Advise our patients on how to improve their health and wellbeing, and at the same time, reduce their carbon footprint. There are co-benefits for the health system and for health.

Eating less meat and dairy, and avoiding highly processed foods, and encouraging walking and cycling and driving less, lowers risk of cardiovascular disease, diabetes and cancers. Fewer cars also means less trauma, less air pollution and less respiratory disease.

Insulating your home makes it warmer, drier and more efficient, making it a healthier place to live, less costly to run, and reduces our carbon footprints. Preserving the natural environment and spending time in green spaces has proven mental and physical health benefits.

Switching off appliances and implementing a carbon reduction policy, will reduce our carbon use in our workplaces and will streamline and modernise our health system.

- Sign the Climate and Health Council pledge www.climateandhealth.org
- Keep informed. Be able to explain why climate change is a health issue.
- Influence menus - ask for local food, less meat and processed food. Drink tap water.
- Put climate change on the agenda of all meetings - clinical teams, committees, professional networks. Doctors can tip opinion with chairs and chief executives.
- Fly less. Do you need to go to that conference? You can often travel by train. Air travel is highly damaging, and the carbon costs outweigh the financial savings. One flight can wipe off all the carbon savings made in a year made through cycling instead of driving.

For more ideas and information, please visit:
- 10:10 Health 1010uk.org/health
- Campaign for Greener Healthcare www.greenerhealthcare.org
- NHS Sustainable Development Unit www.sdu.nhs.uk
- Carbon Addict www.carbonaddict.org
- The Carbon Trust www.carbontrust.co.uk/nhs
- Medsin’s Healthy Planet www.medsin.org/campaigns/healthyplanet
  www.earthscan.co.uk

Please email Sarah Walpole if you have any queries, feedback, or if you want any further information: sarah@climateandhealth.org

With many thanks to the BMA, NHS Sustainable Development Unit, the Climate and Health Council, and the many kind people who have donated time and money.
Climate change is a serious threat to human health. Not only through extreme weather such as the Pakistan floods in 2010 and Hurricane Katrina, but through the spread of infectious diseases and impacts on agriculture leading to food shortages. This can lead to economic and social instability.

Some of the health impacts of climate change in the UK include:

- **Premature deaths** due to heat waves (remember 2003?)
- **Flooding** (remember 2007?), infectious diseases and negative impacts on mental health
- **Increase in food poisoning, waterborne diseases, and respiratory disease**
- **Increased UV radiation increasing skin cancers and cataracts**

Many of the activities that contribute to climate change lead to ill-health. Fortunately, walking or cycling instead of driving, and eating less meat and processed foods can reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease, diabetes and some cancers.

The large budget cuts facing the NHS pose a significant challenge to all of us working to improve health. We must find ways to deliver quality healthcare at reduced costs. Using less energy for transport, heating, lighting, unnecessary drugs and equipment saves money, improves care, as well as reducing the carbon footprint of the NHS.

We are committed under the Climate Change Act (2008) to reduce the UK carbon footprint by 34% by 2020, and 80% by 2050. This is also a massive challenge for health professionals.

The latest figures show that NHS England accounts for 21 million tonnes of CO₂ in 2007. That’s 3% of the UK carbon footprint, and more than the whole of Estonia’s!

Reducing carbon emissions at work, at home and in the community not only benefits the NHS but helps to create a safer society. It contributes to cleaner air, long-term energy and food security, and the protection of biodiversity on which we all depend.

Encourage walking and cycling or car sharing to work; better use of recycling, clinical and domestic waste bins; turning off heating instead of opening windows.

These small changes will not be enough on their own, but are important steps in the right direction. By taking these steps, we can model the changes that we need to make on a larger scale.

A more cost-effective, patient-centred health service is what we are already striving towards: appropriate use of drugs, more appropriate use of ICT, better prevention of disease and unnecessary admissions, treatment closer to home, and better management of chronic diseases.

Speak to your local estates, transport, or energy management groups. There may also be a local trust climate change or sustainability group that you can share your ideas on how to save money and waste, to cut costs and carbon.