Scottish Ambulance Service
Working in Partnership with Universities

NHS SCOTLAND

Public Board Meeting **25 November 2026**
Item No 08

THIS PAPER IS FOR APPROVAL

SCOTTISH AMBULANCE SERVICE ANNUAL CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND SUSTAINABILITY REPORT 2025/26

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Action required	The Board is asked to **approve** the Service Annual Climate Emergency and Sustainability Report 2025/26
Key points	Within the 'Policy for NHS Scotland on the Climate Emergency and Sustainable Development' (DL (2021) 38), each NHS Scotland body must publish a report on its public website each year summarising its progress against the aims of this policy. To support Health Boards, and ensure a level of consistency, a template approved by the Scottish Government Health and Social Care directorates (SGHSC) has been developed for Boards to utilise. The submission by the Service reflects the layout of the template. Despite the impact of financial challenges including creating capacity and infrastructure investment the Service continues to see improvements and initiatives put in place. The Climate Emergency Response and Sustainability Group (CERAS) are responsible for the collation of the report, and this report has been reviewed and approved by the group. The Executive team have also approved the report. The Board Champion has also approved the content of the report. The CERAS group have also met with Scottish Government climate leads to discuss progress against the plan. This was a positive meeting. Following approval by the Board and prior to publishing the SAS Communication team will review the format and presentation.

Timing	The deadline for completing the 2025-26 annual report and has been set for 30 November 2026 with the report submitted to Scottish Government following Board approval.
Associated Corporate Risk Identification	–
Link to Corporate Ambitions	We will deliver our net-zero climate targets.
Link to NHS Scotland's quality ambitions	Contribution to a net zero footprint by 2045.
Benefit to Patients	Delivering safe clinical services in a sustainable economy.
Equality and Diversity	This will be undertaken when the delivery plan is developed and presented through the 2030 Place and Communities Portfolio Board.

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Scottish Ambulance Service Annual Climate Emergency & Sustainability Report 2025/26

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Contents

	Page (will be updated once approved)
1. Introduction	2
2. Background	2
3. Leadership and Governance	7
4. Summary of Impacts	9
5. Climate Change Adaption	11
6. Building Energy	14
7. Our Green Champions	17
8. Sustainable Care	20
8.1. Anaesthesia & Surgery	
8.2. Respiratory Medicine	
8.3. Other Sustainable Care Actions (optional)	
9. Anaesthesia	22
10. Travel and Transport	23
11. Sustainable Procurement, Circular Economy & Waste	26
12. Environmental Stewardship	37
13. Sustainable Construction	37
14. Sustainable Communities	38
15. Conclusion	39

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1. Introduction

This is the Scottish Ambulance Service's (the Service) annual Climate Emergency and Sustainability Report for 2025 / 2026. It reports on the Scottish Ambulance Service environmental performance for the year 2025/26, and future plans and actions.

The planet is facing a triple crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution as a result of human activities breaking the planet's environmental limits.

The World Health Organisation recognises that climate change is the single biggest health threat facing humanity. Health organisations have a duty to cut their greenhouse gas emissions, the cause of climate change, and influence wider society to take the action needed to both limit climate change and adapt to its impacts. More information on the profound and growing threat of climate change to health can be found here: www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/climate-change-and-health

2. Background

As a frontline service of the NHS in Scotland and with over 5,890 members of staff, we provide an emergency ambulance service to a population of over five million four hundred thousand people serving all of the nation's mainland and island communities. Our Patient Transport Service undertakes over 400,000 journeys every year and provides care for patients who need support to reach their healthcare appointments due to their medical and mobility needs, support for discharges and transfers.

We are therefore responsible for a range of services for the people of Scotland, from accident and emergency response, to delivering primary care, providing patient transport, dispatching rapid air ambulance and ScotSTAR (Scottish Specialist Transport and Retrieval Service) support for critical patients, to being a Category 1 responder for national emergencies.

SAS continues to occupy a unique position and role within healthcare provision in Scotland with a visible presence in every community, and over the years, we have continued to innovate and demonstrate our ability to transform and deliver new and improved services.

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The Service is delivered to a geographical area of 30,090 square miles from 141 locations from Whithorn in the south to Unst in the Northern Isles covering a building area of 48,221 square meters, utilising a fleet of 1,677 vehicles, two rotary and two fixed wing aircraft and supporting the Scottish Charity Air Ambulance Service operated from Perth.

The Scottish Ambulance Service is committed to operating, delivering and developing sustainably. This means that sustainability must be at the core of all our decision making to positively influence our policies and how we run our services.

As a national Emergency Service and NHS Board, the Service has changed how it delivers its services, providing more support, care and treatment to people in their homes, and for those patients requiring very specialist support, conveying them to hospitals.

Our Current Service at a glance for 2025-26 is shown below:

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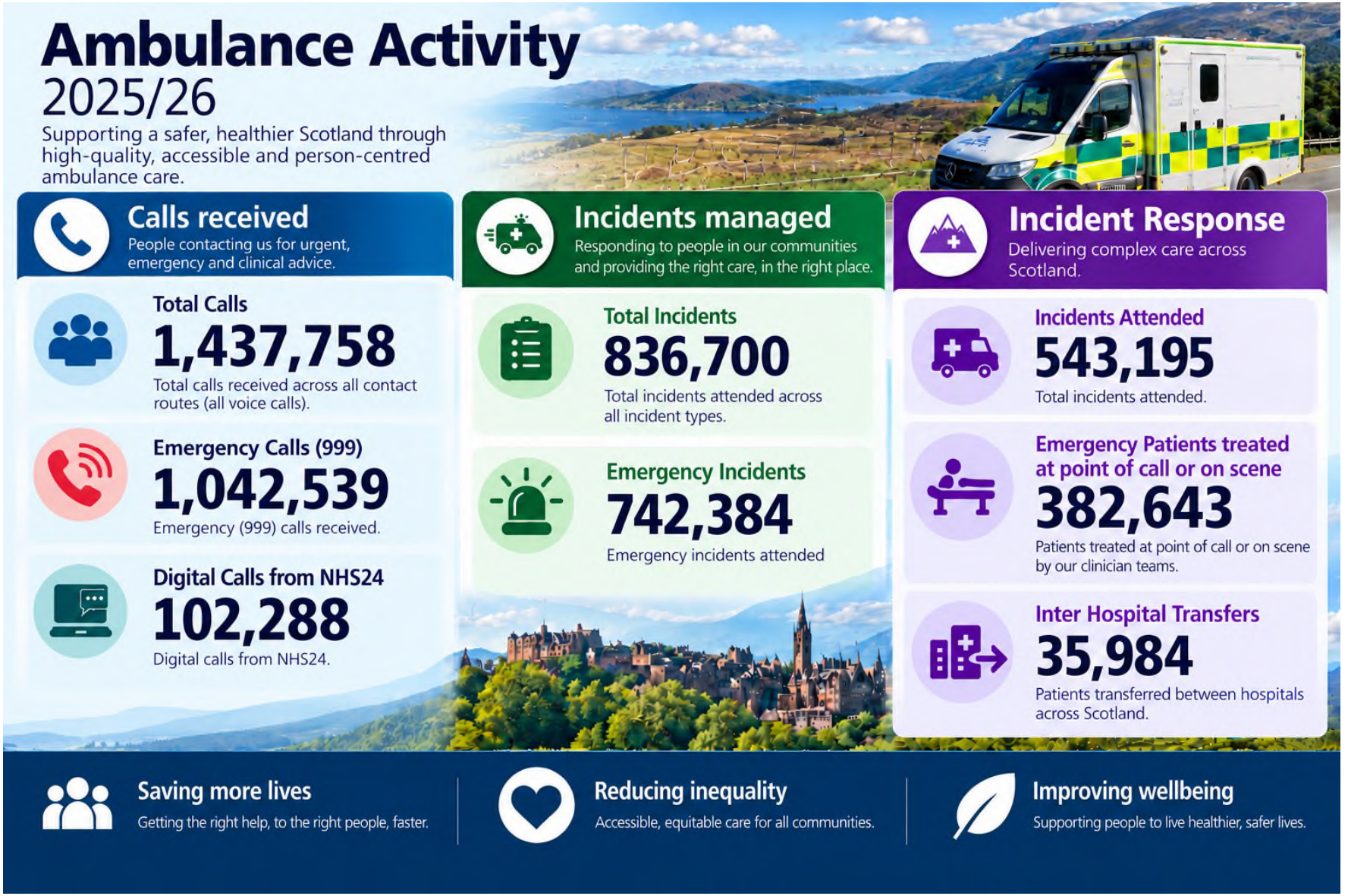

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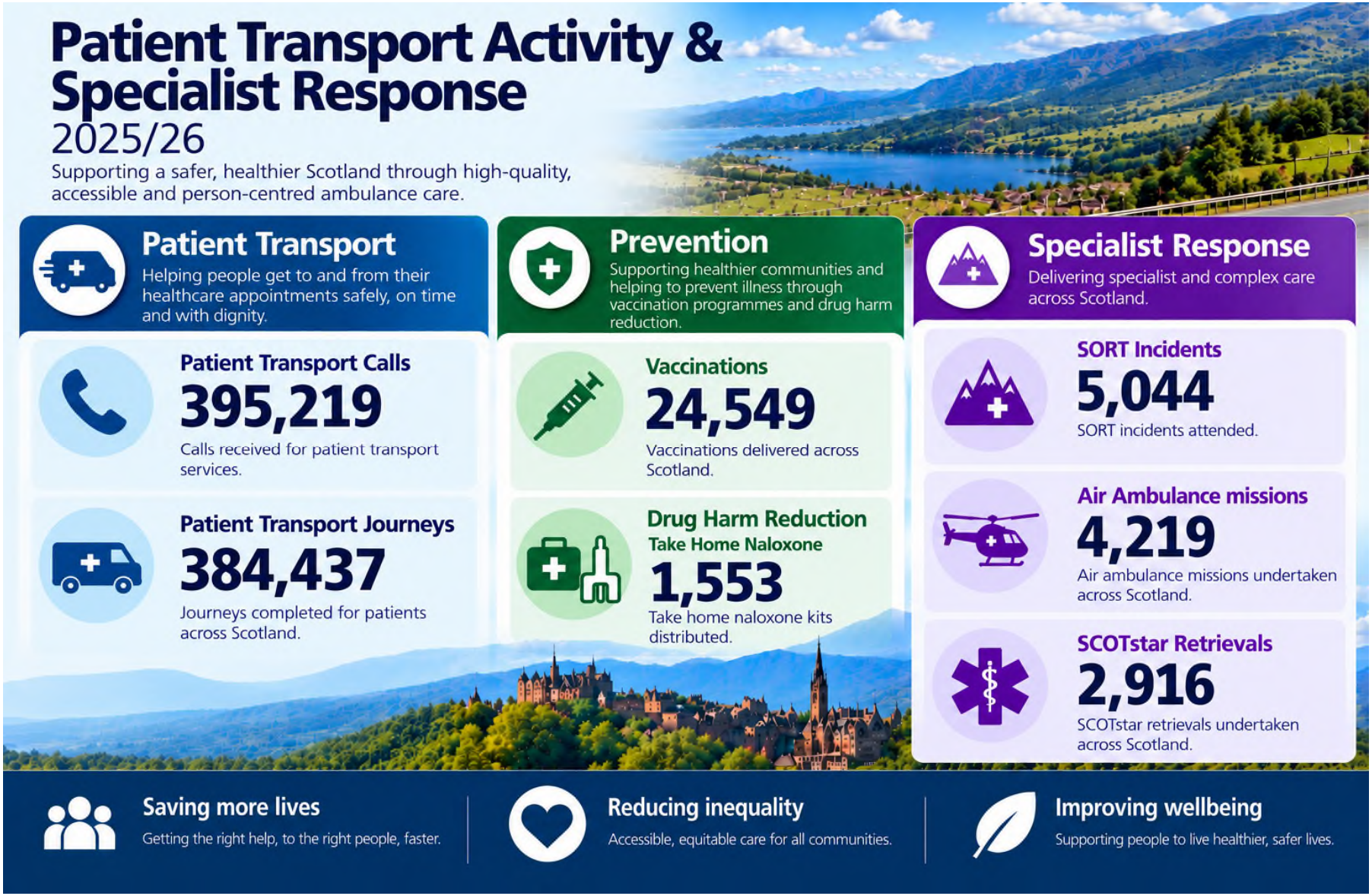

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Importantly more than 50% of the emergency calls to the Service are avoiding unnecessary travel and admissions to Emergency Departments, reducing waste and emissions, and providing better care to patients. Emergency ambulance responses are down 1% compared to last year. Calls Received are down 5.6% on last year, this is due to calls from NHS24 now coming via digital transfer. Patient transport journeys are down 0.31%, on last year. Air Ambulance journeys also down 4% on last year, all supported by strengthened clinical triage.

Our work on prevention continues to strengthen with Take home naloxone distribution up 93% on previous year. We continue to work closely with boards to deliver vaccinations and our work in palliative care is reducing avoidable hospital attendance and supporting more people to receive the right care at home.

The initiatives through the Pathways Hub and the Integrated Clinical Hub continue to reduce unnecessary ambulance and Accident and Emergency attendances. This shifts the balance of care towards patients' homes and local communities, ensuring that patients are provided with the right care in the right place at the right time.

Our **2030 strategy** sets out how we will improve our response to patients, provide them with the best possible care, and supporting the health and safety of communities across the country.

Our strategy describes how we will play a vital role in:

- Saving more lives, improving clinical outcomes, and increasing healthy life expectancy.
- Enhancing the health and wellbeing of our staff and citizens.
- Continuing to shift care focus from acute hospitals nearer to home and local communities, improving patient experience, and reducing unnecessary hospital admissions.
- Improve our care by anticipating needs and responding quickly and safely, delivering the right care in the right place and time.
- Addressing the root cause of health problems and tackling the inequalities that the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated. Taking the opportunity to enable innovation and transformation that harnesses advanced technologies and data-driven approaches to enhance patient care.

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Figure 1 – Scottish Ambulance 2030 Strategy

The 2030 strategy has one of our 6 strategic aims to **'deliver our net-zero climate targets'**. This continues to recognise the importance of sustainability in delivering the Service 2030 ambitions. This aim is integrated into all the 2030 ambitions from providing a high-quality service to improving population health, supporting our staff health and wellbeing and creating safer and more sustainable communities

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Our Path to Net Zero Strategy 2030

Aligning to this 2030 Board Strategy, the Scottish Ambulance Service approved their **2030 Sustainability Strategy – *Our path to net zero*** in September 2022***.***

This strategy committed the Service to

Commitment area	Sustainability commitment
Net zero by 2040	Work towards achieving NHS Scotland targets through efficient use of energy and technological investment and setting our target of 2040 to be a net zero Service.
Supplier alignment	Use suppliers who have policies and procedures, which align with the Service and NHS Scotland environmental objectives.
Built environment	Enhance the built working environment through good design and planned repair, maintenance, and refurbishment regimes.
Waste and recycling	Minimise waste to landfill and implement recycling and safe disposal initiatives where possible.
Continuous improvement	Aim to achieve continuous environmental improvement and best practice.
Stakeholder engagement	Engage with key stakeholders, young people and citizens on climate change issues.
Sustainable decision-making	Ensure that sustainability is a priority criterion in the development and evaluation of all strategic plans, delivery plans, business cases and operational activities.
Information and training	Provide sustainability information, instruction, and training to all staff, suppliers, and stakeholders.

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Commitment area	Sustainability commitment
Sustainability policy	Develop and implement our sustainability policy.
Community and biodiversity	Support environmental initiatives in the community, including biodiversity.
Research and development	Support research and development activities aimed at improving the Service's overall environmental performance.

The SAS path to net zero strategy is also a key connector to the Scottish Government strategic direction described through the Population Health Framework and Service Reform Framework, ensuring whole system approaches to the path to net zero. This will be delivered through reducing health inequalities and ensuring changes within health and social care become more resilient and sustainable. Focusing on making the whole system more efficient and less polluting while simultaneously reducing the health impacts of climate change.

The path to net zero strategy is also supported by a delivery plan that is reviewed on a 3 yearly basis, with targets, delivery dates and outcomes reporting on progress through the Service Strategy 2030 governance structure.

This **2025–2028 delivery plan** supporting the strategy have the following key actions:

Buildings and energy: assess property-condition surveys at high-energy-use sites, plan phased replacement of end-of-life heating systems, and seek funding to begin introducing renewable technologies

Climate resilience: ensure the Climate Change Risk Assessment and Adaptation Plan inform investment in existing facilities and the design of planned facilities.

Fleet decarbonisation: continue the programme to decarbonise the fleet by 2032, including replacement of lighter vehicles with electric alternatives where suitable technology is available

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Sustainable care and staff engagement: take forward Green Champion actions to encourage more considered resource use and promote outdoor activities and connections with nature.

Circular economy: introduce monitoring to track the benefits of extending product and asset life, and spread effective approaches across the Service.

This annual report will provide an update on progress during 25/26 as part of this 2025-2028 delivery plan

3. Leadership and Governance

To deliver the 2030 sustainability strategy, the Service has a Climate Emergency and Sustainability Organisational and Governance Structure identifying key roles, responsibilities, and lines of communication. We use this to foster sustainable practices, provide direction and influence behaviours and cultures.

Specifically we have:

- ✓ **Appointed a Non Executive Director as our Board Climate Emergency and Sustainability Champion.**
- ✓ **Appointed our Director of Finance, Logistics and Strategy as our executive lead for our Climate Emergency and Sustainability response.**
- ✓ **Ensured that our progress in responding to the climate emergency and sustainability issues and is regularly considered by our Board.**
- ✓ **Established reporting on progress of the aims of this strategy through our 2030 governance structures, ensuring that those aims are fully integrated into all planning, management decisions and operational practices across the Service**.

To deliver the action plans, we have put in place a Climate Emergency Response and Sustainability Group (CERAS) who have taken a lead role in the delivery of the strategy. Our 2022-25 3-year action plan has been updated with a new action plan 2025-2028 agreed by the SAS Board in March 2025. Progress against this is reviewed at each CERAS meeting.

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The CERAS group consists of delivery leads for the different seven key work programmes defined within the Strategy:

- Sustainable building and land – **Estates lead**
- Resilience – **Resilience lead**
- Sustainable travel – **Fleet lead**
- Sustainable goods and Services – **Procurement lead**
- Sustainable care – **Clinical lead**
- Sustainable communities – **representatives from regions and operations**
- Our people and culture – **HR lead**

The SAS Communications team and the finance team also support the CERAS group.

The Climate Emergency and Sustainability Executive lead chairs the group and the Climate Emergency and Sustainability Champion oversees the progress of these actions.

The detailed 3-year action plan also shows the ***'Impact from Planned Actions to End of 2027/28'***, recognising the 'so what' of the benefits of the actions.

The pace of change reflects the need for additional capital and revenue funding to implement some of these actions and given the current financial challenges, there is a risk of actions progressing slower than planned, the impact and risk assessment of this is continually being monitored through the CERAS group.

The Service was awarded £155,000 from the Scottish Government's decarbonisation fund in 2025/26 for LED lighting upgrades at six locations. This has resulted in estimated annual savings of 125,271 kWh and 22 tCO_2e from these upgrades.

Further funding has also been received in 2026/27 and this will be reported in the next year annual report.

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4. Summary of Impacts

The Scottish Ambulance Service aims to become a net-zero organisation by 2040 for the sources of greenhouse gas emissions set out in the table below.

The table sets out the volume of emissions produced annually by the Scottish Ambulance Service. The Service has through its 2025/26 Board Measurement Framework agreed a "year-on-year reduction in total greenhouse gas emissions";

During 2025/26 we reduced our environmental impact by approximately 3% on the previous year.

2040 Net-Zero emissions	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Target (2025/26)	Reduction achieved
Carbon footprint (tCO2e)	21,908	23,841	25,611	23,543	23,265	22,578	*22,102*	*-3%*

Source	2024/25 emissions (tCO2e)	2025/26 emissions (tCO2e)	Percentage change – 2024/25 to 2025/26	2025/26 – target emissions	Difference between actual and target emissions – 2025/26 (percentage)
Building energy	2348	2180	-7%		
Non-medical F-gas	3	3	0		
Medical gases	1076	1,021	-5%		
NHS fleet travel	14,631	13,974	-4%		

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SAS Air Ambulance & Coastguard Search & Rescue	4866	4,906	1%		
Waste	46	69	50%		
Water	9.8	8.6	-12%		
Business travel	285	316	11%		
Total emissions	**23,265**	**22,578**	**-3%**	**22,101**	**-2%**
Carbon sequestration	N/A	N/A			
Greenhouse gas emissions minus carbon sequestration					

Generally this shows a positive reduction across most areas. The increase in waste is primarily due to increased reporting from previous years. This year we have included tyre disposal/recycling for the first time. It is worth noting that as we further develop our reporting this is likely to increase again as we are currently working on workshop scrap metal waste reporting for 2026/27. The detail of waste usage is reviewed regularly at the CERAS group and corrective action taken if necessary.

In terms of business travel this is due to an increase across all areas including grey mileage, public transport and air travel. Air travel has increased but can be linked to specific events. There has also been an increase in staff returning to work from home working which would impact the grey mileage and public transport. However overnight accommodation usage has decreased which reflects the additional controls been put in place.

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The table below also sets out how much of key resources we used over the last two years:

Source	2024/25 Use	2025/26 Use	Percentage change – 2024/25 to 2025/26
Building energy (kWh)	11,795,284	11,505,155	-2%
NHS fleet travel (miles travelled)	28,223,948	27,560,417	-2%
SAS Air Ambulance & Coastguard Search & Rescue (Litres)	1,931,961	1,955,233	1%
Waste (tonnes)	482	518	7%
Water (cubic metres)	40,582	35,621	-12%
Business travel (miles travelled)	724,147	1,065,722	47%

Overall progress is good with reductions in fleet, metered gases and energy.

2045 Greenhouse Gas Reduction Targets

We are also working to support reductions of greenhouse gas emissions to net-zero by 2045 for sources of emissions over which we have less control and influence – emissions from the production and supply of the goods and material we use.

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Source	Latest estimate, Tco2e	Year of estimate
PSDS National Procurement Supply chain	2,998	2024/25

The NHS Scotland Emissions Dashboard provides an overview of estimated attributed Scope 3 emissions associated with suppliers covered by available PSDS National Procurement data.

For SAS, the 2024/25 dashboard identifies approximately 2,998 tCO2e.

The indicative results are comprised from the current dataset, which covers only a subset of the SAS supply chain (68 suppliers) and is therefore not a complete organisational Scope 3 footprint. The dashboard nevertheless provides a useful evidence base for identifying higher-emission areas of procurement and supporting targeted supplier engagement and future sustainable procurement activity. We can now monitor progress of this on a year by year basis.

5. Climate Change Adaptation

Climate change makes existing health risks worse and introduces new challenges, ranging from the spread of infectious diseases to the intensification of heatwaves and extreme weather events that will impact the health of the population, healthcare assets and services. NHS Scotland plays a pivotal role in safeguarding the life and health of communities by developing climate-resilient health systems capable of responding to these evolving threats.

The changing climate is increasing risks for health and health services. The UK Climate Change Committee's assessment of these risks are available here: https://www.theccc.org.uk/publicationtype/report/uk-climate-risk/

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Scotland's climate is changing faster than expected according to research published by the James Hutton Institute in December 2023. According to this research:

- "Between 1990 to 2019, February and to a lesser extent April have become wetter, particularly in the west, by up to 60%, exceeding the projected change by 2050 of 45-55%."
- "Scotland is on track to exceed "a 2°C increase in temperature by the 2050s, with the months from May to November experiencing up to 4°C of warming over the next three decades (2020-2049)."
- "The number of days of consecutive dry weather – an indicator for drought and wildfire risk – are also expected to increase in drier months, such as September."

Climate change exacerbates existing health risks and introduces new challenges, ranging from the spread of infectious diseases to the intensification of heatwaves and extreme weather events that will impact the health of the population, healthcare assets and services. NHS Scotland plays a pivotal role in safeguarding the life and health of communities by developing climate-resilient health systems capable of responding to these evolving threats.

The changing climate is increasing risks for health and health services. More information on these risks in the UK can be found in the UK Climate Change Committee's Health and Social Care Briefing available here: www.ukclimaterisk.org/independent-assessment-ccra3/briefings/

The Scottish Ambulance Service has actioned the following to better understand the impact of climate change on the Service and the people and places we serve:

- ✓ **Completed flood risk assessments for all SAS properties**
- ✓ **Developed a Climate Change Risk Assessment & Adaptation Plan**
- ✓ **Embedded a business continuity framework across SAS to enhance our response to:**
  - **Adverse Weather**
  - **Business Continuity Frameworks**
  - **Fuel Shortages**
  - **Pandemic Outbreaks**

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- **Enhanced Community Resilience**

The resilience lead for the Service is a key member of the Service's Climate Emergency Response and Sustainability group.

The Service Climate Change Risk Assessment & Adaptation Plan is reviewed annually. This risk assessment aims to improve the resilience of the Service's assets to current climate risks and future climate change, whilst also assisting in:

- Protecting vulnerable sites, services & communities
- Reducing the cost of service disruption
- Complying with legal requirements

The Service has adopted a six-stage approach of:

- Identifying climate hazards that are likely to affect our assets
- Assessing the probability of the climate hazard occurring
- Identifying assets that could be affected by the hazards now or in the future
- Assessing the scale of the consequence for specific assets if the hazard occurred
- Completing the risk assessment (probability x consequence)
- Developing adaptation plans

In doing so, we have considered an appropriate management approach (Tolerate, Treat, Transfer or Terminate) to identify and have recommended adaptation measures. This will help inform the SAS risk management process & thereby, enable SAS to identify & prioritise investment and other decision making, to ensure essential clinical services remain operational and we undertake informed and effective infrastructure planning.

The climate hazards and therefore risks that are a priority for the service for the year ahead are assessing the public, patient and staff impact on:

- **Higher average temperature and extended periods of hot weather**

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- **Extended periods of dry weather (including the impact of wildfires),**
- **Heavy downpours and driving rain**
- **Storm surge**
- **Flooding**
- **Cold spells**
- **Combined climatic effects including storm, high winds, lightning, fog mist and low cloud.**

The action plans supporting these risks include the impact on our air ambulance service, assets and our overall healthcare service provision.

6. Building Energy

In 2025/26, 2,180 tonnes of CO2 equivalent were produced by the Scottish Ambulance Service use of energy for buildings. This was a decrease of 8% on the year before.

In 2025/26, the Scottish Ambulance Service used 11,505,155 kWh of energy. This was a decrease of 1% on the year before.

Building energy emissions, 2015/16, 2024/25 & 2025/26, tonnes CO2 equivalent (tCO2e)				
	2015/16 energy emissions	**2024/25 energy emissions**	**2025/26 energy emissions**	**Percentage change 2015/16 to 2025/26**
Building fossil fuel emissions	1,446	1,256	1,245*	-14%
Grid electricity	2,161	1,124	935	-57%
Totals	**3,607**	**2,380**	**2,180**	**-40%**

*Including heating oil

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Building energy use, 2015/16, 2024/25 & 2025/26, KWh				
	2015/16 energy use	**2024/25 energy use**	**2025/26, energy use**	**Percentage change 2015/16 to 2025/26**
Building fossil fuel use	7,690,239	6,783,667	6,719,635	-13%
Grid electricity	5,244,504	4,844,301	4,785,520	-9%
Renewable electricity	0	0	0	
Totals	**12,934,743**	**11,627,968**	**11,505,155**	**-11%**

What did we do in 2025/26 to reduce emissions from building energy use?

During 2025/26 the Service applied to the Scottish Government decarbonisation fund to complete LED lighting upgrades at 6 locations. We were awarded £155k. We estimate saving approximately 125,271 kwh of energy and 22 tCO2e annually over the six locations.

What are we doing in 2026/27 to reduce emissions from building energy use?

During 2026 the Service applied to the Scottish Government Decarbonisation Fund for a grant to implement a trial site for the first installation of photovoltaic panels as well as LED lighting upgrade at Livingston Ambulance Station. Livingston station currently emits 50 tco2e from energy use annually. 15 tco2e from electricity consumption and 35 tCo2e from natural gas. A grant of £75k was awarded and will be supplemented with a further £5k from SAS capital funding.

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SAS estimated the solar panels will reduce energy use by 22,700 kWh and the LED lighting by a further 9,475 kWh, a total of 32,175 kwh. This estimate this will reduce our environmental impact by almost 6 tCo2e annually, saving approximately £9,600 with reduced consumption at current rates.

Once the current gas boilers have reached the end of their expected life, these would be replaced with an environmentally friendly alternative reducing emissions by a further 35 tco2e taking energy emissions down to approximately 9 tco2e annually, an estimated reduction of approximately 74% annually. As a pilot project, this would enable SAS to assess the benefits of utilising renewable energy and if successful and financially viable similar projects could be undertaken at numerous station locations aiming to achieve zero-emission heating by 2038 and reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 75% by 2030 as mandated by Scottish Government.

In addition to the above, SAS are also carrying out a further LED lighting upgrade at one of our larger locations, Motherwell Ambulance Station & Workshop and West Divisional HQ. We estimate saving approximately 36,722 kwh of energy and 6.5 tco2e annually.

What projects are we planning for the longer-term to reduce emissions from building energy use?

If the Livingston station trial proves successful we would utilise further decarbonisation funding opportunities and apply for larger scale projects to cover multiple locations, including sites where fossil fuel heating can also be replaced to achieve greater reductions in energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.

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7. Our Green Champions

During 2023/24, The Scottish Ambulance Service launched our 'Green Champion Network'. The purpose of this network was to engage with staff across the entire organisation to be our 'foot soldiers' to embed good practice across all aspects of climate impact and sustainability. We aim to utilise their enthusiasm to encourage sustainably minded workplace behaviours to reduce energy consumption, improve recycling, engage with local communities, improve biodiversity, promote sustainable travel and workplace activity-based groups.

Thus far, we have almost 80 members of staff who have volunteered to be part of the Green Champion Network. They have agreed the following Green Champion Charter

Green Champion Charter

- We aim to bring people together to make enjoying nature as easy and rewarding as possible.
- We aim to encourage everyone to enjoy nature for the positive mental health benefits.
- We aim to raise awareness of the impact our choices have on the environment and how we can make positive changes.

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Green Champions Vision



- ✓ **Drive adoption of change:** take a lead role with your colleagues to promote the Service's Sustainability Strategy to adopt our vision of reducing CO2 emissions into day-to-day business processes.
- ✓ **Share knowledge:** To help disseminate information that supports the Sustainability aims and encourage staff to participate in calls for sustainability related actions.
- ✓ **Signpost colleagues:** to appropriate training and support resources
- ✓ **Lead by example:** To encourage colleagues on how to act sustainably, both at work and at home, by sharing actions that can be taken on by staff.
- ✓ **Attend events:** initial on-boarding briefings, training, promotional events and periodic review meetings.
- ✓ **Provide feedback:**Be critical and give us feedback on how our support is working for you.
- ✓ **Take part:** Be an active member of the Green Champions Network, engaging with and supporting other Champions

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Green Champions – Value

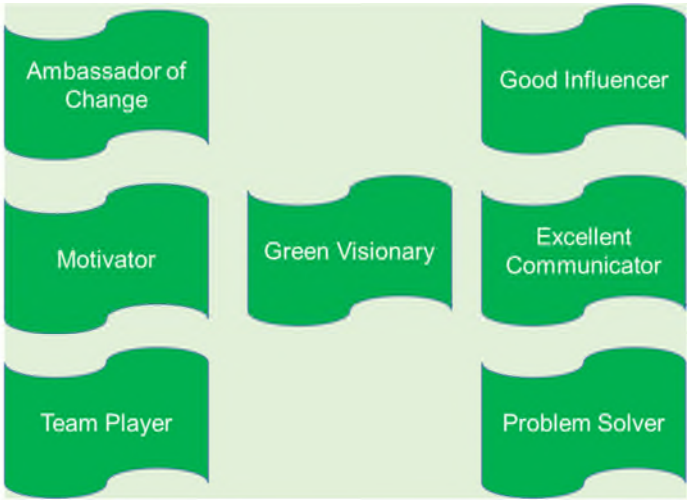
What can Green champions help to achieve?

- Identify and develop initiatives that can help reduce emissions, costs, risks and improve processes and systems.
- Improve staff satisfaction by illustrating sustainability commitment that aligns with staff values
- Align with the Service's Net Zero Plan, Sustainability Policy and Health Well-being Strategy
- Utilise sustainability as a means to deliver wider improved outcomes for staff

What can Green champions do?

- Create a network of staff who share a common interest in sustainability, and to share ideas and encourage best practices across teams.
- Develop professional skills that align with departmental and corporate strategies, delivering net zero, zero waste and improving our overall sustainability.
- Empower staff to promote behavioural change in the Service and deliver the Service's sustainability policies
- To showcase and recognise staff for their work

Green Champion Key Skills



To support the champion network, SAS have created an induction pack, a dedicated teams channel, a data collection process to understand what activities are already taking place

We also have in place a lead Green Champion. a Paramedic, her reasoning for taking on the role encompasses well in what we hope to achieve……

'*Faced with the biggest mental health crisis the world has ever seen, I believe there are many solutions to this, which lie in nature. We as humans are not separate from nature, we are very much part of it, but this notion has become lost over the years and I believe this sense of disconnect is a contributing factor to the dark places we often find ourselves in today. I think when people are truly connected to anything, be that political values, religion, hobbies, sports etc this inspires certain behaviours that are motivating and supportive and I think this is certainly true when it comes to nature….. As we begin to feel more connected to the natural world this can influence small changes which benefit not only our health but also the planet.'*

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Building upon this approach, the green champions have agreed a range of actions and events including:

- Undertake a Nature-Based Training course, this is being planned for 26/27
- Encouraged outdoor activities as team building events, with great examples of this taking place
- Explored Foraging Courses, educating staff on how to support local community biodiversity projects
- Support through additional kit to promote walking groups across the service
- Explore Cold Water Therapy

This is all aiming to connect staff to nature, to each other and support the SAS work on culture and staff health and wellbeing.

In addition work with the SAS communications team to promote the behavioural aspect of energy use in the station, supported by the green champions appears to have had a positive impact with a continuing reduction in building fossil fuel use.

8. Sustainable Care

The way we provide care influences our environmental impact and greenhouse gas emissions. NHSScotland has three national priority areas for making care more sustainable – anaesthesia, surgery and respiratory medicine.

The Service continues to make progress in reducing its carbon footprint through the adoption of more sustainable care practices. Over the last few years, we have significantly improved our environmental sustainability. Our work has resulted in more patients being treated over the telephone and in their homes, avoiding unnecessary travel.

This focus has been on:

- The continued development of our Pathways Hub. We use this to ensure where patients do not require an ambulance response, they receive appropriate care in other parts of the system. Where we do attend but taking the patient to the hospital front door is not needed, we can find opportunities for care that save patient journeys. We are seeing a year-on-year increase in the numbers of patients going through our Pathways Hub

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- Our Integrated Clinical Hub has evolved into a multi-disciplinary team of clinicians (Paramedics, Nurses, Advanced Practitioners and GP Advisors) who continue to provide enhanced clinical decisions, using the principles of realistic medicine to ensure that patients receive timely and appropriate care that meets their needs. Around 23% of calls are managed in a way that does not require an ambulance response by providing self-care advice or signposting patients to a more appropriate care pathway that meets their needs, thereby avoiding unnecessary ambulance and hospital attendance. Our GPs within the clinical hub traditionally manage over 60% of their calls over the telephone without ambulance attendance.
- The drive for greater multi-disciplinary teams and blending of roles means that we can recruit from a variety of experienced healthcare professions and advance our clinical practice. A good example of this is SAS Advanced Practitioners and Paramedics in Urgent and Primary Care who rotate through various work settings as part of their role. They are skilled in finding alternatives to admission, whether by treating the patient themselves, referring to appropriate partners in the community or bypassing ED with direct admission. They provide assessment and treatment in person, by phone or video consultation remotely and when working in collaboration with primary care partners.
- Creating a psychologically safe environment to make patient-centred and risk-based decisions, following the principles of Realistic Medicine. Through work with our Palliative and End of Life Care, we are teaching and supporting our crews to make individualised decisions that put patients at the centre of the process. By listening to what patients and/or their carers want, we can deliver care closer to home and often allow a calm and supported natural death that avoids unnecessary patient journeys.
- Working hard with partner organisations to break down barriers to care, we can conduit care through sometimes complex systems to get the best results for our patients and their carers. One example of this is the collaborative approach working with Flow Navigation Centres, to make sure we preserve ambulance resources for those most in need, whilst maintaining the care to others as they access services.
- Our commitment to increasing CPR awareness and capability has delivered positive outcomes, with bystander CPR rates rising to 69%, an increase since 2019-20.

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- Our staff regularly attend community events, and during the past year the Young Minds Save Lives programme trained hundreds of school pupils in essential emergency medical skills. Following its initial launch in Glasgow, the programme was extended to Angus this year.

Between September 2024 and April 2026, the Scottish Ambulance Service's Integrated Clinical Hub enabled 100,033 incidents to be resolved without ambulance attendance, reducing unnecessary ambulance usage and associated travel. We will work on attempting to quantify emissions saved, based on average journey time, as a key performance indicator for future reporting.

We remain committed to advancing our delivery of sustainable care, for the benefits of our patients and our environment.

8.1 Anaesthesia and Surgery

Greenhouse gases are used as anaesthetics and for pain relief. These gases are nitrous oxide (laughing gas), entonox (a mixture of oxygen and nitrous oxide) and the 'volatile gases' - desflurane, sevoflurane and isoflurane.

Through improvements to anaesthetic technique and the management of medical gas delivery systems, the NHS is reducing emissions from these sources.

The Scottish Ambulance Service's total emissions from these gases in 2025/26 were 1021 tCo2e, a decrease of 55 tCo2e, or 5% from the year before.

The focus has been largely around system loss, SAS do not have any piped supply of Entonox, the primary source of loss/waste. In addition, we only deliver entonox via demand valves which only release gas while the patient is breathing in via the mouthpiece. This minimizes the release of entonox to the atmosphere.

Clinical use of entonox has generally trended down over the last 5 years. In terms of what further steps we can take:

- Increased governance of medical gas cylinders with a specific focus of work already in progress as noted in more detail below
- Further reduction in the clinical use of entonox may be possible with increasing the use of penthrox, there is a separate piece of work on-going looking to establish the cost impact of a full-scale rollout.

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- Explore alternative demand valves which claim to be much more efficient in terms of proportion of gas released on use V's inhaled by the patient.

More detail on the emissions is set out in the tables below:

Nitrous oxide and entonox emissions, 2018/19, 2024/25 & 2025/26, tonnes CO2 equivalent (tCO2e)				
Source	**2018/19**	**2024/25**	**2025/26**	**Percentage change 2018/19 to 2025/26**
Portable entonox	1336	1076	1,021	-24%
Total	**1336**	**1076**	**1021**	**-24%**

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The service has implemented a medical gases project to improve the management of gas cylinders. This project has

- Provided traceability of gases by implementing a smartphone app to capture the movement of cylinders from delivery to collection.
- Reduced the stock holding surplus and achieve closer adherence to clinical guidance in relation to the number of cylinders to be routinely carried on A&E and PTS vehicles
- Identify long term misplaced cylinders and return these to the supplier to be refilled to re-enter circulation and be re-used.
- Improved stock control to reduce ordering frequency, which will result in fewer deliveries and lower associated environmental costs. Fewer instances of gases expiring by reaching 3 years old is being demonstrated.

This remains a work in progress with further improvements planned for 26-27.

8.2 Respiratory medicine

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Greenhouse gases are used as a propellant in metered dose inhalers used to treat asthma and COPD. Most of the emissions from inhalers are from the use of reliever inhalers – Short Acting Beta Agonists (SABAs). By helping people to manage their condition more effectively, we can improve patient care and reduce emissions.

There are also more environmentally friendly inhalers such as dry powder inhalers or inhalers which use low-carbon propellant which can be used where clinically appropriate.

We estimate that emissions from inhalers in Scottish Ambulance Service were1.3 tonnes of CO2 equivalent in 2025/26. We will now report on this on an annual basis.

We continue to identify and support patients with poorly controlled airways disease. By signposting patients to their own GP, we encourage the regular use of preventative medication and promote the switching of metered dosing inhalers to sustainable alternatives. We also continue to promote health by signposting patients to smoking cessation services from community pharmacies.

9. Travel and Transport

Domestic transport (not including international aviation and shipping) produced 28.8% of Scotland's greenhouse gas emissions in 2023. Car travel is the type of travel which contributes the most to those emissions.

NHSScotland is supporting a shift to a healthier and more sustainable transport system where active travel and public transport are prioritised.

A key aim of our path to net zero action plan is to remove all petrol and diesel fuelled cars from our fleet.

We have also been transitioning, primarily, non front-line fleet into electric vehicles and developing our electric charging infrastructure to reduce environmental impact. However, we recognise that our front-line ambulances contribute to the largest make up of our carbon emissions.

Transport makes up approximately 90% of our overall carbon footprint and is therefore the most vital part of our sustainability journey.

In accordance with the Scottish Government's aim to phase out fossil-fuelled cars by 2025 and other fossil-fuelled vehicles by 2030, where technological developments allow. Transport Scotland recently issued a draft Public Sector Fleet Decarbonisation Action Plan,

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with these dates are being extended to 2030 and 2040. We are also actively involved with various partners developing new technology which could become viable alternative fuel solutions

In aiming to reduce travel costs the Scottish Ambulance Service has

- Implemented additional approvals and controls to reduce business travel with all travel over a small threshold requires approval by the Director of Finance and/or the Chief Operating Officer
- Implemented the SAS Agile Working Policy.
- Implemented the SAS business travel policy

Significant work has taken place to continue to reduce the need for travel and accommodation and this has been driven by the Service Best Value efficiency programme, driving not only financial savings but also reduced emissions.

The Service continues to work to remove all petrol and diesel fuelled cars from our fleet aligned with these Scottish Government targets. The Service is now operating over 370 zero emission vehicles. To further encourage the use of electric vehicles the lease car eligibility has been updated to have electric vehicles only unless it can be demonstrated that an individual's role would be impossible with an electric vehicle, which must be reviewed and signed off by the Executive team. Thus far there have been no applications for combustion engine cars.

We continue to roll out the EVC infrastructure, with 74 sites with at least one vehicle charger and a further 10 locations are currently in progress. In total, there are 175 operational chargers across the estate.

In 2025, The Service took delivery of its first fully electric A&E ambulance there have been delays with testing due to issues being addressed by the manufacturer. Due to charging and these technology issues it is not likely there will be a fully operational electric A&E ambulance until 2032..

Fleet and Business Travel

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Greenhouse gas emissions, tCO2e	2024/25	2025/26	Percentage change
Fleet emissions, including SAS Air Ambulance.*	18,981 *(14,631 / 4,350)*	18,160 *(13,974 / 4186)*	-4%
Business Travel (Including accommodation)	286	316	10%

**Does not include MOD Coastguard Search & Rescue as this is reported as a Scope 3 emission.*

The following table sets out how many renewable powered and fossil fuel vehicles were in the Scottish Ambulance Service fleet at the end of March 2025 and March 2026:

	March 2025		March 2026		
	Total vehicles	% Zero tailpipe emissions vehicles	Total vehicles	% Zero tailpipe emissions vehicles	Difference in % zero tailpipe emissions vehicles
Cars	487	63% (306)	497	61% (305)	2%
Light commercial vehicles	87	40% (35)	92	38% (35)	2%
Heavy vehicles	1001	15% (8)	1036	9% (10)	1%
Specialist vehicles	116	0%	49	0%	0%

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Motorcycles	10	0%	3	0%	0%

The following table sets out the distance travelled by our cars, vans and heavy vehicles in 2025/26. This information does not include external hire vehicles or grey mileage.

Distance travelled, miles	**Cars**	**Light commercial vehicles**	**Heavy vehicles**	**Specialist vehicles**	**Total**
2025/26	2,790,950	1,204,460	21,351,285	205,114	25,551,809
2024/25	3,004,239		25,219,709		28,223,948
2023/24	4,966,762	340,731	18,605,637	1,103,142	25,016,272

Business travel is staff travelling as part of their work in either their own vehicles or public transport. It covers travel costs which are reimbursable and doesn't cover commuting to and from work. The table below shows our emissions from business travel by transport type:

Business travel emissions, tCO2e	**Cars**	**Public transport**	**Flights**	**Total**
2025/26	198	3	36	237
2024/25	183	2	17	202

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Percentage change	8%	50%	112%	17%

11. Sustainable procurement, circular economy and waste

We aim to reduce the environmental impact of our resource use by applying circular economy principles, efficient resource use and more sustainable supply chains, supporting the transition to net-zero supply chain emissions by 2045.

During 2025/26, we continued to integrate sustainability considerations into procurement and logistics, including improving our understanding of product origins, supply routes and purchasing volumes to support future assessment of supply chain impacts.

The Service continues to use the suite of sustainable procurement tools and guidance that Scottish Government has made available to all public bodies to assess current levels of performance, helping to inform the actions required to embed good procurement practice to realise intended sustainable outcomes.

Our ongoing recycling project supports the reuse and redistribution of suitable products across the Service, helping to extend product life and reduce waste and unnecessary purchasing.

Our three regional Logistics Hubs provide a coordinated supply model, consolidating products from suppliers for onward distribution to stations and Service locations. This improves stock visibility and demand management and reduces reliance on separate supplier deliveries to individual locations.

Sustainability considerations will continue to inform procurement activity, including product lifecycle, packaging, routes of supply and supplier environmental commitments, where relevant and proportionate.

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The Service launched its updated procurement strategy in November 2023. This continues to recognise that supply chain sustainability must be considered to help determine the extent of the associated greenhouse gas emissions and social and environmental impacts. As key member of the SAS CERAS team, the team consider the best means of minimizing carbon risk, improving energy efficiency, reducing waste and promoting sustainable procurement practices.

During 2026/27, we will continue to review our supply base, product country of manufacture and routes of supply to identify opportunities for products or sourcing arrangements that could reduce supply chain greenhouse gas impacts.

For any Procurement undertaken by the Service's Procurement, there is a mandatory requirement for every tendering supplier to confirm their position in relation to climate change related aspects.

We continue to promote the use of items which have been designed for durability and upgradability. Tendering contracts can apply a focus on durability / upgrade ability where appropriate.

The strategic environmental sustainability priorities of the Scottish Ambulance Service Procurement and Logistics Service's Strategy are:

- Delivering Best Value
- Delivering Sustainable Procurement
- Maximise Innovation and Supplier Development
- Tackling Inequalities
- Implementing all aspects of fair work policy

To continue to monitor the success of this we are tracking the benefits of:

- Move from single use to re-usable product (where possible and or practical)
- Quantify impact of the change in product.

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- Carbon footprint baseline identification of critical and key consumables and assess alternative opportunities to reduce the carbon footprint.
- Point of manufacture, to delivery to the UK and subsequent delivery to our Logistics Hubs.

We now have a product register which identifies the country of origin and the volume of products bought from those countries. Identifying this information will allow us to review specific products and where possible find alternative suppliers within the UK first and foremost which would reduce our supply chain emissions while supporting local businesses.

Waste

We want to reduce the amount of waste we produce and increase how much of it is recycled. The table below sets out information on the waste we produce and its destination for the last four years:

Type	2022/23 (tonnes)	2023/24 (tonnes)	2024/25 (tonnes)	2025/26 (tonnes)	Percentage change – 2021/22 to 2024/25
Waste to landfill	24	26	25	24	-4%
Waste to incineration	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Recycled waste	450	495	465	490*	5%
Food waste	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Clinical waste	13	33	0.5	0.6**	20%

*Including tyres for the first time – 79 tonnes.

**Now includes yellow waste stream (offensive waste)

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The CERAS group have now set targets to reduce the amount of waste we produce, and the tables below provide information on our performance against those targets:

Reduce domestic waste by a minimum of 15%, and greater where possible compared to 2012/2013 – by 2025	
Target – reduce domestic waste by	7.5 (tonnes)
Performance – domestic waste reduced by	26 (tonnes)
Outcome	**Achieved**
Ensure that no more than 5%, and less where possible, of all domestic waste is sent to landfill – by 2025	
Target – reduce waste sent to landfill by	47.5 (tonnes)
Performance – waste sent to landfill reduced by	26 (tonnes)
Outcome	Not yet achieved but making progress
Further reduction required	21.5 (tonnes)

Ensure that 70% of all domestic waste is recycled or composted – by 2025	
Target – recycle or compost	267 (tonnes)
Performance – recycled or composted	411 (tonnes) (2025/26)
Outcome	**Achieved**

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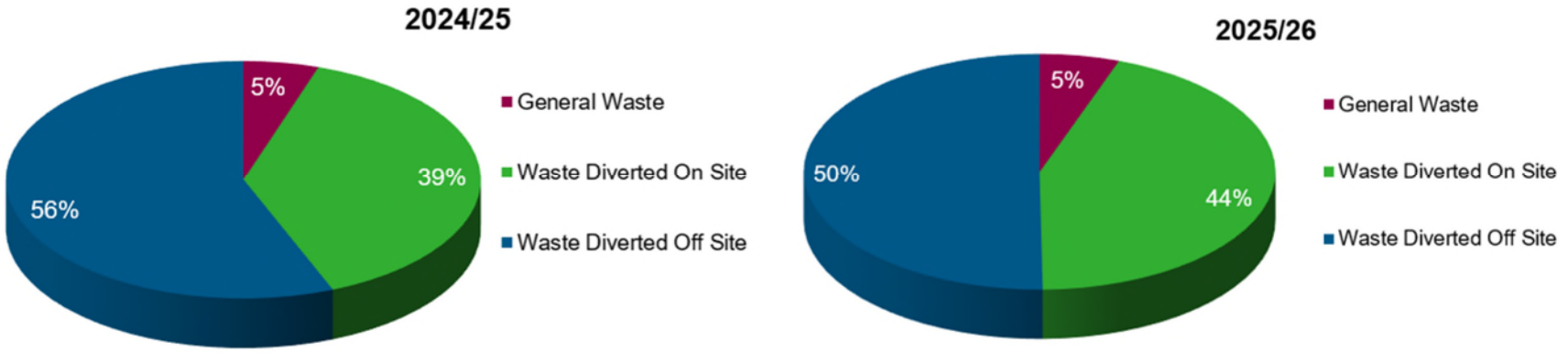
The following graphs show a slight improvement on waste diverted on site compared to the previous year suggesting better waste segregation at station level. This has been and will continue to be a key focus of the CERAS group.

It is also worth noting that while our general waste disposal remains at 5%, many of our locations are serviced by contractors that cannot provide specific weight information. In those cases, weights are calculated on industry standard averages based on full bins. In many locations bins are not full when emptied, accordingly, average bin weight is used so it is likely our general waste to landfill is less than 5%.



Furthermore, the table below shows an overall reduction in the volume of waste produced, reducing by 45.5 tonnes in 2025/26 compared to 2024/25.

Total	Weight breakdown	Waste Diverted Off Site	Total Waste Diversion	Carbon Savings (Tonnes)

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Year	Weight Produced (Tonnes)	General Waste	Waste Diverted On Site	Waste Diverted Off Site	Waste Sent To A Material Recycling Facility (MRF)	Waste Sent To A Energy From Waste Plant (EFW)	Waste Sent To A Anerobic Digestion Plant (AD)	% Waste Diverted On Site	% Waste Diverted Off Site	Total % Of Waste Diverted	Net Benefit of Recycling Versus Landfill (Direct Carbon Saved)	Production Emissions (Indirect Carbon Saved)
2024/25	481.71	24.68	186.38	270.24	145.82	124.42	0.41	39%	56%	95%	684.37	124.42
2025/26	435.17	23.82	192.68	218.33	119.15	99.17	0.34	44%	50%	94%	636.21	99.17

The ‘Green Champion Network’ is also used to promote and encourage conscientious waste disposal at local levels to achieve greater waste segregation and recycling. Ongoing work within the procurement sector is also being developed with suppliers and manufacturers to reduce waste at source. In addition the Logistics Hubs continually aim to reduce the amount of stock held at individual locations and over-ordering which often reach their ‘use-by date’ and ultimately end up as waste. We have seen this waste level reduce year on year.

14. Sustainable communities

The climate emergency undermines the foundations of good health and deepens inequalities for our most deprived communities.

The NHS affects every community in Scotland. SAS have a responsibility to use our abilities as an employer, a major buyer, and one of the most recognised brands in the world – an ‘anchor’ organisation – to protect and support our communities’ health in every way that we can.

The SAS 2025/26 Anchor Plan describes work on using SAS’s employment, purchasing and estate to improve community wellbeing and reduce inequalities. Its main priorities are:

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- **Workforce and fair work**: exploring opportunities for more modern apprentices, attending recruitment events in more diverse communities, and targeting recruitment towards under-represented groups.
- **Procurement and community wealth**: supporting local businesses, SMEs and third-sector organisations, and assessing the community benefits generated through purchasing.
- **Land and assets**: building community benefit into estate developments and increasing community involvement and access to facilities. The proposed community hub within Glasgow South Station is an excellent example of meeting community needs
- **Partnerships and accountability**: working with partners to create healthier, more resilient communities, with objectives and baseline measures overseen by the SAS Anchor Delivery Steering Group

An anchor plan delivery group has been established and reporting on progress has been agreed to now be presented to the SAS Performance and Planning Steering group.

15. Conclusion

Despite the financial and capacity challenges during 2025/26, the annual report has seen improvements and initiatives put in place across the Service.

Specifically work on the estates investment, sustainable care, sustainable communities and the green champions initiative continues to show progress against the SAS path to net zero strategy.

Continued focus is to

- ✓ Further develop the green champion input, supporting health and wellbeing for staff
- ✓ Building upon the decarbonisation investment plan to further develop SAS investment plan for sustainable buildings
- ✓ Fully assess the impact of our first electric ambulance
- ✓ Continue to develop reporting and measuring the impact of our anchor plan and sustainable communities

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