

## Inhalers, Medicines and Waste

As outlined in the [NHS Net Zero Report](#), medicines account for 25% of the NHS carbon footprint. The majority of these emissions (20%) are found within the supply chain in manufacturing and processing of medicines. However for inhalers, which contribute to 3% of total NHS emissions, the emissions occur at the point of use. This is because the Hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) contained in the Metered-Dose Inhalers (MDIs) are powerful greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change. The NHS Long Term Plan aims to deliver significant and accelerated reductions in these total emissions by moving to lower carbon inhalers, such as dry powder inhalers (DPIs).



Other interventions to reduce the contribution of medicines to the carbon footprint include optimising prescribing, substituting for low carbon alternatives and improvements in production and waste processes.

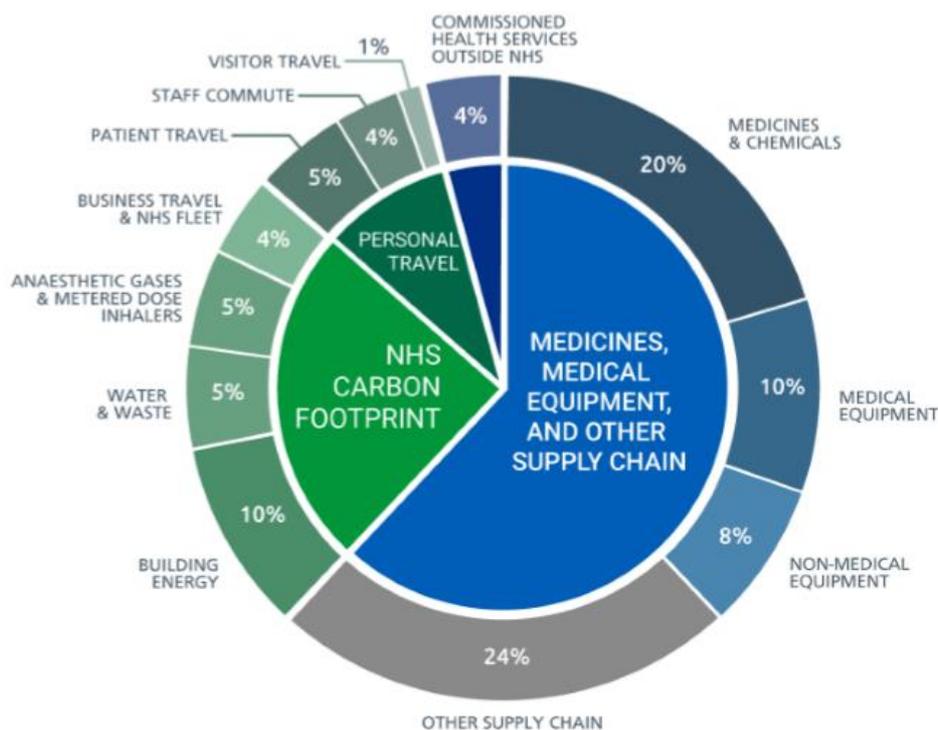


Figure 1: Sources of carbon emission by proportion of NHS Carbon Footprint Plus

As a result of this, NHS Cheshire CCG has made inhalers one of its priorities for action on climate change. Action thus far has included:

- Making changes to the Cheshire Formulary list of approved medicines which takes into account the use of lower cost lower carbon inhalers
- Encouraging patients to reduce inhaler waste by not over-ordering, using the correct technique and returning used/unwanted inhalers to their pharmacy for environmentally safe disposal
- Developing initiatives to support General Practice to switch to lower carbon inhalers

- Rolling out a pilot amongst practices in the Winsford Primary Care Network to support switching patient's inhalers to lower carbon alternatives

How can you make a difference?

- Only re-order repeat prescriptions if needed- do not stockpile!
- If you use an inhaler- ask your GP, practice nurse or practice pharmacist if there are lower carbon alternatives that might be suitable for you
- Drop off your used medicine blister packs for recycling at [participating locations](#)

