

# GAIN-WM: The Trainee-Led Initiative to Improve Sustainability in Healthcare



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## Background

The delivery of perioperative care is a sizeable contributor to the environmental footprint of healthcare with direct consequences on patients, the public and the National Health Service (NHS)<sup>1, 2</sup>. In October 2020, the NHS became the world’s first health service to commit to reaching **carbon net-zero**. It has taken notable steps to reduce its impact on climate change, but there is more to be done. Action must focus, not only on reducing emissions, but on building **adaptive capacity** and **resilience** into the healthcare system<sup>2</sup>.

Clinicians working in Anaesthesia and Intensive Care are well placed to improve sustainable healthcare practices in carbon-heavy areas, however they can be limited by **rotational training**, **paucity in formal Quality Improvement (QI) education** and **lack of organisational support**<sup>3</sup>.

## Introducing The Network

The Green Anaesthesia and Intensive Care Network – West Midlands (GAIN-WM) is a **trainee-led** network to **educate, empower** and **inspire** clinicians towards sustainable healthcare practices.

Since its inception in 2020 the network has recruited over 50 members from across the West Midlands who are committed to raise awareness and improve sustainability in healthcare. The network’s key core activities are summarised in **Figure 1**.

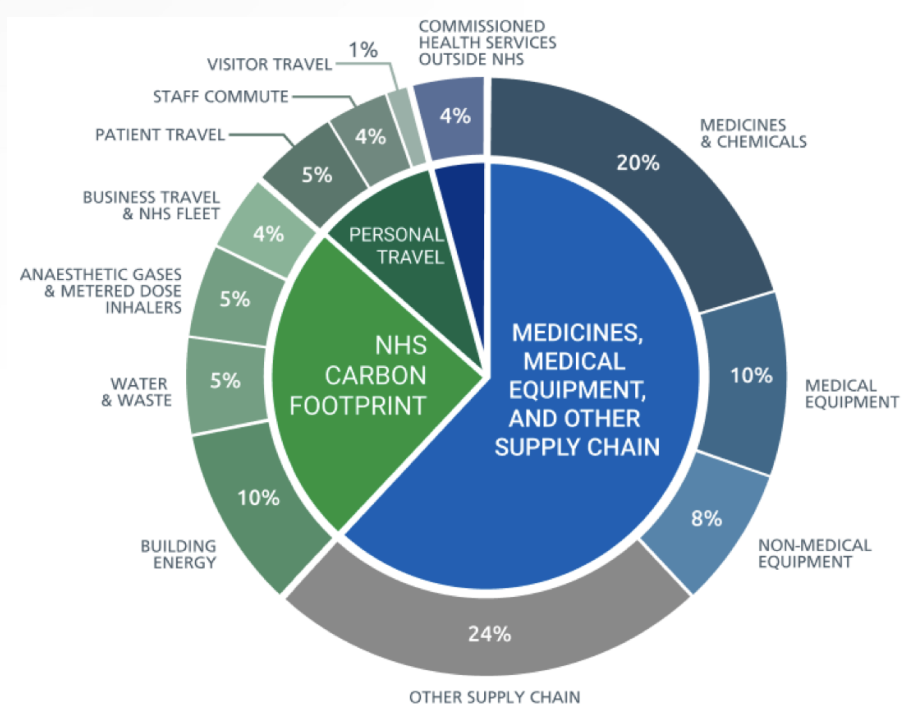
The network aims to achieve maximal effect with minimal environmental impact by adopting a primarily virtual model to connect members and share resources. This is a multidisciplinary network with input from doctors, nurses, ODPs, ACCPs and pharmacists, across all levels of training.

## The Scope

Every area of the NHS will need to act to reach net-zero. GAIN-WM aims to promote QI Projects and encourage learning across the wider domains of healthcare as shown in **Figure 2**.

During virtual network meetings GAIN –WM has invited guest speakers to share expertise on many topics including:

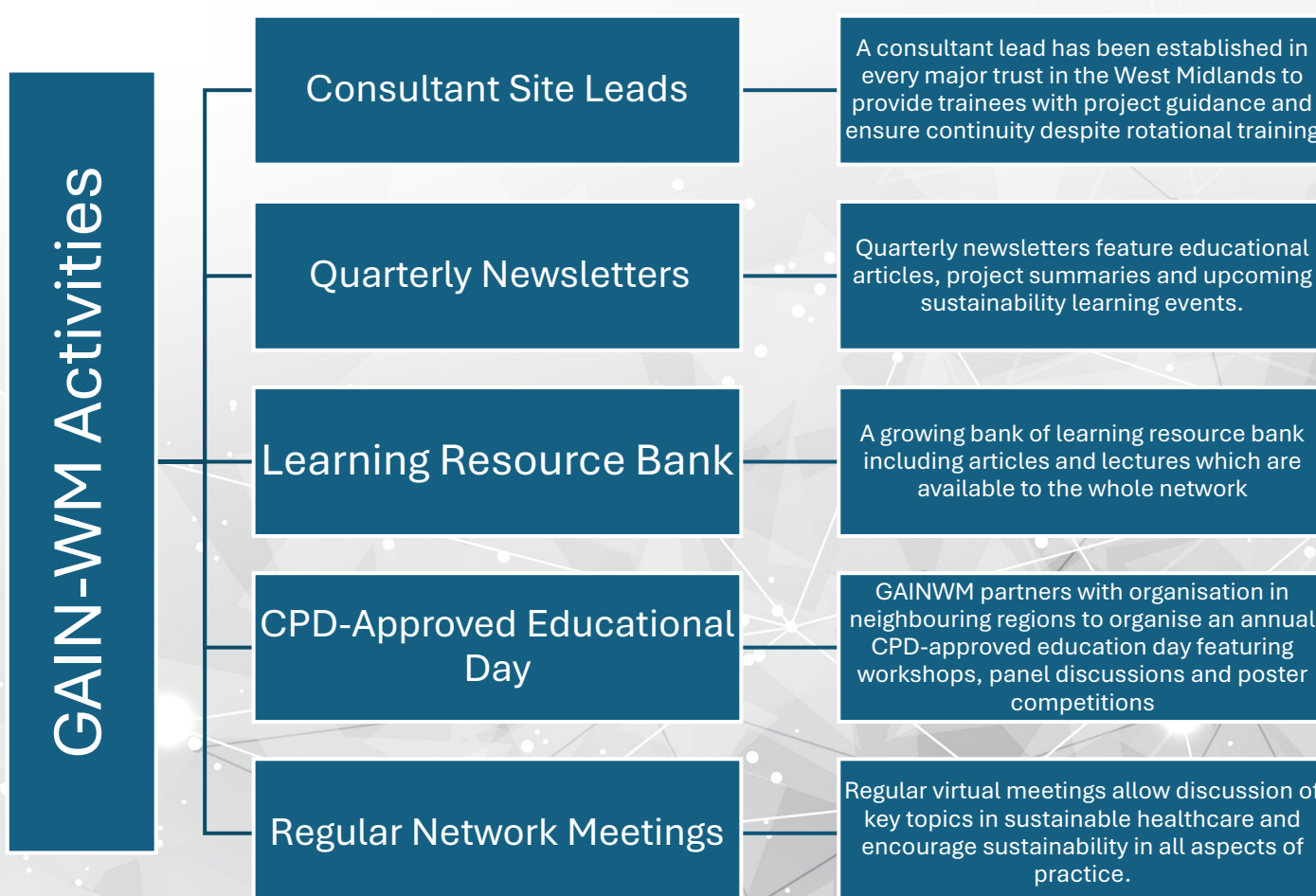
- Sustainability in Business Cases
- Sustainable Pharmacy
- Net-Zero Policy and Funding
- Sustainable Waste Management
- Active Hope in the face of climate change
- Sustainable Quality Improvement



**Figure 2:** Sources of carbon emissions by proportion of NHS Carbon Footprint Plus<sup>2</sup>

## The Next Steps

As the network continues to grow, we aim to expand its achievements into Intensive Care Medicine and diversify our membership. The network empowers all clinicians to drive organisational change, recognising that everyone has a role in addressing the climate emergency.



**Figure 1:** GAIN-WM – Core Activities

**Join The Network:**  
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 @Gainwm



## References

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2. England N. Delivering a “Net Zero” National Health Service Classification: Official.
3. Zarkali A, Acquah F, Donaghy G, Hutton R, McLaughlin L, Ngai J, et al. Trainees Leading Quality Improvement A trainee doctor’s perspective on incorporating quality improvement in postgraduate medical training [Internet]. 2016. Available from: [www.fmlm.ac.uk](http://www.fmlm.ac.uk)