

AGE UK EXETER

Controlled Document

Document Name: Environmental Policy

Document Version Number: 5

Agreed by Risk & Quality Committee: 20.05.25

Approved by Board of Trustees on: 24.06.25

Review Schedule: Every three years

Next review due: June 2028

Owner (Responsibility): Chief Executive Officer

Amendments to: Governance Officer & Environmental Champion

Revision History: See end of document.

Document Location: www.ageuk.org.uk/exeter/about-us/policiesandguidelines/

Document Description

At Age UK Exeter (AUKE), we are committed to being an organisation that cares deeply about the environment. We recognise that the actions we take today will impact future generations, including the older people we support. As a charity, while our primary focus is on enhancing the lives of older people in Exeter, we acknowledge the role we can play in reducing our environmental impact.

This policy outlines our commitments to sustainability, how we aim to reduce our carbon footprint, and how we will engage staff, volunteers, and the wider community in making AUKE a more environmentally responsible organisation.

Implementation and Quality Assurance

Implementation is immediate and this policy shall stay in force until any alterations are formally agreed.

The policy will be reviewed every three years by the Board of Trustees, sooner if legislation, best practice, or other circumstances indicate this is necessary.

All aspects of this policy shall be open to review at any time. If you have any comments or suggestions on the content of this policy, please contact the CEO on, info@ageukexeter.org.uk or at Age UK Exeter, The Sycamores, Mount Pleasant Road, Exeter, EX4 7AE, 01392 202092.

Environmental Policy

1. Introduction

Age UK Exeter (AUKE) is committed to minimising its environmental impact and fostering sustainability in its operations, services, and community activities. We recognise that, as a charity, our primary focus is supporting older people, but we also acknowledge our responsibility to safeguard the environment for future generations.

This policy outlines our commitment to sustainability, identifying key focus areas and specific actions we will take. This policy ensures that AUKE is both environmentally responsible and financially practical, aligning with staff feedback, existing policies, and best practice from other organisations.

2. Objectives & Environmental Vision

Our key objectives are:

Reduce Waste and Improve Recycling - Minimise unnecessary waste and promote recycling.

Improve Energy Efficiency and Reduce Emissions - Reduce energy consumption across all facilities.

Sustainable Procurement - Prioritise environmentally friendly products.

Promote Sustainable Transport - Encourage low-carbon transport for staff and volunteers.

Engagement & Awareness - Engage and empower staff and volunteers. Foster a culture of sustainability within our organisation and community.

Monitor and Report Environmental Performance - Establish clear metrics to track progress.

Our Environmental Vision:

- To embed sustainability into every aspect of Age UK Exeter's operations.
- To inspire and engage staff, volunteers, and the community to take positive environmental actions.
- To be an example of an environmentally conscious charity within the Age UK network.

3. Key Commitments & Actions

Waste Reduction & Recycling

- Move towards a paper-light office by reducing printing and using digital alternatives where feasible.

- Reassure staff: Waste is sorted and recycled by Devon Contract Waste, even if bins appear mixed.
- Acknowledge digitalisation concerns - offer training and support to ease the transition.
- Consider DocuSign for secure, paperless signatures where required or a comparable e-platform for Board materials.
- Encourage the question: **"Do I really need a hard copy of this?"** before printing.
- Retain printed materials where necessary, especially for clients without digital access.
- Prepare for the Simpler Recycling Policy (March 2025). Liaise with Devon Contract Waste to ensure compliance.
- Implement double-sided printing as the default setting for all printers. Promote a "Think Before You Print" culture.
- Set up clear and well-labelled recycling stations across all facilities.
- Properly separate general waste, recycling, and confidential waste (ensure secure shredding and recycling of sensitive documents), ensuring they are handled by certified disposal companies (ie. PaperChain).
- Recycle printer cartridges, batteries, and electronic waste where possible.
- Reduce Paper Towel Waste: Explore installing reusable towel dispensers or energy-efficient hand dryers. Review current paper towel procurement to prevent unnecessary waste.
- Suggestion Box: Encourage staff to share ideas for reducing waste.

Energy & Water Efficiency

- Replace older bulbs with energy-efficient LEDs.
- Ensure lights, computer monitors, and non-essential appliances are switched off when not in use.
- Upgrade to energy-efficient appliances when replacements are needed.
- Encourage staff and volunteers to use less heating and air conditioning by dressing appropriately for the season.
- Regularly service boilers and insulation to maintain heating efficiency.
- Reduce water wastage by fixing leaks and using water-efficient appliances.
- Energy-Saving Modes: Ensure computers and equipment are set to eco-friendly settings (turn it off or put it into hibernation mode and power saver mode)
- Switch Off Campaign: Reminder stickers to encourage turning off lights and devices after use.

Sustainable Procurement

- Source office supplies and furniture from sustainable suppliers where possible, including recycling/reuse shops.
- Avoid single-use plastics and disposable items wherever practical.
- When possible, source food locally (e.g. allotment produce or local caterers) for events and community meals. Celebrate the sharing of produce from Budding Friends allotment.

Sustainable Transport

- Remain aware of the Cycle to Work scheme and ensure all staff know of its provisions should they need it.
- Encourage car-sharing among staff and volunteers, where feasible.
- Incentives for Active Travel: Explore small rewards for walking/cycling to work and/or meetings.

Engagement & Awareness

- Nominate an Environmental Champion to drive initiatives and provide guidance and sustainability updates in staff meetings.
- Provide regular updates in staff meetings and internal communications on environmental efforts.
- Create an ideas and feedback box where staff and volunteers can suggest sustainability improvements.
- Celebrate and highlight existing sustainable practices (e.g. Budding Friend's allotment project). Simple, visual summaries (e.g. posters) showing environmental progress.
- Work with local authorities and engage with community sustainability projects.
- Recognition Program: Celebrate environmental "small wins" within the team.

Monitoring & Reporting

- Include environmental progress in the annual Board review to monitor progress.
- Include environmental impact metrics in our impact reports or newsletter where appropriate.
- Set and review rolling sustainability targets.
- Work with external environmental groups or experts when needed.

Implementation & Governance

Environmental Champion: Ask a staff member to act as Environmental Champion, to keep the organisation accountable and drive initiatives forward.

Green Ambassadors: Ask a staff member or volunteer to be a green ambassador to support the environmental champion and to promote sustainability within their team.

Board of Trustees: Provide oversight and ensure sustainability is embedded in strategic decision making.

CEO and Governance Lead: Ensure policy compliance and progress tracking.

Finance Team: Assess the financial viability of proposed sustainability investments, ensuring cost-effective solutions.

All staff, volunteers, and contractors are expected to adhere to this policy.

Success Criteria

Success will be measured by:

- ✓ Reduced paper usage and improved recycling rates.
- ✓ Lower energy and water consumption.
- ✓ More staff using sustainable transport.
- ✓ Increased use of eco-friendly products.
- ✓ Clear environmental awareness among staff and volunteers.

4. Further information and resources

This policy has been prepared in accordance with:

Going Green: Charities and Environmental Responsibility 2008

The Environmental Protection Act 1990

Waste Management Duty of Care and The Special Waste Regulations 1996

The Charity Commission Environmental Responsibility for Charities 2024

Simpler Recycling Guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/simpler-recycling-in-england-policy-update/simpler-recycling-in-england-policy-update>

Cycle to work scheme: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cycle-to-work-scheme-implementation-guidance>

Devon Contract Waste Contact: 01392 361300.

Revision History

Revision date	Summary of Changes	Other Comments
February 2025	Policy rewrite by environmental intern with 35 hours for consultation, research and policy formation.	Approved 24.06.25