**Q8: Should improving sustainability in health and care practice be a part of the Standards?**

Yes, we believe that improving sustainability in health and care practice should be part of the Standards.

Frontline health workers provide a vital role in enabling the systemic and cultural changes that are needed to mitigate, adapt, and reduce the health burden of the climate crisis. The UK government has published [guidance](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/climate-change-applying-all-our-health/climate-and-health-applying-all-our-health#why-it-matters) for health professionals to act on the climate crisis in their professional practice, and it is legally mandated in the [Health and Care Act 2022](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2022/31/section/9/enacted) that NHS England must contribute to Net zero, with similar commitments from [all four UK health services.](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-health-services-make-landmark-pledge-to-achieve-net-zero)   
  
The HCPC consultation on the revised ‘Standards of conduct, performance and ethics’ provides an opportunity to reflect changes to practise that will be required to achieve the UK’s commitment to net zero. It will help to position sustainability as a core focus of practice, acknowledging the ethical and moral duty of **all** health care professionals to play their part in averting further health impacts of the climate crisis. By integrating a standard on sustainability, the HCPC will make clear its commitment to this agenda by demonstrating leadership in the health sector that others will be inspired to follow.

**a) If so, what ought to be included in the Standard?**

To achieve this, we recommend the **introduction of an eleventh** standard on ‘sustainability in health and care’ with suggested wording provided below.

**N.B** We use the terms ‘you must’ and ‘you should’ in the following ways.

* + ‘You must’ is used for an overriding duty or principle.
  + ‘You should’ is used when we are providing an explanation of how to meet the overriding duty.
  + ‘You should’ is also used where the duty or principle will not apply in all situations or circumstances, or where there are factors outside of a registrant’s control that affect whether or how they can follow the standards.

**New** Standard 11. Practice sustainably to protect patients, the wider community, and the environment, both now and in the future

**Minimise the environmental impact of the care you provide**  
11.1You must take steps to develop your understanding of the links between climate change, environmental degradation, and human health.

11.2 You must seek to understand basic carbon literacy and the environmental impacts of the products and services you provide.

11.3 You must, wherever safe and effective to do so, choose treatment with the least environmental impact i.e. lowest carbon footprint or least waste generated.

11.4 You should include sustainability as a domain of quality when taking part in improvement work, thereby minimising the environmental and financial impacts and seeking positive social impact.

11.5 You should exploit opportunities to promote actions that both reduce carbon emissions and benefit public health e.g. promoting active travel, sustainable diets

If the introduction of an additional standard isn’t feasible, we would suggest the incorporation within Standard 1:

***Incorporation into Standard 1 with the additional subheading and points as below:***  
  
Existing Standard 1. Promote and protect the interests of service users and carers **Additional subheading: Practice sustainably to protect patients, the wider community, and the environment, both now and in the future**1.13You must take steps to develop your understanding of the links between climate change, environmental degradation, and human health.

1.14 You must seek to understand basic carbon literacy and the environmental impacts of the products and services you provide.

1.15 You must, wherever safe and effective to do so, choose treatment with the least environmental impact e.g. lowest carbon footprint or least waste generated.

1.16 You should include sustainability as a domain of quality when taking part in improvement work, thereby minimising the environmental and financial impacts and seeking positive social impact.

1.17 You should exploit opportunities to promote actions that both reduce carbon emissions and benefit public health e.g. promoting active travel, sustainable diets