



Making the Case for Carbon Literacy in Healthcare.

The Carbon Literacy Project has developed free-to-access Toolkits for organisations to train their staff. This document provides you with some initial guidance and materials to assist you in pitching Carbon Literacy to leadership and management within your organisation.

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What is Carbon Literacy?

Carbon Literacy provides learners with ‘an awareness of the carbon dioxide costs and impacts of everyday activities and the ability and motivation to reduce emissions, on an individual, community and organisational basis.’

The Carbon Literacy Project was recognised by the United Nations at the COP21 climate negotiations in 2015 as one of 100 ‘Transformative Actions Projects’ worldwide that could materially change the way we deal with climate change.

Learners who successfully complete a day’s worth of approved Carbon Literacy learning are certified as Carbon Literate. As part of certification, participants are required to complete an Action Plan where they must commit to both a significant individual and group action to reduce their carbon footprint. Upon successful assessment, a learner is awarded a uniquely numbered certificate to evidence their Carbon Literacy, and confirm that they have met the requirements of the Carbon Literacy Standard.

Find out how many people are currently Carbon Literate [here](#).

“Carbon Literacy gives people the knowledge to speak with confidence about climate change to their peers, friends and neighbours, which is so important in shifting attitudes and raising awareness. It also allows participants to develop a broad, instinctive understanding of where carbon emissions come from, and know what steps they and others can take to reduce them.” - **CCF Capacity Building Officer at Keep Scotland Beautiful**

‘The actions of individuals can and do make a difference. Learners who have completed a days’ worth of approved Carbon Literacy learning can be certified as Carbon Literate and we believe this training, this deepening of awareness, is a valuable tool in helping us to become a greener organisation’

- **Libby Sutherland, Environmental Manager at Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust**

Why Carbon Literacy in Healthcare?

The global health sector accounts for around 4% of emissions worldwide, that’s more than shipping or aviation. The NHS’s carbon footprint totals at 25 million tonnes (that’s the same as the whole annual emissions of Sri Lanka) and with Net Zero targets fast approaching in 2040, there is a need to take action now.

The Carbon Literacy Toolkit for NHS provides Trusts with the resources and tools needed to engage their staff in national net zero policy and encourage low carbon actions across the

NHS. From Estates to Theatres and Hospital wards Carbon Literacy is for everyone to identify how they can reduce their workplace emissions.

The Carbon Literacy for Healthcare Toolkit inextricably links climate change and human health, providing details highlighting how a healthier planet can lead to a healthier population and therefore less demand for healthcare services.

The 2021 Lancet report highlights that despite being aware of climate change, healthcare staff feel unprepared to discuss the issue with patients and colleagues in order to drive significant change. The report highlights the need for 'continuing professional education, communication training and patient education materials...' to overcome barriers such as time constraints so commonly felt by NHS staff. The Healthcare Framework provides a comprehensive and details starting point to delivering climate education within your Trust.

Do you need further **staff engagement** and buy-in to meet your net zero ambitions? Does your staff lack the agency and knowledge to improve their environmental performance? From healthcare staff, in order to achieve the behavioural change necessary to address the scale and urgency of the climate emergency and meet your net zero targets. Your sustainability leads cannot tackle climate change alone. Climate change must be tackled cross departmentally and embedded into all roles and activities within the NHS.

Carbon Literacy will empower your staff to engage with actions which have the greatest impact in helping your NHS Trust achieve net zero. Knowledge and best practice can be shared throughout all departments in your Trust, across the services you deliver and the communities you serve.

What will your staff gain from the training?

In a day's worth of interactive learning, your staff will:

- Learn about NHS carbon emissions and targets,
- Understand the scale of the challenge, what they need to do, and which actions will have the greatest impact in helping your NHS Trust reach net zero.
- Commit to two significant carbon reduction actions within their own control to reduce your Trusts carbon footprint.
- Be empowered to make informed everyday low carbon choices.
- Be empowered to talk to others about climate change.

Beyond climate

By embedding awareness of the climate impacts of everyday actions, Carbon Literacy training enables employees to make informed decisions to cut carbon, energy and waste in your NHS Trust, but what other benefits does Carbon Literacy provide?

The Energy Saving Trust reports that the key advantages of implementing an **employee behavioural change programme** are:

1. **Reduced energy bills and transport costs.**
2. **Improved employee morale, satisfaction and productivity.**
3. **Enhanced image and credibility.**
4. **Up-to-date knowledge and information for your staff.**

The financial case for Carbon Literacy

- The Carbon Trust estimates that even low or no-cost behavioural changes can reduce energy costs by at least 10%. Systematic action could save between £400 and £1,000/year for every employee.
- Construction company Jacobs UK indicate that typical realised carbon **savings from Carbon Literacy** are at least **5-15%** per person.

“To say [Carbon Literacy] has been something of a life changing experience for me, is probably not an overstatement.... In hard economic terms, so far we have already reduced our organisation’s energy consumption significantly, and this has saved us over £10,000 this year alone. All the more impressive perhaps when you consider that we’ve been doing this now for less than six months.”

- **Building Operations and Logistics Manager from The Atkinson, Southport**

“Carbon Literacy will save our company money, increase our staff’s well-being and most of all enable us to bring these skills to our tenants. They will benefit through lower bills, healthier lifestyles and greater employability. Based on the pledges the staff made during the training, the estimated initial carbon saving is 77 tonnes CO₂.”

- **CEO, Northwards Housing**

The social case for Carbon Literacy

- Carbon Literacy provides staff with the opportunity to actively engage with your Trusts sustainability priorities and ambitions through taking responsibility for climate change within their workplace. Over the course of the year where Carbon Literacy has been carried out by distance delivery, learners have reported that they feel motivated and empowered to take action.
- Carbon Literacy provides employees with the knowledge and skills to cascade and embed environmentally sustainable and socially responsible values throughout your Trust and beyond. Carbon Literate employees are more environmentally conscious and inclined to engage with environmental initiatives, often resulting in healthier, happier and more active staff.

How can training be rolled out in your organisation?

- Once staff are certified as Carbon Literate themselves, they can roll out training to staff across your NHS Trust. This creates a cascade effect, whereby as you roll out the training, there are more Carbon Literate staff who can take their turn in delivering training. You do not need to be a certified trainer to deliver Carbon Literacy training, just some knowledge on climate change and confidence in speaking and presenting.
- Trainers can help to facilitate training in other NHS Trusts and collaborate to share and save resources.
- The Carbon Literate Organisation (CLO) accreditation offers organisations a visible 'badge' that showcases their commitment to Carbon Literacy and a low carbon culture. There are four levels of accreditation; Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum. A number of councils are now accredited as Carbon Literate Organisations. For information on this process please get in touch or visit our website here.

What do trainers think about the Toolkits in other sectors?

Video - Naomi Wise, Sustainability Officer at Winchester City Council discusses her experiences of delivering training using the Local Authorities Generic Staff Toolkit.

Video - Amy Scoins, Strategic Environment Officer at Leicestershire County Council discusses her experiences of delivering training using the Local Authorities Leadership and Management Toolkit.

Blog - The experiences of trainers from Peterborough City Council who piloted the Local Authority Elected Members Toolkit

What do learners say about their experience?

'My team and I found the training really useful and very insightful. In addition to a grounding in the science behind climate change we learned about how it's also a health emergency and how we as a Trust contribute to it, along with its implications for us as an organisation...the training isn't just theoretical, we also learned about practical, everyday ways in which we can go about meeting those targets.'

Craige Richardson, Director of Estates & Facilities at Leeds Teaching Hospital Trust.

"It was thought provoking and incredibly valuable to step back and look at your daily activities and the impact they have on the world as an individual/community and species. This should become policy, not voluntary. I'd love to learn more and become a Carbon Literacy Certified Training Professional so that I can pass this information on."

Vicki-Louise Clements, Bids and Tenders Manager at Leicestershire County Council

"Really thought-provoking and also helpful to see we could make changes at the council if we want to move things forward. Nice to see some successes made by other councils. Really enjoyable to mix with people across the council whilst homeworking – the course was still really effective even though we were in different places. This should be rolled out to all staff, especially those with decision making powers."

Planning – Resource Officer at Winchester City Council

What could be perceived as barriers?

These are some of the potential barriers that you may be faced with when making the case for Carbon Literacy training in your council.

“We don’t have the time”

- Would you omit information from a health and safety induction to save time? Climate change will impact the health and safety of current and future generations.
- There are many different ways to deliver Carbon Literacy training, for example through workshops or via e-learning. For part-time or contracted staff, e-learning could give greater flexibility for your learners. Learning can also be broken down into a series of smaller sessions. We are looking to explore further Asynchronous options for the Healthcare framework currently in development.
- Part of declaring a climate emergency is dedicating the time to understanding how the climate emergency will affect the NHS and planning how you can respond to it. Carbon Literacy training provides you with this time and should be viewed as workplace planning to formulate your response to the NHS net zero targets. Without dedicating this time and without engaging your staff, it is highly unlikely we will meet the targets and goals set the Net zero NHS documents.
- Carbon Literacy can be used to further enhance existing activities such as CPD, community-based initiatives or workplace inductions.

“It’s not relevant/It’s not my responsibility”

All services provided by our NHS will be directly impacted by the climate crisis, with an increase in patient visits and further strain on a system which is already functioning at full capacity.

Trusts require adaptive solutions to climate change which are specific to their working role. As experts in their fields, your staff understand the unique issues your NHS trust faces. Who better to come up with these solutions than your staff collaboratively working cross-departmentally?

“We don’t have the capacity and resources”

- Funded by the UK Government Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, the Toolkits are accredited and will be free to use for all NHS organisations. The only cost of usage is a £10 certificate application fee per learner. **This eliminates course development, accreditation time and costs as barriers.**

- The Toolkits are designed to be rolled out with minimal input from the trainer to maximise the ease and speed of adoption of Carbon Literacy training.

“Cost”

- The Toolkits are distributed free of charge.
- Carbon Literacy is an investment that will payback - the £10 certification application fee for each learner will be more than offset by the financial and resource savings made through employees being more environmentally and carbon conscious.

FAQs

Why is Carbon Literacy a day’s worth of learning?

Significant levels of behaviour change are required to limit global heating to under 2°C of warming. To understand the scale of the challenge, emissions declined by around 7% in 2020, and the science dictates that we should be aiming for at least a 7.6% decrease on a yearly basis in order to stay within the global carbon budget.

All Carbon Literacy courses must consist of a day’s worth (~7-8 hours) of learning– an element of the Carbon Literacy Standard. There is a wealth of evidence which proves that Carbon Literacy training changes people’s behaviour, and enables and motivates them to take action on climate change. It is important for learners to understand the scale of the challenge in the first half of the course, before then learning about the specific and significant actions that they can take in the second half. 1-2 hours or a half day of learning has not been proven to bring about the long-lasting behaviour change which is required of us. Only learners who have completed a day’s worth of approved Carbon Literacy learning and met the accreditation requirements can be certified as Carbon Literate. To meet the needs of your learners, there are many different ways to deliver Carbon Literacy and training can be delivered over several sessions.

Does The Carbon Literacy Project deliver training?

As the accreditation body, The Carbon Literacy Project does not deliver training. Training is delivered in-house by each organisation or out-sourced to experienced Carbon Literacy trainers or training organisations.

Why is training delivered in Toolkits?

- Carbon Literacy Toolkits have been developed to maximise the ease and speed of adoption of Carbon Literacy. The Toolkits are in a ready-to-go, easily accessible format for in-house delivery.
- No matter where your NHS Trust is within the UK, the Toolkits are customisable according to your location, climate strategy and carbon footprint, to be specific to your unique needs. Data sources have been carefully selected to provide up-to-date, robust and accurate information relevant to your setting.
- A panel of Healthcare professionals have co-created, reviewed and piloted the toolkit materials, ensuring the latest and best sectoral materials are used.

What is included within the Toolkits?

The Toolkits consist of slides, activity resources, a comprehensive trainer manual and a 'getting started' pack.

More information

FAQs – Further Carbon Literacy FAQs

Video – Michael Cullen, Borough Treasurer at Stockport Council Testimonial

Video – Alice Webb, Director of BBC Children's and BBC North Testimonial

Video – BBC Vox Pop Testimonial

Want to find out more? Please get in touch

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