



SUSTAINABILITY
ACTION
 Our NHS | Our People | Our Planet

NHSScotland Sustainability Careers Guide

March 2025



NHS
 SCOTLAND

Contents

Introduction	3	Professional bodies	19
What does sustainability mean?	4	My NHSScotland role in sustainability: case studies	20
What skills are important for sustainability careers?	6	Jimmy Ramsay, NHS Fife	20
How to be an NHSScotland sustainability advocate in your area	7	Joyce Anderson, NHS Tayside	22
Upskilling	7	Yasmine Morgan, NHS Fife	23
Leading by example	7	Fergal McCauley, NHS Golden Jubilee	25
Collaborate and share	8	Saskia Quelleron, NHS National Services Scotland	27
Sustainability specialist areas in NHSScotland	9	Natasha Kumar, NHS National Services Scotland	29
Types of roles – examples	9		
Training and upskilling	14		
NHSScotland Sustainability Action website and internal SharePoint site	15		
NHSScotland Sustainability Action Programme SharePoint site	15		
IEMA (Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment)	15		
Sustainable Scotland Network	15		
NHSScotland TURAS e-Learning modules	16		
Building your network – and finding a community	17		
Within NHSScotland	17		
The National Green Theatres Programme	17		
Other networks	18		

This guide has been prepared for NHSScotland by the Climate Change, Sustainability, and Environment team as part of the NHSScotland Sustainability Action Programme. The team sits within NHSScotland Assure, part of NHS National Services Scotland. The programme is accountable to Scottish Government – it sets out the national approach to delivering the NHSScotland Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy 2022 to 2026 and supports boards to implement the strategy locally.

Acknowledgements:

We'd like to thank each of our case study participants and their health boards (NHS Fife, NHS Tayside, NHS Golden Jubilee and NHS National Services Scotland) for their involvement.

Introduction

Welcome to the NHSScotland Sustainability Careers Guide.

We've developed this guide to equip you with insights, practical advice, and inspiration to carve a meaningful path in sustainability, whether you're:

- a seasoned professional looking to transition into a sustainability role
- someone with a personal interest in sustainability who's keen to launch a career in this area
- an employee at the start of your sustainability career, exploring future career options
- interested in enhancing your sustainability knowledge to carry out your current role more effectively within NHSScotland

The 'triple planetary crisis' of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution poses a significant threat to healthcare access and delivery. In 2022, UK summer heatwaves led to mass cancellations of elective work, with one fifth of hospitals forced to cancel operations during the three days of highest temperatures. Meanwhile, the adverse effects of the planetary crisis on human health, through issues such as air pollution, extreme weather events, mass population displacement are placing new and increasing demands on already over-stretched healthcare systems.

In an era where environmental and social responsibility are at the forefront of global priorities, embarking on a career in sustainability can be both personally and professionally fulfilling, while contributing to a more sustainable and resilient future for generations to come.

The sustainability sector is dynamic and fast-growing. An increasing number of sustainability careers and roles are emerging, creating opportunities for people to champion sustainability within NHSScotland.

What does sustainability mean?

Some brief definitions:

- **Sustainability** means meeting our current needs without compromising resources for future generations. At the moment, we're using the earth's resources faster than they can be replaced. And we're using them in a way that's harmful to our planet.
- **Sustainable development** or growth can only be achieved when environmental protection, social fairness and financial profitability are given equal importance and exist together - without one factor dominating any of the others.
- The '**triple planetary crisis**' is the phrase used when talking about the harmful use of resources. It consists of three complex, interconnected issues: **climate change**, **pollution**, and **biodiversity loss**.
- **Climate change** affects us all. It involves long-term changes in temperatures and more extreme, unpredictable weather. These changes affect our health, food production, housing, safety, healthcare system and employment. Changes to our climate will ultimately impact all living things and the ecosystems that sustain life on our planet.
- **Pollution** is when harmful materials, called pollutants, are introduced into the environment. Pollutants damage our air and water and the quality of our land. Pollution can be caused by nature (for example from volcanic eruptions and wildfires) or by human activity such as driving, the manufacture of products, and using pesticides in agriculture. Human activity, such as burning coal and generating waste, pollute the environment and harm wildlife.
- An **ecosystem** is the complex web of interactions between all living things and the environment they occupy. Change in any one thing will cause change to the entire ecosystem. Ecosystems need to be in balance and need to be preserved, because they provide us with the essential natural resources that we all rely on to live.





- The term **biodiversity** is used to describe the number and variety of living organisms in an area. Biodiversity helps to sustain our life on earth - such as enabling us to grow food, making water drinkable, helping to control pollution, providing us with raw materials for shelter, and providing recreation places to improve our wellbeing.
- **Biodiversity loss** is the reduction in or disappearance of life forms, such as animals, plants, and ecosystems. In 2019, a UN report warned that out of eight million species that currently exist, one million are in danger of extinction.

Factors contributing to this loss include climate change, land use change, splitting up land for development (which causes habitat loss), agricultural practices, and over-exploitation of important species such as fish.

An example of human activity that leads to biodiversity loss is deforestation. This is the clearing of forests and woodlands for activity such as agriculture or construction. Widespread deforestation continues to reduce the number of trees and plants available to absorb **carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions**.

What skills are important for sustainability careers?

The answer to this question can depend on the role and the type of the position, which could include data analyst, project support officer, sustainability manager/lead, energy manager/lead, or senior executive.

However, common skills you might need include:

- ✓ an interest in (and general knowledge about) environmental matters
- ✓ knowledge, gained through education or work experience, about pollution, waste, energy, adaptation, travel, greenspace and biodiversity, circular economy, and other relevant environment related topics
- ✓ analytical skills for reviewing data
- ✓ reporting writing skills for organisations
- ✓ effective communication skills
- ✓ capacity to work collaboratively with a wide range of stakeholders
- ✓ ability to think strategically

Many roles in sustainability can also benefit from education and experience in other fields, across both the public and private sectors.

It is increasingly common, for example, for individuals to transfer into a sustainability role within their existing organisation, drawing on their knowledge and skillset from previous positions – whether that's in estates, transport, waste, communications, energy, environmental stewardship, adaptation, or greenspace and biodiversity or something else – and then enhancing this with additional qualifications in sustainability.



How to be an NHSScotland sustainability advocate in your area

There are plenty of ways you can get involved in sustainability. We've covered some here, but you may think of others.



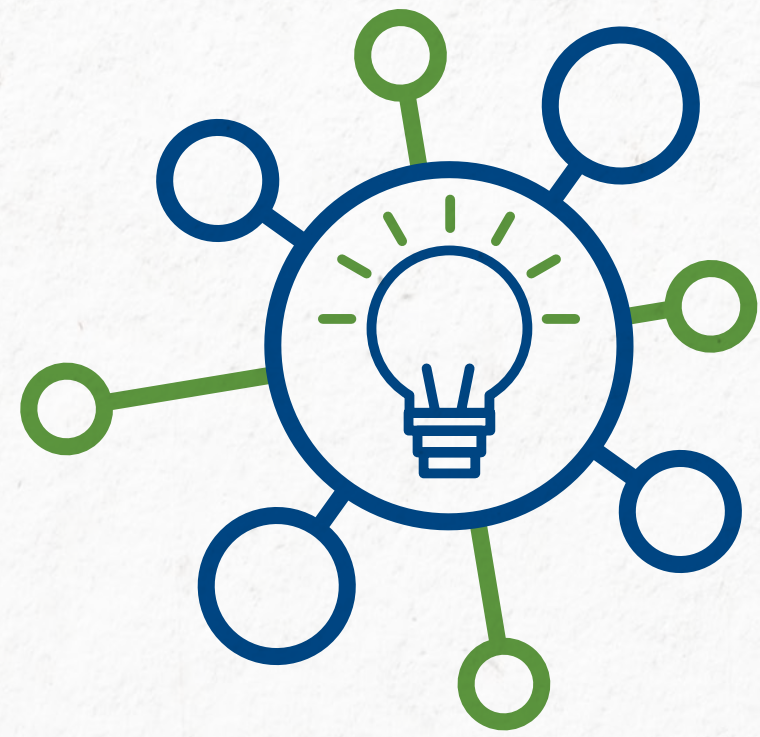
Upskilling

- Educate yourself by staying informed about climate change, sustainability, and related issues. Understand different environmental terminology and concepts, the theory and evidence behind climate change and other issues, also the implications for the environment, society and organisation.
- Learn about sustainable practices, green technologies, and eco-friendly initiatives that can be implemented in workplaces.
- Attend Training and Workshops on sustainability topics. [The environmental sustainability course for NHSScotland staff on TURAS Learn](#) is a good starting point – it provides an introduction to sustainability, what NHSScotland is doing to become more sustainable and what we can do as individuals.



Leading by example

- Adopt sustainable practices in your own work and daily life. Demonstrate the benefits of eco-friendly habits and inspire others to follow suit – share practical tips and resources to help colleagues incorporate sustainability into their work routines.
- Reduce your carbon footprint by conserving energy, using public transportation, recycling, and making environmentally conscious choices.
- Raise awareness within your workplace about the importance of sustainability and the impact of climate change.
- Help to make sustainable changes to the products and services we procure – get in touch with National Procurement if you want to explore sustainable alternatives to what you're buying. Our procurement colleagues can help you make choices that meet both clinical or operational needs and sustainability objectives.



Collaborate and share

- Share information through presentations, workshops, or internal communication channels to educate your colleagues about the benefits of adopting sustainable practices.
- Form or join a sustainability committee or group within your NHS board. Collaborate with like-minded colleagues to develop and implement green initiatives.
- Foster a sense of community and teamwork by involving others in discussions about sustainability and encouraging their input.
- Advocate for policy changes: Advocate for the incorporation of sustainability considerations in decision-making processes.
- Engage leadership: present the business case for your sustainability initiatives to your NHS boards leadership. Highlight the potential benefits and cost savings that can be realised if they adopt eco-friendly practices. Emphasise how sustainability aligns with your board's objectives and sustainability commitments.
- Celebrate achievements: acknowledge and celebrate the achievements of your health board in terms of sustainability. Recognise individuals or teams that contribute to environmental initiatives.
- Use success stories to inspire and motivate others to participate in sustainability efforts.
- Network and collaborate externally: connect with external organisations, NGOs, or industry groups focused on sustainability. Networking can provide insights, best practices, and collaborative opportunities to enhance your workplace's sustainability efforts.

Sustainability specialist areas in NHSScotland

Types of roles – examples

Types of sustainability roles can vary between NHS boards. The salaries and conditions for these sustainability roles will also vary between boards, depending on the role and level of responsibility. All pay scales are reviewed under NHSScotland Agenda for Change – to find out more, visit [the NHSScotland Workforce Policies website](#).



Waste

Waste leads in NHS boards, play a crucial role in ensuring the safe and efficient management of waste generated within the estate. They will understand current waste legislation and frameworks for waste. They are responsible for developing, implementing, and maintaining comprehensive waste management programs that comply with regulatory guidelines and environmental standards.

Waste leads collaborate with various NHS board departments to establish proper waste segregation practices, conducts training sessions for staff, and monitors waste disposal processes to minimise its environmental impact.

Additionally, they stay informed about the latest regulations related to healthcare waste and recommend innovative solutions to optimise waste

reduction and recycling efforts. They engage with circular economy leads to ensure a joined-up approach. The role requires a keen understanding of waste categories, disposal methods, and a commitment to promoting sustainability in healthcare operations.

Waste leads contribute to the overall safety and cleanliness of the estate while ensuring boards adhere to all relevant health and environmental regulations.

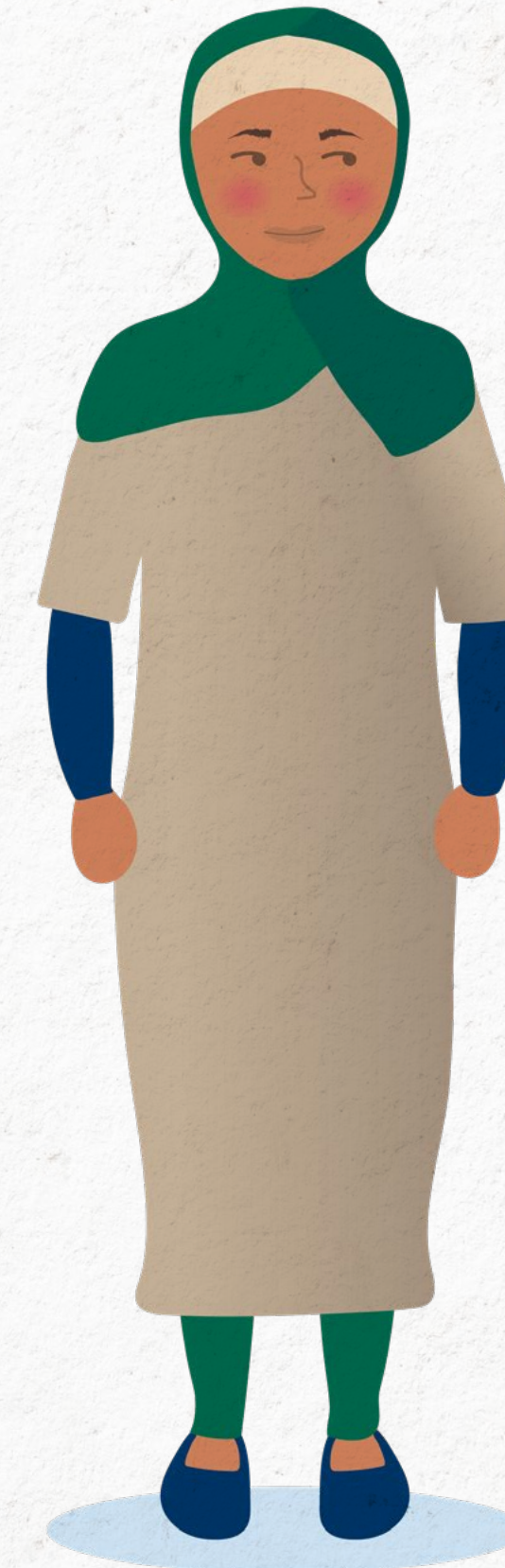


Energy

Energy leads in NHS boards, play a crucial role in optimising energy efficiency and sustainability within the estate. This ultimately supports cost saving and reducing the carbon footprint of healthcare facilities.

They are responsible for implementing and overseeing energy improvements and for developing strategies to reduce energy costs and associated environmental impacts. They are also responsible for monitoring energy performance, highlighting where targets have been achieved and recognising the risks of failure to meet targets by promoting energy conservation practices.

This role involves collaborating with various departments to implement energy-efficient technologies, monitor energy usage, and ensure compliance with regulatory standards.



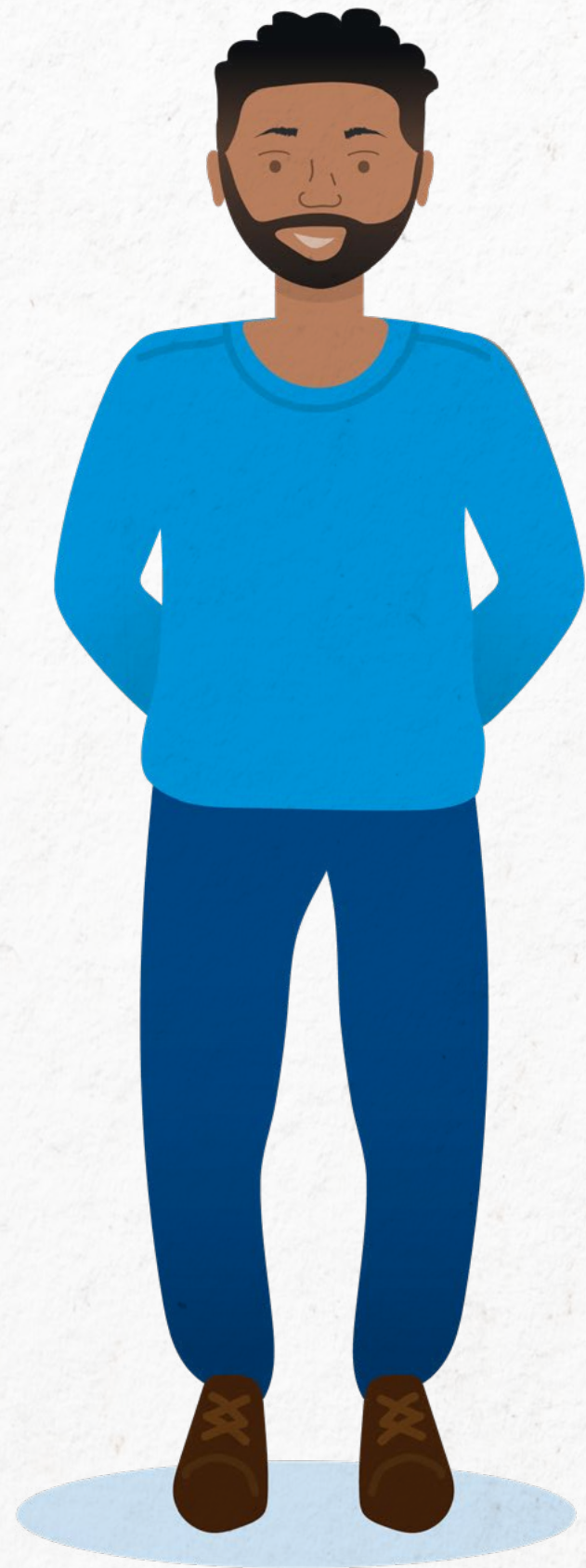
Transport and active travel

Transport and active travel leads in NHS boards play a pivotal role in fostering environmentally friendly and health-conscious travels solutions.

By prioritising modes of transport that minimise ecological impact, such as walking, cycling, and the use of electric vehicles, we contribute to reducing carbon emissions and mitigating the adverse effects of climate change.

Simultaneously, promoting active travel, like walking and cycling, not only enhances personal well-being through increased physical activity but also alleviates traffic congestion and improves urban air quality.

Embracing these practices not only aligns with global efforts to create more sustainable and resilient communities but also underscores the importance of adopting lifestyle choices that benefit both individuals and the planet.



Adaptation

Adaptation leads in NHS boards play a pivotal role in overseeing and implementing strategies to enhance the organisation's resilience and sustainability in the face of changing environmental, social, and economic conditions.

This role involves assessing potential risks and opportunities associated with climate change and other impactful factors, developing, and implementing adaptation plans, and collaborating with internal and external stakeholders to ensure the organisation's long-term viability.

The adaptation sustainability lead is responsible for integrating sustainable practices, fostering innovation, and driving initiatives that mitigate the impacts of environmental changes while aligning with the organisation's overall goals and values.



Greenspace and biodiversity

Greenspace and biodiversity leads in NHS boards are responsible for developing and implementing strategies to preserve and enhance green spaces while promoting biodiversity within urban or natural environments.

This role involves collaborating with various, create and execute, initiatives that prioritise sustainable practices. Their responsibilities may include overseeing the management of projects and funding applications implementing conservation projects and advocating for policies that support biodiversity.

They are also likely to engage in public education and outreach efforts to raise awareness about the importance of greenspace and biodiversity, fostering a harmonious coexistence between human activities and the natural world.



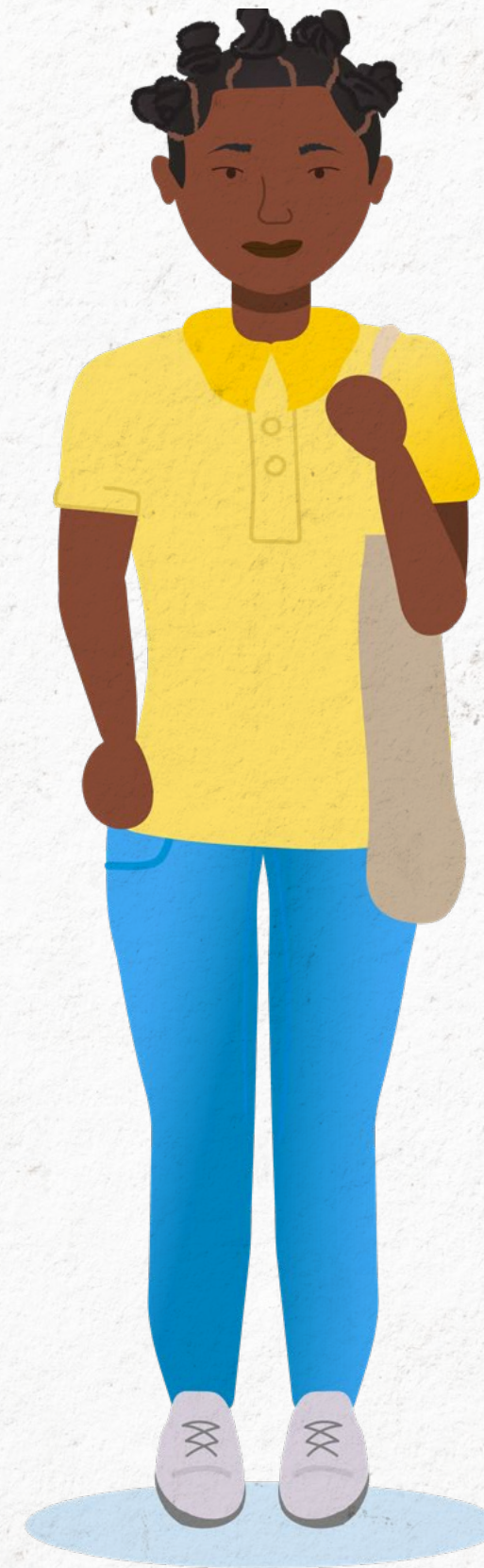
Circular economy

Circular economy leads in NHS boards have a professional responsibility for developing, implementing, and overseeing strategies that promote and enhance circular economy principles within the organisation.

This role involves analysing and optimising resource use, waste reduction, and product lifecycle management to minimise environmental impacts.

They collaborate with various departments to integrate circular economy practices into business operations, supply chain management, and product design. They may also engage with stakeholders, suppliers, and customers to foster awareness and commitment to sustainable practices.

Additionally, they stay up to date with evolving sustainability trends, regulations, and technologies to continually improve the organisation's environmental performance and contribute to a more resilient and sustainable economy.



Environmental Management Systems

An Environmental Management Systems lead in NHS boards plays a crucial role in organisations by overseeing and implementing strategies that promote environmental responsibility, progressing and managing the Energy Management Systems (EMS).

This role involves developing and managing programs to reduce the organisation's ecological footprint, incorporating eco-friendly practices into daily operations, and ensuring compliance with environmental regulations.

The manager/lead collaborates with various departments to integrate sustainability principles into decision-making processes, assesses and improves resource efficiency, and engages with stakeholders to communicate and advance the organisation's commitment to environmental stewardship.

This position requires a deep understanding of environmental issues, regulatory frameworks, and sustainable business practices, as well as effective communication and leadership skills to drive positive change within the organisation and contribute to a more sustainable future.



Sustainability Project Support Officer

Sustainability Project Support Officer in NHS boards are responsible for assisting in the planning, execution, and monitoring of sustainability initiatives.

They work collaboratively with cross-functional teams, stakeholders, and external partners to implement environmental and socially responsible projects.

This role involves conducting research, analysing data, and preparing reports to evaluate the impact of sustainability efforts. Additionally, they contribute to the development of strategies to enhance overall sustainability performance, ensuring compliance with relevant regulations and industry standards.

Through effective communication and coordination, they play a crucial part in driving the organisation towards its sustainability goals, fostering a culture of environmental stewardship and social responsibility.



Sustainability data analyst

Sustainability data analysts in NHS boards play a crucial role in advancing environmental and social responsibility within an organisation.

This professional is responsible for collecting, analysing, and interpreting data related to sustainability metrics, including energy consumption, carbon emissions, waste management, and social impact.

They use advanced analytics tools to identify patterns, trends, and areas for improvement, helping companies make informed decisions to reduce their ecological footprint and enhance their overall sustainability performance.

Additionally, sustainability data analysts collaborate with cross-functional teams to develop strategies, set targets, and report on key performance indicators, contributing to the organisation's commitment to environmental stewardship and social responsibility.

Training and upskilling

There are many career paths to upskill in environmental sustainability, whether through formal qualifications, workplace experience or becoming more aware and involved within your own workplace. You can find a list of formal training providers and resources where you can update your current knowledge below.

Whether you are looking for further sustainability training to contribute to the latest sustainability report at work or you are being asked to encourage Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) best practice in your area.





NHSScotland Sustainability Action website

Visit the [NHS Sustainability Action website](#) where there is a wealth of information and resources. You can register using your NHS email address.

NHSScotland Sustainability Action Programme internal SharePoint site

Where you can find useful news, information and resources. The SharePoint site is available to all NHSScotland staff.

IEMA (Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment)

IEMA offers a broad range of sustainability and net zero training courses. IEMA course certification is globally recognised in the field of climate change and sustainability. There are certificated courses for people at all levels of their career.

Sustainable Scotland Network

Scotland's public sector network on sustainability and climate change (SSN) information and resources can be found on [the Sustainable Scotland Network website](#). The Sustainable Scotland Network (SSN) supports over 600 members across Scotland's public sector to drive action on climate change, scaling up impact through leadership, policy, and research.



NHSScotland TURAS e-Learning modules

You can learn more about environmental sustainability topics through the following eLearning modules:

- environmental sustainability
- safe disposal of waste

Both modules are available to all staff.

Environmental sustainability module

Interested in environmental sustainability but don't know where to start? Want to learn more about what action NHSScotland is taking to tackle climate change – and what you can do to help?

This course introduces sustainability concepts, topics and issues, and will develop your understanding of:

- the effect the environment has on human health
- the environmental impacts of delivering healthcare services
- action that NHSScotland is taking to become more sustainable
- how we as individuals can contribute and make a difference

[Log into your TURAS Learn account to access the environmental sustainability course.](#) If your board uses LearnPro, you can still access the course by opening a TURAS account – TURAS Learn is available to all NHSScotland staff.

Safe disposal of waste module

Making sure we sort our waste safely and correctly is one of the biggest contributions we can all make to making our NHS more sustainable.

It can also help us meet our legal responsibilities, save money, keep everyone safe (by following the right infection prevention and control procedures).

The updated waste module offers helpful guidance on:

- what good waste segregation looks like – what can be recycled and what should be disposed of as clinical waste
- your responsibilities as a waste producer
- the 'journey of waste'

[Log in to your TURAS Learn account to access the waste module](#) – and [you can also visit our dedicated environmental sustainability page on TURAS Learn](#) to access further training on sustainability and how you can help.

If your board uses LearnPro, you can access the module on LearnPro by searching for “NES: Safe disposal of waste (including sharps)”.



Building your network – and finding a community

Developing a deeper understanding of the field that interests you and building a network is an important addition to any training or learning you are doing. Read more about the power of building relationships in the Guardian's guide to networking and find some advice below.

Of course, when you are starting out it can be difficult to build a network or find a community of people in your field. But doing so will help you gain a deeper understanding of sector issues and can help to improve your confidence and wellbeing.

Within NHSScotland

Local or role-specific groups

Contact your board's sustainability lead or team and find out what is happening within your board.

There may be opportunities to get involved with sustainability groups or networks. These could be locally (within your board or work location) or relating to your role or your specialty – from local cycling groups to green clinical networks.

The National Green Theatres Programme

The Green Theatres Programme aims to reduce the carbon footprint of theatres across NHSScotland and enable more environmentally sustainable care by:

- working with clinicians and professionals to develop actions that reduce carbon emissions
- supporting boards to implement, measure and report on these improvements

For more information, visit the [National Green Theatres Programme section of the national Centre for Sustainable Delivery website](#).





Other networks

Examples of these networks and communities include:

1. Casual networking events, such as [People Planet Pint organised by Small99](#) in many UK cities.
2. Programmes or internships, such as the [2050 Climate Group](#) or [On Purpose Associate Programme](#).
3. Environmental groups for ethnic minorities such as [Ethnic Minority Environmental Network \(EMEN\)](#) and [Climate Reframe](#).
4. Green groups for young people such as [UK Youth 4 Nature](#) and [Force of Nature Youth Network](#).
5. Green groups for women, including the [Global Women in Sustainability network on LinkedIn](#).
6. Environmental groups aimed at different professions, including for example [Creatives for Climate](#), [The Public Sector Climate Adaptation Network](#), [Culture for Climate Scotland](#), [Engineers for a Sustainable World](#) and [Climate Psychology Alliance](#).

Professional bodies

Another good way into a professional network is to join professional associations which support, develop, and represent the interests of those working in that area.

Many offer a professional development programme with certification, networking opportunities, and other benefits.

Joining one of these bodies is a good way to keep up to date with developments in your interest area, and to build (and demonstrate) your sector knowledge. Some offer lower price student or graduate membership. Some associations with a strong environmental focus include:

- [Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management \(CIEEM\)](#)
- [Chartered Institute of Environmental Health \(CIEH\)](#)
- [Chartered Institution of Waste Management \(CIWM\)](#)
- [Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management \(CIWEM\)](#)
- [Energy Institute of Corporate Responsibility and Sustainability](#)
- [Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment \(IEMA\)](#)
- [Institution of Environmental Sciences \(IES\)](#)
- [Landscape Institute](#)
- [Royal Geographical Society](#)
- [Royal Town Planning Institute](#)
- [The Geological Society](#)

My NHSScotland role in sustainability: case studies



Jimmy Ramsay, Head of Sustainability, NHS Fife

Jimmy Ramsay, NHS Fife

Who are you? What's important to you?

I'm someone who is deeply committed to driving positive change, particularly in the realm of our NHS Estates and sustainability. I believe in the importance of collective efforts to address climate challenges and make a meaningful impact on our communities.

Outside of work, I enjoy spending time with friends and family. I have 3 kids ages from 6 to 15 so most days are eventful. I'm a very hands on person, working in the house, garden and on my vehicle quite a lot but love nothing more than getting away up the north of Scotland in my van, paddleboarding in lochs and snorkelling in rivers.

On a personal note, I value collaboration and open communication, and I'm always eager to learn from others. While I appreciate most things, I have a strong dislike for wastefulness and inefficiency, which motivates my dedication to sustainability.

Your journey in NHSScotland?

I have dedicated the past 20 years to the Estates department in NHS Fife, beginning my career as a time-served electrician. Over the years, I have progressed through a variety of positions, including supervisor, Estates Officer, and Estates Manager. Currently, I serve as the Head of Sustainability.

How did you end up in a sustainability role?

My journey into a sustainability role began during my time as Estates Manager, where I oversaw the Energy and Sustainability Estates Officer. As awareness of the climate emergency grew, particularly with the release of Scottish Government (SG) policy (DL38), it became clear that NHS Fife needed to adjust its organisational structure to effectively support sustainability initiatives. I pursued a Master's degree in Sustainable Development while working, which prepared me for this transition, and I subsequently applied for the position.

Most rewarding and challenging parts of your role?

The most challenging aspect of my role initially was familiarising myself with the various departments and individuals within the organisation who were involved in sustainability initiatives and figuring out how to effectively collaborate with them. Establishing new partnerships with local organisations and public sectors was also a learning curve; breaking down barriers and implementing innovative ways of working presented challenges, but ultimately, we achieved success and is strengthening and ongoing today.

Conversely, the most rewarding part of my role is the opportunity to work collaboratively across the organisation. Witnessing our collective achievements in response to the climate emergency is incredibly fulfilling. As a resident of Fife, leading change within NHS Fife is particularly meaningful to me, as it not only addresses climate concerns but also helps the board enhance efficiency in multiple areas.

Advice for others considering a role in climate change and sustainability?

My advice for anyone considering a role in climate change and sustainability is that it's never too late or too early to get involved. At 42, I came from a background that wasn't directly focused on sustainability, but many of my previous roles provided valuable connections to this field, giving me a solid foundation. It's also important to note that youth brings fresh perspectives; we have two 24-year-old sustainability officers who are in their first full-time positions after university, and they are making significant contributions to our objectives.





Joyce Anderson, Operational Waste Manager, NHS Tayside

Joyce Anderson, NHS Tayside

Who are you? What's important to you?

I have a keen interest in interior design and enjoy upcycling furniture. I'm a vegetarian with a passion for healthy eating, and I love walking—my favourite being the Fife Coastal Walk. I also enjoy reading, especially true crime.

Your journey in NHSScotland?

With over 30 years of experience in operational management across healthcare, including private healthcare, GP practice management, and the NHS, waste management has always been part of my responsibilities. Currently, I'm fully dedicated to it as the Operational Waste Manager at NHS Tayside.

How did you end up in a sustainability role?

A former line manager asked if I would take on the responsibility for waste management, thinking I'd be well-suited for it—and it turns out, I am! I'm passionate about sustainability and the circular economy, and I'm proud to be one of three Chartered Resource and Waste Managers in NHSScotland.

Most rewarding and challenging parts of your role?

Finding sustainable solutions to problems—there's nothing better than a good ending! During my interview for this role, I promised I would make a difference, and no matter the challenges, that remains my goal. Also, there's a fantastic group of waste managers across NHSScotland, and it's reassuring to know that their experience, knowledge, and support is always readily available.

Advice for others considering a role in climate change and sustainability?

Waste management is about so much more than just disposal. It's a complex field that involves regulations, sustainability practices, technology, data analysis, and risk management. The field is constantly evolving, making it both challenging and exciting!



Yasmine Morgan, NHS Fife

Who are you? What's important to you?

I am half Scottish, half Swedish, born and raised in Dunfermline. I speak English, Swedish and Spanish fluently. My favourite physical activities are yoga, long walks, pole dancing, climbing and more recently boxing!

Your journey in NHSScotland?

I am one year into my role as a Sustainability Officer with NHS Fife after graduating from the University of St Andrews in 2023. I have recently become Vice-Chair of the NHSScotland Greenspace and Biodiversity Group. I also am very grateful to have won Rising Star at the NHS Fife Staff Awards for the work my team and I have done over the past year. I love the broadness of my role, and I get to interact with so many different people across NHS Fife and many other organisations across Fife and Scotland.

My main roles are currently working on the board's Environmental Management System (EMS) including the EMS policy, creating greener GP networks and working on greenspace improvement and climate adaptation.

How did you end up in a sustainability role?

I initially did an internship in 2022 before my final year at university. I studied Sustainable Development and Spanish at university, so I had the theory and background knowledge needed to get into a sustainability role. However, that is not to say that you absolutely need a background in sustainability to pursue a role in the field. Many skills already relate to sustainability, and it is a broad field with many specialties, for example, politics, biology, geography, computer science to name a few. Sustainability also now relates to everyone's job whether they realise it or not, from the paper we use to the emails we send, we need to be conscious of our use of resources and energy.

Most rewarding and challenging parts of your role?

Most rewarding is the creativity that I can bring to the role, the conversations with people who are passionate about making the world a better place. The most challenging part is working against 'traditional' ways of doing things and encouraging people to change their behaviours.

Advice for others considering a role in climate change and sustainability?

Be aware that the role may be very broad so have a few key focuses and projects at a time. To ensure you don't get overwhelmed by challenges and climate anxiety, make sure you have grounding practices to reduce stress and burnout. A role this challenging requires you to be fiercely loyal to your values and to yourself. Be open minded to new collaborations and be confident in your ability to improve existing systems and behaviours for the future of the NHS.





**Fergal McCauley,
Sustainability Manager, NHS
Golden Jubilee**

Fergal McCauley, NHS Golden Jubilee

Who are you? What's important to you?

Grew up in County Donegal, Ireland. When I was 20 years old I decided to come to Glasgow to further my education in building surveying; otherwise I would have either been a farmer or fisherman. And I am still here!

Family is important. Sometimes it's like having a second job bringing four kids up!

When I get spare time, I like to work out at the local gym and on the odd occasion I'll take the kids swimming. Although, my competitive nature lets me down as they outswim me now given, they go to a swimming club. Other hobbies include DIY and watching football (team will be kept a secret!).

Your journey in NHSScotland?

Spent 25 years working in further education starting out as a Building Surveyor and latterly as Head of Facilities Management. Energy and waste management including capital projects all touched on carbon management and sustainability. I was also the lead for the organisation over the past nine years and completed all mandatory

reporting, founding and chairing the Environmental Sustainability Working Group and helped develop and publish a Sustainability Strategy and Environmental Policy. Coupled with this experience and seeing a role of this nature coming up at NHS Golden Jubilee, I decided it was the right time for a career change to focus on a subject area that provides greater job satisfaction whilst making a difference. I have been in the role since April 2024 and really enjoy it.



How did you end up in a sustainability role?

It was a case of who was best placed to lead on sustainability. Whilst working in further education, Public Bodies Climate Change Duties Reporting surfaced in 2014/15 and with two new super campuses in the centre of Glasgow, my role was chosen to lead on sustainability. I am glad I took on the role.

Most rewarding and challenging parts of your role?

Reducing consumption, waste and buying automatically reduces cost. Being able to translate that into carbon savings and seeing it reduce year on year is rewarding. The challenge is getting people to treat the workplace the same way they treat their own home – recycle, turn lights and unused equipment off, and so on.

Advice for others considering a role in climate change and sustainability?

You probably do it at home without realising it like recycling, turning the heating down, using less electricity and buying less stuff! Walking, cycling, public transport and using the car less.

You can use these skills at work. Sustainability covers many aspects. It covers other areas such as climate risk, adaptation, biodiversity, active travel, and so on.

It is a rewarding and satisfying career and will extend way beyond net zero targets as the role helps organisations save money!





Saskia Quelleron, Climate Change and Circular Supply Lead, NHS National Services Scotland

Saskia Quelleron, NHS National Services Scotland

Who are you? What's important to you?

I am passionate about the NHS having had several lifesaving operations whilst I was young. I believe that like everything we need to evolve to develop the best performance of our healthcare. In my spare time I like to spend time in my garden and with my pets or read in the sun (when it shines). Generally, I love the outdoors and particularly wilderness areas, but not so keen on tight spaces and long drops!

Your journey in NHSScotland?

I came to the NHS from a mixed employment background having worked in a variety of careers from customs officer then Intelligence Analyst for HM Customs and Excise (now HM Revenue and Customs), through to private sector companies such as Standard Life and Morgan Stanley where I worked with IT and in particular IT forensics.

How did you end up in a sustainability role?

In NSS I became redeployed, from a series of roles in redeployment I was sought to work in Facilities Management as I had a wide business knowledge.

When the sustainability manager became vacant, I jumped at the chance to temporarily take the role on. My wider career history and NSS knowledge helped me to appreciate the scale and complexity of the challenge, but also to understand how improvements could be made in different areas. From this broad start and working in sole capacity I became part of the wider NHSScotland sustainability teams and developed in more specific areas such as sustainable care, and now procurement.





Most rewarding and challenging parts of your role?

I enjoy the variety and scope of the work in addition to the very real challenge. Sustainability remains a very large challenge without clear answers in a lot of circumstances. The ability to problem-solve in this arena and to effect change is highly rewarding. No two days are ever the same and the challenges don't just exist, they change, requiring you to keep on your toes.

There is a huge communication and collaboration aspect to the role. To make radical change, we need to effect mass change and not just limit this to our own organisations.

Networking and talking to others to find out what is new, what works and what doesn't work are a necessity for progression. This has meant meeting a lot of interesting people and organisations and learning out with your own area. In its entirety it is a dynamic role that frequently changes but this keeps it fresh and new.

Advice for others considering a role in climate change and sustainability?

As with any complex problem, everyone has something to give. I would advocate that irrespective of background, anyone with analytic or problem-solving skills will enjoy sustainability and the difference that you can make as one person building systemic change. You can always learn subject matter detail, but you need to have the ability to work with a wide variety of people and be able to adapt to rapidly changing demands and asks. The nature of change isn't for everyone, but if you want a dynamic and evolving job, it is a role for you.

Everyone has their own view on sustainability, and this makes it interesting and varied. An open mind to all possibilities is a must. There are many areas in which you can specialise, but you can remain a generalist and still perform at a high level. It's a hard role, but greatly rewarding and varied.



**Natasha Kumar,
Sustainability Manager
(Energy Transition), NHS
National Services Scotland**

Natasha Kumar, NHS National Services Scotland

Who are you? What's important to you?

I'm a climate scientist and sustainability professional with a deep-rooted passion for protecting our planet. I was born and raised in Fiji, a beautiful but vulnerable Pacific Island nation that faces the very real threat of climate change-driven disasters. Growing up in a South Asian household, sustainability wasn't just a concept - it was a way of life. My family and culture instilled in me the importance of living harmoniously with nature, and I've carried those values into my academic and professional journey.

Outside of work, I have a keen interest in photography, capturing moments that tell a story about people and nature. I also love challenging myself to learn new languages - currently, I'm tackling Spanish and Arabic, which has been both rewarding and humbling!

Your journey in NHSScotland?

I joined NHSScotland and NHS National Services Scotland (NSS) in March 2023, marking my first role in the healthcare sector. I'm part of the

national Climate Change, Sustainability, and Environment team within NHSScotland Assure – we support all 22 health boards and I lead on the Energy Transition of our built estate. A big part of my role focuses on decarbonisation and helping NHSScotland achieve its net-zero goals. It's a challenging but incredibly fulfilling role, and I'm proud to contribute to such a vital mission.



How did you end up in a sustainability role?

My sustainability journey began at university with an internship at an environmental consultancy. There, I helped everyone from music festival organisers to charities achieve their sustainability goals. After graduating, I moved into the offshore renewables industry, where I worked on developing wind farms in the Moray Firth.

As well as further study (a research master's degree). I also worked with charities to implement climate change projects (from energy upgrades to community food gardens and awareness campaigns) through initiatives like Keep Scotland Beautiful.

Before joining NHSScotland, I worked at Ofgem, the energy regulator, where I focused on non-domestic renewable heat incentive schemes, storage (battery) policies, electricity distribution and flexibility, and finally as a strategist implementing net zero roadmaps and more. Through these incredibly varied roles, I have come to the NHS with a unique perspective on sustainability, energy, research, and public sector work.

Most rewarding and challenging parts of your role?

NHSScotland is incredible, and decarbonising nearly 1,000 sites is a monumental task. The challenge lies in balancing sustainability ambitions with financial constraints and the increasing demands of patient care.

However, the most rewarding part is working with colleagues from diverse backgrounds - engineers, clinicians, policymakers, and sustainability experts - all collaborating to tackle complex challenges. The NHS core values are evident in everything we do, and it's inspiring to be part of a team that is committed to making a real difference.



Advice for others considering a role in climate change and sustainability?

Sustainability is a vast field with opportunities for everyone, regardless of their background. Whatever your role, there's a place for you. What matters most is a genuine passion for making a difference, whether it's through big-picture projects or small, everyday actions like reducing waste or saving energy.

If you're considering a career in sustainability, my advice is to stay curious, be open to learning, and don't be afraid to explore different areas. Every role, no matter how small it seems, contributes to the bigger picture of protecting our planet for future generations.

This publication can be made available in large print, Braille (English only), audio tape and different languages. Please contact nss.equalitydiversity@nhs.scot for further information.

All content is available under the [Open Government Licence v3.0](#) except for graphic assets and where otherwise stated.

Contact details:

Find out more by visiting [our Sustainability Action website](#) or emailing nss.sustainabilityscotland@nhs.scot

NHS National Services Scotland
Gyle Square, 1 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh
EH12 9EB

Designed by NHS National Services Scotland's Creative Services

**SUSTAINABILITY
ACTION**
Our NHS Our People Our Planet

NHS
SCOTLAND