

A Manifesto for Health and Climate



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Health Professional Leadership Bodies across Scotland, led by the Royal Pharmaceutical Society and Royal College of GPs, are creating a national movement for sustainable practice across healthcare to reduce the environmental impact of prescribing.

Our goal is to support the NHS to reach its ambition to become net zero by 2040. Medicines account for around 25% of carbon emissions in the NHS. If this target is to be met, then tangible actions from the Scottish Government, the health service, the pharmaceutical industry and educational providers need to happen.

Ahead of the Scottish Election in 2026, we are calling on political parties and candidates standing for election to commit to actions which will help deliver both a healthier and a more sustainable Scotland.

Health Professional Leadership Bodies have already united to develop our [Joint Statement: Reducing the environmental impact of prescribing](#). In this manifesto, we call for political action to be taken on the themes within our joint statement.

WE CALL POLITICAL PARTIES AND CANDIDATES IN THE 2026 SCOTTISH ELECTION TO COMMIT TO THE FOLLOWING:

1. Urgently accelerate the electronic prescribing programme, by allocating appropriate resource.
2. Provide specific funding to primary care to improve sustainable medication disposal.
3. Enable green social prescribing initiatives across Scotland including with public messaging.
4. Ensure that the pharmaceutical industry makes information about the environmental impact of medicines readily available in a standardised data format.
5. Work with Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network (SIGN) and the Scottish Medicines Consortium (SMC) to publish and disseminate information about the environmental impact of medicines in their guidelines.
6. Ensure education providers support prescribers by including environmental sustainability in education and training for health professionals.

URGENTLY ACCELERATE THE ELECTRONIC PRESCRIBING PROGRAMME, BY ALLOCATING APPROPRIATE RESOURCE.

The next Scottish Government should urgently allocate funds and accelerate electronic prescribing which would reduce the paper administration burden on GPs, pharmacists and other clinicians in the multidisciplinary team, which would both free up their time to care for patients and reduce carbon emissions.

PROVIDE SPECIFIC FUNDING TO PRIMARY CARE TO IMPROVE SUSTAINABLE MEDICATION DISPOSAL.

Medicine taken incorrectly, or not taken at all, is a potential risk to patients and leads to medicine wastage, placing a huge financial and carbon burden on the NHS.¹ We need to invest in research into the reuse of medicines not taken to reduce waste.

The next Scottish Government should provide specific funding to primary care to improve sustainable medication disposal.

ENABLE GREEN SOCIAL PRESCRIBING INITIATIVES ACROSS SCOTLAND INCLUDING WITH PUBLIC MESSAGING.

About 10% of medicines are thought to be overprescribed: where people are given medicines they don't need or want, or where harm outweighs benefits. This can happen for a variety of reasons including when medicine is given instead of a better alternative, such as social prescribing.

The next Scottish Government should support green social prescribing initiatives across Scotland.

To support this, Scottish Government should lead a public messaging campaign, so the public understand the role and benefits of green prescribing.²

The next Scottish Government should also work with the NHS to ensure that formularies are updated to include a traffic light system of environmental impact. Currently the environmental impact of medicines is not routinely considered when making prescribing decisions, meaning evaluating sustainability of prescribing decisions is not always possible.

ENSURE THAT THE PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY MAKES INFORMATION ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF MEDICINES READILY AVAILABLE IN A STANDARDISED DATA FORMAT.

In order that the most environmentally sustainable prescribing decisions can be made, it is essential that the information of the environmental impact of medicines is made available by the pharmaceutical industry, to allow robust evaluation.

The next Scottish Government should work with the UK Government to compel the pharmaceutical industry to make this information readily available in a standardised data format.

WORK WITH SCOTTISH INTERCOLLEGiate GUIDELINES NETWORK (SIGN) AND THE SCOTTISH MEDICINES CONSORTIUM (SMC) TO PUBLISH AND DISSEMINATE INFORMATION ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF MEDICINES IN THEIR GUIDELINES.

In order that health and care professionals can make the most environmentally sustainable prescribing decisions, the next Scottish Government should continue to support and resource SIGN to ensure that they can make more quickly provide information about the environmental impact of medicines available in their guidelines.

¹ <https://www.greenerpractice.co.uk/information-and-resources/clinical-considerations/prescribing-and-deprescribing/>

² IBID

**ENSURE EDUCATION PROVIDERS
SUPPORT PRESCRIBERS BY INCLUDING
ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY IN
EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR HEALTH
PROFESSIONALS.**

It is essential that all prescribers have awareness and understanding of environmental sustainability built into their professional training, so that they are enabled to make environmentally sustainable choices as professionals.

An important part of ensuring this will be working with education providers to ensure that environmental sustainability is covered as part of all undergraduate and ongoing continuous professional development programmes.

The next Scottish Government should encourage health professional educational providers to embed this in their educational programmes.

This document has been written by:

**ROYAL
PHARMACEUTICAL
SOCIETY**
Scotland



This document is endorsed by:



**ROYAL COLLEGE
of PHYSICIANS
of EDINBURGH**

RCOA
Royal College of Anaesthetists

Scotland



**FACULTY OF
PUBLIC HEALTH**



**The ROYAL
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