



NHS Highland

**Biodiversity Report
2021-2024**



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1. Introduction

NHS Highland is one of 14 NHS Boards (excluding special Boards) in Scotland and provides a range of community based and acute hospital services for more than 320,000 people. NHS Highland is the largest and most sparsely populated board in Scotland and it is spread over 32,500 square kilometres, The Board employs 8000 whole time equivalent staff. NHS Highlands primary care facilities include health centres, clinics and community hospitals, and the Board also operates a laundry facility.

NHS Highland is composed of two Health and Social Care Partnerships (HSCPs). The Highland Health and Social Care partnership covers the local government area of Highland. It has two main divisions. The North and West operational unit covers Caithness, Sutherland, Lochaber and Skye, Lochalsh and Wester Ross. The Inner Moray Firth operating unit covers Raigmore Hospital, Badenoch and Strathspey, Mid Ross, Inverness and Nairn. The Argyll and Bute Health and Social Care Partnership covers the local government area of Argyll and Bute.

The Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 places a Biodiversity Duty on all public bodies to further the conservation of biodiversity in carrying out their functions. The Scottish Biodiversity Strategy was published by the Scottish Government in 2004 and contains 5 strategic objectives, including:

- Reversal of biodiversity loss
- Increasing awareness and engagement
- Restoring and enhancing through planning, design and practice
- Providing a management framework for including biodiversity in all decision making
- Encouraging a wider availability of knowledge

The Biodiversity Duty states that, in exercising any functions, public bodies should further the conservation of biodiversity as far as is consistent with the exercising of those functions.

Biodiversity reporting, implementation and projects will become a standing agenda item on the NHS Highland Environment and Sustainability Board from April 2021. NHS Highlands Estates staff in conjunction with a planned biodiversity audit will conduct a review of all grounds and gardens to establish a baseline to work from in developing and implementing potential biodiversity projects. The review will include what additional training grounds staff may require to assist them in promoting biodiversity throughout the NHS Highland estate.

2. Governance

NHS Highland has an established Environment & Sustainability Board, chaired by the Boards Director of Capital Planning, Estates and Facilities. In addition the Board has a dedicated Non- Executive Sustainability Champion.

The Group membership includes:

Director of Nursing
Director of Finance
Director of Pharmacy
Director Public Health
Employee Director
Clinical Director Dental
Associate Medical Director
Primary Care Representative
Chief Officer Acute Care,
Chief Officer Community Care
Head of Procurement
Head of Communications & Engagement
Head of Strategy
Fleet Transport Manager
Green Theatre representative
Control of Infection Manager
Head of Facilities
Head of Capital Planning
Head of Environmental and Sustainability
Deputy Head of Environment & Sustainability

The Board is responsible for delivery of the various Chief Executive letters and acts as a reference group for other relevant national mandatory and statutory legislation, including CEL 2 (2012) “A Policy on Sustainable Development for NHSScotland 2012” and CEL 14 (2010) “Sustainable Development and The Climate Emergency and Sustainable Development Strategy 2022.

The Environment & Sustainability Board is responsible for the development and implementation a staff engagement programme. This programme will increase staff and public awareness of sustainability and environmental initiatives and engage with appropriate stakeholders. The Board will ensure the delivery of all sustainability and environmental initiatives as part of NHS Highlands Sustainability and Environment agenda.

The Board is responsible for overseeing and co-ordinating various national programmes including:

- NHS Scotland Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy 2022-2026
- National Climate Change Risk Assessment and Adaptation tool
- National Sustainability Assessment Tool
- Developing a road map to net carbon zero by 2045
- Implementing the Sustainable Procurement guidance

- Developing a low carbon transport fleet for small vehicles - 2025

3. Current Biodiversity and Green Health Projects

Highland Green Health Partnership:

- NHS Highland is the lead partner and host the Senior Development Officer for this pilot initiative (1 of 4 across Scotland) to take forward Our Natural Health Service strategy. See website www.thinkhealththinknature.scot Core aims are around supporting more and better access for communities to access the outdoors for health. Strong emphasis on reducing inequalities and supporting mental health and wellbeing.
- Developing locality steering groups and increasing capacity at community level.
- Developing Green Prescriptions initiative for primary care.
- Grant funding to local projects including community growing and biodiversity groups. Wide communication and social media presence.
- Virtual walking initiative between nature reserves including interactive content around nature and biodiversity.
- Partnership project delivered through High Life Highland - Green Health Events across Highland Health and Social Care Partnership.

NHS Greenspace:

- This project has developed and improved the grounds at New Craig's Hospital (Mental Health), for the benefit of staff, patients and visitors.
- Greenspace Development Officer in place for 3 years, nationally recognised work using greenspace therapy with severe and enduring mental health and recovery, including "bring the outdoors in" for vulnerable or low confidence patients; additional funding accessed for dedicated OT capacity; local partnership with Apex for greenspace maintenance.
- Greenspace improvements around the public garden at Lawson Memorial in Golspie continue to enhance biodiversity.
- New build hospitals committed to enhanced natural environment - e.g. Badenoch and Strathspey Hospital in Aviemore has good partnership with Cairngorm National Park developing real opportunities for biodiversity enhancement and including nature in therapeutic provision.
- Partnership with Incredible Edible Inverness - using green space around GP surgeries for vegetable and fruit growing and turning mowed lawn over to wildflower.
- Implementation of the green practice tool kit <https://www.greenerpractice.co.uk/for-gps>
- The Alliance for Water Stewardship, (AWS) certification – NHS Highland was the first healthcare facility in the world (Caithness General Hospital) to be awarded the Alliance for Water Stewardship Certification. AWS is a global membership collaboration comprising businesses, NGO's and the public sector. Members contribute to the sustainability of local water resources

through their adoption and promotion of a universal framework for the sustainable use of water. www.a4ws.org

4. Proposed Biodiversity Projects

NHS Highland has started the process of looking at some quick biodiversity wins and this will include the placing of bird boxes on the various hospital sites with particular regard to placing swift boxes on as many sites as possible, as these are declining at an alarming rate. It is also NHS Highland's intention to look at reducing grass cutting on the estate with view to promoting wild flower growth. In addition to this money saved from the implementation of the Warp-it reuse system will be used to purchase trees for a planting programme across NHS Highland estate.

5. Biodiversity going forward

The immediate challenge for NHS Highland as for most public bodies is to implement the national Climate Change Risk Assessment tool and from this work to develop an adaptation plan. In addition to this NHS Highland has committed to a full biodiversity audit of the entire estate to be progressed in financial year 2022 – 2023. The audit outcomes will inform NHS Highland biodiversity action plan going forward.

6. Monitoring progress

NHS Highland will monitor and report on the outcomes of all biodiversity projects and activities using indicators that will be developed with other public bodies and charities such as Scottish Environmental Protection Agency, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and Nature Scotland.

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