

How to: combat climate change



Climate change is one of the greatest challenges facing Wales and one that must be tackled together across the third sector and beyond. As the sector which is best positioned to support the most vulnerable communities in Wales, taking climate change into account is critically important for third sector organisations and the people these organisations support. Third sector organisations have the potential to serve as catalysts for action at a local level, helping to build social capital and resilience.

How Climate Change may impact the Third Sector

Climate change is going to cause changes in food supply and security, threats or implications to political stability, and shifting migration patterns. These indirect social and economic effects of climate change, from interrupted services to raising costs of resources, will hit the vulnerable and disadvantaged people harder and faster because they have less capacity to adapt to these new challenges. People who are vulnerable to climate change include those who are less supported by families, friends and agencies.

How can you reduce your impact on the environment?

Reducing your impact on the environment does not have to be a massive change. We are keen to see how you are thinking about your and your beneficiaries' impact on the environment. Below are some small changes you can implement that, in the long term, could make a big difference.

Printing/Paper

Printing is not only a key cost for your group, but is also a huge area for waste. You could try some of the following to reduce both your costs and your environmental impact:

- Implement a policy of reduced or no printing.
- If you do need to print use both sides of the paper when printing where possible which you may find cuts your paper consumption by half.
- Reuse boxes that you receive packages in to send out items again.
- Have paper recycling boxes so your team can recycle where they can including waste papers, lunch wrappers etc.
- Avoid colour printing if possible – set printers to automatically print in black and white.
- Buy recycled toner and ink – this can reduce the amount of metal and plastics going to landfill.
- Place staff manual, handbooks and policies online rather than printing out large hardcopy documents.
- Invest in air hand driers in staff bathrooms to avoid using paper towels.

Transport

Changing the way you transport is a key area in reducing the effect on the environment. Here are some ideas you could try:

- Encourage your team to walk or bike to work.
- Consider flexible working so that not all staff are in the office at once and allow staff to work from home to avoid a commute in to the office one day a week for example.
- Video call rather than travelling to visit

Energy

When it comes to energy, small changes can make a big difference long term:

- Replace light bulbs to energy efficient LED bulbs. These are the most energy efficient lighting technology available on the market. They last much longer and are more durable than other types of lighting.
- If your buildings have periods where they are not in use (e.g. evenings and weekend), try having an out of hours thermostat setting to conserve energy when no-one is in the building.
- Make sure that lights are turned off when rooms/buildings are not in use. You could also invest in automatic switches so that lights switch off in rooms that are not in use.
- Unplug computers when not in use. Encourage staff to completely shut down PCs after hours.
- Look out for energy saving appliances when replacing this includes, computers, printers, fridges etc.

Other things to try

- Use reusable tableware for events that you host.
- Provide filtered water to avoid them purchasing bottled water.
- Consider installing a water boiler in the kitchen to avoid the need to boil the kettle.