



Our climate change commitments

Annual update (April 2025 – March 2026)



**Committed
to quality**



healthwatch
Brighton and Hove

Our commitment

Healthwatch Brighton and Hove is committed to contributing to the city's accessible, clean, and sustainable environment goals.

As part of our commitment, we routinely review and update our ways of working and also publish an annual report describing actions we have taken or are working on. We also include a summary in our statutory [Annual Report](#).

This is our first update progress report.

To note. Our plans for this year have been affected by the [government's proposal](#) to abolish Healthwatch. Currently, we only have certainty about our immediate future until March 2027, and this will affect our long-term climate change plans.

What we achieved in 2025–2026

- We previously [published our initial plans](#) to become carbon neutral.
- We met with Community Works, who achieved their [Investors in the Environment Bronze Award](#), and they have shared good practice with us.
- We are working with a local sustainability consultant who has reviewed our draft plan and is supporting us to refine this. This work is funded by a grant from [Naturesave Trust](#). As a result, we are developing a workable plan to help us deliver meaningful change.
- We were an active partner during the first year of a city-wide partnership with the [Trust for Developing Communities](#) (TDC) and 20 other local VCSE to deliver a [Lottery-funded Climate for Communities Project](#). Sadly, due to the uncertainty regarding our future, we have had to withdraw from this and have lost associated funding. We have provided the partnership with insight on how best to evaluate the impacts of the project from a health and wellbeing perspective.

Developing our plans

Our **Year One plans** were focused on conducting a review of work we have undertaken to date. Other areas of focus included identifying funding to underpin our work and creating an environmental sub-group. We successfully achieved these.

Uncertainty about our future has diverted our attention away from delivering everything we had hoped to do this year, e.g. we have not had the capacity to undertake a financial review or identify suitable training and volunteering opportunities. These activities will be rolled over to next year.

Year One progress

1. **A review of our work.** We are working with Alice Doyle from [Positive Impacts](#). Alice has reviewed our draft climate action plan, and her feedback is helping us to establish a proportionate approach to our work, focused on what a small team of five staff and 40 volunteers can directly influence, and how we might integrate sustainability into our services. We have agreed that our actions must be achievable, repeatable and avoid overcommitting ourselves.

Carbon emissions are often divided into three areas, and we have assessed which areas we have some control over:

Scope 1 are called direct emissions from activities within the organisation e.g. emissions created from manufacturing processes.	Healthwatch does not create direct emissions as we do not produce goods or have manufacturing processes which create greenhouse gases and we are a tenant, rather than owning premises (see below).
Scope 2 are called indirect emissions , e.g. from any electricity, heat, cooling, or steam which are purchased.	Healthwatch rents office space from Community Base which provides all our lighting, heating, recycling, etc. As a tenant, we have minimal control over the building's Scope 2 indirect emissions. But we do have a choice of landlord and we have reviewed this.
Scope 3 are other indirect emissions, for example , choices our employees make and our supply chain.	We have identified that we have some control over Scope 3 indirect emissions, such as staff and volunteer travel, commuting and our supply chain e.g. who provides our printing needs.

2. **Funding.** We successfully secured funding to support our climate ambitions as part of our partnership work with TDC, but this has unfortunately now been lost (see above).
3. **Training.** We have been on a learning curve this year and have been supported through our involvement with the TDC project and from our work with Positive Impacts. Through the TDC project, we have hosted sessions with other voluntary and charitable partners to reach priority groups with climate-health messaging. We will focus on identifying further training for our staff team and volunteers next year.
4. **Environmental sub-group.** Initially, this was formed by our CEO and the project lead for the TDC project but following the loss of this member of staff, the whole staff team now forms this group; in addition to Alice who is bringing independent scrutiny to our work.
5. **Risks:** We identified that key risks to our ability to meet our climate ambitions are dependent on factors that we have no control over (see the table above), our limited team capacity, buy-in from staff and volunteers and the proposed closure of Healthwatch. We have mitigated some of these through the review process described above.
6. **Measuring emissions:** This has been delayed pending the outcomes from our review and will be carried over to next year.
7. **Sharing energy saving advice, conducting an internal financial review, and identifying volunteering opportunities.** These activities have been delayed and will be carried over to next year.

Steps we have taken this year

A review of our office space

We have reviewed our office requirements this year and explored other opportunities in the city. Following this review, we decided to remain in Community Base. We now share a smaller office with [Community Works](#), two days a week. Our staff team work from home the remainder of the time.

We purposefully decided to remain in Community Base as it is home to a variety of Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprises (VCSEs) who we work with and also because our landlord takes their responsibility towards the environment seriously. Community Base has already completed a Carbon Footprint Reporting.

- The building has a hydroelectric power supply which significantly reduces energy supply carbon emissions when compared with non-renewable electricity sources.
- The landlord has installed energy efficient heaters which over time will decrease building energy usage and it will be interesting to see how significant this is. Conservatively, the hope is for a minimum 10% reduction.
- The landlord has delivered ongoing improvements to upgrade lighting to LED which will also impact favourably on energy usage.

Our move from a larger office to a smaller, shared space with Community Works will reduce our carbon footprint. Our previous CO₂ footprint made up a small 0.001 CO₂ tonnes of Community Base's overall output. We have yet to determine what impact our downsizing will have on this level.

Modifying our office needs

In addition to a change of office, we have:

- **Purchased eight efficient laptops**, which use less energy and have longer battery lives e.g. they are engineered with low-power components and feature a 42-kWh long-life battery. The laptops contain 10% post-consumer recycled plastic and ocean-bound plastic in speaker enclosures, and packaging is 100% sustainably sourced and made from recyclable moulded paper pulp. Using a smart plug, our previous calculations showed that running one of our older laptops for a standard 7 hours a day created 0.13kWh of electricity per day. Our new laptops have been recorded as creating 0.10kWh per day. This reduction in electricity usage will lower our carbon emissions, with the exact amount still be calculated.
- **Recycled seven of our old laptops**, saving these from going to landfill.
- **Recycled office furniture** we no longer needed, including six desks, two shelving units, one storage cupboard and two pedestals, saving these from going to landfill.
- **Reduced our printing requirements.** We have switched to using online surveys as standard practice. However, we recognise that being an inclusive organisation means that we must continue to communicate with people in a way that suits their needs, for example, producing printed materials to ensure we can reach people with updates about our work and opportunities to shape local health and social care. Working with our

landlord who provide printing facilities, we hope to be able to estimate our current printing needs and determine how we might reduce these.

- **Moved to holding more meetings online** and conducting interviews with members of the public online or by phone, which has reduced our travel needs. We estimate that 80% of our meetings are now online and 80% of our interviews are conducted online or on the phone.
- **Continued to use central printing options**, meaning that we do not buy in paper. Paper used for printing is 100% recycled.
- **Supporting staff to make greener choices.** We offer hybrid-working and as part of this we encourage staff who work at home to purchase recycled paper, to optimise heating to one room, to put the stand-by time on their laptops to 2 minutes, and we offer them spare equipment to be used at home rather than sending them to landfill (e.g. office chairs).

Supporting sustainable travel

We cover some staff travel costs into the office, so that this does not act as a barrier to someone working for us. We also cover our team member's travel costs incurred in the course of their work. We encourage them to use sustainable travel choices as much as possible and by covering travel costs, our aim is to remove costs as barrier to achieving this.

The majority of our staff team walk to work or use public transport (train and bus). Car use is minimal and estimated to occur just once a week.

We also cover our volunteer travel costs. For one of our routine projects, which involves our volunteers going out to meet people in person, we try to match service users to the location of our volunteers to reduce distances travelled.

Next steps

To help us determine our carbon emissions and savings, we will:

- Record our printing needs, small purchases that we make, and explore how we store our work electronically.
- We will record details of how our staff team and volunteers travel to off-site meetings, conferences, or other legitimate business travel. This may help us identify more ways to encourage sustainable travel. For commuting, we will use google maps to determine the distance and method of travel and multiply this by the days worked. We will also start to

ask staff and volunteers how they travel to determine if we can do more to help them switch to use public transport.

- Examine our general purchasing. This represents a minor part of our business activities as we do not 'buy in' many supplies. We purchase general office supplies from local shops in the city. We sometimes rely on larger retailers who can quickly deliver, particularly to staff member's homes. When choosing suppliers, we will start to consider the 'likely distance travelled' by them, in addition to looking at cost and their environmental credentials.

Year two plans

Year Two will be focused on trying to identify new funding opportunities to support our work and suitable training courses for our staff team and volunteers i.e. to increase their carbon literacy.

Through a financial review, we will determine if we can further support staff and volunteers to make greener choices.

We will start to record data as described above to determine our current travel and supplier needs as well as their environmental credentials. We hope these actions will enable us to calculate a CO₂ baseline.

We will determine what other data we might capture from the people we engage with through our work, and how we can raise awareness of climate choice. For example, we will explore whether to add questions on climate-health to all our surveys/focus groups. We will also use our communication channels to share energy saving advice.

We will explore how we use and store our work digitally ('digital content hygiene') to see if we can reduce carbon emissions. Our website and brand platform are provided by Healthwatch England, limiting any technical changes that we might make but there might be scope for us to improve internal practices.

Lastly, we will determine whether we have capacity to join the Green Champions network.



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