

1. Definitions

Healthwatch refers to Healthwatch Brighton and Hove.

Employees refers to all Healthwatch employees.

2. Scope

This policy covers all employees.

3. Summary – our commitment

3.1 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 role to play in supporting the Council’s environmental ambitions.

3.2 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 approach and operating methods.

3.3 As an asset locked organisation, we also recognise 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.

3.4 Healthwatch is committed to developing its plan to become a net zero organisation and will publish more details as these become available.

3.5 This policy is supported by our Environmental Policy.

4. Our aims

4.1. In February 2024, Healthwatch attended the “Net Zero 360: Free sustainability course for businesses in Brighton and Hove” which was funded by Brighton and Hove City Council.

4.2. This course provided us with a wealth of information which will help us calculate our current carbon impact and inform plans to help us meet net zero, supporting our city’s target is to be carbon neutral. <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/climate-change/becoming-carbon-neutral>

4.3. We will continue develop our longer-term policy throughout 2024/25 and publish updates to ensure transparency and accountability.

4.4. We recognise that healthy environments have a direct positive impact of the wider health needs of local residents. Caring for our environment is everybody’s business.

5. Policy context and how good environments support health and wellbeing

- 5.1. On 27 June 2019, the UK legislated to introduce a target for achieving at least a 100% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, compared to 1990 levels by 2050. This target is known as the Net Zero Target, and since its passing into legislation, the Government has released the Net Zero Strategy to help drive its achievement.
- 5.2. Contracting authorities have a responsibility to act now to reduce these emissions, consistent with the trajectory of reducing UK emissions by at least 68% reduction in all greenhouse gas emissions between 1990 and 2030, 78% by 2035, and achieving net zero carbon by 2050 ([source](#)).
- 5.3. Climate change and nature loss are two of the defining challenges of our time, and the 2020s are the critical decade for action. We have a closing window to limit global temperature increases to 1.5°C and to halt and reverse biodiversity loss. It is estimated that climate change and nature loss result in extreme weather, sea level rise and ecosystem collapse, and these effects are accelerating and intensifying. These in turn will drive increasing food and water scarcity, pandemics, displacement of people, conflict, economic instability and reversals in development gain.
- 5.4. Action on climate and nature will not only protect against the worst impacts, it will allow us to take advantage of the huge opportunities in the transition to a net zero, climate resilient and nature positive future. This economic transformation will help revitalise our economies, deliver energy security, **improve our health** and catalyse sustainable development ([source](#)).
- 5.5. More than 30% of emerging diseases are thought to be caused by changes in land-use. The linkages between nature loss, climate change, **health**, food security, economic security and prosperity have never been clearer.
- 5.6. Some of the **underlying causes of pandemics** are the same global environmental changes that drive nature loss and climate change, with land use change causing 30% of new disease since 1960.
- 5.7. **Small and medium enterprises**
- 5.8. There are an estimated 5.5 million SMEs in the UK, which make up an estimated 50% of all UK business emissions. There is both impact and opportunity for such organisations, including Healthwatch, from taking action now to reducing its carbon footprint:
 - Our suppliers may be affected adversely by global warming, pushing up prices which then get passed on. The impact is greater if resources decline and manufacturing drops, increasing demand.

- We recognise that many tenders or contracts to deliver health-related work now require organisations to have a clear net zero policy. Where this cannot be shown, it may lead to automatic disqualification.
- We also recognise that having green credentials affects the attractiveness of our organisation, especially for younger workers.
- UK Government targets (2030 and 2050) will affect all SMEs via changes to supply chains and government policy.
- NHS – all suppliers were required to have a carbon reduction plan by April 2024 for any contract worth £5m or more – if the organisations we scrutinise have these plans in place, so must we.

6. Our plans

6.1. We recognise that delivering meaningful change takes time and requires an understanding of our current carbon footprint. We are committed to achieving this. Our plans for the next 18 months include:

<p>Short (6 months, April - September 2024)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attending a training course to help us understand how to measure our carbon footprint. • Promoting our attendance on this course and our commitment to developing a plan. • Sharing details of the course with other SMEs/VCSEs to maximize impact and support more local organisations to determine their carbon reduction plans. • Presenting results and learning from attending the course to the team, volunteers and Board for wider discussion. • Start to collate data to populate a carbon calculator (from staff, suppliers, Community Base landlord, etc). • Purchase a 'smart' plug so we can start capturing energy usage of individual items used by the team.
<p>Medium (6-18 months, October 2024 – September 2025)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start enquiring about the green credentials of our suppliers, landlord, etc to inform our choices. • Develop a list of sustainable suppliers. • Continue populating the carbon calculator to determine our carbon footprint. • Develop a longer-term plan to reduce our emissions by 90% which has SMART targets and publish this. • Recognising and acknowledging things which are outside of our control and why this is the case. • Including details of our commitment in our statutory Annual Reports.

Longer-term (18 months +, October 2025 onwards)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake an annual review of our progress and publish this.
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7. How we will determine our footprint

7.1. We will explore:

- Direct emissions from sources we control (e.g. suppliers).
- Indirect emissions e.g. purchased electricity emissions.
- Everything else that we can influence, which will be about 80% of all our emissions e.g. commuting, travel, waste, transport.

7.2. Areas where we can look to measure our emissions and make changes include:

Energy and buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How we heat our offices (e.g. stopping using plug in electric heaters) • How we use lighting. • The green credentials of our office equipment and phones. • Where we choose to host events (what are their green credentials?) and what resources we use to support these e.g. keeping paper materials to a minimum
Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How staff and volunteers travel between home and office/other locations.
Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How we use water and prevent unnecessary waste.
Suppliers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local suppliers – checking their green credentials and making switches to those which match our ambitions (this can affect our choices of office equipment, IT, chairs, desks, events, etc).
Waste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing what we recycle. • Reducing paper usage. • Reducing food waste.

7.3. We will explore:

- Using a Microsoft MS emissions calculator and /or the use of tools such as Small99.co.uk - <https://small99.co.uk/digital-emissions-calculator/> to measure our digital emissions i.e. from IT/email.
- For our shared office space, we will ask our landlord for annual electricity bills, then define the total square meterage of the building and that of the office space we use and

work this out as a percentage. We will apply this percentage to the overall bill to get an approximate estimate of our contribution.

- For commuting, we will use Google Maps to determine the distance and method of travel and multiply this by the days worked in the office/other locations.
- We will define a baseline year against which a 90% reduction can be measured.

8. Resources

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

9. Additional Policies & Documents

- 9.1. 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	26 March 2024
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	4 September 2024
Next Review Date	September 2025