

A group of four people are seated around a wooden table in a meeting room, working on laptops. The room has wood-paneled walls and a window in the background. The lighting is warm and focused on the work area.

# CLIMATE ACTION FOR ASSOCIATIONS

## QUICK WINS

# How To Reduce Your Carbon Footprint



# QUICK WINS: HOW TO REDUCE YOUR CARBON FOOTPRINT



**In the spirit of taking small, bite-size steps, there are a number of easy “quick wins” your association can focus on in the office to reduce carbon emissions.**

**Whether or not your business has already started to quantify its carbon emissions, these simple areas of focus can get you started on the right path.**

## **Purchase Eco-friendly Products**

With a little bit of time and attention to detail, buying eco-friendly is an easy habit to get into once you have the correct mindset. Focus on purchasing recycled or re-usable products, as this will greatly reduce your workplace's volume of “mixed waste”, which will be a key component of information to input into your Carbon Calculator.

## **Paperless Office**

Let's be honest, folders and cabinets full of paper are a pain in the butt and a pretty inefficient way of running an office in the 21st century. Best of all, the less paper the better for the environment, so avoid printing wherever possible by getting into the habit of electronic-only communication and document storage. The savings and benefits to the environment are immense - reductions in paper waste, ink cartridges and electricity used by printers. A small business in the CAFA network of less than 10 people, gradually went paperless and in its first year saved more than £6,000 in paper ink cartridges and hardware. A saving that went straight to its bottom line.

## **Recycling**

Arguably one of easiest ways to reduce waste and improve resource efficiency in the workplace. A best practice office will be operating efficient recycling schemes for paper, cardboard, glass, cans and toner cartridges at the very minimum. Ensure your waste collection is reliable, and regular. Ensure any private waste collection suppliers are reputable. Enquire and ask for references for how the company treats and processes waste.



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## E-Waste

An appalling 53.6 million tonnes of e-waste was produced globally in 2019, an increase of more than 20% compared to five years prior.\* There are now facilities that wipe clean, take apart the hardware and recycle the internal parts at home and/or export overseas. Many computer and telephone devices contain valuable metals, making the business of e-waste very lucrative.

## Lighting

It sounds so obvious, but stick to natural light wherever possible by opening blinds and curtains and positioning desk stations closer to the light, as this reduces the need for powered lighting to be switched on. Research also shows that natural light has a number of health and well-being benefits, such as being a source of vitamin D as well as boosting employee productivity. Choose LED lights over any other lightbulbs as they are significantly more energy efficient. Install timers on your lighting and/or motion activated light sensors which will turn on for a designated period of time or whenever there is activity in the room. Introduce an internal last to leave lights off policy for employees in the entire building and specific areas of the workplace. Incentivise behaviour change by rewarding and communicating with employees as they adopt new practices.

## Power-Off

Electronic machines and equipment that are plugged in but not being used or on standby account for a considerable amount of electricity consumption. So get into the habit of unplugging everything or turning off machines when not in use. This is especially true of computers and monitors, where it is common to leave them not only plugged in but also switched on in screen saver mode. Switching off will also boost your organisations cyber security.

\*Data comes from the [Global E-Waste Monitor 2020](#), a new report out of the United Nations, the International Telecommunication Union, and the International Solid Waste Association.



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## Heating & Cooling

Understand how the heating and cooling systems in your workplace operate and take advantage of any energy efficient settings that are built in. For example, you may be able to use timers or sensors to control your energy output. Turn off heating and cooling in unoccupied rooms and ensure windows and doors are closed when using heating or air-conditioning to optimise efficiency. The optimisation and regular servicing of your boilers is key. In the summer if it's not too hot and its secure to do so, open windows instead of opting for air-con.

## Insulation

Its almost meaningless to focus on heating and cooling without considering the insulation of your building. Check your windows are properly sealed when closed and with no drafts. The same goes for doors and door frames. Address and fix all drafts. Ensure your roof and where relevant walls are properly and evenly insulated with environmentally sustainable insulation.

## Renewable Energy Provision

Switching to renewable energy sources will enable your association to reduce carbon emissions and its dependency on fossil fuels.

## Conserve Water

Keep unnecessary water usage to a minimum by fixing leaks within pipes or taps. Consider fitting low-flow aerator taps or electronic taps with sensors which will not only reduce the amount of water used but also improve hygiene. Ensure dishwashers are full before starting a wash cycle. Many organisations now have filtered boiling hot water taps fitted so employees can make individual hot drinks rather than over-filling the kettle with water. Only using exactly the amount you need will make a big difference over time.



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## Suppliers

Select and procure green suppliers where possible, whether it be in relation to lower carbon products and services, suppliers that manage and measure their own carbon footprint or products and services that are supplied on a carbon equivalent basis. For information read the CAFA's **'Greening Your Suppliers Checklist'**.

## Encourage Greener Commute

Reduce overall travel wherever possible, public transport over private, bicycles over powered vehicles, trains over domestic and short haul flights, petrol over diesel vehicles and electric and hybrids over petrol vehicles. Look to implement flexible working and working from home strategies which can to help further reduce emissions.

If you have a company car park, ensure there are EV charging options. Consider adding in staff shower facilities to remove blockers to employees wishing to run or cycle to work. This will also be seen as an employee benefit. If you do offer shower facilities, ensure to communicate information regarding the optimal length of showertime/water usage. Check out CAFA's Guide on **'How to Measure Carbon Emissions When Working at Home.'**

## Internal Champions

Make overseeing the implementation of your association's climate action plans a part of at least one employee's job description. This is an essential first step with a direct line to senior management and reporting requirements to the council/board. Introduce organisational/team-wide KPI's to ensure cross organisational support and understanding of the mission.



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## Gather Feedback & Communicate Progress

Sustainability, climate action and employer brand are now interlinked. Employees, particular younger generations, want to work for employers with a strong social outlook and conscience. Having a clear and measurable climate action plan will make your association a more desirable employer to work for.

Communication is a key way of ensuring everyone's involvement in implementing green practices across your association. Make sure that everyone understands the why, the what and the how behind your carbon reduction strategies. Sharing regular feedback on targets and achievements to staff also helps to maximise employee engagement and drives behavioural change. Reward individuals and teams on their achievements.

## Measure Mindset

Quantify everything in relation to carbon wherever possible. Think of it like money or currency, as if all carbon-related income (consumption) and expenditure (reductions) must be accounted for. Sustainability reporting is already mandatory in larger organisations and the requirement will filter down to smaller organisations, so the sooner your association understands its starting position and takes positive action the better.



These are just a few early stage, quick wins for your organisation to consider for your organisation. For more detailed information and guidance visit [www.climateactionforassociations.org](http://www.climateactionforassociations.org)

# CLIMATE ACTION FOR ASSOCIATIONS

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