

Environmental Sustainability Policy

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Document Owner: Sustainability Lead

Signed off by: Environmental Sustainability Committee

Date last reviewed:	10/07/2024	
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Policy consultation with:	SMT	
Legal Requirements:		
CQC:	Well-Led – Environmental sustainability – Sustainable development	
Other:		
Related Policies:		
<p>Scope: This policy applies to all operations, activities, and services of Outward, encompassing our staff, the people we support, tenants, and all stakeholders involved in our network. It is designed to guide our environmental sustainability efforts across all organisational levels and departments, ensuring that sustainability principles are integrated into our daily practices, decision-making processes, and long-term planning. The policy extends to our interactions with partners, suppliers, and the broader community, reinforcing our commitment to a sustainable future.</p>		
Policy Equality Impact Assessed		

Version number	Amendments	Reviewed by	Date

This information can be made available in alternative formats, such as easy read or large print. Please contact 0208 980 7101 or email info@outward.org.uk.

1. Policy Statement

At Outward, our commitment to sustainable development is not just a principle; it is a fundamental aspect woven into the fabric of our work. We understand the importance of meeting the needs of the present while safeguarding the ability of future generations to continue to be able to meet theirs. This ethos is particularly crucial in the context of our operations, where we provide care for the people we support and tenants.

2. Purpose

Outward is not just committed to sustainability; we are actively shaping a future where care for our environment is embedded in every action we take. Our journey is not just a path; it is a collective stride towards a more sustainable and harmonious world.

To achieve our sustainability goals, we focus on several key areas:

- **Environmental Impact Assessment:** Regularly, we take a thoughtful look at the environmental impacts of our operations. This is not just a routine check; it is a commitment to understanding and addressing our footprint.
- **Compliance:** We do not merely comply with environmental legislation; we embrace it as a framework for our commitment. Our policies and services are crafted with the environment in mind, ensuring harmony between our goals and regulatory requirements.

- **Policy Integration:** We have a suite of interwoven policies. We ensure that every policy and service development aligns seamlessly with our sustainability commitment. Our priority is not funding at the expense of sustainability; it is finding a balance that benefits both.
- **Promotion of Sustainability:** Within our network of charities, we actively encourage a commitment to the sustainable development philosophy. We believe that our influence extends beyond our immediate operations to create a broader impact.
- **Local Environmental Initiatives:** Our commitment goes beyond the walls of our organisation. We actively participate in and encourage involvement in local environmental initiatives and schemes, realising that sustainability is a collaborative effort.

3. Responsibilities

Our commitment to sustainability is dynamic. We recognise that as the landscape evolves, so should our efforts. Regular reviews and revisions are not just administrative tasks; they are opportunities to enhance our impact and contribute meaningfully to a sustainable future. Improving environmental awareness among our staff is not a task; it is an ongoing journey. Overall responsibility for sustainability at Outward rests with the Outward Board. The **CEO** and **Executive Team** of Outward are responsible for setting policy, objectives and targets and reviewing effectiveness, however all employees at every level have a responsibility for sustainability.

Training for Staff and Workshops for People We Support:

Outward provide staff with the knowledge and tools to contribute to sustainability through tailored training programs, workshops, and resources, empowering them to integrate sustainability into their daily work and decision-making processes. In addition to staff training, we recognise the importance of engaging and empowering the people we support and tenants in our sustainability efforts. We will organise workshops and educational sessions to raise awareness about environmental conservation, promote sustainable living practices, and encourage active participation in our sustainability initiatives.

4. Procedures

We are committing to the UK Government's net zero targets, to reduce our carbon emissions to zero by 2050. To achieve this target, Outward will ensure that to take practical steps to reduce our resource usage and carbon emissions, as well as finding innovative solutions to operational challenges. This may include decisions between the most cost-effective and the "greenest" options, which will require budget consideration.

We commit to:

- Going digital and working towards a paperless office
- Minimising our energy and water usage, considering green energy tariffs
- Maintaining recycling facilities and reducing the use of single-use plastic wherever possible
- Working with corporate partners to reduce the volume of non-recyclable packaging we receive, and reusing recyclable materials in our service delivery for outbound orders
- Using ethical consumables including Fairtrade tea, coffee, and sugar; The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified paper; and responsibly sourced cleaning materials where possible
- Reducing our impact through events by prioritising digital, printing fewer materials, opting for meat-free options and avoiding plastic packaging
- Providing our impact reports as digital by default. When printing is necessary, always using recyclable materials e.g. uncoated paper, recyclable bindings
- Working with our logistics suppliers to minimise carbon emissions in our supply chain e.g. through back loading and efficient use of space
- Supporting our landlords to improve premises' environmental performance
- Sharing and learning alongside our sector peers and corporate partners, to be confident in acting on environmental and sustainability issues
- Working towards using the most sustainable providers feasible, including asking questions of current and prospective suppliers regarding their own practices and approach to their environmental footprint.

5. References/Further Reading

- [Environmental sustainability - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)
- [Environmental sustainability – sustainable development - Care Quality Commission \(cqc.org.uk\)](https://www.cqc.org.uk)
- [Explainer: What Is Sustainability and Why Is It Important? | Earth.Org](https://www.earth.org)
- [What is sustainability? A simple guide to a vital idea | Greenpeace UK](https://www.greenpeace.org)
- [How sustainable living can help counter the climate crisis \(unep.org\)](https://www.unep.org)
- [Sustainability | UNEP - UN Environment Programme](https://www.unep.org)
- [Sustainability | European Environment Agency's home page \(europa.eu\)](https://european-council.europa.eu)

6. General Data Protection Regulations Statement

Outward is committed to compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations and the Data Protection Act 2018. It requires all staff and partners to respect confidentiality and data subjects' rights in line with its policies and procedures.

To ensure compliance with the Regulations staff must ensure that any personal information digitally produced or processed as part of these procedures is appropriately filed within an approved relevant filing system with role-based access control.

Whilst processing paper documents, including those from third parties, these documents must be stored in secure lockable cabinets. Records will be kept for as long as they are needed to meet the operational needs of Outward, together with legal and regulatory requirements. Where there is a deviation from this principle, the reasons for this must be recorded.

A detailed breakdown of retention and deletion of records can be found in Outward's Record Management and Retention Policy.

When disposing of documents containing personal data this should be done via confidential waste.

Please refer to Outward's Data Protection Policy and Procedure for more information.