

## Statement on environmental sustainability

The BACCN continues to recognise 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 diseases. 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). 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 and other ecological concerns on public health. There is a growing number of national strategies and statutory requirements developing for NHS organisations within the four countries of the United Kingdom.<sup>1,2,3,4</sup>

Critical care nursing is a resource-intensive service 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 sufficing 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 already improved environmental sustainability through:

- Changing the *Nursing in Critical Care* journal to an online-only publication.
- Sustainable actions while running the [BACCN national conference](#).
- 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 the 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](#) and [other networks](#) within the Centre for Sustainable Healthcare and [Nurses Climate Challenge Europe](#).
- Endorsing projects and innovation which applicants can use towards sustainability in critical care nursing – for further information, see the [BACCN Grants and Awards](#).
- Provide dissemination opportunities for sustainability-related projects at the [BACCN National Conference](#), [BACCN regional study events](#) and [Nursing in Critical Care journal](#).
- Organisational membership of the [UK Health Alliance and Climate Change](#).

*Developed by one of the BACCN Professional Advisors in conjunction with from Dr Heather Baid, University of Brighton*

<sup>1</sup> England: [Greener NHS England programme](#) and [Health and Social Care Act 2022](#)

<sup>2</sup> Scotland: [NHS Scotland Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy](#)

<sup>3</sup> Wales: [NHS Wales Decarbonisation Strategic Delivery Plan](#)

<sup>4</sup> Northern Ireland: [Green Growth Strategy for Northern Ireland](#)