

NHS Greater
Glasgow and
Clyde

Biodiversity
Public Body
Report 2020



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Section 1: Introductory Information about Public Body

Introduction

NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde (NHS GG&C) is the largest of all the 14 NHS Boards (excluding special NHS Boards) in Scotland. Serving a population of over 1.2 million people, the board covers the city of Glasgow, Inverclyde, Renfrewshire, East Renfrewshire, East Dunbartonshire and West Dunbartonshire. As of September 2020, NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde employs almost 35,000 staff. Of which, 28,000 are medical based, with almost 7,000 in non-medical roles. NHS GG&C has more than 300 GP surgeries, 35 hospitals, over 50 health centres and clinics along with dentists, opticians and pharmacy facilities. As an integral part of the Community, NHS GG&C works alongside local authorities and the voluntary sector in its provision of a wide range of health services.

Biodiversity provides many goods and services which are essential to life on earth. Healthy communities rely on well-functioning ecosystems, which support our populations with clean air, energy, fresh water, food security and medicines, as well as regulatory functions such as climate and disease regulation. Moreover, biodiversity provides extensive opportunities for developments in medicines and pharmaceuticals, with the potential to discover treatments for many diseases and health problems. It also supports economic opportunities, and leisure activities which further add to our overall wellbeing (World Health Organisation, 2015).

Conversely, land use change, pollution, chemical and waste contamination, climate change and poor water quality are just some of the contributory factors adding to biodiversity loss and posing threats to human health. The arrival of COVID-19 has shown that when we destroy biodiversity, we destroy the system that supports human life. The more biodiverse an ecosystem is, the more difficult it is for a pathogen to spread rapidly or dominate. Loss of biodiversity provides an opportunity for pathogens to pass between animals and people (UNESCO, 2020).

NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde recognises the value of its significant outdoor estates with increasing evidence often linking access and use of greenspace and biodiversity to a multitude of healthcare benefits. Recognising the health and social benefits of high-quality greenspace and biodiversity for not only patients, staff, and the wider community, NHS GG&C are committing to improving green space and biodiversity. Through successful implementation of quality greenspace in our estates and communities, it is possible to reduce health inequalities, and lead healthier, more active lives. Thus, benefitting our NHS in the long-term through reduction in both economic and systemic burden by reducing unnecessary admissions employing a "prevention rather than cure" approach.

Key Environmental impacts from NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde's Operations:

Due to size and nature of the organisation, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde is a significant buyer and user of resources and services. Due to the nature of the organisation, key environmental impacts arise from energy, emissions, waste and the consumption of resources such as single use plastics which are necessary for infection control.

Policy Framework

The Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 created a duty on public bodies, including NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, to "further the conservation of biodiversity as far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions." In addition, The Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011 places a requirement on public bodies to provide a publicly available report, every 3 years, detailing

the actions the organisation has taken to meet the biodiversity duty. Outlined in this report will be NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde's progress to date, strategic aims, actions and aspirations for the future. Moreover, the report will collate the key work performed from 2017 onwards with regard to Scotland's Biodiversity Route Map and the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy which sets out a vision for 2030. This is now supplemented by the 2020 Challenge for Scotland's Biodiversity which responds to the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2020 (2011).

Scotland's 2020 Challenge aims to:

- Protect and restore biodiversity on land and in our seas, and to support healthy ecosystems
- Connect people with the natural world, for their health and wellbeing, and to involve them in the decision-making process
- Maximise the benefits for Scotland of a diverse natural environment and the services it provides, contributing to sustainable economic growth

The Scottish Biodiversity Strategy sits within a broad framework, which encompasses EU, UK and Scottish legislation and policy.

UN Sustainable Development Goals

Scotland, as one of the first countries to sign up to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, is well placed to achieve significant sustainable development. Progress through the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy will contribute to many of the 17 SDGs, however, there are two goals directly related to biodiversity:

- Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
- Goal 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, and halt and reverse degradation and biodiversity loss.

Organisational Commitment

Through successful implementation of quality greenspaces in our estates and communities, it is possible to reduce health inequalities, and lead healthier, more active lives. Well managed NHS greenspace that is rich in plant and animal life is a key resource for physical activity by patients, staff, visitors and the local community, and can be used in treatment and recovery programmes. The direct experience of nature has been shown to improve health outcomes and is recognised as important in the treatment of mental illness and in supporting good mental wellbeing. Thus, benefitting the NHS in the long-term through reduction in both economic and systemic burden through reducing preventable admissions and prevention rather than cure.

The Sustainability Team, situated within Estates and Facilities at NHS GG&C are the local driving force behind greenspace, biodiversity and sustainability working under the national Health Facilities Scotland.

In addition, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde has established a Sustainability Governance Group, which ensures all corporate and operational activities are carried out in a compliant manner, whilst overseeing the delivering and implementation of sustainable development. Due to the multi-faceted nature of sustainable development, and its relevance across sectors of the organisation, various working groups have been setup to implement and monitor, with overarching supervision provided by the board's Sustainability Team.

A Biodiversity and Greenspace Working Group is currently underway, with monthly meetings, with members from Arts and Health, and the Green Exercise Partnership, and often featuring guests from Sustrans, Glasgow City Council, and others. The working group is set up to drive the development or greenspace and biodiversity projects.

Section 2: Actions to Protect Biodiversity and Connect People with Nature

Green Exercise Partnership

The Green Exercise Partnership (GEP) supported by the Scottish Government, is a collaboration between NHS boards, Public Health Scotland, NatureScot and Scottish Forestry. The aim of the collaboration is to improve the quality and accessibility of greenspace in and around NHS sites. Moreover, it also aims to encourage staff, patients, visitors and members of the local community to



use greenspace beneficially. Recognising the positive links between health and greenspace, the GEP seeks to capitalise on the healing effects of greenspace, particularly for patient recovery from mental and physical trauma. As part of the GEP's NHS Greenspace for Health demonstration programme, The Conservation Volunteers charity (TCV) employs a full time Green Activity Project Officer at Gartnavel general. Their role includes running sessions with the garden running sessions, delivering taster and engagement sessions and acting as a contact point and facilitator for other

groups who use the space: these include volunteers with Macmillan Cancer Support, and clinical staff and patients from a number of wards at the hospital

Greenspace and Biodiversity Master Map

Working alongside the GEP and NatureScot, NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde aims to begin using GIS to map the NHS estate, publicly accessible greenspace, location and type of health activities, deprivation and health data. This information will be used to target the provision and resourcing of future green health activities.

Royal Alexandra Hospital Pond & Beyond Project

The RAH pond at the rear of the hospital is a greenspace area with huge potential, however, there is currently little to no access for staff, patients and visitors. The Sustainability Team, along with Health Improvement: Arts and Health have recently received funding to begin improvement of the site, with work expected to commence January 2021. The project will include the following improvements to the pond area:

- Management, maintenance and improvements of the pond and its existing wetland and aquatic habitats.

- Assembly of a jetty on to the pond to act as a viewing area, with appropriate safeguarding/railing.
- Creation of boardwalk and wayfinding over wetland area to allow for walking and wheelchair access around the pond.
- Creation of outdoor teaching area using natural landscape on south bank of the pond.
- Creation of new pedestrian and wheelchair access to hospital site/pond area from Victoria Road.
- Biodiversity enhancement - habitat diversity and connectivity for a range of fauna including bats, nesting birds such as swans, aquatic species and a variety of insects and pollinators.

Phases Two and Three will introduce new habitats such as wildflower areas, erection of structures such as an outdoor eating area, growing beds and outdoor gym area. Additionally, landmark way finding including artwork elements at key intersections, viewpoints, panoramas and site-specific interpretation works. This project allows NHS GGC to meet or potentially exceed, and provide best practice examples for, statutory biodiversity and sustainability requirements, acting at a local level in response to the climate emergency. Improving organisational reputation in these areas with staff, media and the public.



Gartnavel General Complex

The Gartnavel Growing Spaces project, developed as part of the "Art in the Gart" Programme at Gartnavel Royal hospital in partnership with The Conservation Volunteers, coordinates regular volunteer activities and events for patients and the larger community based out of the Summerhouse and Walled Garden at Gartnavel. Gartnavel Royal Hospital's Walled Garden and Summerhouse form part of the Glasgow hospital's 200-year history. It was one of 4 green spaces chosen as a



demonstration project by the Green Exercise Partnership – a joint venture between the Forestry Commission Scotland, NHS Health Scotland and Scottish Natural Heritage. Gartnavel Complex is home to many specialist units, notably cancer and psychiatric, with patients often requiring long-term care. Working alongside the GEP and landscape architects, under-utilised land was re-designed to provide high quality surroundings and links to the natural environment through elements such as fresh air, sunshine and exercise. The natural

environment has been enhanced through the introduction of wildflowers and fruit trees. Working alongside clinicians, staff and the local community, allowed for the introduction of an integrated network of trails through the site, with seating areas at strategic intervals, allowing patients and staff respite close to hospital buildings. In addition, the trails are also linked to active travel routes, encouraging cycling. Again, solidifying NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde's commitment to carbon reduction and air pollution mitigation and prevention. Prior to the project, the walled garden surrounding a 19th Century A-Listed building was boarded up, unused and neglected. Now, the area has been transformed and houses a summerhouse and greenhouse, with volunteers assisting patients in the growing of wildflowers and vegetables all year round. It is also accessed by a local nursery and the local community. In addition to the benefits for staff, patients and visitors, NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde, have been able to make significant cost savings in terms of site maintenance and management. Instead of cutting trees and grass, areas are now left to encourage biodiversity, particularly pollinator species.

Stobhill Skye House Project

Situated on the Stobhill Hospital site, Skye House is a purpose-built residential adolescent inpatient unit for high-risk young people aged 12-17 who are at risk of harm to self; including patients with psychosis, eating disorders, personality disorders, and suicidality. Albeit somewhat delayed by Covid-19, work has commenced on utilising the current unused courtyard to the rear of the site. Use and enjoyment of this space holds untapped clinical and social benefits, whilst also being a safe space. Regarding biodiversity, plans include the creation of playing fields, spaces for gardening, greenspace and seating areas will allow space for relaxation, mindfulness and socialising.



Queen Elizabeth University Hospital

This project is currently in the design phase, working with ERZ Landscape Architects, who are scoping both the QEUH and Royal Children’s hospital as part of the Covid-19 Green Recovery. Although in the early stages, plans are being made to bring greenspace indoors, primarily in each atrium through the creation of green walls, planting areas and hanging plants.

Halo Project

The HALO Project is a public generative artwork that positions Scotland as the starting point of conversations around how we navigate the impact of COVID-19 as we look towards a green recovery. The HALO Project resonates with our conflicting need to socially distance whilst maintaining human contact, and seeks to bring joy, conviviality and calm to urban landscapes. The Project uses plants, greenspace and mixed planting to define safe spaces, as well as creating places for outdoor activity. The HALO's increase biodiversity and enhance outdoor spaces. Depending on species used they may add to native plant populations and create habitat. In groups, they will form green corridors and habitat networks, enhancing the development of green infrastructure and assisting with surface water drainage and water management.

Leverndale “Design in the Dale”

Leverndale Hospital are working with the Green Exercise Partnership and Landscape Architects ERZ Ltd to re-design outdoor spaces within the hospital campus. The aim of the project is to create outdoor destination spaces within the campus, which will provide a range of exercise opportunities, improve biodiversity and create social spaces and places for relaxation and reflection. There is substantial evidence which demonstrates that quality greenspace can promote mental and physical health. The

spaces will be connected by a well-defined pedestrian route which will tie-in to the existing 'mile-loop walk' and nearby National Cycle Network route 7. The proposals aim to encourage people into the site by foot and bike, to easily move around the site and to set out on the 'mile-loop walk'.

Section 3: Mainstreaming Biodiversity

Particularly, focusing on the pursuit of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which encapsulates greenspace, health and biodiversity, as well as the National Strategy and regulations, as defined in CEL 2 2012 (*A Sustainable Development Policy for NHS Scotland*) and the *Scottish Government's Climate Change Plan 2018-2032*.

Environmental Management System

We assess environmental risks and impacts of our activities on the surrounding environment, local communities, while ensuring compliance with legislation and industry best practice. The Environmental Management System will assist in waste and pollution minimisation. Pollution and contamination from waste is particularly important due to its negative impact on biodiversity and contributing to species decline. Moreover, the system also enables us to monitor and audit regularly.

Sustainability Implementation Strategy

NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde are striving to lead the way in sustainable practice whilst driving positive environmental change enabling us to continue to provide exceptional patient care, protect our staff and our local communities.

With NHS Scotland implementing a new sustainability strategy for Scotland, this document is our route map and board strategy for implementing national strategy. Our implementation plan sets out key elements of sustainability which can come together to actively support and enable efficient and effective healthcare delivery. As one of the UK's largest health boards, we have an obligation to work in a way which has a positive effect on the communities we serve. We aim to be a sustainability champion, educator and role model. NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde's Sustainability Implementation Strategy 2020-2024 identifies Greenspace and Biodiversity as a key priority in achieving health and wellbeing.

Sustainability Communications

The Sustainability Action 'brand' aims to explain what sustainability is and means through demonstrating and highlighting the sustainable actions that all NHS Scotland staff can make, raise the profile and importance of sustainability within NHS Scotland, connect and contextualise all sustainability topics and actions and underpin all sustainability-related communications across NHS Scotland. Both biodiversity and greenspace are established as key performance indicators.

Section 4: Climate Change

Climate Ready Clyde

Adaptation to the effects of climate change is of high importance to NHS GG&C as there are many ways in which our sites will be affected. Extreme weather, flooding and an increase in temperature all pose a threat to our buildings, transport systems and our ability to provide health care to the public. We are such a large organisation that a lot of people rely upon for both healthcare and employment; it is important that we prepare our sites for the impacts of climate change to ensure we can still do our duty as a public health service and as an employer. Working with Climate Ready Clyde has really

helped us to identify the key methods of adaptation that can aid us in planning our approach to climate change in the Clyde region.

Section 5: Public Engagement and Workforce Development

Sustainability Communications Strategy 2020-2024

NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde's Sustainability Team aims to improve sustainable development and environmental performance across the board, in line with the UN SDGs. As one of Scotland's largest employers, NHS GG&C is well placed to achieve significant positive behavioural change through fostering environmentally conscious thinking due to its size and stature.

The Sustainability Team aims to achieve this through our *Communications Strategy*, utilising and improving our use of multiple communication tools and channels, both internally and externally working closely with the board's Communications Department.

Awareness Campaigns

We will deliver engaging internal communications to create interest in the strategy amongst our colleagues as part of wider cultural change across the business, sharing good news stories, highlighting best practice and generating momentum and excitement in our priorities. Our Awareness Calendar allows us to promote Environmental Awareness Days such as Climate Week, Recycling Week as well as environmental issues

NHS GGC StaffNet

StaffNet enables staff to access a wide range of service information, resources and systems from a single online portal. This includes policies, procedures and training information as well as daily briefs and newsletters.

Section 6: Highlights and Challenges

Woodside Health Centre

The £20m, health centre opened in 2019 and was delivered as a partnership with NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership, Glasgow City Council and Development Partner Hub West Scotland. It has also benefited from expertise and funding provided by the Green Exercise Partnership, as well as being part of wider partnership work led by Scottish Canals aimed at enhancing the surrounding natural environment and promoting healthier lifestyles. Recently, the centre has won the Glasgow Institute of Architects Design Award for Healthcare.

Challenges

- Economic and resource pressures;
- Preventing further loss of habitats and species;
- Awareness and fostering environmentally conscious behaviour;
- Embracing sustainability at the heart of decision making