

An abstract graphic consisting of several overlapping, curved, fan-like shapes in various shades of green and blue, radiating from a central point on the left side of the page.

OUR ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

From Understanding to Action

Introduction

We have been reporting annually on energy, water, waste and business travel since 2012 in line with *Greening Government Commitments* and we have taken steps to reduce our impacts.

We know we need to do much more – to follow suit on our environmental ambition for the sector*, to play our full part in meeting the UK's net zero target, and to do what we can, within our sphere of control and influence, to respond to the climate and environmental crisis.

This document sets out:



where we are
in our
environmental
journey

what we know
about our
environmental
impacts and
carbon footprint

our commitment
to plan, act and
change

Key terms

Net zero – What the science says is needed to limit global temperature rise to below 2 degrees Celsius – reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to as close to zero as possible by the middle of this century, with the small amount of remaining emissions absorbed through natural carbon sinks like forests, and new technologies such as carbon capture.

Carbon footprint – An indicator of climate change impact, measured in GHG emissions and based on energy, travel, waste etc, most commonly given in tonnes carbon dioxide (CO₂) or carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e).

Carbon dioxide equivalent – A number of GHGs contribute to global warming and climate change. The major GHGs are carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄) and nitrous oxide (N₂O). Each GHG has a different global warming potential. Carbon dioxide equivalent is a way of expressing different GHG emissions in a single measure.

* Goal 3 of our 2010-20 strategy *Great Art and Culture for Everyone*: 'the arts, museums and libraries are resilient and environmentally sustainable' and now 'cultural organisations and individuals lead the way in their approach to environmental responsibility', one of four investment principles in our 2020-2030 strategy *Let's Create*.

Looking back and looking forward

In our 2021-24 Delivery Plan – the first under our strategy for 2020-2030, *Let's Create* – we committed to undertaking an organisation-wide environmental review and to publishing a new environmental policy and action plan.

So far...

- The **environmental review** has been completed. Looking at the past and present, we better understand where we are in our environmental journey and how and where we need to do better in the future.
- We have defined a new **environmental policy** outlining our key environmental commitments and priorities.
- We are working on our **environmental action plan**, but want to take more time for wider engagement internally, and also externally.

Our environmental review



What next?

- We will publish a more detailed report in January 2022.
- Our action plan will be in place by spring 2022.
- We will report on our 2021/22 impacts and carbon footprint in summer 2022.

About Arts Council England

What we do

We champion, develop and invest in artistic and cultural experiences that enrich people's lives.

We support activities across the arts, museums and libraries – from theatre to digital art, reading to dance, music to literature, and crafts to collections.

Sector investment 2018-22

£1.45 billion

of public money from government

£860 million

from the National Lottery

£1.57 billion

of government money via the Culture Recovery Fund

An arm's length body

We are an arm's length non-departmental public body of the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. As such we work to principles, policies and standards which apply to public service bodies – in areas ranging from financial reporting to procurement.

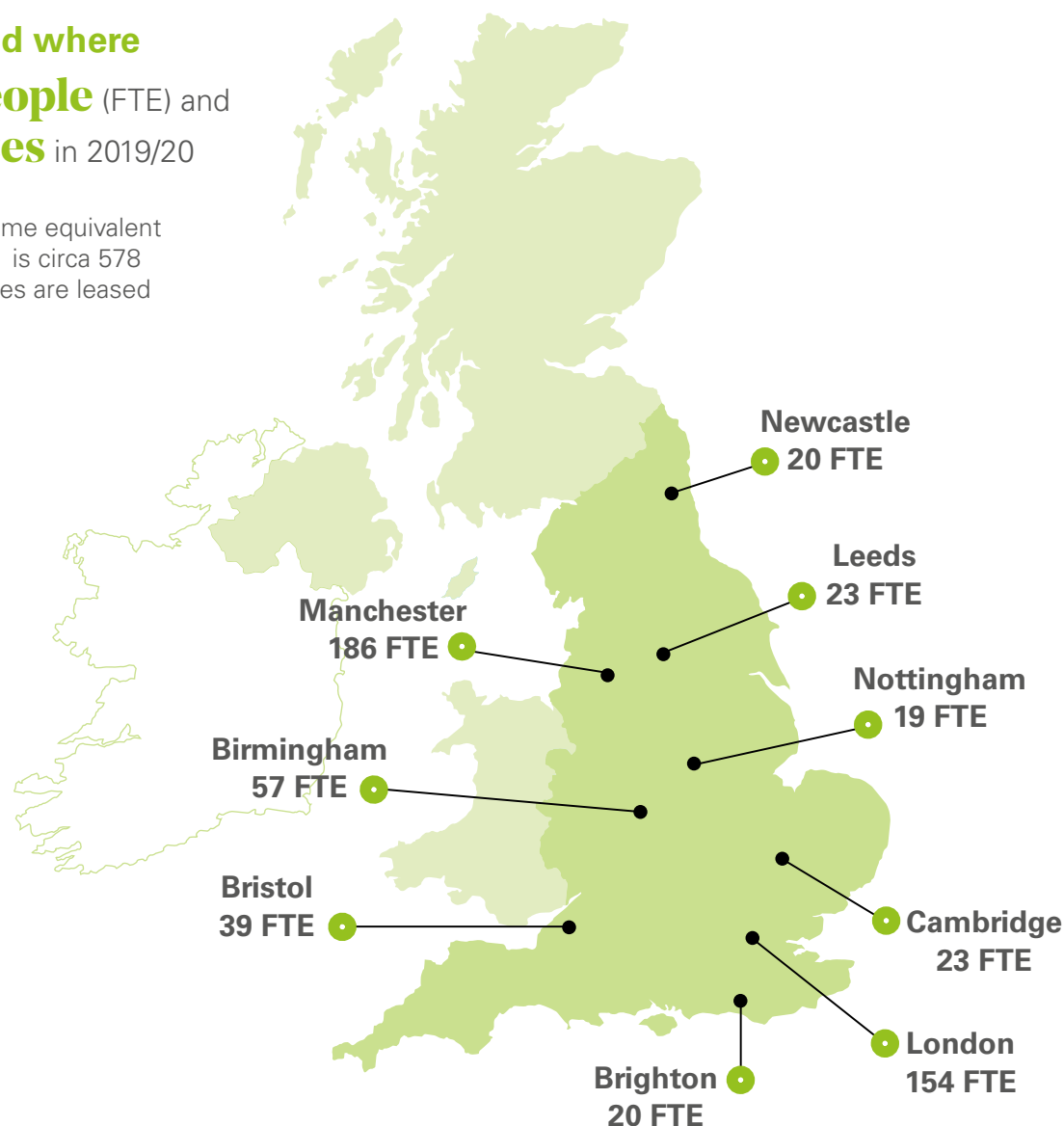
Staff and running costs 2019/20

£36.8 million

Who and where

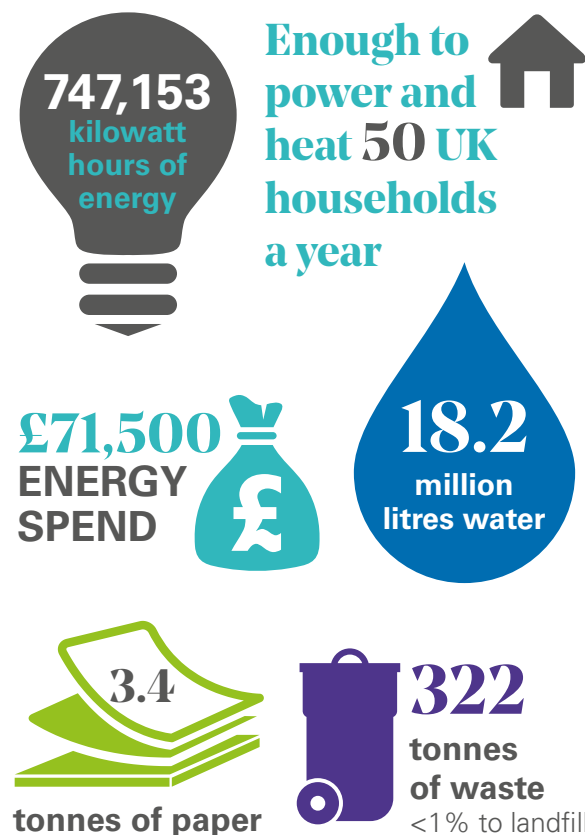
541 people (FTE) and
9 offices in 2019/20

FTE = full-time equivalent
FTE in 2021 is circa 578
All our offices are leased



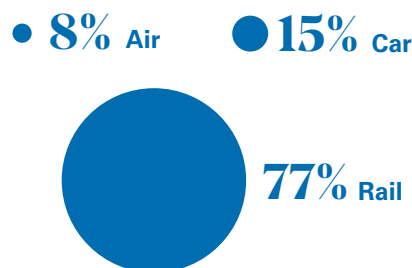
Arts Council England Environmental snapshot 2019/20

9 offices – 4,500 square metres

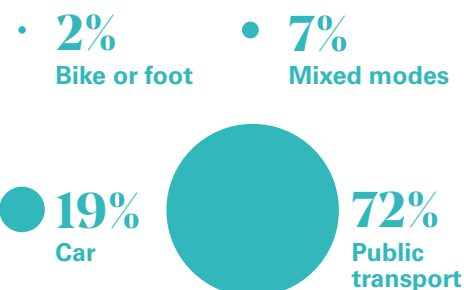


Travel for and to work

2 million miles business travel

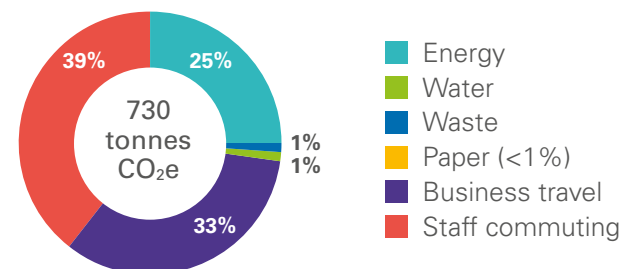


2.5 million miles staff commuting

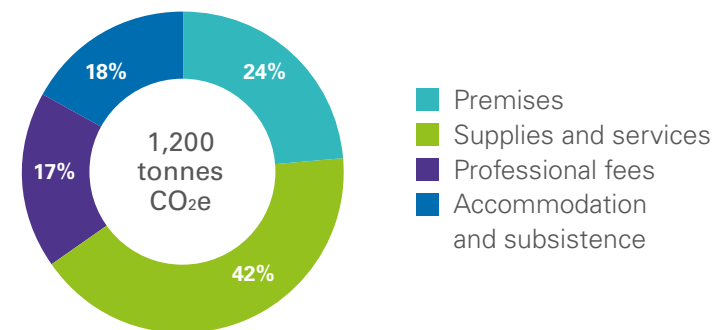


Carbon footprint 2019/20

Offices and travel – based on volumes, distances etc.



Purchased goods and services – based on £7.2 million spend



Offices, travel, purchased goods and services =
1,930 tonnes CO₂e

1,930 tonnes CO₂e = 5,280 people flying London-Venice return

Notes:

- The carbon footprint is relatively comprehensive and a good indicator of our climate change impact. It is calculated using a range of data sources, some more accurate, (eg business travel impacts are based on detailed travel expenses), and some less (eg staff commuting impacts are estimated based on the results of a survey).
- There are a few areas of impact we weren't able to include in the 2019/20 analysis, notably impacts relating to: caring for and touring the Arts Council Collection; waste electronics and electrical equipment; and digital systems and services such as data centres and website hosting.

Environmental actions since 2019

People



- Two Environmental Responsibility sponsors on our Executive Board, one sector-facing and one internal-facing
- Two full-time Environmental Responsibility roles in place and five area leads for our Environmental Responsibility Investment Principle
- 2019 pilot project for our South East office to raise environmental awareness and engage employees on what kind of action we could take
- 2021 staff survey, with an 80% response rate, which helped us understand what employees think about our environmental impacts and actions

Place



- Relocated our South West office in 2019 to a building with an A-rated Energy Performance Certificate and an 'Excellent' rating under BREEAM (Buildings Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Methodology)
- Energy audit done for our South East office in 2019 and our West Midlands office in 2021
- Upgraded to LED lighting and installed double-glazed windows with sustainably sourced timber frames at our West Midlands office – our third biggest office and the one over which we have greatest control

Travel



- Reduced business travel mileage prior to the pandemic – 25% less in 2019/20 compared with 2018/19 – through the increased use of remote working and online collaboration tools and a focus on reducing travel for internal meetings
- Developed new procedures to keep travel for internal meetings to a minimum as we move to a hybrid working model
- Estimated the impacts of staff commuting for the first time, based on the results of a staff survey in 2021, with a 73% response rate

Technology and digital



- Reduced paper use – 54% less paper purchased in 2019/20 compared with 2018/19 – mainly through the introduction of new electronic documentation procedures and online collaboration tools
- Reconditioned 75 old tablets and donated them to a school in a disadvantaged neighbourhood

Pension



Most of our employees, past and present, are members of the Arts Council Retirement Plan (1994). We are one of six employers – all arts, cultural and creative bodies – participating in the Plan and members of its Board of Trustees, which is independent of Arts Council England.

All Trustees have been doing environmental, social and governance training. The amount of money in the Plan going into responsible investment funds has increased and 10% is now in a fund focused on companies who perform well on environmental, social and governance and are preparing for climate change.

Environmental responsibility policy

The environmental and climate crisis is the most significant challenge facing all of us. Its effects are being felt across the world, in the UK, in England, in our communities, in our sector – but affecting the most disadvantaged and the least responsible most of all.

We understand the unique role the cultural sector can play in positive environmental change – finding and demonstrating new and better ways of doing things for people and the planet, helping audiences and communities to connect with and interpret what is happening and inspiring them to take action.

As the national development agency for creativity and culture, the most important role we can play is to support this positive environmental change. We are doing this by building on the solid foundation laid by our Environmental Programme, running since 2012, and now working to help ‘cultural organisations and individuals lead the way in their approach to environmental responsibility’ in line with our 2020-30 strategy *Let’s Create*.

We will lead by example in terms of our own environmental responsibility.

This is our commitment:

- **We will make environmental responsibility integral to how we work, where we work and who we work with to fulfil our sector-facing role.**
- **We will use our position and influence to build environmental understanding and advocate for positive environmental change with those who work for and with us, from our employees to our service providers and our partners.**
- **We will develop and improve understanding of our own environmental impacts and performance and do more to better communicate this, internally and externally.**

By 2023/24:

- **we will have reduced our office energy use emissions and business travel emissions by 25% compared with 2019/20, and;**
- **we will have a clearly defined pathway to net zero in line with the UK’s net zero target.**

Our priority areas



People



Place



Travel



Technology



Procurement



Pension

Our priority areas



People:

environmental training, skills development and capacity-building for leadership and employees



Place:

greening our workplaces and office working and engaging employees on greener home working



Travel:

reducing business travel and promoting sustainable travel options for business travel and staff commuting



Technology:

engaging with key technology and digital service providers to understand impacts and explore low and zero carbon and circular systems and solutions



Procurement:

developing clearer internal guidance on how our procurement choices can contribute environmental, social and financial value



Pension:

engaging with our pension plan partners, advisors and members to develop understanding of responsible investment and future divestment options

What next?

Over the next few months we will be working on a more detailed report on the results of the organisation-wide environmental review. Through the review, we have already identified a range of actions we can take to improve our environmental performance. We will be consulting internally and externally to build on this and have a comprehensive action plan in place by Spring 2022.

January 2022

Publication of a more detailed environmental report following on from the 2019/20 environmental snapshot

Spring 2022

Environmental action plan in place

Summer 2022

Reporting on our 2021/22 environmental impacts and carbon footprint

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