

## GOOD CORPORATE CITIZENSHIP

# The Business Case

## What is it?

Sustainable development is common sense and also makes good business sense. It is a framework that aims to enable all people, throughout the world, to satisfy their basic needs and enjoy a better quality of life without compromising the quality of life of future generations.

It requires the following principles to be taken into account:

- living within environmental limits
- ensuring a strong, healthy and just society
- achieving a sustainable economy
- promoting good governance
- using sound science responsibly.

**Good corporate citizenship** is about healthcare organisations making a contribution to sustainable development, health improvement and tackling health inequalities, through their day-to-day business activities. It is how corporate behaviour can aid population health, social cohesion, strong local economies and a healthy environment.

## Why do it?

It is becoming increasingly clear that current practices and lifestyles in the UK are unsustainable, and are posing a significant threat to human health. Climate change, obesity levels and health inequalities are challenges we face today and which urgently need addressing.

The NHS, operating as the biggest business in England has an enormous power to do good, or harm, through how it uses its influence and resources. With an annual budget of £96 billion and the largest property portfolio and workforce in Europe the NHS can have a considerable impact on the local economy, community and environment.

*“Just as we are seeking greater leadership in corporate social responsibility from the private sector, the NHS must play a similar role for the public sector.”*

Choosing Health, 2004

It's important to recognise that good corporate citizenship is good business practice and as such can deliver a range of benefits to the NHS:

### Financial savings

Energy and water saving measures and good waste management can lower running costs and curtail the increasing cost of landfill tax. Recognising the longer term benefits and using whole life costing can provide both financial savings and a more sustainable choice.

**Rosie Hospital in Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust** saved £7,000 and 176 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> by upgrading 334 lights to energy efficient bulbs and running an energy awareness programme focusing on switching off lights.

### Improved staff morale

Recruiting local people, encouraging appropriate work-life balance, promoting employees' health, and offering a pleasant work environment: All can improve staff retention, increase productivity and contribute to population health.

**86% of Directors of Nursing** say design of hospital buildings improve the performance and morale of NHS nurses. (CABE 2004).

**A public perception study by MORI** (2005) shows that almost nine in ten British workers believe it is important that their own employer is responsible to society and the environment, with over half feeling that it is “very important”.

### Faster patient recovery rates

NHS organisations can improve the patient experience, helping to speed up patient recovery rates, reduce expenditure on drugs and manage demand.

Post-operative patients with views of nature from their windows can recover more quickly, require fewer painkillers and leave hospital earlier.

Providing nutritious, locally sourced food can enhance the patient experience while simultaneously reducing carbon emissions and boosting the local economy.

*“Our patients say meals are tastier and they feel that supporting local suppliers and farmers is important. The patient satisfaction percentage at RBH is 20% above the national average, providing firm evidence that the improvements to food quality and procurement were a success.”*

Mike Duckett  
Catering Manager,  
Royal Brompton & Harefield NHS Trust

## Reputation

With an increasing public and consumer focus on social and environmental responsibility, communicating positive action being taken can really demonstrate your ability to respond to pressing issues and improve your relationship with the community you are accountable to.

**Concern about the environment is at its highest for a decade** (MORI 2007). Taking action against climate change helps the NHS to set a leading example and raise public profile.

## Good governance

Identifying and managing longer-term social and environmental changes and risks is part of good governance and is consistent with a future focus on sustainable development. NHS organisations can engage with local communities and stakeholders to ensure that they anticipate and adapt to changing needs and expectations.

*It just makes good sense on every level - as well as contributing to the fight against climate change, and hopefully inspiring others to do likewise, we're also making considerable financial savings which will allow the Trust to invest further in health improvement.*

*Best of all, it gives a strong platform for us to develop our services in partnership with our local community."*

Andrew Foster  
Chief Executive  
Wrighton, Wigan and Leigh NHS Trust

## Healthier local population

NHS organisations can improve population health and well-being by encouraging and supporting healthier, more sustainable lifestyles, and investing their resources in ways that benefit the local economy, community and environment, particularly in disadvantaged areas.

**Unemployment has a major negative health impact;** when unemployed, men are more likely to experience serious mental health or substance abuse problems and women have higher rates of diagnosed disorders. Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust's Local Jobs For Local People employability project started in 1999 and has since taken 600 local people out of unemployment, helping to improve health in the community.

## Long term viability of the NHS

If you put all these benefits together it is clear that increased efficiency, direct financial savings and a healthier population will free up resources and services for those who unavoidably need them and will help to ensure the long term viability of the NHS.

## Getting started Top ten high impact changes

- 1 Meet the NHS energy reduction and efficiency targets by measuring your carbon footprint and developing a carbon reduction strategy – take advantage of the Carbon Trust's NHS Carbon Management Programme and other services such as carbon surveys.
- 2 Encourage waste separation and recycling to reduce waste going to landfill.
- 3 Build sustainable development into the procurement process. As a first step, encourage procurement of Office of Government Commerce 'quick win' products, where relevant.
- 4 Develop a travel plan to promote active travel and minimise car travel, by encouraging people to travel by bicycle, on foot or by public transport.
- 5 Focus relevant recruitment and skills development activity on specific local groups (for example, the long-term unemployed, people with mental health problems).
- 6 Work in partnership with local organisations and stakeholders through, for example, local strategic partnerships and local area agreements to deliver community-wide health outcomes.
- 7 Make sure that new building contracts contain sustainable development right from the start.
- 8 Elect a board-level non-executive director to lead on sustainable development.
- 9 Lead by example – communicate your sustainability achievements to patients, staff, visitors and the public.
- 10 Visit [www.corporatecitizen.nhs.uk](http://www.corporatecitizen.nhs.uk) for more information and to take the test.



## How do we do it?

### NHS Good Corporate Citizenship Assessment Model

Go to [www.corporatecitizen.nhs.uk](http://www.corporatecitizen.nhs.uk) for more detail on the themes discussed above. This web-based tool is designed to help NHS organisations assess and improve their contribution to sustainable development. It is based around six areas: transport; procurement; facilities management; employment and skills; community engagement; and new buildings. For each area it contains self-assessment criteria, resources, case studies and communications materials to provide a complete self-help package.