

# Sustainability Strategy

## 2019–2022

March 2019



## Vision

The Royal College of Anaesthetists (College) works to promote the highest standards of perioperative care for patients as described in the College Strategic Plan 2018–2021.<sup>1</sup> We are committed to embedding sustainability in everything we do.

## Background

It is widely accepted that current use of global resources is not sustainable without compromising the wellbeing of future generations. Therefore, the College and anaesthetists must minimise the environmental impact of our lives and work.

The Lancet Report 2015<sup>2</sup> suggested that addressing climate change is a great opportunity to improve global health. Man-made CO<sub>2</sub> and other greenhouse gas emissions are significant drivers of climate change. The NHS contributes significantly to the UK's CO<sub>2</sub> production, with estimates suggesting as much as 5 per cent of CO<sub>2</sub>e based on estimates for NHS procurement, staff and patient travel, infrastructure and waste management.

The College will align itself with relevant national and international initiatives aimed at mitigating further global temperature rise and climate change such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals. We are a founder member of the UK Health Alliance on Climate Change.

As a UK registered charity, we adhere to the Charity Governance Code. The Board of Trustees recognises its broader responsibilities towards communities, stakeholders, wider society and the environment, and aims to act on them in a manner consistent with the charity's purposes, values and available resources.

The College is already committed to promotion of sustainability through the College Strategic Plan 2018–2021 and the Joint Environmental Policy Statement with the Association of Anaesthetists (AoA).<sup>3</sup> We will support implementation of initiatives which align with our College strategy of perioperative care, and promote efficient and cost-effective use of healthcare resources whilst reducing variability of care and improving patient outcomes.

We acknowledge that significant change depends on huge alteration of lifestyles and a reverse of consumerism, but we can contribute by making our members and fellows aware of the effects of their behaviour. We can ensure the College conducts its business in an increasingly sustainable manner.

## Strategic priorities

- 1 The College will aim to minimise the environmental impact of its work as an organisation and move towards achieving the ISO 14001 standard.
  - Engage staff in identifying areas for improvement and encourage Green Champions within the organisation.
  - Maintain and improve the College estate to maximise energy efficiency and minimise resource consumption.
  - Reduce, reuse and recycle.
  - Support remote working for staff and volunteers wherever feasible to reduce environmental impact of travel.

- Environmental and sustainability issues to be considered for all contracts as they are re-tendered and when working with partner organisations for events.
  - Support migration of membership from paper to electronic journals, subject to financial implications.
- 2** The College will commit to encouraging its members to consider the environmental impact of their clinical practice without compromising patient safety or quality of care.
- Include relevant topics across the range of College educational events.
  - Work with partner organisations such as the AoA to deliver specific study days like the oversubscribed AoA Environment Seminar 2018.
  - Include environmental impact of anaesthesia in anaesthetic curriculum and training.
  - Training and education to cover delivery of evidence-based and cost-effective healthcare interventions and pathways
  - As the Guidelines for the Provision of Anaesthetic Services (GPAS)<sup>4</sup> is updated, it should continue to include an environmental impact assessment and suggest good practice that minimises environmental impact whilst maintaining or enhancing safety and quality of care. Specific recommendations can be made as and when the evidence is available to support them.
- 3** The College will review its investments to ensure they are consistent with our aim to be a socially and environmentally responsible organisation.
- Investment Committee to examine current funds and consider what the College should invest in or actively avoid.
  - Keep the possibility of decarbonisation of investment portfolio under review.
  - Investment decisions must balance environmental/ethical concerns with need to achieve sufficient financial return to support delivery of the College’s charitable aims and the College Strategic Plan.

## Operationalising the strategy

College staff are key to successful implementation of the strategy. Since they are familiar with the daily business of the organisation, they are ideally placed to identify areas for improvement. Individuals may choose to take on a role as Green Champion for sustainability in their area.

Work towards achieving ISO 14001 accreditation will be led by the Head of Facilities. An early part of this will be assessment of the current position with an environmental audit. This will highlight priority areas for improvement. Some will fall under planned preventive maintenance and others will relate to alterations and improvements to the building.

All Boards and Committees will aim to maximise use of Skype or telephones for meetings. Papers will only be printed on request and the expectation will be that most participants will work with electronic documents. The new document sharing software will facilitate paper free working. Paper usage will be monitored by department and recycled paper options will be explored.

Sustainability and environmental impact will be included, as appropriate, in the anaesthetic curriculum rewrite and GPAS chapter updates.

Investments will be reviewed, carefully considering the optimum balance between investment return and environmental impact. This may require input from the membership through the membership engagement group or membership surveys.

## Responsibility and reporting

Each Board will identify SMART goals relevant to its area of responsibility and have sustainability as a standing agenda item. Each Board will collate relevant information from its committees and report to the Board of Trustees. Progress will be shared with the membership in the Annual Review.

Currently there is a Council lead for sustainability (Dr Lucy Williams) and the President's Environmental Advisor (Dr Tom Pierce).

All staff and volunteers have a responsibility to reduce our carbon footprint as an organisation.

The sustainability strategy will be reviewed in two years so that it can be updated in line with the next College Strategic Plan.

## References

- 1 Strategic Plan 2018–2021. RCoA 2018 ([bit.ly/RCoAStrategy2018-21](https://bit.ly/RCoAStrategy2018-21)).
- 2 The Lancet Commission on Health and Climate Change 2015 ([bit.ly/2XjxEU6](https://bit.ly/2XjxEU6)).
- 3 Joint Environmental Policy Statement 2017. Association of Anaesthetists, Royal College of Anaesthetists and College of Anaesthetists in Ireland. AoA 2017 ([bit.ly/2XhDzIz](https://bit.ly/2XhDzIz)).
- 4 Guidelines for the Provision of Anaesthetic Services (GPAS). RCoA 2019 ([bit.ly/RCoA-GPAS](https://bit.ly/RCoA-GPAS)).

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