

Report into medical supply companies for primary care in the UK

Summary

The NHS has set an ambitious target to achieve net zero by 2045. Primary care is responsible for about 25% of all the NHS emissions, with emissions from medication (60%), energy (13%), travel (13%) and goods and services (13%).

The NHS a Sustainable Suppliers Framework which includes requirements for a Carbon Reduction Plan and an Evergreen Assessment tool for companies to use.

Fourteen companies were identified as supplying GP practices with medical supplies. These were analysed and assessed against the Sustainable Suppliers Framework requirements.

Discussion

There is a mix of companies which could be used by primary care to obtain medical supplies.

Some (notably Numed, PMS Instruments and Rocialle) have made concerted efforts to meet the NHS sustainable procurement expectations.

Many of the companies have not taken up the NHS NZ approach, had their carbon footprint measured or have a carbon reduction plan available.

There are two large multinational companies (Alliance Healthcare and WMS) who have multibillion dollar annual revenues, and for who, the UK primary care market is likely to be a fraction of a percentage of their overall revenue

Viking is concerned with non-medical supplies.

Conclusion

The companies with the most comprehensive approaches to meet the NHS NZ targets with a CRP are **Numed healthcare, PMS instruments and Rocialle**.

One company - **WMS** - are owned by a parent company who has significantly investments and vested interests in (and own) fossil fuel distribution companies.

Introduction

The NHS has set an ambitious target to achieve net zero by 2045. The emissions under its direct control (about 25% of the total) are due to reach net zero by 2040; the wider supply chain under its indirect influence (the remaining 75%) has a few additional years grace.

Primary care is responsible for about 25% of all the NHS emissions. The majority (60%) is due to prescribing medication and inhalers, the remaining 40% is split (reasonably evenly) between energy, travel (staff and patient) and goods and service.

Background

Healthcare uses medical equipment and consumables to deliver services to patients. This ranges from gloves and couch roll to blood pressure and ECG machines.

The Sustainable Suppliers Framework (<https://www.supplychain.nhs.uk/sustainability/>) has five requirements for suppliers

1. Carbon Reduction Plan
2. Social Value Requirements
3. Evergreen Assessment
4. NHS England Suppliers Roadmap
5. Modern Slavery PPN 02/23

This report examines two aspects (Carbon Reduction Plan and Evergreen Assessment) and how they apply to supplying medical goods to primary care.

NHS Carbon Reduction Plan (NHS CRP) identifies a supplier's current carbon footprint and their plan to achieve net zero emissions. It aligns with PPN 06/21. It covers

1. Commitment to achieve net zero by 2050 (or earlier) for UK operations
2. Covers Scope 1 and 2 emission and a defined subset of Scope 3 - specifically upstream transportation and distribution, waste generated in operations, business travel, employee commuting, downstream transportation and distribution.
3. Provides emissions in CO2e for the seven gases of the Kyoto Protocol
4. Sets out the environmental management measures in effect e.g. certification scheme, adopted carbon reduction measures
5. Be board or company director approved
6. Signposted and published on the suppliers website
7. Updated annually

More details at <https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/carbon-reduction-plan-requirements-for-the-procurement-of-nhs-goods-services-and-works/>

Evergreen Assessment is a self-assessment tool for suppliers to the NHS. It provides a 'Evergreen Maturity' consisting of four levels of increasing maturity (only NZ aspects included here):

1. Publicly committed to net zero carbon (by 2050) and engaged with sustainability. Covering Scope 1 and 2 and a subset of Scope 3, UK boundary.

2. Comprehensive net zero targets (by 2050) and reporting for carbon emissions. Covering Scope 1 and 2 and all relevant Scope 3, UK boundary.
3. 2045 net zero targets that are independently validated. Covering Scope 1 and 2 and all relevant Scope 3, global boundary.
4. 2045 net zero targets, independently validated, across the global organisation. Covering Scope 1 and 2 and all relevant Scope 3, global boundary.

More details at <https://www.england.nhs.uk/nhs-commercial/central-commercial-function-ccf/evergreen/>

Suppliers to primary care

Medical supplies in primary care can be bought from a variety of companies.

From a combination of survey of GP practices and internet searches, 14 companies which supply medical equipment and goods to GP practices were identified and analysed.

Assessment

Information was gathered from the company website and documents and from Companies House.

Information was gathered on company directors, other interests (e.g. other company directorships), any other associated companies. Whether there was a section of their website devoted to environmental sustainability, whether there was a Carbon Reduction Plan (and other requirements of the NHS CRP), and whether there was sign up to the Evergreen Assessment process or whether their maturity could be calculated from the available information.

Wider impacts of healthcare supply chains to primary care.

The wider damaging impact that health care and health care products have on the environment which goes well beyond the carbon emissions. However, there are limitations in the tools and data available for analysis. Wider environmental impact will be assessed in future iterations when possible. However, the lack of perfect information on wider aspects of sustainability should not stop publication of the information that is available

Results

The tables of the results from the investigation so far are found in Appendix 1 including. Information on the company, directors, other companies and info; Information regarding their public commitment to sustainability and carbon reduction plan; And Carbon Footprint

Table 1 shows the companies analysed and whether then have environmental sustainability on their website, whether there is a publicly available CRP and whether there is a public commitment to meet the NHS NZ targets.

Table 1. Results of analysis of medical supply companies regarding public declarations and commitments to environmental sustainability and net zero.

Name of company	1. Do they have a section of their website devoted to environmental sustainability	2. Do they have a public written carbon reduction plan	3. Do they have a public commitment to meet net zero emissions
Alliance	Yes	Yes	Yes
CCG supplies	No	No	No
Dene healthcare	Yes	No	No
Foursquare healthcare	No	No	No
Hillcroft supplies	No	No	No
Medical supermarket	Yes	No	No
medisave	No	No	No
Medtree	No	No	No
Midmeds	No	No	No
Numed healthcare	Yes	Yes	Yes
PMS instruments	Yes	Yes	Yes
Rocialle Healthcare	Yes	Yes	Yes
Wel medical	No	No	No
Williams Medical supplies	Yes	Yes	Yes

Analysis of individual companies

Alliance Healthcare

Part of a large, multinational company supplying healthcare, pharmacy and hospitals. Cencora – formerly known as AmerisourceBergen - is ultimately the parent company, headquartered in USA. Total revenue in 2023 was \$262 billion and supplies 20% of all pharmaceuticals sold in USA.

Their CRP showed a dramatic increase in emissions from 2019 to 2023 (Table 2).

Table 2. Emissions (tonnes CO₂e) from Alliance 2019 and 2023 (Source <https://www.alliance-healthcare.co.uk/sites/g/files/xpfdlm151/files/2023-11/PPN-0621-Carbon-Reduction-Plan-AHUK%202022.pdf>)

	2019 (baseline)	2023	% change
Scope 1	25773	30118	
Scope 2	676	132	
Scope 3	26512	42504	
Total	52961	72754	+37%

Cenora aiming for 54% reduction in Scope 1 and 2 by 2032; within that, Alliance Healthcare aiming for net zero Scope 1 and 2 by 2030.

Initiatives include EV van trial in 2022 and aiming to start electrifying delivery fleet from 2024; recycling 60% of its waste, LED lighting in service centres and purchasing of 100% renewable electricity.

Signed off by Managing Director

CCG Supplies

Small UK based wholesale company with directors having several other companies effectively selling similar products (e.g. PPE etc).

No CRP or Carbon Footprint (CF).

Dene Healthcare

See Rocialle Healthcare.

Foursquare healthcare

Small UK based wholesale company.

Director has no other company links recorded.

No CRP or CF.

Hillcroft supplies

UK based wholesale company.

No CRP or CF.

Directors have no other company links recorded.

Medical supermarket

Wholesale company owned by Procure Health Limited. Directors have several other companies including logistics and software.

Limited environmental statement with no figures, details or targets or plan.
No CRP or CF.

Medisave

Wholesale company.
Directors have multiple other companies.
No CRP or CF.

Medtree

Wholesale company.
Medtree is a dormant company and trading name of BTME group. Other companies associated with directors include BTME group ltd, Tactree Limited, Boundtree medical Europe Ltd (dormant), BTME holdings Ltd. <https://btme-group.co.uk/>.
No CRP or CF.

Midmeds

See Rocialle Healthcare.

Numed healthcare

Wholesale company. Directors have several other companies.
Have an environmental statement, CRP and CF.
Have a declaration to meet NHS NZ targets
Initiatives include achieving Green Small Business Certification in July 2023, operate a partial hybrid working mode to reduce staff commuting and video conferencing. Aiming for improved energy performance, green energy tariff, Adopt an Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Policy, ensure that commuting emissions are a factor in the choice and design of new premises and reducing car commutes through lift share and cycle to work scheme.
Meets NHS CRP guidance and signed off by Managing Director.

PMS instruments

Small UK based wholesale company.
Director has no other company links recorded. Have a declaration to meet NHS NZ targets. Have sustainability on their website, a CF and CRP.
There appears to be a degree of confusion over the numbers presented tho. For example, total footprint is 14.3 tonnes CO2e, whereas their predicted reduction is reported to be '11.4 tCO2e by 2029 – a reduction of 20%' which isn't correct.
Their initiatives include 100% renewable electricity and solar panel installation with a view to replacing the gas boiler with a heat pump, education with staff, working with suppliers, improved recycling rate (currently 32%).
Meets NHS CRP guidance and signed off by Managing Director.

Rocialle Healthcare

Large Welsh based wholesale company.
Owner of Dene Healthcare and Midmeds. Directors only have interests in these companies.

Have a declaration to meet NHS NZ targets, signed by Managing Director. Have sustainability on their website, a CF and CRP – independently prepared. The CRP uses emissions per employee for their intensity metrics. Multiple initiatives including energy reduction (33% reduction to date), 100% renewable energy tariff (including solar panels), 100% recycled boxes, employee engagement, sustainable travel policy and sustainable procurement policy (and others).

Wel medical

Small UK wholesale company. More involved with CPR equipment and manakins than general medical supplies.

Director involved with several other companies including CU Medical Supplies which appears to manufacture CPR systems.

No CRP or CF.

Williams Medical Supplies (WMS)

Large, multinational supply company based in Ireland. Parent company is DCC plc (revenue in 2023 \$22 billion) who also owns multiple fuel retailers, heating oil, LPG (as part of DCC energy – which generates 74% of their profits (2024 [annual report](#))).

Complex web of companies the directors are involved in. Some are manufacturers (such as Medi-globe and Vaxsac).

DCC have a CF calculated and have a CRP.

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Conclusion

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Appendix 1

Table 1					
Name of company	Website	number of employees	Directors	Number of other directorships	Other info
Alliance	https://www.alliance-healthcare.co.uk/		Kourosh Pirouz, Nicholas Cossins, Careen Snadden, Axel Vivaene	All also directors of Almus Pharmaceuticals. Pirouz and Vivaene also at amerisourcebergen international services limited and alliance healthcare management services limited and AH UK Holdco1 limited (ultimate parent company). Now under umbrella of Cencora	AH UK Holdco1 limited (ultimate parent company with £70 million profit in 2022 and paid out £161 million as dividend. Is a 'investment holding company').
CCG supplies	https://ccgsupplies.co.uk/	7	Angela Elvidge, Benjamin Elvidge	Also directors of CCG Medical Holdings Ltd. Both directors of property investment company	Have several other similar businesses to healthcare - https://ccgconsumables.co.uk/ in car https://ccg-automotive.co.uk/ pharmacy https://ccg-pharmacy.co.uk/ and agriculture https://ccgagriculture.co.uk/
Dene healthcare	https://denehc.co.uk/	31		Part of Rocialle	Part of Rocialle Healthcare Limited
Foursquare healthcare	https://www.foursquare-healthcare.co.uk/	1	Aashima Ralli	No	
Hillcroft supplies	https://new.hillcrofts-supplies.com/	44	Guy Howden, Roger Howden	No	
Medical supermarket	https://www.medical-supermarket.com/	18	aimee coleman, nicholas coleman, Peter Paul, Emily Silva, Udhi Silva, Lloyd Wilcox	N Coleman, Udhi Silva and - directors of startup logistics, snaffling pig limited, NU trading (related to Procure health)	Procure health limited trades as medical supermarket
medisave	https://www.medisave.co.uk/	109	Graham Wright, Melissa Allen-Denton, Emily Bush,	Several also directors at (mostly micro companies) e.g Pod Technical Limited or admin support, software companies (staff =	

			Nathan Castle, Mathew Denton, Nicola Wright	1). Total 10 companies with joint control or significant interest (p31 companies house report)	
Medtree	https://medtree.co.uk/	18 (as BTME group)	Debra Edmonds, Jonathan Edmonds Stuart Edmonds	Medtree is a dormant company and trading name of BTME group. Other companies associated with directors include BTME group ltd, Tactree Limited, boundtree medical Europe Ltd (dormant), BTME holdings Ltd. https://btme-group.co.uk/	
Midmeds	https://www.midmeds.co.uk/			Part of Rocialle	Part of Rocialle Healthcare Limited
Numed healthcare	https://www.numed.co.uk/	57	Martin Healy; Simon Healy	6 (https://find-and-update.company-information.service.gov.uk/officers/Zbl2uTNglA7ZSZT68LdT7dRtBmQ/appointments); 2 (https://find-and-update.company-information.service.gov.uk/officers/sbrUo5p_44D77p4ryu_Fkg0im3l/appointments)	
PMS instruments	https://www.pmsinstruments.co.uk/index.html	5	Rebecca Webb, Andrew Webb	No	
Rocialle Healthcare	https://www.rociallehealthcare.com/	330	S Loose, B Sitaseuth Chen, J Lu, D Xu, MGuo, Y Yang, J Chaisumdet	Limited to joint directorship(s) in either Rocialle, Midmeds and/or Dene HC only	
Wel medical	https://www.welmedical.com/	24	Jonathan Gilbrook	7 others - CU Medical Services Limited (manufactures medical supplies); Share necessities Ltd (paid out >£2million in shares, but no obvious income), Torrington Town Mill Limited (holiday let firm - https://townmills.uk/about-us/ ; Canabeb Ltd; Ironman 2019 Ltd; Innosonian Europe Limited, Spencer Stuart Limited	More CPR equipment and Manakins than general GP equipment
Williams Medical supplies	https://www.wms.co.uk/		Conor Costigan, Hugh Hamer, Harry Keenan, Redmond	Complex web of companies with individuals directors of numerous spread across multiple companies. Williams Medical Supplies and Williams Medical Holdings Limited (as an	Parent company DCC plc (incorporated in Ireland). https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/DCC_plc . Also owns fuel retailers (petrol, heating oil, LPG)

			McEvoy, Caroline Moran	investment holding company). Some (Vaxsac) are manufacturers of medical equipment.	Some (e.g. DCC Health and Beauty) make a loss (e.g. \$9 million) and gain 'tax credits' (of \$532,000). Williams Medical Supplies - made £5m pre-tax, paid nearly £1m in tax. Also, Williams Medical Holdings Limited (as an investment holding company) - made £3 million loss, but reclaimed £0.5m back from tax
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Table 2					
Name of company	1. Do they have a section of their website devoted to environmental sustainability	2. Do they have a public written carbon reduction plan	3. Do they have a public commitment to meet net zero emissions	Address	Comments
Alliance	Yes	Yes,	Yes	https://www.alliance-healthcare.co.uk/about-us/environmental-social-and-governance	V limited, massive inc in emissions between 2019 and 2023
CCG supplies	No	No	No		
Dene healthcare	Yes	No	No	https://denehc.co.uk/ but v limited	
Foursquare healthcare	No	No	No		
Hillcroft supplies	No	No	No		
Medical supermarket	Yes	No	No	https://www.medical-supermarket.com/Sustainability/Sustainability-Environmental-Policy	
medisave	No	No	No		
Medtree	No	No	No		
Midmeds	No	No	No		
Numed healthcare	Yes	Yes	Yes	https://www.numed.co.uk/sustainability	Yes - by 2050. https://www.numed.co.uk/files/uploads/SupportDocument/Numed%20Holdings%20Limited%20-%20Carbon%20Reduction%20Plan%202024.pdf
PMS instruments	Yes	Yes	Yes	https://www.pmsinstruments.co.uk/acatalog/Carbon-Reduction-Plan.html	By 2045. Figures in CRP dont make sense! https://www.pmsinstruments.co.uk/acatalog/Carbon-Reduction-Plan.html
Rociale Healthcare	Yes	Yes	Yes	https://www.rocialehealthcare.com/environmental/	By 2045. Details within Carbon Reduction Plan https://www.rocialehealthcare.com/wp-

					content/uploads/2023/06/FNZ-Standard-Report-2022-Rocialle-Healthcare-200623.pdf
Wel medical	No	No	No	https://www.welmedical.com/about-us/our-commitments/	Minimal mention but no details
Williams Medical supplies	Yes	Yes	Yes	Parent company (DCC) have a sustainability report (https://www.dcc.ie/~media/Files/D/Dcc-Corp-v3/documents/investors/annual-and-sustainability-reports/2024/dcc-sustainability-report-2024.pdf) but not healthcare specific. WMS have a page - https://www.wms.co.uk/green	By 2045. saying 'The team at Williams Medical is mindful of the need to reduce our carbon footprint and limit our impact on the environment'.

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Name of company	What is their total footprint? (tonnes co2e)	Scope 1	Scope 2	Scope 3	Independently verified?	Year committed to achieve net zero	Sub set of scope 3 or all scope 3?
Alliance	72754 (2023); 52,961 (2019)	30118 (2023); 25773 (2019)	132 (2023); 676 (2019)	42504 (2023); 26512 (2019)			
CCG supplies							
Dene healthcare							
Foursquare healthcare							
Hillcroft supplies							
Medical supermarket							
medisave							
Medtree							
Midmeds							
Numed healthcare	185	15	14	156			
PMS instruments	14.3	0.8	1.4	12.1			
Rociale Healthcare	472	11	340	122			
Wel medical							
Williams Medical supplies	1347	57	155	1135			