PCC environmental and sustainability policy

September 2024

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1. Statement, scope and review date

Primary Care Commissioning CIC ('the Company') recognises that the environment is important to our business, staff and customers.

We recognise that we have a responsibility to manage the environmental impact of our business activities carefully and ensure that we meet all legal and regulatory requirements. We also recognise that we have a responsibility to support our stakeholders to reduce their own carbon footprints.

The Company's environmental and sustainability policy is based upon the following principles:

- We will comply with, and exceed where practicable, all applicable legislation, regulations and codes of practice
- We will integrate sustainability and environmental considerations into all business decisions
- We will ensure all staff are fully aware of the Company's environmental and sustainability policy and are committed to implementing and improving it
- We will minimise the impact on sustainability of all our business activities
- We will support our clients, suppliers and other stakeholders to reduce their environmental footprint and encourage them to adopt sound sustainable management practices - this will be an increasing focus of our service provision
- We will continually improve our environmental performance as an integral part of our business strategy and operating methods with regular review points and report annually.

The Company aims to become carbon neutral by 2040 but will aim to hit the target before then. We will revise this target date in future updates to this policy.

Scope

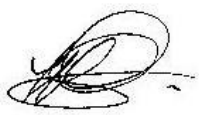
This policy applies to all employees of the Company together with any agency workers and self-employed contractors.

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and we may amend it at any time.

Review date

We have developed an Environmental Action Plan (EAP) to ensure we meet the requirements of this policy. The EAP, together with this policy, comprises our Environmental Management System (EMS). Our EMS is independently certified by Green Small Business. Our certification is maintained through an annual audit carried out independently by Green Small Business.

We will update this policy at least annually. This policy will next be reviewed in September 2025.



Helen Northall
Chief executive

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2. Policy

The Company has a detailed plan that ensures that sustainability and environmental considerations are systematically embedded into the organisation.

Sustainability and environmental concerns and the need to consider these in all areas of work are highlighted to staff during induction. We will also seek to raise the levels of carbon literacy within the organisation through engagement with the Carbon Literacy Project.

We are committed to the reduction of our carbon footprint and minimising our impact as a company on the environment. Where it is not possible to eliminate all emissions we will invest in carbon-reduction projects which are independently verified to international standards, such as Gold Standard.

The Company reviews progress on an annual basis and this is reported in our Carbon Reduction Plan. Sustainability is considered as one of the key performance indicators of the organisation with progress reported to the Company's governing body.

All staff are expected to contribute to these goals and requirements are included in HR policies and procedures where practical and appropriate.

As a minimum our employees follow these practical steps:

Employee travel and internal meetings

- Apply the principles of our 'Use of Transport' guidance (see Appendix 1), through avoiding travel where possible and using the most sustainable mode feasible for necessary travel.
- Include the full cost of more sustainable forms of transport in proposals, rather than the least cost option which may involve travelling by car or air
- Reduce the need for staff to travel by supporting alternative working arrangements, including home working, and promote the use of public transport by locating PCC's office and meetings in accessible locations
- Use not-for-profit and community venues and procure using Social Value Act principles, where this is feasible and appropriate.

Buying equipment and consumption of resources

- Apply the principles of our Environmentally Preferable Purchasing policy when making purchases on behalf of the Company (See Appendix 2)
- Minimise the use of paper and other consumables, for example by double-siding all paper used, considering whether printing is required, purchasing recycled paper and identifying opportunities to reduce waste
- As far as possible arrange for the reuse or recycling of office waste, including paper, computer supplies and redundant equipment. We will only use licensed and appropriate organisations to dispose of waste which cannot be re-used or recycled
- Reduce packaging as much as possible
- Seek to reduce the energy consumption of equipment by purchasing energy efficient equipment and through good housekeeping
- Encourage suppliers to improve the environmental impact of the products and services we purchase from them.
- Seek to reduce the amount of energy used as much as possible in our head office and encourage our employees to reduce the amount of energy they consume when working from home
- When evaluating tender or quotation responses, sustainability and environmental considerations will be one of the decision-making criteria.

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Working practices

- Reduce the need for travel by promoting the use of virtual platforms for the delivery of our work programmes and internal meetings.
- For in-person events/meetings secure venues with easy access to public transport links and providing walking directions. Encourage car sharing where travel by public transport is not possible.
- Use not-for-profit and community venues, booking appropriately sized rooms to minimise energy use
- Use virtual communication (email, phone and video) for all pre and post event stakeholder liaison, unless otherwise requested by clients.
- Encourage delegates to book events online via our events booking system, reducing the need for paper invitations and booking forms
- Provide electronic copies of event materials to delegates and keep printing to an absolute minimum. Where event materials need printing print in black and white, double-sided and on recycled stock.
- Use venues for events and meetings who provide fair-trade and/or organic beverages and ensure confirmation of accurate numbers of participants to reduce food waste and request jugs of tap water instead of water in plastic bottles
- Ensure that any associates contracted to PCC are aware of our environmental and sustainability policy and that adherence to the policy is included within their contract.

Advising clients

- Ensure all staff and associates take account of sustainability issues in advising clients.

3. Next steps

The Company will continue working towards maximising sustainability, supporting staff to implement the practices listed above, reducing its carbon footprint and minimising its impact on the environment.

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Appendix 1
Use of transport guidance

Introduction

In support of the Company's environmental and sustainability policy these guidelines are intended to ensure that its employees reduce travel where possible and use less sustainable modes only where necessary to ensure business effectiveness or personal health and safety.

Alternatives to travel

The Company encourages employees, partners, associates and clients to seek alternatives to travel through using and actively promoting the use of more sustainable ways of conducting business, for example the use of video-conferencing for meetings, workshops and events.

Public transport

Employees are encouraged to minimise car use and use public transport when undertaking journeys on behalf of the Company. Public transport includes journeys by train, tram, bus, taxi and ferry.

Cars and taxis

To uphold the Company's environmental and sustainability policy, we will only reimburse employees the expenses for use of personal cars, hire cars, taxis (including tips) or motor cycles over 50cc, where a journey is necessary for the business and cannot reasonably be carried out by more sustainable means. Valid reasons for using personal cars, hire cars, taxis or motor cycles over 50cc include the following:

- No public transport available
- Not using car or taxi would involve disproportionate delay, discomfort and inconvenience
- Significant time saving, e.g. able to make earlier train connection
- Need to carry heavy or bulky equipment
- Risk of personal danger, e.g. waiting at stations late at night
- Childcare and other personal commitments

Where the use of a taxi is required, e.g. to facilitate the use of public transport for the main part of a journey, we encourage the use of electric taxis wherever they are available (e.g. via the Freenow app).

Pedal cycles

Use of pedal cycles is encouraged as part of the Company's environmental and sustainability policy. The Company has a Cycle to Work scheme available which provides interest-free loans towards the purchase of pedal cycles and necessary equipment (e.g. helmet, waterproofs and panniers). Requests for such loans should be discussed with HR or Finance .

Air travel

In line with our environmental and sustainability policy and our commitment to cut carbon emissions, the Company discourages employees from travelling by air on business unless no alternative is available. Please note that air travel will only be permitted for business journeys within mainland UK or for business journeys of less than 500km where no suitable alternative is available. Public transport will be encouraged for journeys which do not meet these criteria.

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Projects requiring journeys which do not meet these criteria should be discussed and approved by your line manager in advance of them being bid for or taken. A strong business case will need to be demonstrated for pursuing such projects. Consideration will be given to the fuel efficiency of the airline when booking air travel and only economy class travel will be permitted. The carbon emissions associated with any approved air travel will be offset via a Gold standard (or other recognised third party accreditation) carbon offsetting scheme.

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Appendix 2
Environmentally preferable purchasing guidance

Introduction

The Company is committed to purchasing in a way that minimises negative environmental impacts and maximises the opportunities for positive outcomes for society and the environment. The Company has developed this guidance to encourage the purchase and use of materials, products, and services that reflect these commitments. The policy applies to all employees in all locations, including employee home offices.

Principles

It is our policy to:

- Purchase with a view to minimising waste and maximising efficiency
- Purchase products, materials and services that minimise negative environmental impacts and, in particular, that have lower greenhouse gas emissions in their production, shipping, use and disposal
- Purchase products and materials that are durable and long-lasting; and
- Where relevant, favour products and materials that:
    - include recycled content
    - are biodegradable
    - exclude toxic chemicals
    - use unbleached or chlorine free manufacturing processes
    - are lead-free and mercury-free
    - are organic
    - use wood from sustainably harvested forests.

Environment

Preference will be given to products and/or suppliers that meet robust third-party social and environmental certification criteria. Examples of this third-party criteria include, but are not limited to:

- Certified B Corporation
- Soil Association Organic
- Fair Trade
- ISO 14001
- Green Small Business
- Planet Mark
- TCO Certification (for IT products)

Other rigorous and independent third-party certifications will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Local / diverse

Our policy also reflects the critical importance of supporting local economic development, community prosperity and cultural diversity, as well as reducing transportation. Therefore, preference will be given to independent suppliers physically located within 50 miles of our office or delivery locations. Similarly, preference will be given to suppliers owned by/employ those from disadvantaged sectors of communities, or otherwise demonstrate that they support the reduction of inequalities.

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Please note that these are preferences and not absolute requirements. Price, quality, performance, availability, and other factors will also need to be considered when selecting suppliers.

Resources

Employees are encouraged to find socially and environmentally responsible vendors in their area by searching, for example, http://www.bcorporation.net/ or http://www.ethicalconsumer.org/ and by looking for the third-party certifications listed above.

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4. Review log

Date	Summary of change	Action	Author
September 2016	Policy reviewed	No changes required	WJG
August 2017	Policy reviewed	Minor typographical changes noted	WJG
April 2020	Policy reviewed	Minor amendments noted	WJG
April 2021	Policy reviewed	Transfer to new policy template	WJG
April 2022	Policy reviewed	Policy updated to reflect the introduction of new processes and procedures to place more emphasis on environmental and sustainability issues	WJG/HN
April 2023	Policy reviewed as part of Green Small Business EMS audit	Policy updated to include: • reference to an increasing focus being placed on supporting our clients, suppliers and other stakeholders to adopt sound sustainable management practices • Inclusion of reference to carbon literacy awareness • Inclusion of use of transport guidance • Inclusion of environmentally preferable purchasing guidance	GSB/WG /HN
Sept 2024	Policy review	Minor changes noted	WJG

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