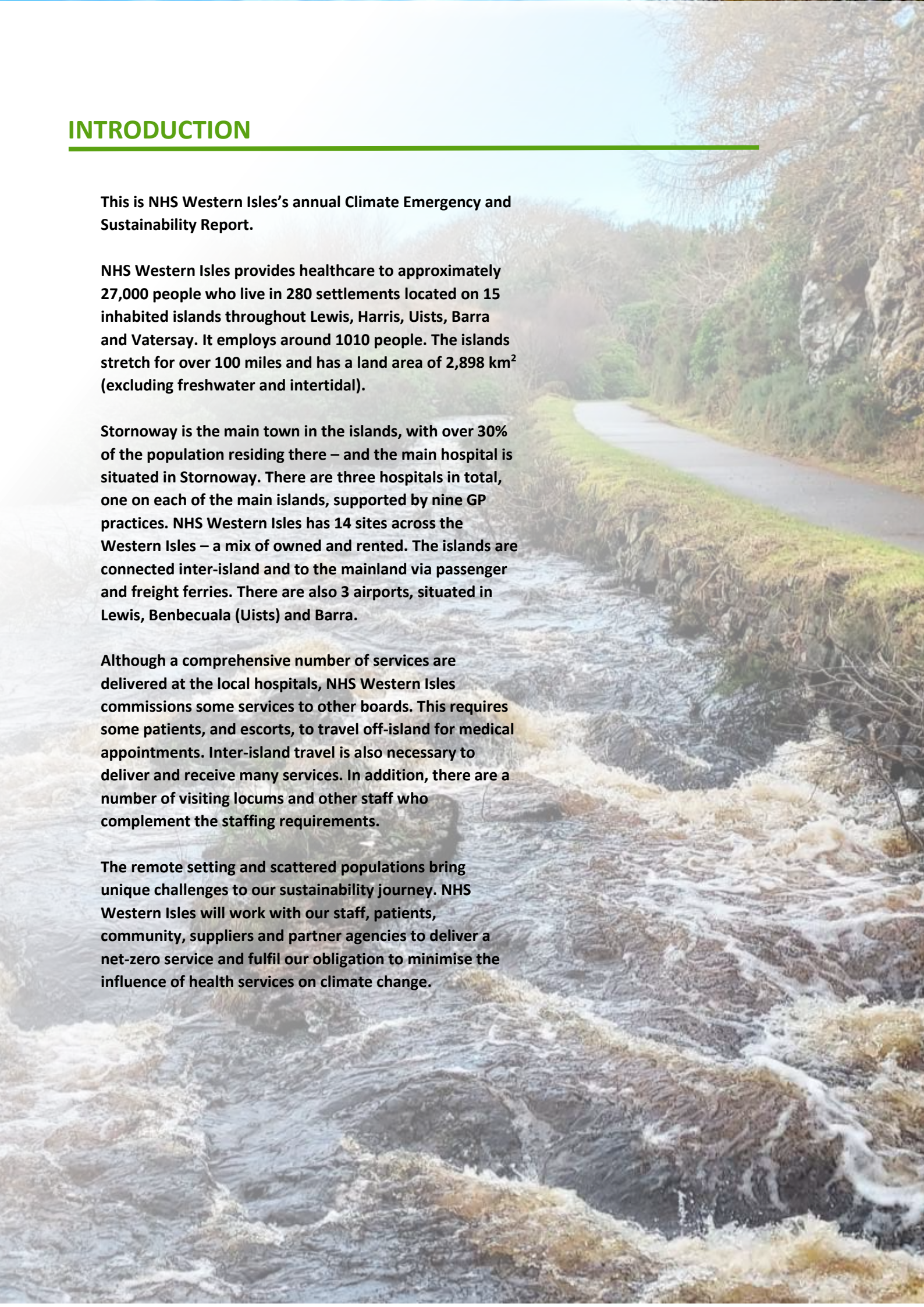
This is NHS Western Isles's annual Climate Emergency and Sustainability Report.

NHS Western Isles provides healthcare to approximately 27,000 people who live in 280 settlements located on 15 inhabited islands throughout Lewis, Harris, Uists, Barra and Vatersay. It employs around 1010 people. The islands stretch for over 100 miles and has a land area of 2,898 km<sup>2</sup> (excluding freshwater and intertidal).

Stornoway is the main town in the islands, with over 30% of the population residing there – and the main hospital is situated in Stornoway. There are three hospitals in total, one on each of the main islands, supported by nine GP practices. NHS Western Isles has 14 sites across the Western Isles – a mix of owned and rented. The islands are connected inter-island and to the mainland via passenger and freight ferries. There are also 3 airports, situated in Lewis, Benbecuala (Uists) and Barra.

Although a comprehensive number of services are delivered at the local hospitals, NHS Western Isles commissions some services to other boards. This requires some patients, and escorts, to travel off-island for medical appointments. Inter-island travel is also necessary to deliver and receive many services. In addition, there are a number of visiting locums and other staff who complement the staffing requirements.

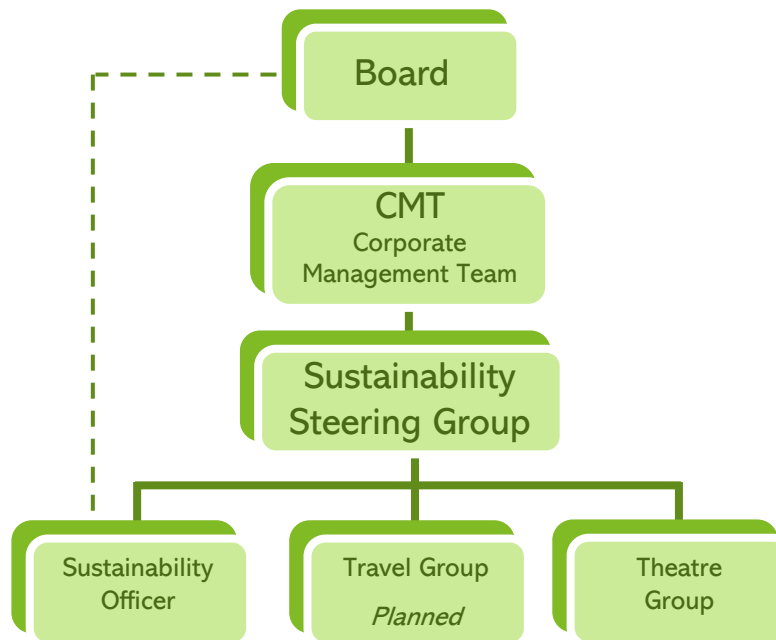
The remote setting and scattered populations bring unique challenges to our sustainability journey. NHS Western Isles will work with our staff, patients, community, suppliers and partner agencies to deliver a net-zero service and fulfil our obligation to minimise the influence of health services on climate change.



## LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

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Julia Higginbottom continues to represent the Board as the Sustainability Champion. The Executive Lead is the Director of Public Health, Dr. Maggie Watts. The Sustainability Steering Group has lead responsibility for climate and sustainability within the organisation and communities. Work will continue building on work already being undertaken and the Board have committed to support the long-term goal of becoming a more environmentally sustainable organisation and build healthy and resilient communities.



## GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

NHS Western Isles aims to become a net-zero organisation by 2040 for the sources of greenhouse gas emissions set out in the table below. The table sets out the amount of greenhouse gas produced annually by NHS Western Isles.

### Greenhouse gas emissions 2021/22 & 2022/23, tonnes CO2 equivalent

Source	2021/22 – emissions	2022/23 – emissions	Percentage change – 2021/22 to 2022/23	2022/23 – target emissions	Percentage difference between actual and target emissions – 2022/23
Building energy	3,764	3,631.1	- 3.5 %	n/a	n/a
Non-medical F-gas use	u/k	u/k	u/k	n/a	n/a
Medical gases	1,361	1,398	+2.7 %	n/a	n/a
Metered dose inhaler propellant	400	423	+5.8 %	n/a	n/a
NHS fleet use	u/k	u/k	u/k	n/a	n/a
Waste	u/k	u/k	u/k	n/a	n/a
Water	u/k	u/k	u/k	n/a	n/a
Business travel (car only)	u/k	96	u/k	n/a	n/a
Total greenhouse gases emitted					
Carbon sequestration	n//a	n//a	n//a	n/a	n/a
Greenhouse gas emissions minus carbon sequestration					

In 2023/24 work will be in identifying gaps in our emissions data and steps required to address this. Work will also begin on developing a local strategy, action plan and risk register.

## CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION

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The climate is changing due to the greenhouse gases already emitted into the atmosphere. While efforts to reduce the rate and scale of climate change continue, we must also adapt to new conditions we are facing.

The changing climate is increasing risks for health and health services. More information on these risks in the UK can be found in the UK Climate Change Committee's Health and Social Care Briefing available here: [www.ukclimaterisk.org/independent-assessment-ccra3/briefings/](http://www.ukclimaterisk.org/independent-assessment-ccra3/briefings/)

The main risk facing the islands is flooding. It is anticipated this will give rise to problems with travel disruption, loss of infrastructure, building damage, coastal erosion and ecosystem damage. It is essential that we plan ahead to ensure the continuing provision of medical services to patients both in the clinical setting and in their own homes. Projected temperature rises will also affect the more vulnerable patients who are less able to adapt to higher temperatures.

NHS Western Isles is a member of the Outer Hebrides CPP Climate Change Working Group who, in collaboration with Adaptation Scotland, outline priorities for action to build climate resilience throughout the islands and the next steps to implementing measures. The Climate Rationale, Case for Action and interactive maps of the Westerns Isle showing flood risks and anticipated erosions data can be found here <https://www.cne-siar.gov.uk/strategy-performance-and-research/climate-change/outer-hebrides-community-planning-partnership/>

NHS Western Isles has fully supported the development of the first citizen science climate change concerns map ([www.outerhebrides.communitymaps.org.uk](http://www.outerhebrides.communitymaps.org.uk)). This tool allows local people to upload comments, photos, video clips to document the direct evidence of climate change on the islands. It also allows staff to highlight operational concerns, such as being unable to reach parents or attend work. Stage 2 will fully populate the map with data that will inform planning adaptation to climate change that is already locked in. NHS Western Isles will also be joining the Outer Hebrides Climate Hub corporately and encouraging the NHS family to join as independent members.

The NHS Western Isles Climate Change Risk Assessment will be reviewed and updated regularly.



## BUILDING ENERGY

We aim to use renewable heat sources for all the buildings owned by NHS Western Isles by 2038.

The pandemic reversed much of the significant energy reductions we had made but we are now slowly making progress again.

In 2022/23, 3,082 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent were produced by NHS Western Isles's use of energy for buildings. This was a decrease of 2% since the year before.

In 2022/23, the organisation used 12,548 kWh / MWh of energy. This was a decrease of 2% since the year before.

As of 2022/23, NHS Western Isles does not generate any energy from renewable technologies. Possibilities to implement renewable solutions for the future are being explored.

### Building energy emissions, 2015/16, 2021/22 and 2022/23 – tCO<sub>2</sub>e

	2015/16 energy use	2021/22 energy use	2022/23 energy use	Percentage change 2015/16 to 2022/23
Building fossil fuel use	2,118	2,454	2,414	+14 %
District heat networks and biomass	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Grid electricity	712	686	668	-6%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>2,830</b>	<b>3,140</b>	<b>3,082</b>	<b>+ 9%</b>

### Building energy use, 2015/16, 2021/22 and 2022/23 – MWh

	2015/16 energy use	2021/22 energy use	2022/23 energy use	Percentage change 2015/16 to 2022/23
Building fossil fuel use	8,250	9,557	9,401	+14%
District heat networks and biomass	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Grid electricity	3,355	3,232	3,147	- 6%
Renewable electricity	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
<b>Totals</b>	<b>11,605</b>	<b>12,789</b>	<b>12,548</b>	<b>+8 %</b>

*What we did last year to reduce emissions from building energy use:*

- 🌱 The three new steam boilers installed recently are running between 10 – 15% more efficiently.
- 🌱 Most properties and clinics now have LED lighting installed.

*What we are we doing this year to reduce emissions from building energy use:*

- 🌱 In the coming year we will be replacing storage heaters in clinics with more energy efficient Rointe heaters.
- 🌱 LED lighting installation will continue.

*What projects we are planning for the longer-term to reduce emissions from building energy use:*

- 🌱 Last year we commissioned Jacobs Engineering to provide a net-zero route map for three NHS Western Isles properties: Western Isles Hospital, Uist and Barra Hospital and the Health Board Offices. These building account for 84% of total buildings emissions. We have received the baseline report with final recommendations expected summer 2023, from which we will review options.
- 🌱 The possibility of installing heat pumps and other renewable technologies in some properties is being explored and funding sources sought for feasibility studies.

The age of the properties (with inadequate insulation) and the disruption to clinical services that would be required to retrofit for renewable energy sources, or energy reduction measures, is a major barrier to achieving net-zero targets. Many properties have energy efficient, electric, hot water and heating systems. As the national gride moves towards total renewable generated energy, this will reduce the carbon footprint of our properties.

At the end of 2022, during routine testing, elevated levels of the bacteria Legionella were discovered in some pipelines at Western Isles Hospital. Remedial action has been taken but it still requires the water system to be flushed three times per day. This practice needs to continue indefinitely, unfortunately increasing water usage and processing needs.

## SUSTAINABLE CARE

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The way we provide care influences our environmental impact and greenhouse gas emissions. NHS Scotland has three national priority areas for making care more sustainable – anaesthesia, surgery and respiratory medicine.



## Anaesthesia and surgery

Greenhouse gases are used as anaesthetics and for pain relief. These gases are nitrous oxide (laughing gas), entonox (a mixture of oxygen and nitrous oxide) and the ‘volatile gases’ – desflurane, sevoflurane and isoflurane.

Through improvements to anaesthetic technique and the management of medical gas delivery systems, the NHS can reduce emissions from these sources.

NHS Western Isles’s total emissions from these gases in 2022/23 were 1,398 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e, an increase of 3% from the year before.

More detail on these emissions is set out in the tables below:

### Volatile medical gas emissions, 2017/18, 2021/22, 2022/23 – tCO<sub>2</sub>e

	2017/18 (baseline year)	2021/22	2022/23	Percentage change 2017/18 to 2022/23
Desflurane	16	5	3	-81 %
Isoflurane	0	0	0	n/a
Sevoflurane	3	3	4	+33 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>-63 %</b>


### Nitrous oxide and entonox emissions, 2018/19, 2021/22, 2022/23 – tCO<sub>2</sub>e

Source	2018/19 (baseline year)	2021/22	2022/23	Percentage change 2018/19 to 2022/23
Piped nitrous oxide	59	128	108	+83 %
Portable nitrous oxide	4	14	6	+50 %
Piped entonox	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Portable entonox	64	60	55	-14 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>+33 %</b>

*What we did last year to reduce emissions from anaesthetic gases:*

-  The use of desflurane has been discontinued.

*What we are doing this year to reduce emissions from anaesthetic gases:*

-  The use of piped nitrous oxide and Entonox will be discontinued and the manifold lines will be removed. We have retained some Entonox for use in Maternity, where required.

*What else did we do last year to make surgery more sustainable?*

- 🌱 The Green Theatres remit has been added to the Theatre Users Group Agenda to raise the profile of sustainability issues and consideration of further measures to move towards the Green Theatre model.

*What are we doing this year to make surgery more sustainable?*

- 🌱 The Theatre Users Group will work towards implementing the Green Theatre model.

Theatres are striving to reduce their recyclable waste, particularly paper waste. Although the Green Theatre potential is being explored, it is noted that space within all of the NHS WI theatre areas is very limited and challenging to consider multiple bins.

## Respiratory medicine

Greenhouse gases are used as a propellant in metered dose inhalers used to treat asthma and COPD. Most of the emissions from inhalers are from the use of reliever inhalers – Short Acting Beta Agonists (SABAs). By helping people to manage their condition more effectively, we can improve patient care and reduce emissions.

There are also more environmentally friendly inhalers such as dry powder inhalers which can be used where clinically appropriate.

We estimate that emissions from inhalers in NHS Western Isles were 423 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent.

### Inhaler propellant emissions, 2018/19, 2021/22, 2022/23 – tCO<sub>2</sub>e

Source	2018/19 (baseline year)	2021/22	2022/23	Percentage change 2018/19 to 2022/23
Primary care	377	392	412	+9 %
Secondary care	7.9	7.7	10.7	+35 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>384.9</b>	<b>399.7</b>	<b>422.7</b>	<b>+10 %</b>



*What we did last year to reduce emissions from inhalers:*

- 🌱 Our primary care pharmacists review prescribing within General Practice and seek to encourage reduction of metered dose inhalers where alternatives exist. This is replicated in the Western Isles Hospital pharmacy where metered dose inhaler use is restricted and alternatives provided as appropriate.

*What we are doing this year to improve patient care and reduce emissions from inhalers:*

- 🌱 The Primary Care Pharmacy team are leading on environmental drive. A campaign will begin advertising the safe disposal of inhalers to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, encouraging users to return them to a dispensing practice or pharmacy.

*What else we did last year to make care more sustainable:*

-  We strive to reduce patient travel by repatriation of services where appropriate (e.g., diagnostics) and advocate for remote consultations (with connectivity available throughout the Western Isles).
-  The principles of Realistic Medicine support sustainability and our examples of remote consultations and patient support using digital means are in line with both Realistic Medicine and sustainability.

## TRAVEL AND TRANSPORT

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Domestic transport (not including international aviation and shipping) produced 26% of Scotland's greenhouse gas emissions in 2021. Car travel is the type of travel which contributes the most to those emissions.

NHS Scotland is supporting a shift to a healthier and more sustainable transport system where active travel and public transport are prioritised.

NHS Western Isles's transition to electric vehicles has slowed due to: lack of funding to replace internal combustion vehicles with more expensive, battery powered vehicles; a lack of on-island infrastructure; delays in repairing broken charge points and no on-island certified garages to maintain or repair electric vehicles. We explored the possibility of transitioning to hybrid vehicles in the interim, but there was a lack of vehicles available as no manufacturer makes suitable hybrid Light Commercial Vehicles.

There is also an added carbon budget that comes with providing services to an island community. Although a comprehensive number of services are delivered at the local hospitals, NHS Western Isles commissions some services to other boards. This requires some patients, and escorts, to travel off-island by ferry or flight for medical appointments. Inter-island travel is also necessary to deliver and receive many services. In addition, there are a number of visiting locums and other staff who complement the staffing requirements. Digital solutions and recruitment and retention initiatives, which we continually strive to improve, have alleviated some of these pressures.

In 2023/24, a Travel Subgroup, reporting to the Sustainability Steering Group, will be established to develop and implement the actions set out in the national strategy and work towards the targets and actions set out there; including to reduce emissions caused by staff, patient and visitor travel through reducing the need to travel and increasing active travel opportunities.

For the population of the Western Isles, choosing Active Travel outside of the main towns is challenging due to issues such as: highly inclement weather, single track roads and an embedded culture of car use that is driven by these issues. As well as pursuing Active Travel initiatives we have also taken the approach of improving general activity levels and access to physical activity exercises.

This encourages people to be more active which will lead to them being more willing to undertake Active Travel for leisure purposes, when appropriate. Active travel routes are also promoted.:






*What we did last year to reduce the need to travel:*

- 🌱 We continue to provide remote clinics through the Near Me clinics, allowing patients to attend some GP and hospital appointments from home, by videocall. They are further supported by a number of Digital Hubs for patients who may not have the equipment, skills or digital infrastructure to access Near Me services from home. This reduces miles travelled by patients and carers, as well as reducing health inequalities that arise through lack of digital services.
- 🌱 A capital bid for an MRI scanner has been prepared. Up to 1,100 MRI scans of Western Isles residents are carried out at mainland hospitals every year and a locally based service will significantly reduce the number of patient journeys to the mainland.
- 🌱 We continue to apply the Working from Home policy.
- 🌱 We continue to promote meetings by videoconferencing and Teams; all inter-island and mainland travel requests undergo a robust approval process, being approved first by the department manager and finally by the Chief Executive. Mainland travel is only approved if all efforts for online meetings have been exhausted.










*What we did last year to improve active travel:*

- 🌱 Stakeholders have been gathered to work towards achieving the Cycling Employer Friendly Award, with an ambitious plan for the whole of the Western Isles. A Cycling Champion has been appointed and sites are being assessed for work to be done to meet the award criteria.
- 🌱 A staff travel survey was undertaken to indicate how people travel, barriers to active travel and why travel choices are made and a plan to overcome these barriers is in production.
- 🌱 NHS Western Isles continues to support and promote the Cycle to Work scheme. The value has increased from £1,000 to £1,500.
- 🌱 Through Sustrans, a Places for Everyone bid has been approved, in principle, to deliver a walk, wheel and cycle pathways in the three main hospital sites. It is expected that the monies will be released in 2024 and the first stage is to secure a consultancy firm to deliver project objectives and scope.
- 🌱 Walk leader training: we continue to build on our network of walk leaders who initiate walking groups in their own areas and get people who were previously inactive moving again.
- 🌱 Walk on Hebrides campaigns: promotion of health walks, in person throughout the whole islands and virtual campaigns.
- 🌱 Providing a step-count challenge for the Outer Hebrides population.
- 🌱 Move More: a collaborative service between NHS WI, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar and MacMillan Cancer which offers virtual or in-person, one-to-one and group activities for people suffering from Long Term Conditions (including cancer), leading to personalised programmes which keep these groups active and in better health for longer.
- 🌱 Community Health Walks: supporting people in rural areas to increase or maintain their physical activity, reducing the need to travel to a main hub to participate.
- 🌱 Promotion of the physical and mental benefits of being active.


*What we are going to do this year to reduce the need to travel:*

-  We will continue to expand the use of Near me and the Digital Hubs.
-  We will continue to apply the working from home policy and promote online meeting.
-  We continue to provide remote clinics through the Near Me clinics and digital hubs, allowing patients to attend some GP and hospital appointments from home, by videocall.
-  If successful in the bid for an MRI scanner, NHS Western Isles will process the plan for a scanning service.
-  We will begin a campaign among staff to encourage car-sharing.

*What we are going to do this year to improve active travel:*

-  We will continue working towards the Cycling Friendly Employer Award by upgrading and improving cycling facilities, such as shelters and showering facilities.
-  We will be linking to Travelknowhow Scotland for support in planning the progress with short, medium and long-term goals set.
-  A series of “Bike Ready” events is planned throughout the Western Isles. Working in collaboration with Cycling UK, Rural Connections, UHI and Dr Bike, staff will have the opportunity to try out e-bikes and regular bikes, be taken on a led ride, be given free sessions on basic bike maintenance and offered general advice on things like the cycle to work scheme. This will encourage the use of e-bikes and increasing confidence in cycling.
-  There is a proposal with Cycling Scotland to develop the infrastructure on NHS grounds that will enable the organisation to house a selection of bikes and ebikes.
-  A dedicated cycling page on the staff intranet page is in development, dedicated to hosting upcoming cycle events, past events, photos, features links to our NHS Western Isles Cycling Teams Channel, and other cycle-related information.
-  NHS Western Isles will be offering Pedal Cycle business mileage allowance which will be claimed through e-expenses.
-  Stakeholders will be gathered to review the Sustrans walk, wheel and cycle project outline, in preparation for funding being received.
-  We will continue to expand and promote our physical activity and walking initiatives: led community walks, step count challenges, Move More and other activities.
-  A winter walking campaign is planned, which will include giving out free hi-vis waistcoats.

*What we are going to do this year to improve public and community transport links to NHS sites and services:*

-  As part of a partnership on Community Led Local Development, we have commissioned a needs assessment and review of community transport. Once complete the findings will be used to address any gaps in access to NHS sites.

We are working to remove all petrol and diesel fuelled cars from our fleet. We will not achieve this by 2025. The NHS Western Isles Board should consider the extra capital required to decarbonise the fleet and if NHS Western Isles can commit to meeting any of these costs.

The following table sets out how many renewable powered and fossil fuel vehicles were in NHS Western Isles’s fleet at the end of March 2022 and March 2023:

	March 2022		March 2023		Difference in % Zero Emissions Vehicles
	Total vehicles	% Zero Emissions Vehicles	Total vehicles	% Zero Emissions Vehicles	
<b>Cars</b>	3	0	6	0	0
<b>Light commercial vehicles</b>	19	26 %	22	32 %	+6 %
<b>Heavy vehicles</b>	0	n/a	0	n/a	n/a

The following table sets out how many bicycles and eBikes were in NHS Western Isles]’s fleet at the end of March 2022 and March 2023:

	March 2022	March 2023	Percentage change
Bicycles	0	0	0
eBikes	0	0	0

## GREENSPACE AND BIODIVERSITY

### Biodiversity

Biodiversity, or the wide variety of living organisms within an environment, has declined at a rapid rate in the last 50 years. Evidence demonstrates that these trends are attributed to human activities, such as land use change, habitat degradation and fragmentation, pollution, and the impacts of climate change. The State of Nature report published in 2023 has highlighted the decline of nature across Scotland, with 11% of species now classed as threatened with extinction.

Public bodies in Scotland have a duty under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 ([Nature Conservation Scotland Act 2004](#)) to further the conservation of biodiversity, taking care of nature all around us. Furthermore, the Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011 ([Wildlife and Natural Environment Scotland Act 2011](#)) requires every public body to summarise their activities to meet this duty, through the production of a publicly available report.

NHS Western Isles has an ongoing awareness raising campaign, to inform and educate staff of the cause and effect of the climate emergency and loss of biodiversity. We will also raise awareness and understanding of the importance of biodiversity and nature through the Induction Programme that all staff need to undertake when they start employment.

In 2023/24, NHS Western Isles will review their estates and how to best protect and enhance our biodiversity and promote nature-based solutions.

### Greenspace

The design and management of the NHSScotland green estate for human and planetary health, offers an opportunity to deliver a range of mutually beneficial outcomes. These include action on climate change (both mitigation and adaptation), biodiversity, health and wellbeing for patients and staff, community resilience building and active travel.



The table below outlines key greenspace projects and their benefits.

Project name/ location	Benefits of project	Details of project
Our Hospital Garden	<p>Increased biodiversity.</p> <p>Walking routes to encourage physical activity.</p> <p>A space to relax in a tranquil, green area.</p> <p>Teaching staff gardening and grow-your-own skills.</p>	<p>Led by the local Rotary Club, which rejuvenated the greenspace within Western Isles Hospital by planning a number of perennials, plants and flowers, as well as seating areas for staff, patients, visitors and members of the community. The first and second phases, outside Erisort and Ambulatory Care area and the internal courtyard rose garden area are complete. It has also been extended to include a woodland walkway. A promotional campaign will also be undertaken to post signage and encourage its use, as well as a review of the accessibility of the entry points. Staff will also be encouraged to volunteer to learn gardening skills and help maintain the garden.</p>
Community Polytunnels	<p>Encouraging people to grow their own food.</p>	<p>We have funded Polytunnels in the Cearns housing estate in Stornoway, an area that has been identified as an area of high deprivation. This has been very successful and more families have taken up the opportunity to grow their own, making it a better use of greenspace as well as food sustainability.</p>
Sustrans Walk, wheel and cycle paths	<p>Increased biodiversity</p> <p>Providing a safe, convenient, peaceful area for people to undertake physical activity.</p>	<p>With Sustrans, a Places for Everyone bid has been submitted to build three walk, wheel and cycle pathways on each of the main hospitals. These will include areas where local plants and flowers will be planted along the routes.</p>





## SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT, CIRCULAR ECONOMY AND WASTE

Earth Overshoot Day marks the date when our demand for resources exceeds what earth can regenerate in that year. In 2023, Global Earth Overshoot Day is 2 August.

For the UK, the picture is more worrying. In 2023, the UK's Earth Overshoot Day is 19 May. The current level of consumption of materials is not sustainable and is the root cause of the triple planetary crises of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution.

We aim to reduce the impact that our use of resources has on the environment through adopting circular economy principles, fostering a culture of stewardship and working with other UK health services to maximise our contribution to reducing supply chain emissions to net-zero by 2045.

We continue to include sustainability and ethical credentials of suppliers when procuring goods. Where possible, goods are sourced locally including butcher meat, fresh fish and some fruit and vegetables. We will continue with this into the next year. Both the commercial questionnaire document used in tenders and the supplier review scorecard used in our supplier management processes have sections for evaluating environment, sustainability and socio-economic credentials.

We want to reduce the amount of waste we produce and increase how much of it is recycled.

The table below sets out information on the waste we produce and its destination for the last three years:

Type	2020/21 (tonnes)	2021/22 (tonnes)	2022/23 (tonnes)	Percentage change
Waste to landfill	Not available	Not available	46.19 (recorded from Oct 22)	n/a
Waste to incineration	0	0	0	n/a
Recycled waste	Not available	Not available	12.20	n/a
Food waste*	Not available	Not available	Untouched meals: 2.8 Dining room WIH 36.5 – 43.8	n/a
Clinical waste	16.6 (recorded from Oct 20)	131.9	84.4	n/a

\*Food waste: Currently, only untouched meals are being recorded by weight. Production and dining room waste has been extrapolated from 6 days of production waste monitoring exercises, conducted over the year, and includes peelings / production waste / servery waste / plated waste / vending machines etc. Once capital funding can be secured for a dryer or dewatering system, all food waste can be recorded by weight.

NHS Scotland have set targets to reduce the amount of waste we produce:

- Reduce domestic waste by a minimum of 15%, and greater where possible compared to 2012/2013 – by 2025
- Ensure that no more than 5%, and less where possible, of all domestic waste is sent to landfill – by 2025
- Reduce the food waste produced by 33% compared to 2015/16 – by 2025
- Ensure that 70% of all domestic waste is recycled or composted – by 2025

In 2023/24, NHS Western Isles will begin to write a local Strategy and Action Plan. This will include setting local waste reduction targets to meet the national targets.

*What we did last year to reduce our waste:*

- 🌱 A Food Waste Action Plan has been delivered, committing to reducing food waste by 33% by 2025. Progress has been hindered as staff retention and recruitment problems has given rise to a 20% vacancy level. This issue is being addressed and once personnel is at full capacity more the Action Plan will be progressed. This will include an awareness raising campaign with staff about untouched meal wastage and appropriate ordering and stock-rotation.
- 🌱 Food waste was being sent to the local Anaerobic Digester, but operational problems have led to the discontinuation of this at present. Funding has been approved for a food dryer or de-waterer in 2023/24 which will resolve the issues; this will also enable more comprehensive monitoring of food waste.
- 🌱 We continue to promote the use of recycling facilities, available in all main properties, as well as reducing consumption where possible. A new ordering system called Genesis has been implemented in some departments. This is the current gold standard and allows stock levels to be set and monitored against use. Stocking at a level commensurate with use avoids over-stocking and the associated waste. It also provides a full suite of management data.
- 🌱 A capital bid for a Waste Treatment Unit is being finalised. If successful, around 75% of waste will be processed on-site at Western Isles Hospital and autoclaved to a lower volume floc which is sent to local landfill, rather than being shipped to the mainland for incineration.

There are a number of areas currently under review by the IT department. A proposal will be prepared and options assessed. These include:

- 🌱 Transitioning to greener data centres rather than a single server room.
- 🌱 Upcycling IT equipment for use within the organisation or donating to community groups, local education centres or charities.
- 🌱 Recycling equipment not fit for upcycling.

The dental clinic are planning some waste reduction measures:

- 🌱 Children are being encouraged to recycle their old toothbrushes by dropping them off at the Dental Centre.
- 🌱 A business case to purchase a digital scanner in the dental centre will be prepared. This will reduce the need to take impressions and almost eliminate waste from alginate and gypsum.

- ✿ Trials are planned to reduce mileage caused by hand delivering Childsmile invitation letters to some schools. Hand delivering the letters to schools has resulted in a 100% response from parents, but a trial will begin in the next year where some schools will have the invitations posted out.

## ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

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*“Sustainable practices and recycling help organisations save money, but more importantly reduce my environmental impact. My children motivate me, it is their future after all.”*

*Margaret Ann Morrison, shown sitting at her desk that was upcycled from old worktops destined for the bin.*

Environmental stewardship means acting as a steward, or caretaker, of the environment and taking responsibility for the actions which affect our shared environmental quality.

This includes any activities which may adversely impact on land, air and water, either through the unsustainable use of resources or the generation of waste and pollution. Having an Environmental Management System (EMS) in place provides a framework that helps to achieve our environmental goals through consistent review, evaluation, and improvement of our environmental performance.

NHS Western Isles uses the Rio EMS. It is incomplete and a lack of resources is impeding progress.

An extensive awareness raising campaign is ongoing. A series of social media posts, press releases, Team Brief (the organisation’s weekly newsletter to staff) articles, highlighting examples of good practice. Staff training & information sessions have also been delivered. These were tailored to local issues, but national campaigns have also been supported.

Plans are underway to include Climate Emergency and Sustainability into the Corporate Induction Programme. This will ensure that new staff entering the organisation will understand the importance of the issues and begin employment with sustainability embedded into their work practices.

Discussions are also taking place to start a network of Green Champions, who will promote sustainable practice within their own area and share ideas across divisions.



*An image taken from one of the staff training sessions delivered in March 2023, in collaboration with Nature Scot and Climate Hebrides, showing projected flooding in the Stornoway area.*

## SUSTAINABLE CONSTRUCTION

Where there is a need for new healthcare facilities, we want both the buildings and grounds to be safe, nature-rich, sustainable, resilient and accessible.

NHS Western Isles is not currently working on any building projects. The proposed new hospital to replace St Brendans in Barra has been postponed. Due to national pressure on NHS capital budgets, a Scottish Government decision was taken to defer the project until 2026/27.

## SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

The climate emergency undermines the foundations of good health and deepens inequalities for our most deprived communities.

The NHS touches every community in Scotland. We have a responsibility to use our abilities as a large employer, a major buyer, and one of the most recognised brands in the world – an ‘anchor’ organisation – to protect and support our communities’ health in every way that we can.

*What we are doing to act as an anchor institution and improve the resilience of our local community:*

- 🌱 The IJB has published a draft strategic framework which identifies the strategic intent to develop community assets/human capital as a key element of the H&SCP. The IJB plans to undertake a consultation and engagement exercise across the islands to support this work.
- 🌱 As a member of the Outer Hebrides CPP Climate Change Working Group, who are tasked with improving understanding of climate change in the Outer Hebrides, building collaboration across organisations, and developing plans and priorities to embed in the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP), a number of projects and initiatives are being undertaken or due to be launched. These include:
  - 👉 Releasing a Climate Rationale (<https://online.flippingbook.com/view/616539390/>) and Case for Action (<https://online.flippingbook.com/view/616121670/>).
  - 👉 Developing interactive climate maps of the OHs (<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/82f26e8ece054334a436d0c803841577>), Climate Hubs to involve local communities voices.
  - 👉 Citizen science environmental mapping website for people to log effects of climate change in their area (<https://outerhebrides.communitymaps.org.uk/welcome>).
  - 👉 Community engagement events for Gaelic speakers planned 2023/24.
  - 👉 Climate Hubs to be established 2023/2024 to facilitate collaborative working, shared training opportunities, ideas, guidance and provide funding & support.
  - 👉 An Outer Hebrides specific Conference of the Parties is planned for 2024, bringing together local partners to collaborate and commit to actions for change.
- 🌱 NHS Western Isles is also a member of the Western Isles Food Partnership, a local multiagency group. The group's aim is to achieve a Sustainable Food Place Award, develop an island-wide Food Action Plan and Good Food Growing Strategy. With NHS Western Isles using their influence as an Anchor Institution, this will reduce food waste and create a vibrant, prosperous and sustainable food community.
- 🌱 Plans are underway to include sustainability issues in the Place Standards Assessment tool, which will help people understand the impacts of climate change in their locality and support them in designing solutions.
- 🌱 Discussions are being held with a local, bestselling author of bakery books to collaborate in promoting low carbon cooking and budget-friendly methods.

## CONCLUSION

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We can't have healthy people on a sick planet. Climate change impacts health in many ways and NHS Western Isles has committed to taking the whole system approach required to meet the climate emergency and sustainability targets set out by the Scottish Government.

NHS Western Isles has made good progress in taking action and embedding sustainability in the organisation, as outlined in this report period. Work is ongoing in many key areas and in the year to come we can look forward to improving and expanding on this. New governance arrangements, and a local strategy and action plan, will ensure a more co-ordinated approach to the issues we face as well as strengthened data gathering, assessment and monitoring.

Pre-pandemic gains in the energy performance of the estate can be improved even further if funding is approved for decarbonisation projects; the age of the estate and ongoing water contamination problems will hinder progress, but we will seek solutions. We will continue to work on reducing medical emissions through appropriate disposal of propellant inhalers and implementing the Green Theatre programme. The organisation is working towards the Employer Friendly Cycling award and improving the opportunities for people to uptake active travel options – an area that is particularly difficult in the inclement climate of the Western Isles. Waste reduction plans, if funding is approved, will see significant reductions in emissions. Informing and engaging staff will remain a priority with more awareness raising initiatives.

The Western Isles enjoys a very close community spirit and NHS Western Isles has strong links with many local groups. We will work with our partners to build on the achievements made to date, to provide an island wide coordinated approach and commit to common targets to tackle the issues our islands will face as a result of the climate emergency.

Significant challenges remain and for progress to continue funding and resource opportunities need to be identified, from both external and internal sources.

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