



ENVIRONMENTAL AND SUSTAINABILITY POLICY

BACCN Environmental and Sustainability Policy

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1	03/07/2026	Patricia McCready	New document

Introduction

The British Association of Critical Care Nurses (BACCN) is committed to promoting and strengthening education, professional development, collaboration and excellence in critical care nursing. BACCN is committed to fostering a professional community that values dignity, respect, inclusion, integrity and accountability. BACCN is a registered charity and non-profit organisation that works to support and represent critical care nurses and the wider critical care community across the United Kingdom. This commitment underpins all BACCN activities, decisions, policies and events.

BACCN recognises the significant environmental impact of healthcare delivery, and the vital role critical care nurses can play in promoting sustainability. This policy sets out BACCN's commitment to environmental sustainability and supports members, critical care teams and partners to consider sustainable practice in professional, educational and organisational activity.

This policy forms part of the BACCN policy suite and should be read alongside related BACCN policies, including the Finance Policy, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, Code of Conduct, Health & Safety and Safeguarding Policy, Conference Code of Conduct and Safeguarding Policy, Data Protection Policy and Complaints Policy.

BACCN Environmental and Sustainability Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out BACCN's commitment to environmental sustainability and to support the integration of sustainability into the planning, delivery and evaluation of critical care services, BACCN activities, events, communications, procurement and partnership work.

The policy supports approaches that consider ecological, financial and social resources, so that healthcare needs can be met while reducing avoidable environmental harm and protecting future health and wellbeing.

Scope

Unless otherwise stated, this policy applies to BACCN members, Board Directors, committee members, volunteers, contractors, consultants, event speakers and representatives, staff where applicable, and partner organisations working with BACCN. It applies to all BACCN activities, including governance, membership, conferences, educational events, publications, communications, elections, recruitment and appointment processes, awards and recognition programmes.

This policy covers BACCN operations and activities including office operations, events and meetings, travel, procurement, communications, education, community engagement and collaboration with professional bodies and stakeholders.

Definitions

For this policy, the following definitions apply:

- Board of Directors means the BACCN Board of Directors, being the governing body of BACCN and the body described as the National Board within the Articles of Association.
- Board means the BACCN Board of Directors.
- Board Director means an individual appointed or elected to the BACCN Board of Directors.
- Environmental sustainability means using resources responsibly and reducing avoidable harm to environmental systems that affect health and wellbeing.
- Sustainable procurement means considering environmental impact, value for money, safety, inclusion and quality when purchasing goods or services.
- Sustainable clinical practice means reducing avoidable waste and environmental impact while maintaining patient safety, care quality and professional standards.
- Low carbon alternatives mean products, services, travel options or care approaches that reduce environmental impact where clinically and operationally appropriate.

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- Monitoring and assurance mean reviewing actions, progress, risks and learning so that the policy remains relevant and effective.

Roles and Responsibilities

The BACCN Board of Directors holds overall responsibility for ensuring that this policy is implemented, monitored and reviewed effectively. Operational responsibility may be delegated to an Environmental Sustainability Lead, committee or working group; however, ultimate accountability for compliance and assurance remains with the Board.

All staff, volunteers, Board Directors, contractors and committee members are responsible for supporting BACCN's environmental sustainability aims within their role and area of influence.

Leadership and Governance

BACCN will demonstrate leadership in environmental sustainability within the critical care nursing community. BACCN will establish an environmental sustainability committee or designate a lead to overseeing the implementation and monitoring of this policy. BACCN will integrate environmental sustainability considerations into its strategic planning and decision-making processes. We recommend that each ICU appoint a clinical lead for environmental sustainability and ensure that sustainability is a standing agenda item in quality meetings. Sustainability principles should be embedded in staff inductions, ongoing education, and quality improvement initiatives.

Responsibility

All staff, volunteers, Board Directors, contractors and committee members are responsible for complying with this policy and contributing to the organisation's environmental sustainability goals.

This policy serves as a framework for BACCN's environmental sustainability efforts. It will be further developed and implemented through the development of specific action plans and targets. By working together, we can create a more sustainable and environmentally responsible healthcare system for future generations.

Key Principles and Requirements

BACCN will consider environmental sustainability in relevant decisions and activities, while maintaining safety, quality, inclusion, professional standards and value for money. The requirements below should be applied proportionately across BACCN activity.

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Guiding Principles

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle: Prioritise waste reduction, reuse of resources, and effective recycling programmes within healthcare settings.

Resource Efficiency: Promote the efficient use of energy, water, and other resources in critical care units.

Sustainable Procurement: Advocate for the procurement of environmentally friendly and sustainable products and services such as:

- Energy-efficient medical equipment
- Recycled and recyclable materials
- Products with minimal packaging
- Pharmaceuticals with reduced environmental impact

Carbon Footprint Reduction: Encourage the reduction of the carbon footprint associated with healthcare delivery, including:

- Minimising travel for professional development activities
- Promoting the use of telemedicine and remote consultations
- Supporting the development of sustainable transportation options for healthcare workers

Education and Awareness: This goal is to raise awareness among members and the wider nursing community about environmental sustainability issues and best practices.

Collaboration: Collaborate with other healthcare organisations, professional bodies, and policymakers to promote sustainable healthcare practices.

Advocacy: Advocate for policies and initiatives that support environmental sustainability within the healthcare sector.

Leadership and Collaboration: Foster a culture of environmental responsibility and collaborate with stakeholders to achieve sustainability goals.

Continuous Improvement: Regularly evaluate and improve environmental performance through monitoring, auditing, and innovation.

Resource Management

- BACCN will minimise energy consumption in its offices and operations through energy-efficient practices and technologies.
- BACCN will conserve water and promote responsible water usage.
- BACCN will implement effective waste management programs to reduce waste generation, promote recycling, and ensure proper disposal of hazardous materials.
- BACCN will reduce paper consumption and promote the use of electronic resources for communication and documentation.

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Sustainable Procurement

BACCN will prioritise the procurement of products and services that have a lower environmental impact, considering factors such as recycled content, energy efficiency, and reduced packaging.

BACCN will engage with suppliers and vendors to encourage sustainable practices and promote transparency in their environmental performance.

Sustainable Clinical Practice

We endorse the four principles of sustainable clinical practice:

- **Disease prevention and health promotion:** Supporting early intervention and rehabilitation to reduce long-term dependency and improve outcomes.
- **Patient education and empowerment:** Promoting shared decision-making and advance care planning to align care with patient values.
- **Lean service delivery:** Encouraging evidence-based, high-value care that minimises unnecessary interventions and waste.
- **Low carbon alternatives:** Advocating on the use of environmentally preferable products and practices, such as switching from intravenous to oral medications where appropriate.

Travel and Transportation

BACCN will promote sustainable travel options for its staff, members, and event attendees, such as public transportation, carpooling, and virtual meetings.

BACCN will minimise the environmental impact of its events and meetings by selecting venues with sustainable practices, reducing waste, and offering plant-based catering options.

Education and Awareness

BACCN will educate and train its members on environmental sustainability in critical care nursing, promoting best practices and innovative solutions.

BACCN will raise awareness among its members and the wider healthcare community about the importance of environmental sustainability and its link to patient care and public health.

BACCN encourages ICU staff to:

- Implement sustainable practices within their clinical settings.

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- Educate colleagues and patients about environmental sustainability.
- Advocate for sustainable healthcare practices within their workplaces.
- Participate in professional development activities related to environmental sustainability.

Community Engagement

BACCN encourages all critical care units to:

- Include environmental sustainability in all stages of ICU planning and redevelopment.
- Comply with statutory standards such as the NHS Net Zero Building Standard.
- Incorporate environmental costs into procurement decisions.
- Adhere to NHS waste management standards and promote appropriate use of PPE. BACCN will engage with local communities and organisations to promote environmental sustainability initiatives and support community health and wellbeing.

BACCN will collaborate with national and regional partners to support sustainable healthcare initiatives and contribute to the development of local Green Plans. We will advocate for policies and practices that reduce the environmental footprint of critical care nursing while safeguarding patient safety and care quality.

Communication

BACCN will communicate this policy to its members through various channels, including:

- The BACCN website
- Newsletters and publications
- Conferences and workshops
- Social media

Collaboration

BACCN will collaborate with other healthcare organisations, professional bodies, and stakeholders to advance the goals of this policy.

Finance and procurement alignment

Environmental sustainability should be considered during procurement, travel, venue selection, catering, printing, use of digital resources, event planning and supplier engagement. These considerations should sit alongside value for money, safety, inclusion, accessibility, quality and reputational risk.

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Reporting Concerns

Anyone who identifies a concern relating to the implementation of this policy, including avoidable waste, unsustainable practice in BACCN activity, procurement concerns, or barriers to sustainable participation, is encouraged to raise this through the relevant BACCN route. Concerns may be raised with the designated policy lead, relevant committee or working group, the BACCN Chair, a Board Director, an event lead where applicable, or the formal complaints process.

BACCN will take concerns seriously and review them proportionately, taking account of environmental impact, feasibility, financial implications, safety, inclusion and quality.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

BACCN will handle all reports, feedback, complaints and concerns sensitively, fairly and confidentially. Information will only be shared with those who need it to investigate, manage or resolve the matter appropriately. All information and records will be managed in accordance with UK GDPR, applicable legislation and BACCN data protection requirements.

Where monitoring data, member feedback or sustainability reporting includes personal or organisational information, this will be collected, stored and used lawfully and proportionately.

Monitoring and Assurance

Monitoring and Reporting

BACCN will monitor its environmental performance and track progress toward its sustainability goals.

BACCN will regularly report on its sustainability efforts and achievements to its members and stakeholders.

Continuous Improvement

BACCN will regularly review and update this policy to reflect evolving best practices, emerging challenges, and new scientific evidence.

BACCN will strive to continuously improve its environmental performance through ongoing evaluation, innovation, and collaboration.

Implementation, Monitoring, and Review

BACCN will:

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- This policy will be reviewed and updated annually by the Board to reflect evolving best practice and emerging challenges.
- Progress toward achieving environmental goals will be monitored and reported annually.
- The charity will strive to continuously improve its environmental performance through ongoing evaluation and implementation of best practices.
- BACCN will regularly monitor the progress of its sustainability initiatives and evaluate the effectiveness of this policy.
- Progress toward environmental goals should be reviewed and reported to the Board at least annually. Monitoring may include review of sustainability initiatives, event arrangements, procurement decisions, travel considerations, resource use, communication channels and feedback from members or stakeholders.
- Learning from monitoring, feedback and external guidance should inform future updates to this policy and any associated action plans or targets.

Related Documents

This policy forms part of the BACCN policy suite and should be read in conjunction with other relevant BACCN policies and procedures, including:

- BACCN Finance Policy
- BACCN Expenses Policy
- BACCN Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- BACCN Code of Conduct, Health & Safety and Safeguarding Policy
- BACCN Conference Code of Conduct and Safeguarding Policy
- BACCN Data Protection Policy
- BACCN Complaints Policy
- Relevant conference, procurement, travel and event planning procedures

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Board, or sooner where there are changes in legislation, regulatory requirements, organisational arrangements, national guidance, emerging evidence, monitoring findings, incidents, complaints or feedback indicating that revision is required.

The annual review cycle is an intentional exception to the standard three-year BACCN policy review cycle because sustainability expectations, evidence and external requirements continue to develop rapidly.

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References

- Faculty of Intensive Care Medicine and Intensive Care Society (2025). Guidelines for the Provision of Intensive Care Services (GPICS) Version 3 – Consultation Draft. London: FICM & ICS.
- University of Brighton, Intensive Care Society, The Faculty of Intensive Care and UK Critical Care Nursing Alliance. (2025). Intensive Care Environmental Sustainability Recipe Book Version 1.0.

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