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NHS Western Isles Anchors Strategy

2023-2026



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What is an Anchor Institution?

Anchor institutions is a term used to describe large and locally rooted organisations like NHS boards, colleges, universities, police and local authorities. They employ many people, spend substantial amounts of money, own and manage land and assets and often deliver crucial services. As a result, they have a huge influence on local communities and economies.

National and Local Guidance

Scotland's National Strategy for Economic Transformation (2022) sets out the Scottish Government's approach to the development of a well-being economy.

Community wealth building and a wellbeing economy are central themes of the Scottish Government's Programme for government and national performance framework. The Care and Wellbeing Portfolio is the overall strategic reform policy and delivery framework within Health and Social Care. It brings oversight and coherence to the major health and care reform programmes designed to improve population health, address health inequalities and improve health and care system sustainability.

Improving health requires improved system sustainability and, even more critically, improved outcomes in the wider factors that create health – good early years, learning, jobs, income and supportive communities.

Community Wealth Building (EDAS, 2023) is a practical, place-based approach to local economic development which retains and redirects more wealth into the local economy, aiming to improve economic opportunities, empower communities and create environmentally sustainable local economies. The five key pillars address spending, workforce, land and property, inclusive ownership and finance.

Anchor organisations, which are organisations with a significant presence and stake in the local community, are key to advancing and enabling Community Wealth Building (EDAS, 2023).

The NHS Scotland Delivery Plan Guidance requested that

“NHS Boards and HSCPs increase their contribution to primary prevention by becoming exemplar anchor institutions. As large employers across Scotland, health and social care organisations have a role to redirect wealth back into their local community to help address the wider determinants of health inequalities.”

NHS Western Isles as an Anchor Organisation

NHS Western Isles provides healthcare to approximately 27,000 people who live in 280 settlements located on 15 inhabited islands throughout Lewis, Harris, Uists, Barra and Vatersay. It employs around 1010 people. The islands stretch for over 100 miles and has a land area of 2,898 km² (excluding freshwater and intertidal). Stornoway is the main town in the islands, with over 30% of the population residing there – and the main hospital is situated in Stornoway. There are three hospitals in total, one on each of the main islands, supported by nine GP practices. NHS Western Isles has 14 sites across the Western Isles – a mix of owned and rented. The islands are connected inter-island and to the mainland via passenger and freight ferries. There are also 3 airports, situated in Lewis, Benbecula (Uists) and Barra. Although a comprehensive number of services are delivered at the local hospitals, NHS Western Isles commissions some services to other boards. This requires some patients, and escorts, to travel off-island for medical appointments. Inter-island travel is also necessary to deliver and receive many services. In addition, there are a number of visiting locums and other staff who complement the staffing requirements. The remote setting and scattered populations bring unique challenges.

In the Outer Hebrides the NHS is a large public sector organisation with a significant stake in our geographical area – effectively ‘anchored’ in and contributing to the social and economic fabric of our communities. NHS Western Isles has sizeable assets that can be used to support local community wealth building and development, through procurement and spending power, workforce and training, and buildings and land. By further leveraging our resources, expertise and long-term commitment, NHS Western Isles has an opportunity to have even greater impact. By working collaboratively with other organisations, we can help to address some of the interconnected challenges faced by society today, such as poverty, inequality and the climate emergency.

NHS Western Isles aims to improve health and reduce health inequalities. As a health board we are able to have a wide influence on our local community by the actions we take to achieve those aims.

The Five Dimensions

There are five ways in which NHS organisations act as anchor institutions identified by The Health Foundation (2019) and these have influenced PHS anchor guidance. NHS Western Isles can act as an anchor institute through:



Employment:- NHS Western Isles can ensure workforce strategies involve thinking not only about how the NHS can grow local workforce supply and widen access to employment for local communities, but also how it can be a better employer and place to build a career for more people. It acts as an anchor not only in the number of jobs it creates, but in how it can support the health and wellbeing of its staff through good employment conditions and the working environment (The Health Foundation, 2019).



Procurement and Commissioning:- NHS Western Isles Procuring and commissioning more goods and services from local small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and voluntary and community sector organisations can have an important economic impact, as resources spent locally have a multiplier effect and are reinvested in the local community. Purchasing decisions can also produce wider social benefits (The Health Foundation, 2019).



Capital and estates (Environment, Sustainability and Assets):- NHS Western Isles can manage and develop its land and estates to support broader social, economic and environmental aims – for example, by working with partners to support more high-quality, affordable housing and widening access to community spaces (The Health Foundation, 2019).



Service design and delivery (including environmental impact):- NHS Western Isles must take action to have a significant reduction on its impact on the environment and minimise its contribution to climate change and air pollution. It supports responsible consumption and waste reduction. NHS Western Isles can reduce inequalities through design and delivery of core service to reach and benefit disadvantaged communities (PHS, 2023 and The Health Foundation, 2019).



Working in partnership (to become an exemplar anchor institute):- NHS Western Isles can accelerate progress by working with others to extend reach into communities – both within the NHS and with anchors from other sectors – to scale impact and develop shared approaches. Combining assets in terms of jobs, spending and land can be significant (The Health Foundation, 2019).

Context – Where are we now?

To understand the current position in NHS Western Isles as an anchor organisation, a questionnaire from the 'Harnessing the Power of Anchor Institutions: A Progression Framework for Scottish Organisations (2023)' was distributed to key staff in relevant areas. The results were used to give an overview of NHS Western Isles' performance against the five ways in which an NHS organisation can act as an anchor institution.



Employment

There is regular analysis of workforce data on recruitment and absences. This is coordinated by a Strategic Workforce Group which produces monthly workforce reports that is analysed to inform strategic direction. This has helped to embed effective workforce planning and to assist with planning for Health and Care (Staffing) Act- 2019. There is active engagement with the local jobcentre to promote recruitment opportunities within NHS Western Isles.

In relation to recruitment, there are established recruitment processes embedded that prioritise equity for all applicants. Utilisation of external marketing opportunities seek to broaden access to potential candidates. NHS Western Isles is a Disability Confident Employer.

NHS Western Isles Apprenticeship offerings are already above the National Living Wage. Work Experience is offered to all areas where placements can be accommodated. These are actively promoted at local career fairs and employability events.

NHS Western Isles offer Flexible Working with all employees and candidates. Various Work-life Balance policies are actively promoted during all recruitment campaigns that include Flexible Working, Paid Parental Leave, Paid Carer Leave and Paid Bereavement Leave. The Remote Work Location Policy is also explored with candidates to ensure we are able to attract the best talent to each role advertised.

In relation to pay, standard packages are in place that include local and national non-pay benefits. NHS Western Isles pays the Real Living Wage. Advice and resources to support staff financial wellbeing are actively promoted to managers as well as via local Team Brief and staff Social Media pages.

NHS Western Isles organise mid-career and pre-retirement seminars to support staff in helping to plan for their retirement.

NHS Western Isles display commitment to lower-paid staff reaching their potential through a training and development approach. There is also a commitment to Leadership and Management development.

In terms of staff support and conditions NHS Western Isles actively promotes the national iMatter survey which includes a crucial aspect around Action Planning for individual teams.

There is equitable access to work opportunities via our established recruitment process and an established workplace wellbeing group. NHS Western Isles are regularly providing expert advice to other organisations and workplaces in our community, particularly around Health Improvement and best practice.

The average results from each area are shown below:

Area (under Employment section)	Average score (1-4, 1 is least performing, 4 is most performing)
Workforce data	3
Recruitment	3
Pay	3
Maximising staff potential	3
Supportive environments and wellbeing	3
Working with other local employers and employability partners	3
Overall for Employment section	3



Procurement and Commissioning

NHS Western Isles annually analyses local spend using consistent methodology. There is minimal levels of local contracting as the organisation primarily uses national frameworks, but all local contracts have clauses for prompt payment of subcontractors. Splits and lots in contracts are utilised to limit geographic disadvantage or to benefit local suppliers where appropriate. All local contract opportunities are discussed with potential suppliers. We proactively identify opportunities for local suppliers rather than identify local gaps. For example, we are in a remote rural location and there are no suppliers of medical supplies.

We include community benefit clauses or more commonly an opportunity to contribute to overall tender scores where supplier can offer additional community benefits or outcomes. Fair Work and wider social, health and environmental issues are examined as part of commercial questionnaire in standard ITT documentation, but not highlighted as a specific point of evaluation. Sustainability, corporate & social responsibility are standard discussion points in our supplier management Scorecard. However supplier reviews tend to be reactive rather than proactive at present.

The average results from each area are shown below:

Area (under Procurement and Commissioning section)	Average score (1-4, 1 is least performing, 4 is most performing)
Procurement and spending	2
Value for community, employees and the environment	1
Procurement of new infrastructure in ways to deliver social value	2
Overall for Procurement and Commissioning section	2



Capital and Estates (Environment, Sustainability and Assets)

NHS Western Isles has a clear and substantive environmental plan backed by targets, actions and EMS/monitoring, which is delivering tangible progress. National long-term net-zero targets have been adopted from the NHS Scotland Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy (2022-26). A Climate Change Risk Assessment and Adaptation Plan (CCRA) is in place. The organisation assesses current performance, using recognised tools.

There are significant actions to reduce energy use and improve efficiency with monitoring of building emissions, grey fleet, anaesthetic gases and MDI emissions.

There are actions to reduce resource use, waste and pollution through monitoring and systems such as 'Genesis'. Staff awareness raising has been undertaken of food wastage in untouched food and kitchen portions, since then untouched meals have reduced. A water waste review has been completed and actioned, while recycling containers are installed in all main buildings.

Attempts have begun to decarbonise travel through fuel-efficient vehicle fleet, remote working is a consideration for relevant posts. Strong policies are in place to promote active travel through walking and cycling by staff (e.g., showers, good bike parking) and promotion of carsharing scheme. A Sustainable Travel Subgroup has been established.

Near Me hubs and Digital Support hubs have been set up, reducing the need for patient and escort travel to main hubs, reducing travel requirements as well as associated stress.

The age of the estate inhibits improved environmental impacts of building, with no new-builds planned.

Proactive approach to improving staff, visitor and community access to green/open space. Green space within the grounds of Western Isles Hospital has been converted into a garden and woodland walkway, providing a tranquil space to sit outdoors or to undertake short walks. There is a focused effort to improve biodiversity and wildlife within sites and land.

NHS Western Isles proactively participates in strategic partnerships as part of a planning and place shaping. We have promoted Community Engagement and utilised the Place Standard Framework to shape our places.

The average results from each area are shown below:

Area (under Capital and Estates section)	Average score (1-4, 1 is least performing, 4 is most performing)
Environmental policies, targets and management systems	3
Energy, resource use, waste and pollution	2
Transport, the built and natural environment	2
Maximising community use and engagement for land, buildings and other assets	3
Overall for Capital and Estates section	3



Service design and delivery (including environmental impact)

The organisation looks at data in detail and works closely with local partners (e.g., third sector, local authorities and health sector) to establish a good understanding of local needs, issues and hard-to-reach groups. There are well developed community profiles produced in partnership with Public Health Scotland and the Community Planning Partnership that have been shared widely.

In depth data profiles have been produced for identified inequality areas. Data/baselines with target groups and communities mapped and fed into a strategy for service delivery. Locality Plans have been drawn using this qualitative data and supplemented by more qualitative findings from the Get Heard survey.

The Place Standard Tool has been introduced by NHS WI into wider partnership activity to inform the Local Outcome Improvement Plans and the Integrated Children’s Services Plans.

NHS Western Isles has a commitment to designing and delivering services that reach and benefit disadvantaged or marginalised communities. The Women’s Health Plan has been developed to ensure greater equity of outcome.

Information is readily and routinely shared with decision-makers across the organisation. This is achieved through understanding of our community and application to service design by embedding joint working. Our lead role in the development of the Poverty strategy and plans is acknowledged. Further work to ensure meaningful engagement with both community and staff to explore innovative opportunities may be beneficial. In addition to the wider community, NHS Western Isles has built links with local schools, colleges and universities and has support mechanisms for local business to support development.

The average results from each area are shown below:

Area (under Service Design and Delivery section)	Average score (1-4, 1 is least performing, 4 is most performing)
Services that reach and benefit disadvantaged or marginalised communities	3
Partnership working	3
Supporting local communities	3
Overall for Service Design and Delivery section	3



Working in partnership (to become an exemplar anchor institute)

The organisation has a good understanding and commitment to 'anchor action'. It understands how being an effective anchor institution can support community wealth building, reduce poverty and inequality, and reduce environmental impact. NHS Western Isles is beginning to embed anchor actions in the organisation's policies and strategy. Staff are encouraged to develop innovative solutions to support community wealth building, health inequalities and climate change initiatives. Organisational culture, values and behaviours show support for inclusivity, diversity and making a positive local impact through support for local community organisations. Financial decision making includes consideration of positive societal impacts, population health and population sustainability.

There are direct connections and relationships with key partners through existing avenues such as the Community Planning Partnership.

Further work is required to embed governance and reporting structures taking into account how to measure impact of actions and ways of working. To further enhance the role and aims of NHS Western Isles as an inclusive anchor and place at the centre of the organisation's mission and visions and across corporate documents. To improve

collaboration with key local organisations agreeing shared targets and objectives around anchor action (e.g., procurement, employment, built environment and service delivery).

Area (under Working in Partnership section)	Average score (1-4, 1 is least performing, 4 is most performing)
Embedding of inclusive ‘anchor actions’ and ‘thinking’ into organisational leadership	2
Acting as a ‘champion’ for anchor collaboration with other organisations	2
Overall for Working in Partnership section	2

NHS Western Isles commits in our Sustainability Plan, to take a whole system approach to meet the climate emergency and sustainability targets set out by Scottish Government. This coordinated approach includes employer, workforce and financial sustainability as well as working with our partners into the longer term. There is strong synergy with this anchors strategy as outlined in our intentions below.

Strategic Intent

NHS Western Isles recognises the key role it can play as an anchor institution. Being clear on our strategic intent will enable staff to work together, and with partners on a collaborative vision. The strategic intent encompasses the five ways in which an NHS organisation can act as an anchor institution as set out below.



NHS Western Isles will increase fair work and develop local labour markets by:

- ***Widening workforce participation***
- ***Building the future workforce***
- ***Being a good employer***



NHS Western Isles will maximise community benefit through procurement, commissioning and shorter supply chains by:

- ***Shifting more spend locally***
- ***Embedding social value into purchasing decisions***



NHS Western Isles will contribute to the environment, sustainability and assets by:

- ***Adopting stretching policies, processes, targets and management systems***
- ***Expanding community access to NHS property***
- ***Working in partnership to maximise the wider value of NHS estates***



NHS Western Isles will increase Service delivery and reach to benefit diverse and disadvantaged communities by:

- ***Designing and delivering core services to reach and benefit disadvantaged communities***
- ***Influencing sustainable practices in the NHS and community***



NHS Western Isles will become an exemplar anchor institution through leadership and working more closely with local partners by:

- ***Partnering with other anchor institutions across the Outer Hebrides***
- ***Partnering with other NHS anchors***

Strategic Actions – How will we deliver the strategic intent?

Strategic action to improve NHS Western Isles' commitment to increasing NHS WI role as an Anchor Organisation are described in the Annual and Medium-Term Delivery Plan reported to Scottish Government. These plans already are considered in our governance structure, being scrutinised by the board.

Key to delivery for the Western Isles community will be continued working in partnership with other anchor institutions. The forum in which this will take place is our local Community Planning Partnership. The partnership in its Local Outcome Improvement Plan has adopted the following priorities:

- **Sustainable population** - The Outer Hebrides retains and attracts people to ensure a sustainable population
- **Sustainable economy** - The Outer Hebrides has sustainable economic growth and all our people have access to appropriate employment opportunities
- **Improving quality of life and wellbeing** - The islands offer attractive opportunities that improve the quality of life, wellbeing and health for all our people

The Community Planning Partnership and its themed priorities provide natural links to the local employability partnership and other anchor institutions. It also enables cross organisation discussion around a 'prevention' public health approach, contribute to community wealth building and address poverty including child poverty.



NHS Western Isles will increase fair work and develop local labour markets that support wellbeing communities:

The organisation will achieve this through completion of the following actions:

Widening workforce participation

- 1) Targeting recruitment opportunities towards underrepresented groups, or those at risk of poverty. We will monitor diversity around applications and target areas.
- 2) Establish regular meetings with Director of Finance and Procurement to consider local demographic implications, particularly where the complexion of our future workforce is likely to take a sharp change.
- 3) Have clear employability objectives through Local Employability Partnerships.

Building the future workforce

- 1) Improve employability options that include local further education providers and NHS Youth Academy involvement. It is anticipated that opportunities in schools and UHI North, West and Hebrides will offer new innovative opportunities into bespoke placements.
- 2) Work with Lews Castle College to provide placements for access to nursing work with areas and to provide Foundation apprenticeship opportunities.

Being a good employer

- 1) Dedicated seminars made available regularly for lower paid staff to attend and get up to date advice on financial planning and pensions.
- 2) Explore options for childcare provision by NHS WI.
- 3) Prospectus of learning opportunities to be developed with regular offerings of training across various transferrable skills, including IT, Customer Service and other key skills to support progression within the organisation.
- 4) Continue to embed Leadership & Management support across the organisation. Promote support and resources for those who are moving into a managerial role or considering this as part of their career progression.
- 5) Develop the work of our dedicated Wellbeing Group recognising the importance of being well at both work and home. The initiatives put forward seek to support staff 24/7 across 365 days a year. Our Employee Assistance Programme seeks to place support at the point of need for staff and their families.
- 6) Continue to provide the extensive and regular communications that support staff wellbeing along with resources and confidential support.
- 7) Continue to participate in Supporting Armed Forces Employment (SAFE) Programme in partnership with NES to support NHS Western Isles to become an employer of choice.
- 8) Providing support to SME's on mental health, finance, sickness absence through awareness raising and training.



NHS Western Isles will maximise community benefit through procurement, commissioning and shorter supply chains

The organisation will achieve this through completion of the following actions.

Shifting more spend locally

- 1) A more structured and planned approach to supplier management will be put in place for 2024.
- 2) NHS WI will work to develop a procurement strategy to ensure that where possible procurement exercises can benefit local communities. This may involve breaking down contracts or making the process to bid for contracts as simple as possible within the rules and regulations that must be observed. This strategy will also look at more than just financial cost and consider what additional value can be generated through the purchasing power of local anchor organisations.
- 3) Develop the corporate culture of procurement and commissioning and foster a deeper relationship between procurement and economic development for Community Wealth Building.
- 4) Continue to routinely monitor/analyse local spending adding a focus on identifying any missed opportunities for local supply.
- 5) Review and adapt internal procurement policies to increase spend with local/target populations where possible.

Embedding social value into purchasing decisions

- 1) Ensure social value and community benefit goals are given adequate weighting in all regulated procurements.
- 2) Embed anchor employment including Fair Work First and sustainability priorities into social value requirements in all regulated procurements.



NHS Western Isles will contribute to the environment, sustainability and assets through growing the social, ecological, and economic value for local communities

The organisation will achieve this through completion of the following actions.

Adopting stretching policies, processes, targets and management systems

- 1) A food waste dewatering unit will be purchased that will allow food waste to be sent to the local biodigester which feeds the Biogas CHP plant. Food waste monitoring will begin on installation of de-watering unit.
- 2) F-gases monitoring will be embedded in 2024.
- 3) A review will be undertaken in 2024-25 of fleet emissions tracking and what information needs to be gathered to provide more accurate figures.
- 4) A review of the EMS system and introduction of an island appropriate system in 2024-25.
- 5) A net-zero route map for three properties has been produced. This will be reviewed during 2024-25 for feasibility of implementation of recommendations and rolled out to other properties, where appropriate.
- 6) Decarbonising of properties will be reviewed (e.g. retrofitting energy saving measures like heat pumps) and funding sought for any suitable projects.
- 7) Staff awareness sessions will begin 2024-25 on saving energy, e.g. switching off monitors, lights etc.
- 8) Waste reduction initiatives -business case being prepared to autoclave clinical waste onsite, reducing waste shipped to mainland and incinerated by around 80%. If successful bid, Clinical Waste Unit will be installed 2024.
- 9) In 2024-25 IT will undertake a review of end-of-life IT equipment disposal (currently crushed) and assess possibility of upcycling or using for training purposes within local charities and organisations.
- 10) Travel Subgroup will produce an Action Plan working towards net-zero and increased Active Travel Goals.

Expanding community access to NHS property

- 1) A promotional campaign will run 2024-25, showcasing the benefits of the garden in WIH, to increase the use. Disabled access will be reviewed. Further expansion projects will be assessed.
- 2) Cycle Friendly Award including bike shelters and improvements to facilities- to be achieved throughout NHS premises to enable active travel for staff and the public.

Working in partnership to maximise the wider value of NHS estates

- 1) A Stage 0-2 bid to Sustrans has been approved for walk, wheel and cycle paths around Western Isles Hospital, Uist & Barra Hospital and St Brendans. This will include planting local species plants around the walkways to enhance biodiversity. Stage 2 of the Sustrans project will continue and a contractor will be engaged to scope the project outline.
- 2) Supporting access to affordable housing or housing for key workers using NHS estate and conducting a housing impact assessment with CnES.



NHS Western Isles will increase Service delivery and reach to benefit diverse and disadvantaged communities.

The organisation will achieve this through completion of the following actions.

Designing and delivering core services to reach and benefit disadvantaged communities

- 1) Work with local partners and PHS list teams in data gathering and needs assessments to understand local needs, issues and hard to reach groups and how this changes over time.
- 2) Work with partners (locally and nationally) on specific targeted projects to reduce inequalities in key areas e.g. screening and vaccination uptake.
- 3) Work with the ADP to expand community access to specialist and recovery services, including training and funding of service delivery.

Influencing sustainable practices in the NHS and community

- 1) Work with community planning partners to tackle poverty including child poverty and fuel poverty.
- 2) Develop the use of community engagement tools such as the National Standards for Community Engagement.
- 3) Work with community planning partners to develop strong connections with local businesses, third sector or community groups to help them innovate or otherwise support their success.
- 4) Develop robust and bespoke community benefit procurement access through the national community benefits portal. Utilise partnership with the Third Sector to ensure wide distribution and access.
- 5) Provide Health Improvement advice, support and training to employers and employees.
- 6) Provide awareness sessions and training to employers/employees on the cost of living and the impact it has on our mental and physical health.
- 7) Employees are provided with training along with awareness sessions from local and national agencies who can provide support during cost of living crisis, e.g. energy and financial advice.
- 8) The Place Standard evidence will be utilised to inform the LOIP and community locality planning.



NHS Western Isles will become an exemplar anchor institution through leadership and working more closely with local partners

The organisation will achieve this through completion of the following actions.

Partnering with other anchor institutions across the Outer Hebrides

- 1) Work with the community planning partnership and the sustainable delivery group to create and develop strong place-based partnerships with other local organisations.
- 2) Align with the partnership Community Wealth Building Plan to share anchor development on local economic development and procurement opportunities.
- 3) Supporting Employability Partners.
- 4) Developing a systems approach to Physical Activity.
- 5) Leading the Community Led Local Development Partnership.
- 6) Increasing local community activity through funding and resourcing.

Partnering with other NHS anchors

- 1) Join partnership with other health anchors at multiple levels-place, system, region and nationally.
- 2) Support anchor work internally and build support including inclusion in NHS Western Isles' Delivery Plan.

Metrics

Scottish Government have produced a set of metrics to measure NHS Boards' performance as an anchor institution. These metrics are currently being assessed and will be used to measure our progress.

The metrics will be utilised to build a baseline understanding of current practice to know where to prioritise action and establish informed goals. The audit will generate information on purchasing behaviour, use of estates, employment practices and environmental impact which will then inform goal-setting and targets for shifting behaviours based on current levels of practice. Data is also vital for measuring the impact of interventions and building the business case for future investment.

Governance and Reporting.

Activities to improve NHS Western Isles' capability as an anchor within the community are ongoing within the organisation. Therefore, this plan has set out to engage staff across NHS Western Isles to capture the areas of performance and areas which could benefit from further strategic level leadership.

Meet with Sustainability Steering Group to discuss performance and benchmarking to agree way forward, to include governance arrangements and key partnerships.

The governance structure within NHS Western Isles to monitor the implementation of this strategic plan is outlined as follows:

Executive lead	Director of Public Health
Governance committee	Board
NHS Western Isles board reporting frequency	Annually

References

National Performance Framework <https://nationalperformance.gov.scot/national-outcomes>

NHS National Procurement Strategy 2021-2026 [NHS NSS National Procurement Strategy 2021 - 2026](#)

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United Nations Sustainable Development Goals <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>

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