

Joint statement: Reducing the environmental impact of prescribing

Introduction

This joint statement was developed following a round table meeting of Royal Colleges and professional leadership bodies of prescribers, held on 31 March 2022. The virtual meeting brought together a range of senior representatives, enabling an extensive range of ideas to be generated. Following detailed discussions, the round table converged on the actions in this statement.

Our commitment

As professional leadership bodies in Scotland for prescribers, we are committed to reducing the environmental impact of prescribing and medicines use.

Our actions

1. We will educate and influence our professions, the public and policy makers about how to make medicines use more environmentally sustainable.
2. We will encourage our professions to take a Realistic Medicine approach to prescribing by involving patients in prescribing decisions and reducing unnecessary prescribing.
3. We will encourage and promote the increasing use of green social prescribing initiatives, which links people with nature-based interventions and activities.

What we call for

1. We call on policy makers to enable a more sustainable approach to prescribing. This includes prioritising the introduction of electronic prescribing across the NHS, introducing the requirement for an environmental impact in NHS medicines procurement and improving the availability of data about the environmental impact of medicines.
2. We call on Scottish Government, including the Chief Medical Officer, to enable the delivery of a Realistic Medicine approach to prescribing by developing a supportive infrastructure for green social prescribing across Scotland.
3. We call on the pharmaceutical industry to make information about the environmental impact of medicines readily available in a standardised data format.
4. We call on the Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network (SIGN) and the Scottish Medicines Consortium (SMC) to make information about the environmental impact of medicines available in their guidelines.
5. We call on education providers to support prescribers by including environmental sustainability in education and training for health professionals.
6. We call for fresh thinking and innovation within the NHS and NHS suppliers in areas such as reducing medicines waste, reducing the use of paper, plastics and unnecessary packaging, and increasing recycling.

Signed by