

Environmental Policy

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Date to be reviewed: Oct-Dec 2011



Voluntary Action Westminster acknowledges the connection between the climate crisis and the threat of current and future homelessness, disease, food and water shortages and poverty for millions of people around the world. VAW understands that all organisations, no matter how small, can reduce their carbon emissions and therefore reduce this threat. As such, VAW recognises its responsibility to reduce its carbon and environmental footprints and formally commits itself to being an environmentally responsible organisation. VAW as a strategic second tier body acknowledges its role in promoting an environment that our future generation can enjoy.

VAW will do this through:

Legal compliance

- Comply with all relevant environmental legislations and regulations that affect the organisation.
- VAW will observe environmental legislation as a minimal standard and seek to out-perform current legislative requirements, where practical.

Waste solutions

- Purchase recycled paper and recycle waste paper
- Reduce paper consumption by printing double-sided
- Print only if necessary
- Encourage sharing of copies of agenda and minutes by people in the meeting
- Using scrap paper for minute-taking, printing draft copies, etc
- Reduce junk mails coming to us
- Promoting waste solutions by putting a line at the bottom of each staff member's email saying 'please don't print this email unless absolutely necessary'
- Reuse incoming packaging materials such as boxes and envelopes
- Use glasses and mugs as opposed to disposable alternatives
- Use sugar dispenser instead of individual sachets of sugar
- Use large jars of coffee instead of individual coffee sachets
- Share office supplies and have them centralised
- Central ordering system

- Use PowerPoint presentation when applicable.

Energy use

- Switching off lights when not in use
- Turning off photocopiers/printers at the end of the day
- Turning off computers including the monitor at the end of the day or if it will not be in use for a few hours
- Turning on the heating when the temperature goes down below the acceptable level (i.e. 19 degrees)
- Using natural light as much as possible
- Using energy efficient light bulbs throughout the office where possible.

- Installing timer devices on machinery which automatically switch on/off at certain times to save energy.

- Installing sensor light switches in corridors and toilets to save energy when not being used.

Transport solutions

- Encourage employees to use public transport when travelling to and from work and to partners and other organisations.
- Encourage cycling by providing shower facilities for cyclists and promote a cycle to work loan scheme.

Purchasing and procurement

- Be aware of the environmental effects of products and the credentials of their suppliers; making a conscious decision to choose those who have sound environmental practices.

- To seek and purchase energy efficient equipment or consider reusing equipment where possible.
- Cutting down (or removing) suppliers journeys (CO₂ emissions) by looking at alternatives to multiple deliveries:
 - scheduled ordering times
 - ordering from local suppliers
- Printing as much publicity as possible on recycled paper

Water conservation

- Encourage employees to conserve water by turning off the tap when not in use
- Using dual toilet flush systems.

- Using the existing resources well; ordering bottled water only when necessary.

Monitoring and support

- The chief executive will take responsibility of ensuring the process and policy is upheld within the organisation, with a nominated staff member.
- An annual update will be reported to the Trustees, at the same Board of Trustee meeting as the annual report.
- An eco-update will be presented and discussed at quarterly SLT meetings and will be regularly updated to staff as and when required.
- Staff are required to support this policy in their day to day work and where required, may be asked to be involved with decisions that effect them. It will also be part of the overall induction policy for new staff members and to be monitored through VAW Appraisal System.
- VAW will seek to make all of its current and future premises to be as energy and water efficient as practical. Where it does not own a premises, it will work with the owners to try and achieve this ambition.
- VAW will work with other local charities to spread good practice in the sector.
- The chief executive, Strategic Leadership Team and the nominated staff member will develop an ethos around staff taking an active role around this policy and ensure developments are shared accordingly.