

A large graphic on the left side of the page, consisting of a series of overlapping, curved shapes that fan out from a central point on the right. The shapes are colored in a gradient from light green to dark blue. The text "ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY ACTION PLAN 2022-24" is written in white, bold, serif font on the leftmost, darkest green shape.

**ENVIRONMENTAL  
RESPONSIBILITY  
ACTION PLAN  
2022-24**

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# Introduction

## Developing our plan – from understanding to action

In our [Delivery Plan](#) for 2021-24 we committed to an environmental review of our organisation, to publish a new environmental policy and action plan and to improve and develop our environmental responsibility.

With the support of our environmental partner Julie's Bicycle, we completed a carbon footprint and environmental snapshot for the Arts Council for 2019/20. This allowed us to better understand our environmental impacts, practice and performance. The findings were published in November 2021 in [Our Environmental Responsibility: From Understanding to Action](#). A follow up [Environmental Review Report](#) was published in April 2022. This provided further detail on the carbon footprint process and analysis. We would recommend reading both reports before this plan.

Completion of the footprint and snapshot resulted in an update to our environmental policy, which included new specific commitments for 2023/24:

**25%** We will reduce our office energy use and business travel emissions by 25%, compared with 2019/20

**0%** We will have a clearly defined pathway to net zero in line with the UK's net zero target

The carbon reduction target focuses on areas of our operations where we have good data and the greatest control, allowing us to make meaningful, measurable reductions to our carbon footprint.

In addition, [Our Environmental Responsibility: From Understanding to Action](#), identified six priority areas for future action:

### People



### Place



### Travel



### Technology



### Procurement



### Pension



Both the snapshot and environmental review reports have informed this third and final document in the series, our Environmental Responsibility (ER) Action Plan 2022-24. The plan sets out our planned outcomes across the priority areas for the period 2022-24. Each outcome has specific actions, responsibilities and timescales assigned that support our journey towards net zero. The outcomes and actions were developed by the Arts Council ER team with the six priority area teams. A completed plan was reviewed and approved by our management committee.

It is important to say that the plan is a live, working document and will be reviewed and updated at least once a year.

# Our areas of influence

Like all organisations, the Arts Council operates within spheres of control and influence, and these in part determine our carbon footprint. We recognise that the largest area of our carbon footprint relates to the organisations and individuals that we fund. The impact of this investment is addressed via the Environmental Programme for our National Portfolio Organisations and Sector Support Organisations. Since 2012, this programme has helped the sector to reduce its carbon footprint and includes data, planning and reporting requirements in our funding agreements. Individuals and organisations can also embed ER in their projects through our other funding programmes including National Lottery Project Grants and Capital Investment Programme. We continue to develop new resources to support this, with an increased focus on the wider creative and cultural sector highlighted in our strategy for 2020-2030, [Let's Create](#).



As such, our operations and offices are the main focus of the ER action plan. We have greater ability to make changes and take control across some of our operational areas, such as travel and training. However, as an arm's-length body, some of our procurement must be made through government frameworks and the bank we use is mandated. Furthermore, our offices are leased rather than owned, which limits the changes we can make – though we can influence change through conversation, knowledge sharing and leadership. These limitations and opportunities are reflected in the plan.

We also recognise that there is a carbon footprint associated with the Arts Council Collection, and the touring and loaning of its artworks. Storage of the Collection is currently managed by Hayward Gallery, Southbank. The Collection is to be rehoused in Coventry in a single repurposed building, designed and operated to high environmental standards. The Collection was not included in the 2019/20 footprint and snapshot, but an initial action is included in the plan that focuses on the storage facility. Further outcomes and actions may be added in later versions of the plan.

# Progress and planned outcomes

## Understanding and communication

Our updated environmental policy, as set out in [Our Environmental Responsibility: From Understanding to Action](#), makes a commitment that 'we will develop and improve understanding of our own environmental impacts and performance and do more to better communicate this, internally and externally'. We have developed outcomes and specific actions around this commitment.

## Priority areas



### People

All staff are supported in their personal and professional development through our learning and development programme. During the pandemic, most of this programme moved online, which improved accessibility to training and reduced staff travel and related carbon emissions.

For this priority area, ER becomes part of everyone's job at the Arts Council and is seen as integral to what we do. We plan to develop and deliver environmental training for staff at all levels, to build ER capacity and skills, with additional specialist training if needed according to the staff member's role. Our leadership teams will be confident advocates for ER.



### Place

The Arts Council operates from nine offices across England, all of which are leased. We currently operate to a hybrid working model, with a mix of home and office working. This makes data collection around environmental impacts more difficult, and we are aware that this business model may result in an overall increase in our footprint. However, our aim is to support the best green outcomes for this working model.

In addition to our target to reduce office energy use, we will aim to achieve a minimum Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) C rating across our office estate. We will improve our understanding of the environmental performance of our offices, facilities and practices. We intend all of our offices, within the limits of our control, to demonstrate environmental best practice, be supplied with renewable energy and be climate resilient.



## Travel

With our new hybrid working model, larger meetings are now held virtually by default. Our Essential Car User policy has been updated and is now closed to new users, and our Cycle to Work scheme was updated in 2021 to include e-bikes. We are currently investigating electric vehicle salary sacrifice options with a carbon neutral company car provider.

For this priority area, we are working towards a carbon reduction target of 25 per cent less business travel emissions compared with 2019/20 by 2023/24. To support this, we will promote sustainable travel options for both business travel and staff commuting.



## Technology

While information and communication technology (ICT) purchases are largely made through government frameworks, there is still space for us to make positive changes. For example, as part of the recent update of our mobile phone estate, the monthly allowance for staff to use their personal phones for work and retire their second 'work phone' was increased. This led to a big drop in the number of new work phones needed. Also, in switching to virtualisation and cloud-based services, we have already reduced our data centre (and corresponding energy) requirements.

We will engage with key technology and service providers to better understand our impacts associated with the ICT equipment and digital services we use. We also plan to explore low and zero carbon and circular systems and solutions, in order to achieve a quantifiable reduction in the impacts associated with our technology.



## Procurement

Our procurement choices can contribute to environmental, social and financial value. We plan to put green procurement and policy in place for key areas of our spend and ensure that staff have the knowledge and training to make better, greener choices. Our tender procedures will include ER. We will improve our understanding of key supplier practices and aim to encourage our suppliers to put in place their own targets, if they have not already done so.



## Pension

The Arts Council's main pension scheme is an independent scheme, rather than civil service or other public sector schemes. We are one of five employers (all arts, cultural and creative bodies) participating in the plan. The pension is overseen by a Board of Trustees. A member of our Executive Board is a Trustee, and our Chief Financial Accountant represents all active members of the pension. The scheme is administered by a private company.

Progress has already been made in transferring investments to funds that consider ethical, environmental, social and governance (ESG) factors. We plan to engage with our pension plan partners, advisors and members to develop a full understanding of responsible investment and future options.

# Our actions

Implementation of the detailed actions below will result in key changes that align with the three elements of our ER Investment Principle:

## Understand the data

We will be able to increase the scope of our carbon footprint. Implementation of the action plan will improve our understanding of our environmental impacts, through the development of a more detailed and accurate picture of our practices and performance across the organisation.

## Plan, action and change

Changes in practice are proposed across all six of our priority areas. Reviews may lead to future changes in policy, and an initial action is included relating to our Collection. The areas where we expect to see the biggest and quickest changes relate to our pension, business travel, and energy use.

## Influence, educate and advocate

Developing and running staff ER training will improve knowledge and build confidence in taking environmental action at work and at home. We aim to improve our internal ER leadership and engagement through cross cutting actions such as the green forum, staff surveys and provision of the staff handbook.

	Outcome	Action	Team Lead	Timescale
<b>Understanding and communication</b>	<b>Improved understanding of our own environmental impacts and performance</b>	Complete the actions across all of our six priority areas, to identify and fill gaps in the Arts Council's carbon footprint.	ER/Priority area leads	2022-24
		Investigate whether Arts Council England can use Creative Green Tools and/or alternative systems such as Science Based Targets.	ER	2023
		Collect data relating to the existing Arts Council England Collection storage facilities and forecast data for the new storage facility.	Collections	2023
	<b>Improved communication of our environmental impacts and performance</b>	Publish an annual carbon footprint of the Arts Council.	ER	2024
		Update our action plan on an annual basis, as a minimum. This will include review of our carbon reduction targets and longer term aims and ambitions.	ER/Priority area leads	2024
		Review how we streamline our environmental reporting for our organisation and all stakeholders.	ER/Planning	2023
		Agree a format and regularly report on ER to our governance leadership.	ER/Planning	2022
		Continue to discuss ER with peers, stakeholders, and government departments, and pursue opportunities for cross working and climate leadership.	ER	2024

	Outcome	Action	Team Lead	Timescale
<b>People</b>	<b>ER is a part of everyone's job at Arts Council England</b>	Develop an ER value in action, as part of our internal guidance for our values in action (as part of the development of Let's Create, we created an internal set of values for the Arts Council).	HR	2022
		Relevant job descriptions will be reviewed and updated to reference ER.	ER/HR	2022
		Create a Staff Green Handbook and add this to the Arts Council England induction pack.	ER	2022
		Explore opportunities for staff engagement on environmental responsibility, including a green forum and an environmental pledge – actions or practices that staff can sign up to.	ER	2024
		Ensure all staff are aware of our environmental policy commitments and the carbon reduction targets we are working towards, and our action plan.	ER and Communications	2022
	<b>All Arts Council England staff have ER training, including Executive Board</b>	Develop and run an ER training programme for all staff – to build awareness, and support action and advocacy. The programme is likely to be made up of a mix of e-learning modules and drop-in/workshop sessions.	ER/Learning and Development	2022-23
	<b>Staff with specific ER roles have the environmental training and skills they need</b>	Review ER training needs for the ER team, priority area and Investment Principle area leads. Research training options and complete as appropriate, eg energy management, green procurement, carbon footprinting.	ER	2023
	<b>Arts Council leadership (director and above) are confident advocates for ER</b>	Discuss with our directors, Executive Board and National Council, and take a decision regarding additional training on climate leadership, over and above the ER training.	ER	2022-24

	Outcome	Action	Team Lead	Timescale
<b>Place</b>	<b>25% less office energy use emissions compared with 2019/20</b>	Move our London office to significantly smaller, naturally ventilated premises. The floor space will be halved with a corresponding reduction in our carbon footprint.	Estates	2022
		Engage with landlords of all our offices on environmental monitoring with a view to reviewing existing lease agreements around energy.	Estates	2022-23
		Develop and implement a building energy management and monitoring plan for our offices (covering lighting, heating, cooling and appliances).	Estates	2023
		Annually review our energy use emissions against our carbon reduction target.	Estates	2022-23
	<b>All our offices, within the limits of our control, demonstrate environmental best practice, are supplied with renewable energy and are climate resilient</b>	Refresh our Property Strategy to build strong environmental criteria and climate resilience into decision-making, including review of car parking provision.	Estates	2024
		As part of our energy management and monitoring plan we will keep our energy procurement under rolling review, switching to renewable energy or a green tariff energy supply when contracts come up for renewal.	Estates	2022
		Scope options for partial landscaping within the parking area at our Birmingham office, feeding into ambitions around staff wellbeing and biodiversity improvements.	Estates	2022-23
		Complete a Climate Change Risk Assessment for our estates and operations and, if appropriate, develop a Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan. This will include review of local net zero targets and flood zone information.	Estates/ER	2023
	<b>We will have an improved understanding of our offices, facilities and practices</b>	Review waste management practices and associated contractors for our offices. Where our waste collection is not mandated to the local authority, we will look to consolidate collections with waste service providers to ensure consistency across the estate and responsible waste management. This may include bespoke collections such as food waste, where this is not currently offered by the local authority.	Estates	2023-24
		Review water consumption across our offices and investigate what steps we can take to encourage efficient use of water.	Estates	2024

	Outcome	Action	Team Lead	Timescale
<b>Travel</b>	<b>25% less business travel emissions compared with 2019/20</b>	Review and refresh our Ways of Working at least once a year.	HR	2022
		Review the quarterly carbon data from our travel booking system to ensure we are on track to meet our target, and investigate whether additional detail can be obtained from the system.	Finance/ER	2022-24
		Review and update our flight policies in accordance with the Greening Government Commitments, and add carbon related information to the flight application form/process.	ER/Finance	2022
		Review our policy and procedures for major national and international events, in relation to our carbon targets.	ER/Finance	2022
		Review and update our essential car user policy, to encourage use of sustainable transport options for business use, where practicable.	HR	2023
		Complete our investigation into electric vehicle salary sacrifice options.	HR/Finance	2023
		Review our mileage allowance for cycling (for business travel).	HR/Finance	2022-23
	<b>We have done everything we can to encourage sustainable travel for staff commuting</b>	Our Birmingham office is located within Birmingham's clean air zone (CAZ) (launched in 2021). We will review our parking spaces and the possibility of installing electric vehicle chargers, once the CAZ business levies are confirmed.	Estates	2023
		Publish a Staff Green Handbook with sections on travel choices and associated impacts.	ER	2022
		Review local initiatives on public transport and cycling for each office and make information available to staff.	Estates/ER	2022
		Complete an annual staff environmental survey, including questions on commuting, to improve our data.	ER/HR/ Communications	2023

Technology	Outcome	Action	Team Lead	Timescale
<b>Technology</b>	<b>We have an improved understanding of the impacts associated with the ICT equipment and digital services we use</b>	Engage with key digital service providers to understand impacts relating to the services they provide us as well as their own environmental commitment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>outsourced data centres</li> <li>cloud service providers</li> <li>website service provider</li> </ul>	IT/Communications	2024
		Establish the energy use and associated carbon footprint of our ICT equipment (devices, systems and networks) for 2022/23 and a monitoring system from 2023/24.	IT	2022-24
		Include ICT and digital services in our environmental reporting and carbon footprint.	IT/Communications/ER	2023-24
		Establish a process to track the ICT equipment we purchase, use and dispose of, including monitoring of end-of-life ICT equipment and waste, electronic and electrical equipment (WEEE), working with WEEE service providers and contractors.	IT/Estates	2024
	<b>A quantifiable reduction in impacts associated with the ICT equipment and digital services we use</b>	Develop an energy efficiency plan for office ICT equipment.	IT	2023
		Review and update our procedures for end-of-life ICT equipment with a reuse first approach.	IT/Estates	2023
		Complete an audit of our website, removing outdated content that will help to improve efficiency, and compare energy usage once complete.	Communications	2022
		Ensure any new services are cloud-based and will engage with providers to collect data on energy sources and usage.	IT	Ongoing – 2024
		Develop and implement guidance on environmentally responsible design of digital publications, working with digital designers.	ER and Communications	2023
		Raise staff awareness via the Staff Green Handbook, which will include a section on ICT and digital impacts.	IT/ER	2022

	Outcome	Action	Team Lead	Timescale
<b>Procurement</b>	<b>Green procurement and policy are in place for key areas of spend</b>	Update our procurement policy, integrating sustainability and building on social value criteria.	Procurement	2024
		Engage with Crown Commercial Services (CCS) on best environmental practice for key areas of procurement.	Procurement	2024
		Improve our understanding of CCS advice and guidance and how to implement this within Arts Council England.	Procurement	2024
	<b>Tender procedures include environmental responsibility</b>	Update our tender procedures for contracts £10,000 and over to strengthen the sustainability section of the process, with inclusion of a standard tender question.	Procurement	2024
		Provide guidance and roll out associated training for each department.	Procurement	2024
	<b>We have improved our understanding of key supplier practices and staff have the knowledge and training to make 'green' choices</b>	Review our 10 largest suppliers, to understand their existing policies and practice, and encourage change.	Procurement	2024
		Create a list of preferred options within the choices provided by our main supplier of office supplies.	Procurement	2024
		Pilot inclusive green procurement for professional services, eg for smaller companies who don't have environmental certifications.	Procurement	2024
		Develop internal guidance on how decentralised procurement choices can contribute to environmental, social and financial value, and deliver procurement training.	Procurement	2024
	<b>Pension</b>	<b>Our pension scheme and approach to investment has been reviewed at staff and Trustee level.</b>	Undertake a staff survey, to review staff (who are pension fund members) appetite for responsible investment.	ER/HR/ Communications
Propose that a standing environmental item is added to the Trustee meeting agenda. We believe this is best practice in accordance with our Investment Principles <a href="#">Governance Guide</a> .			Procurement	2024
Propose that Trustees review the various bonds, property investments etc within the fund, in relation to environmental, social and governance (ESG) factors.			Trustees	2022

# Glossary

## Arm's-length body (ALB)

Public bodies which operate at varying degrees of independence from the government.

Arts Council England is one of 37 ALBs reporting into the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport – this means we work to principles, policies and standards which apply to public service bodies.

## Let's Create and Environmental Responsibility

Arts Council England's strategy for 2020-2030. Sets out three Outcomes and four Investment Principles (IP), one of which is Environmental Responsibility (ER). Three elements underpinning the ER IP:

- understand the data
- plan, action and change
- influence, educate and advocate

## Executive Board

Arts Council England's Executive Board is chaired by the Chief Executive and comprises of two Deputy Chief Executives, Chief Financial Officer (CFO), Chief Operating Officer and two Executive Directors.

The CFO leads on Environmental Responsibility (ER) internally. The Executive Director leads on Enterprise and Innovation for the ER IP.

## Greening Government Commitments

Set out high level targets for central government departments and their agencies – including ALBs such as Arts Council England – to reduce their environmental impacts as well as standards on reporting on key sustainability areas.

## Government environmental reporting guidelines

Guidelines to help organisations report on their environmental impacts – including their climate change impact via greenhouse gas accounting or carbon footprinting – covering both reporting required by regulation and voluntary reporting.

## Net zero

What the science says is needed to limit global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius (i.e. reduce greenhouse gas emissions to as close to zero as possible by 2050) with the small amount of remaining emissions absorbed through natural carbon sinks like forests, and new technologies such as carbon capture.

In 2019, the UK government set a Net Zero 2050 target (achieving net zero emissions by 2050 compared with 1990) – via a revision to the UK Climate Change Act and, in October 2021, published its [Net Zero strategy](#)

## Greenhouse gases (GHGs)

GHG traps heat in the atmosphere contributing to global heating and climate change. Carbon dioxide is the GHG most talked about – it makes up about 75% of all GHGs. The other GHGs are methane, nitrous oxide and fluorinated or F-gases (such as refrigerants).

Different activities generate different GHGs (e.g. deforestation releases carbon dioxide, landfill waste generates methane). Some activities emit more than one GHG (e.g. for cars, burning fossil fuel generates carbon dioxide and fuel combustion generates nitrous oxide). Different GHGs trap different levels of heat and last for different lengths of time (e.g. methane is 25 times more impactful than carbon dioxide, but less long-lived).

A measure of the climate impact of different activities expressed as CO<sub>2</sub> (carbon dioxide only) or CO<sub>2</sub>e (if other greenhouse gas emissions are accounted for). Impact is calculated by multiplying a unit of volume or weight by a conversion factor based on carbon intensity of what is being consumed or wasted:

- 1 kilowatt hour (kWh) electricity use = X kg CO<sub>2</sub>e
- 1 tonne landfill waste = X kg CO<sub>2</sub>e

UK Government GHG Conversion Factors for Company Reporting are published annually. Arts Council's 2019-20 carbon footprint was calculated using 2019 government factors.

## Carbon footprint and conversion factors

## Carbon dioxide equivalent (CO<sub>2</sub>e)

A measure used to compare the emissions from various GHGs on the basis of their global warming potential (i.e. the amount of warming one tonne of a GHG would create over 100 years relative to one tonne of carbon dioxide). For example, the global warming potential for methane is 25, so one tonne of methane is the equivalent of 25 tonnes of carbon dioxide.

## Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions

Three types or scopes of GHG emissions which can be accounted for when calculating a carbon footprint:

- **Scope 1 direct** – emissions from 'owned or operated assets' (e.g. gas boilers, company-owned vehicles, generators)
- **Scope 2 energy indirect** – emissions from energy you buy (that is generated elsewhere) – purchased electricity, heat, steam and cooling
- **Scope 3 other indirect** – emissions from everything else – business travel, purchased goods and services, food and drink, waste disposal, etc.

Arts Council England's 2019-20 footprint covers scopes 1, 2 and 3 emissions.

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