

PURPOSE

Autism Initiatives recognises that our work may have a direct or indirect effect on the local, regional and global environment. We are committed to reducing any harmful effects on the environment and promoting the understanding of sustainability in its broadest context.

Autism Initiatives recognises that its activities have an environmental, social and economic impact at a local, regional and global level. Our social responsibility is achieved largely through our day to day delivery of services to people with autism. We also seek to share our knowledge and experience through contributions to local autism/ voluntary sector networks, attendance and contribution to national and international events, publishing of materials and working in partnership with other agencies and professionals however it is appropriate to establish a policy to complement our core charitable activities

Our sustainability definition and ambition

We endorse the spirit of the 'Brundtland' and 'Caring for the Earth' definitions of sustainable development:

'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'
and 'improving quality of life while living within the earth's carrying capacities'.

What this means to us is that we operate our professional activities and the management of our organisation in a way that enables all people to realise their potential and improve their quality of life while protecting and enhancing the earth's natural capital. This aspiration is operationalised for our purposes by our sustainability objectives, targets and indicators. We are therefore committed to continually improve the integration of sustainability into our working environment and business processes. Our aim is to play a proactive role in contributing to achieving sustainability where we have influence. We are committed to accountability and transparency in our sustainability performance.

Social and Environmental Responsibility Policy

UK environmental regulations focus on a number of key areas:

- **Air** - related to the amount of smoke, dust, noise, odour and solvents emitted by your business.
- **Hazardous substances** - regulations cover the collection, storage, handling, processing, use and disposal of various substances including: oil, ozone depleting substances, pesticides and biocides, radioactive substances, animal by-products and hazardous/special waste.
- **Waste** - regulating the handling, storage, transport and disposal of trade waste, as well as the recycling of products.
- **Water** - pollution, water abstraction and the discharge of trade effluent to public sewers.
- **Packaging** - covering the production, use and handling of packaging or packaging materials.
- **Land** - regulations cover the usage of contaminated land and landfill sites for disposal of business waste.

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OBJECTIVES

The objectives are;

- Comply with all statutory requirements related to the environment, health and welfare of staff, Service Users, and the wider community.
- Avoid unnecessary use of hazardous materials. To take reasonable steps to prevent damage to either public health or the environment where such materials are used.
- Provide a safe working environment for all staff.
- Make continuous efforts to reduce our impact on the environment by endeavouring to achieve best practice, in terms of caring for the environment.
- Seek to ensure that environmental practices should form an integral part of standard operating practices and procedures.
- Increase awareness of environmental responsibilities amongst staff and Service Users through staff development, discussion at the Health and Safety meeting and various channels of communication.
- Operate in ways that seek to maximise social and economic benefits and minimise any adverse impacts to the local community.
- Minimise the production of waste by recycling and reusing
- Minimise energy waste across all services

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SCOPE

Autism Initiatives has a commitment to continuous improvement

We aim to have:

- Recognition of compliance with relevant environmental legislation as a minimum level of performance
- A commitment to raising the awareness of employees with regards to green issues and how they can help
- The monitoring of progress and review of environmental performance on an annual basis

Specifically, Autism Initiatives will be addressing:

- Transport and travel
 - Minimising waste (reducing packaging and recycling)
 - Reducing the emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases
 - Efficient use of water and energy
 - Use of more natural and eco friendly products and services
 - Minimising use of hazardous and toxic substances
 - Support for positive actions related to the local community and our Service Users
 - Support for ethical, fair trade and other socially responsible practices
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ACTION POINTS

WASTE REDUCTION	
POLICY	<p>AI will reduce the amount of waste generated by reusing and recycling.</p> <p>It is most effective to minimise waste at source.</p> <p>AI will consider disposal of a product before making a new purchase.</p>
OBJECTIVE	To reduce waste generated by AI
ACTION POINTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce consumption of materials • Reuse products where possible • Use refillable products where possible • Set up contract with recycling company re: paper, metal cans, plastic bottles etc across our service • Install paper recycling facilities in every office • Set up composting facility for canteen waste • Issue electronic documents where possible • Minimize our use of paper and other office consumables, for example by reusing and all paper used, and identifying opportunities to reduce waste. • Purchase office paper produced from sustainable sources • Issue documents electronically wherever possible. • Reduce the energy consumption of office equipment by purchasing energy efficient equipment and good housekeeping • Wherever possible use rechargeable batteries and recycle non-rechargeable batteries • Encourage staff to turn off computers every day at the main supply when they finish work • We will encourage the use of low energy bulbs and their appropriate disposal of it according to the guidelines set by the Department of Environment. • We will request colleagues to reduce unnecessary paper usage where appropriate including double-sided printing and photocopying. We will recommend that members of staff set their printers and photocopiers to produce double-sided copies. • We will arrange for waste paper and cardboard to be recycled, via the services provided by our office management contractors where appropriate. We will use a waste collection company that will separate cans, glass and plastics from our commercial sites.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The domestic sites will recycle cans, glass and plastic according to their respective council request. We will arrange for printer cartridges to be recycled. • We will arrange for redundant electric and electronic equipment to be recycled where ever possible or alternately disposed off through a responsible waste management contractor. • All waste products will be disposed off through safe responsible methods according to the local authorities.
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PURCHASING	
POLICY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All will ensure all purchasing decisions take account of the environmental factors involved in production, use and disposal of the product.
OBJECTIVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take account of environmental factors in purchasing decisions; • E.G Fair Trade beverages
ACTION POINTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buy recycled and recyclable products where possible • Wherever possible all departments will use local suppliers. • Check if there is a fair trade option • Buy eco-friendly cleaning products where possible • We will encourage our suppliers to adopt environmentally friendly policies and practices.

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ENERGY AND WATER SAVING MEASURES	
POLICY	Energy production consumes valuable non-renewable resources and causes massive pollution. AI will investigate energy and water saving measures
OBJECTIVE	Increase efficient use of water and energy supplies
ACTION POINTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage Service Users and staff to switch off lighting after use • Encourage Service Users and staff to switch off computers, including monitors, after use • Use energy efficient light bulbs in all AI properties • Regular checks for water leaks in taps, toilets etc and repair immediately • Install water saving devices in toilet cisterns • Make staff aware of energy saving measures through training and environmental awareness sessions • Undertake 'Carbon Footprint' checks • Look at the installation of water butts for collection of rainwater

HYGIENE, HEALTH AND SAFETY	
POLICY	While conforming to legislation, all work places should acknowledge the worker's need for an acceptable working environment and should implement greener practices wherever possible.
OBJECTIVE	To implement greener practices in line with health and safety requirements
ACTION POINTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enforce and ensure no smoking policy for all AI work areas • Investigate 'daylight' lighting • Ensure adequate air circulation in all offices

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TRAVEL	
POLICY	Examine the impact our use of transport and personal vehicles has on the environment
OBJECTIVE	Reduce the impact of environmental emissions from AI vehicles
ACTION POINTS	<p>Promote public transport for staff who do not need to drive for work</p> <p>Provide adequate cycle storage for staff and service users</p> <p>Car sharing where possible</p> <p>Audio/ Video conferencing where possible</p> <p>Ensure all AI vehicles are correctly serviced</p> <p>Educate staff as to Eco Safe Driving</p> <p>Where the only practical alternative is to fly, we will purchase appropriate offsets</p> <p>Reduce annual car mileage and purchase appropriate offsets for all staff business and personal mileage</p> <p>Replace company cars with more efficient models as they become due for replacement</p>

WORKING PRACTICES	
POLICY	
OBJECTIVE	To look towards sustainable and environmentally friendly working practices within all our services
ACTION POINTS	<p>Promote public transport for staff who do not need to drive for work</p> <p>Provide adequate cycle storage for staff and service users</p> <p>Car sharing where possible</p> <p>Audio/ Video conferencing where possible</p> <p>Ensure all AI vehicles are correctly serviced</p> <p>Educate staff as to Eco Safe Driving</p> <p>Where the only practical alternative is to fly, we will purchase appropriate offsets</p> <p>Reduce annual car mileage and purchase appropriate offsets for all staff business and personal mileage</p> <p>Replace company cars with more efficient models as they become due for replacement</p>

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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACTION PLAN

THE ACTION PLAN WILL BE UPHELD THROUGH THE FOLLOWING:

- Our Health and Safety Committee will improve awareness and understanding of the issues amongst staff within the organisation and request staff to encourage the Service Users to assist and participate in the implementation of the policy.
- We will encourage environmental responsibility amongst our stakeholders, including clients, contractors, suppliers, colleagues and Trustees.
- We will conduct our operations in a way that minimises our consumption of natural resources. We will also manage waste through responsible disposal and the reuse and recycling of materials where economically feasible.
- We will adopt an inclusive approach to our social responsibility and sustainability practices, inviting colleagues' suggestions comments and actions. The Health and Safety Representative will report the suggestions and comments at the Health and Safety meeting for further discussion and action.

CITIZENSHIP

Autism Initiatives will allow colleagues to undertake all normal civic duties, including jury service, membership of public authorities, school governors, etc, as long as such duties do not limit proper performances of their duties.

Although as an organisation it is inappropriate to make financial donations to other charitable causes, we will allow staff to individually fundraise for other charitable causes.

We will endeavour to recruit locally to sustain the local employment market and to contribute to the local economy.

SME's AND SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

Autism Initiatives (AI) recognises the important contribution Small and Medium Enterprises (SME's) and Social Enterprises make to the environmental and economic well being of a local area. AI is committed to support the local economy. Through its procurement, AI will support small business growth, and also the voluntary and community sector, including Social Enterprises. AI appreciates that the majority of Welsh businesses are SME's

Environmental sustainability is important to AI and the use of local SME's and local social enterprises ensures that distance travelled by a local workforce or the distance supplies need to be transported is minimised.

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AI is committed to Social Enterprise development and has set up its own social firm in Edinburgh, an art gallery providing young people aged between 16 and 19 the opportunity to undertake 'creative apprenticeships'. This social firm offers familiar but stimulating work that is highly desirable to our client group. The development of social firms for our client group is a key objective for AI and we are currently in the preliminary stages of setting up our second social firm.

AI encourages diversity and competition through engagement with all potential suppliers, but in particular Small and Medium Enterprises and the Voluntary & Community Sector as active partners. These principles are built into Autism Initiatives (AI) procurement processes.

In particular AI

- Ensures tender documents are kept as simple as possible.
- Pays all supplier invoices promptly within one calendar month from receipt of an invoice. Local small suppliers are paid fortnightly.
- Encourages its suppliers to build relationships with local SME's
- When procuring for goods/services AI uses value for money criteria to make decisions. This criteria takes into account environmental and local economy outcomes.

CONTRACTORS

We expect all our contractors to adhere to the terms within this policy and to have their own suitable Social and Environmental Responsibility Policy. Contractors should also be aware that we will require CRB checks in order to provide protection for our Service Users from forms of abuse and as part of our commitment to safeguarding the people we work with.

DRIVING AND TRANSPORT

We ask all our drivers to read the Driving Standards Agency 'Eco Safe Driving Guide' This is a proven style of driving which reduces emissions and fuel consumption without compromising safety.

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ANNUAL REVIEW

The effectiveness of this policy and our practices will be reviewed annually by the Health and Safety Committee at Directors level.

Following a review the policy will be revised as necessary to ensure its continuing effectiveness and suitability in line with changes to and development of legislation and the Environmental action Plan.

CROSS REFERENCE

- **Driving Policy**
- **Child Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding Policy**
- **Adult Protection Policy**
- **Health and Safety Policy**