

1. Definitions

Healthwatch refers to Healthwatch Brighton and Hove.

Employees refers to all Healthwatch employees.

2. Scope

This policy covers all employees.

3. Summary

The policy covers the environmental aspects that Healthwatch have legal and regulatory responsibilities for.

Brighton and Hove City Council has published its climate action for a cleaner, healthier and fair future. As a responsible employer and representative body whose aims are to improve the health and social care needs of our population, we recognise that the natural environment can support this. Healthwatch recognises that we have a key role to play in supporting the Council's environmental ambitions.

Healthwatch recognises that it has a responsibility to the environment beyond legal and regulatory requirements. We are committed to reducing our environmental impact and continually improving our environmental performance as an integral part of our business strategy and operating methods.

As an asset locked organisation, we also recognize that by reducing our impact on the environment, this may save us money too. Resource efficiency is about looking at the resources we consume and finding ways to reduce them.

Healthwatch is developing its plan to become a net zero organisation and will publish this in due course.

This policy is intended to reflect the guidance laid down in the city's "Climate information for businesses - How to make your business more sustainable and be part of the circular economy." See section 7 for resources.

The Board of directors (Board) has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy. The Board has delegated responsibility for overseeing its implementation to the Chief Executive Officer. Suggestions for changes to this policy should be reported to them.

4. Responsibility

All Employees have a responsibility to support the aims and objectives of this policy, though it is the Chief Executive who is responsible for ensuring it is implemented.

5. Policy Aims

5.1. To:

- Comply with all relevant regulatory requirements.
- Continually improve and monitor environmental performance.
- Continually improve and reduce environmental impacts.
- Increase employee awareness.

5.2. Paper. We will:

- Minimise the use of paper in the office.
- Reduce packaging as much as possible.
- Seek to buy recycled and recyclable paper products.
- Reuse and recycle all paper where possible.
- Rely on digital communication across our team which means we rarely use paper.

5.3. Energy and water. We will:

- Reduce the amount of energy used as much as possible.
- Switch off lights and electrical equipment when not in use.
- Adjust heating with energy consumption in mind.
- Take energy consumption and efficiency of new products into account when purchasing them.

5.4. Office supplies. We will:

- Evaluate if the need can be met in another way.
- Evaluate if renting or sharing is an option before purchasing equipment.
- Evaluate the environmental impact of any new products we intend to purchase.
- Choose more environmentally friendly and efficient products wherever possible.
- Reuse and recycle everything we can.

5.5. Office:

- We are purposefully located in Community Base which is committed to minimising the adverse environmental impact of their activities and encourage others to do so. This means we give meaning to this commitment by working in an office using electricity supplied from 100% renewable sources, by using recycling facilities in our building, by using energy efficient

appliances whenever possible, and by taking other practical steps to reduce our carbon footprint and the energy used in our building and in our activities. In 2023, Community Base was awarded a grant of £20,000 from Rampion Community Benefit Fund to upgrade our heating to more efficient and eco-friendly heaters across the building, and rehomed and recycled 12 tons of bricks and 1.5 tons of steel casings from the old storage heaters.

- In 2021, we opted for hybrid working with most work now performed remotely at staff member's homes. This has reduced our transport by car and public means, reduced plastic waste through less office-based lunches, and reduced our energy costs to a single room compared to heating an entire office.

5.6. Transportation:

- Reduce the need to travel, restricting to necessity trips only.
- Promote the use of travel alternatives such as e-mail or video/phone conferencing.
- Make additional efforts to accommodate the needs of those using public transport or bicycles.

6. Monitoring and improvement

We will:

- Comply with all relevant regulatory requirements.
- Consider Brighton and Hove City Council's response to protecting our environment.
- Continually improve and monitor environmental performance.
- Continually improve and reduce environmental impacts.
- Review this policy and any related business issues at monthly management meetings.
- Update this policy at least every two years in consultation with Employees and other stakeholders where necessary.
- Involve Employees in the implementation of this policy, for greater commitment and improved performance.

7. Resources

- 7.1. Brighton and Hove City Council’s climate action plan for the city:
<https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/climate-action>).
- 7.2. Brighton and Hove City Council’s Climate information for businesses:
<https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/climate-action/climate-information-businesses>.

8. Additional Policies & Documents

- 8.1. The Healthwatch policies and documents referred to in this policy are available on request by contacting the Healthwatch Team on 01273 234 040 or email to policies@healthwatchbrightonandhove.co.uk.

Date Policy Reviewed	4 January 2023
At the 15 January 2024 meeting of the Healthwatch Brighton and Hove Board of Directors, the Board approved the recommendation to delegate authorisation of operational policies to the Chief Executive Officer of Healthwatch.	
Date Approved by the CEO	15 March 2024
Next Review Date	March 2026