

Policy and associated procedures	Havant and East Hants Mind Environmental Policy
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Policy applies to	
Staff	Yes
Volunteers	Yes
Trustees	Yes

1. Purpose of the Policy

Havant and East Hants Mind (HEH Mind) recognises its responsibility to the environment beyond legal and regulatory requirements (Companies Act 2006 [Section 172 (1)(d)], Climate Change Act 2008, Environment Act). 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, with regular review points.

We will encourage and support our service users, volunteers, and staff to contribute to more environmentally and socially sustainable behaviours, focusing on positive actions that everyone can take to reduce negative impacts.

Furthermore, we recognise the growing mental health impact related to climate change, known as ‘Eco Anxiety’, defined as:

“Feelings of helplessness, anger, insomnia, panic, and guilt toward the climate and ecological crisis. It can also be described as persistent and intrusive worries about the future of the Earth.” ([Source](<https://sustainabilitydefined.com/ecoanxiety>))

According to the Office for National Statistics, in October 2021, 75% of adults in Great Britain said they were either very or somewhat worried about the impact of climate change. It is also recognised that those who experience anxiety are more likely to implement small changes in their lifestyles to address climate change and that those who make small changes feel less anxious as a result.

Awareness of Eco Anxiety will be threaded through our environmental action plan. In particular, we will raise awareness of this issue as it relates to our service users, especially children, young people, and those in poverty. We will also promote connections with nature and the environment, which are shown to alleviate anxiety.

In the first year of implementing this policy (within 2025), we will establish our baseline environmental impact and create a 12-month action plan. After 12 months, we will provide a report to the Board of Trustees to review progress and set targets for further improvement.

HEH Mind is committed to reducing our carbon footprint and working towards a carbon-neutral plan in line with NHS guidance by 2050.

2. Scope

This policy covers all HEH Mind activities across all operating premises (including homeworking) and all staff, trustees, volunteers, service users, and contractors.

3. Responsibility

The Senior Management Team (SMT) is responsible for ensuring that the environmental policy is implemented, with day-to-day management led by the Quality Team. However, all trustees, employees, and volunteers have a shared responsibility to ensure that the aims and objectives of the policy are met.

4. Policy Aims

By adhering to this policy, we will strive to adopt the highest available environmental standards in all areas of our operations. To achieve this, we will:

- Continually investigate new environmental techniques and best practices to ensure we implement effective changes within and beyond HEH Mind.
- Assess our current position and set realistic, time-framed targets to reduce our carbon footprint.
- Explore ways to become carbon neutral and ultimately 'Climate Positive' in line with our strategy.
- Research recognised accreditation or external benchmarks to work towards as an organisation.
- Incorporate environmental factors into business decisions.
- Address Eco Anxiety through our communications and activities.

5. Action Plan and Targets

a) Evaluate current position and set time-framed targets:

- Conduct an audit of our current position against the targets below.
- Create a 12-month action plan to reduce our carbon footprint.
- Present a report to trustees at the end of the first year to review progress and set further targets.

b) Improve environmental and financial efficiency in the use of all materials, supplies, and utilities:

- Make wise decisions when purchasing equipment and provisions, prioritising fair trade, recycled, and local produce, and minimising packaging.
- Use suppliers who recycle their products, such as toner cartridges.
- Minimise paper usage and purchase recycled or recyclable paper products.
- Reduce/eliminate single-use plastics.
- Reduce energy consumption by selecting renewable energy suppliers and promoting energy awareness among staff.
- Evaluate options for renting/sharing equipment instead of purchasing.
- Work with cleaning contractors to use environmentally friendly cleaning materials.
- Assess and reduce the carbon footprint of our website and digital systems.

c) Manage waste effectively:

- Reuse and recycle paper, glass, and plastic wherever possible.
- Participate in food waste reduction initiatives.
- Plan activities and meals to minimise waste.
- Use licensed and appropriate organisations to dispose of waste.

d) Adopt an environmentally sound transport strategy:

- Encourage car sharing among trustees, staff, and volunteers.
- Promote the use of travel alternatives such as video/phone conferencing.
- Assess and optimise hybrid working models.

e) Encourage employee and service user involvement:

- Appoint an Environment Champion to increase engagement with the policy.
- Communicate progress and updates to staff, service users, and volunteers.
- Promote environmental awareness during inductions and team meetings.
- Incorporate links with the natural environment in workplaces and service user activities.

f) Improve staff wellbeing and address the mental health impact of climate change:

- Raise awareness of the mental health impact of climate change.
- Ensure HEH Mind premises provide pleasant and inspiring working environments.

g) Promote access to the natural environment:

- Enhance outdoor spaces at HEH Mind premises through projects such as recycling, tree planting, and habitat creation.
- Build partnerships with local nature-based organisations.

6. Monitoring and Reporting

- To ensure that the aims of this policy are met:
- The policy will be reviewed annually by the Quality Team and SMT.
- Progress will be monitored by the Quality Team and the Environmental Champion.
- Updates will be reported bi-annually to the Board of Trustees.
- A summary of our environmental position and activity will be included on the HEH Mind website.
- At the end of the first year, we will provide a report to the Board of Trustees to review progress and refine future targets.

Comparison of Environmental Policies

Key Improvements in the New Policy (2025):

1. Broader Purpose and Strategic Focus:

- The new policy explicitly links its purpose to legislative frameworks like the Climate Change Act 2008 and Environment Act, demonstrating a legal and ethical commitment. The old policy (2020) lacks this direct alignment.
- The inclusion of "Eco Anxiety" as a mental health consideration tied to environmental concerns adds a unique and progressive dimension to the new policy, recognizing the intersection between mental health and climate change.

2. Comprehensive Scope:

- The 2025 policy covers all operating premises, including homeworking, whereas the 2020 policy primarily emphasizes adherence to landlords' environmental guidelines due to a lack of ownership of premises.

3. Actionable Aims and Targets:

- The 2025 policy sets measurable, time-framed targets such as creating a 12-month action plan and reporting annually to trustees. The older policy mentions Environmental Impact Assessments and Reduction Plans but lacks specific timeframes for action.

4. Integration of Environmental and Mental Health Strategies:

- The new policy addresses Eco Anxiety and incorporates mental health into its environmental objectives by promoting nature connections, a focus absent in the old policy.

5. Modernized and Specific Actions:

- Detailed actions in the new policy include reducing single-use plastics, choosing renewable energy suppliers, and assessing the carbon footprint of digital systems, reflecting contemporary environmental priorities. The older policy focuses on general good practices without specificity.

6. Monitoring and Reporting Enhancements:

- The 2025 policy introduces bi-annual updates to trustees and public transparency by summarizing activities on the HEH Mind website. The old policy only mentions assessments and plans without structured reporting.

7. Engagement and Advocacy:

- The appointment of an Environmental Champion in the new policy ensures dedicated focus on environmental goals. It also includes strategies for engaging service users, trustees, and staff in environmental advocacy, which the older policy only touches upon superficially.

8. Ambitious Goals:

- The goal to become carbon neutral by 2050 and explore "Climate Positive" strategies aligns with global climate ambitions, marking a significant upgrade from the old policy's general aim to "minimise impact."

Strengths Retained from the Old Policy:

- Both policies emphasize using ethical suppliers, saving energy, reducing waste, and encouraging recycling, ensuring continuity in promoting sustainable practices.

Overall Superiority: The new policy is superior due to its structured approach, measurable targets, broader scope, and innovative integration of mental health concerns with environmental strategies. It demonstrates a forward-thinking mindset and aligns with both organizational and global priorities in combating climate change.