# NICE Listens environmental sustainability project recommendations

1. Based on the findings from this NICE Listens project, recommendations have been developed in 3 areas: NICE's role and responsibility, existing work to prioritise, and future work.

NICE's role and responsibility

1. The following recommendations relate to the overarching principles that the public believes NICE should follow in making healthcare more environmentally sustainable. They set out how NICE should clarify and communicate our role in this challenging area to ensure transparency and public trust.
   1. Do what we can to reduce the environmental impact of healthcare, in keeping with our remit to optimise resource use to maximise population health outcomes.
   2. Formalise and publicise our responsibility to make healthcare more environmentally sustainable, including reference to the benefits that environmentally sustainable healthcare can provide.
   3. Focus on improving the environmental sustainability of healthcare in ways that also improve health outcomes, respect people’s preferences and avoid exacerbating health inequalities.
   4. Ensure full transparancy regarding any decisions made in the context of healthcare and environmental sustainability.

Existing work to prioritise and build on

1. Some of NICE's existing activities could lead to environmental benefits, whether or not this is their primary purpose. The following recommendations target NICE's activities that aim to reduce the supply of unnecessary healthcare and the demand for care in the first place, thereby reducing the environmental cost. They also focus on how we should provide environmental information to patients in shared decision making situations, building on our [patient decision aid for asthma inhalers](https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng80/resources/inhalers-for-asthma-patient-decision-aid-pdf-6727144573).
   1. Identify care that provides no benefit and produce guidance to minimise the provision of such care, for example, through publishing "do not offer" recommendations in our guidelines and explore the use of similar recommendations in technology evaluation guidance.
   2. Provide and support the implementation of guidance on preventative healthcare and management of chronic conditions. This could be prioritised through amendments to topic selection criteria to ensure priority is given to topics that reduce avoidable demand for healthcare (via primary prevention, effective chronic disease management, or guarding against overdiagnosis and overuse of medicines/care).
   3. In shared decision making contexts, provide information for patients about the environmental impacts of different interventions where possible, in ways that account for individual circumstances.

Future change and areas requiring further research

1. Understanding how and when to take into account the environmental impact of health interventions is an area of ongoing work at NICE. The following recommendations reflect the public's view on how they would like NICE to act.
   1. Continue to explore ways to influence the healthcare supply chain to become more sustainable, for example, by encouraging the generation of high quality environmental data while ensuring that we do not promote unsubstantiated sustainability claims.
   2. Identify circumstances in which it is appropriate to consider the environmental impact of a health intervention.
   3. In cases where multiple care options exist that are comparable in terms of clinical and cost effectiveness, take into account the environmental sustainability of each option to guide decision making, where possible.
   4. Develop ways to make judgements about how the financial and environmental costs of health interventions should be balanced when making recommendations for the NHS.
   5. Explore ways to reduce the risk of recommending health interventions that may not deliver the benefits promised but would nevertheless impose environmental costs, for example, by upholding stricter evidence standards for technologies in some circumstances.