

Statement on environmental sustainability

The BACCN recognises that the climate emergency is a health emergency.

The [Lancet Countdown](#) tracks the links between public health and climate change because immediate global sustainable development actions are needed to prevent further worsening of heat extremes, food and water challenges and rise in infectious diseases¹.

Ecological awareness is particularly relevant for healthcare professionals as the health sector contributes 4.4% of global greenhouse gas emissions (if healthcare were ranked as a country, it would have the fifth biggest carbon footprint)². Therefore, in promoting the health of individuals, healthcare threatens planetary health by damaging the environment, which then worsens the negative impact of the climate crisis on public health. The [Greener NHS programme](#) provided the [Delivering a Net Zero Health Service](#) report to address these urgent ecological issues.

Critical care nursing and practice are resource-intensive requiring large volumes of clinical supplies to care for critically ill patients and their families. The BACCN encourages all critical care nurses to maintain high-quality care while doing so with available resources to minimise the risk of resource depletion in the future and reduce environmental damage.

The BACCN also recommend that critical care units implement changes for environmental sustainability in a financially affordable and socially responsible manner, which includes ethical procurement and fair trade within the healthcare supply chain.

As an organisation, the BACCN has already lowered its carbon footprint through:

- Changing the *Nursing in Critical Care* journal to an online only publication.
- Sustainable actions within the running of our national conferences <https://www.baccn.org/conference/sustainability/>
- Reducing travel through remote meetings.

The BACCN pledges to continue improving environmental sustainability by:

- Promoting the [principles of sustainable clinical practice](#) in critical care, including prevention, patient centredness, lean service delivery and low carbon alternatives.
- Supporting development of guidance for how critical care nurses can reduce their carbon footprint through a circular economy approach (reduce, reuse, recycle) to minimise waste and facilitate responsible waste disposal.
- Encouraging nurses to become green champions drawing from networking and resources available from the [Critical Care Susnet](#), [Green Nurse Network](#) and [Nurses Climate Challenge Europe](#)
- Endorsing quality improvement projects and research studies about sustainability in critical care nursing.

BACCN Professional Advisors produced this statement in conjunction with guidance from Dr Heather Baid, University of Brighton

¹ Watts, N., Amann, M., Arnell, N., Ayeb-Karlsson, S., Beagley, J., Belesova, K., Boykoff, M., Byass, P., Cai, W., Campbell-Lendrum, D. and Capstick, S., 2020. The 2020 report of The Lancet Countdown on health and climate change: responding to converging crises. *The Lancet*. 397 (10269): 129-170. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(20\)32290-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(20)32290-X)

² Karliner, J., Slotterback, S., Boyd, R., Ashby, B., Steele, K., 2019. Health care's climate footprint: how the health sector contributes to the global climate crisis and opportunities for action. <https://noharm-global.org/documents/health-care-climate-footprint-report>