

Guidance Sheet

Developing an Environmental Policy

Why do we need an Environmental Policy?

An Environmental Policy will set out your organisation's commitment and intention to protect the environment. For some social economic organisations, environmental benefits may even form part of your core objectives.

How do we start?

To prepare an Environmental Policy your organisation must first consider its operational impact on the environment. You may need to carry out a mapping exercise to ascertain this fully.

Involvement and consultation

As with the development of all organisational policies, in order to gain ownership and commitment of all concerned, it is essential that staff, volunteers, service users and other key stakeholders are involved in its development from the outset. **Please refer to VAB's guidance sheet 'Policy Development & Implementation'.**

What do we need to include?

Your policy should open with a brief description of your organisation e.g. "[Organisation] is predominantly an office based organisation, with some 'outreach' provision and attendance at meetings/events requiring regular use of transport."

Your policy should cover the following issues:

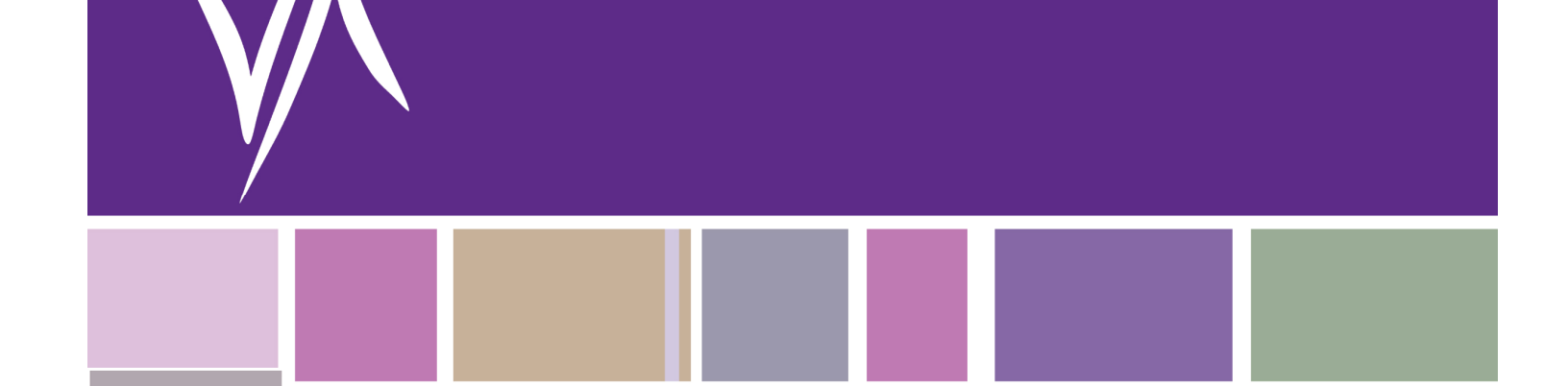
- ◆ Your commitment to pursuing and following relevant legislation e.g. waste disposal legislation
- ◆ Your commitment to reducing environmental impact e.g. waste/pollution prevention
- ◆ Your commitment to economy saving e.g. switching off appliances when not in use, or purchasing energy efficient products
- ◆ Your commitment to re-cycling e.g. using re-cycled products and re-cycling used products such as printer cartridges, paper, etc



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- ◆ Your commitment to seeking suppliers with good environmental practices, and supplies with minimum packaging which have travelled less distance e.g. considering your energy and product suppliers
 - ◆ Your commitment to avoiding using chemicals wherever possible by seeking substitutions e.g. alternative cleaning solutions
 - ◆ What you will do when a significant environmental hazard occurs e.g. developing a spill response plan. You will also need to consider your requirements under health and safety legislation in such areas
 - ◆ Your commitment to reducing transport pollution, e.g. offering mileage allowance for cyclists as well as motorists, encouraging car sharing or use of public transport
 - ◆ Your commitment to always considering the environmental benefit in relation to maintenance and repairs of your premises/equipment
 - ◆ A commitment to carrying out a regular audit for improvement. **Please contact the advice team if you would like a model audit for this purpose Tel: 01226 286841.**

Target Setting

The policy should identify realistic targets for improvement or reduction of pollution e.g. 5% reduction in energy and water bills, switch to use of energy efficient bulbs, or movement to paperless practices by a particular time. If it is not possible to reduce pollution, can you make steps to balance your environmental impact e.g. support a tree planting programme?

Best practice Environmental Policy

A well produced Environmental Policy should contain clear language and be flexible enough to include all of the organisations services and practices.

The policy as a living document...

Ultimately, the success of the policy will lie in how it is put into practice and how this practice is monitored. Your organisation will need to consider how it will monitor and support staff and volunteers in adhering to it e.g. training and regular review. It should be clear that the Environmental Policy is a 'living' document requiring continuous improvement, and as such it should be regularly reviewed, communicated (both internally and externally); and there should be clear processes for improvement.

If you have any questions regarding the above information, or would like assistance in developing support systems, please contact our advice team on 01226 286841 or Email: advice@vabarnsley.org.uk

