



Business and corporate governance

Environmental and carbon reduction policy

There is strong consensus within the scientific community that climate change is occurring and is caused by human activity. The British Red Cross is therefore taking steps to reduce its own carbon emissions. This makes good sense environmentally and economically.

Policy owner	Executive Director People and Learning
Policy lead	Liz Cole and Richard Dickens – Carbon Reduction Team
Audience	All staff and volunteers
Legislation and regulation	The British Red Cross will ensure it operates within all environmental, legal and other requirements as imposed by EU and UK law and best practice
Formally endorsed by	Executive leadership team and board of trustees
Endorsement date	June 2018
Next review	June 2021

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The environment in which we work and live has never been subjected to as much change as it is now experiencing. Population growth, use of finite resources and greenhouse gas emissions from human activities are taking their toll in many ways not least of all through climate change and pollution. Unfortunately, as we see in our international work, it is often the poorest and most vulnerable communities who are hardest hit by climate change, although in recent times we've seen some extreme conditions here at home too. World temperatures continue to rise¹ as greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere increase and pollution through waste generation continues.
- 1.2 The British Red Cross, as part of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, is committed to reducing the environmental impact of our operations and will ensure that all is done to mitigate climate change and the adverse impact this has on the world. We are committed to complying with applicable legislation in all the jurisdictions where it operates and will share achievements with all stakeholders in and outside the organisation.
- 1.3 This policy has been produced in line with, and should be interpreted in the light of, our organisational values: compassionate, courageous, inclusive and dynamic.

¹ Source: NASA

1.4 This policy must be read in conjunction with the [Guidance to Implementation of Environmental and Carbon Reduction Policy](#).

2 Policy statement

2.1 The British Red Cross policy statement on carbon emissions is:

There is strong consensus within the scientific community that climate change is occurring and is caused by human activity. The British Red Cross is therefore taking steps to reduce its own carbon emissions. This makes good sense environmentally and economically.

Purpose and aim

2.2 The British Red Cross needs to balance environmental commitments with other considerations such as UK and international emergency response operations, financial constraints and response to the humanitarian imperative.

2.3 It is nonetheless our aim to ensure our environmental commitments become an integral part of our day to day activities, that we seek ways to continually improve our environmental performance and operate in a responsible manner including reducing waste and making reductions in our carbon emissions from heat, power and travel.

2.4 The British Red Cross will ensure it operates within all environmental, legal and other requirements as imposed by EU and UK law and best practice.

2.5 The British Red Cross has attained ISO 14001 certification in environmental management systems and will maintain this accolade as a minimum standard for all present and future environmental and carbon reduction initiatives.

Scope

2.6 The aim of this policy is for the British Red Cross to control its impact on the environment through the following objectives:

- Minimise our contribution to pollution by reducing our carbon emissions and waste together with recycling, reusing and reducing wherever possible
- Assess the adverse effects our operations/partnerships may have on the environment and seek ways to minimise them
- Introduce into our procurement practice supplier selection criteria based on a minimum environmental standard
- Promote environmental awareness to all stakeholders including the induction of new staff and volunteers
- Monitor, report and reduce carbon emissions specifically from heat, power and travel

We will achieve the objectives through the following activities:

- i. Selecting the most appropriate form of travel taking in to account carbon emissions as well as other business factors; and only travel when necessary

- ii. Ensuring that our buildings are operated in such a manner so to optimise use and reduce emissions through control of heat and power
- iii. Reducing waste through control of packaging for bought in goods
- iv. Recycling all appropriate waste such as paper, card, metals and plastics
- v. Reducing our use of plastics
- vi. Ensuring that the induction process for new starters contains information about this policy and obligations to adhere to it
- vii. Challenging behaviour of colleagues who act in a manner contrary to the this policy
- viii. Implementing a central reporting mechanism to allow senior management to be informed about environmental issues within the organisation and achievements made in mitigating the overall environmental impact
- ix. Expanding the availability and use of new technologies to allow for changes in behaviour particularly around travel, e.g. greater use of video conferencing and expand the 'virtualisation' of IT systems
- x. Including in supplier selection and review criteria minimum environmental standards expected of current and future suppliers for bought in goods and services
- xi. Providing quarterly reports for each business unit showing carbon emissions generated from electricity, gas and travel
- xii. Using environmental impact assessments (EnvIA) for UK and international operations/projects where a potential increase risk of detriment to the environment has been identified and report on such assessments in our Annual Report and other such media outlets.

Standards

2.7 ISO 14001:2015 standard for our environmental management systems.

3 Responsibilities

3.1 All of our people are responsible for complying with this policy and supporting our efforts to minimise our impact on the environment.

3.2 Management and all those in a supervisory role have the responsibility for implementing the policy within their areas of responsibility, and should ensure that environmental issues are given adequate consideration in the planning and execution of our operations, services and programs.

4 Laws and regulations

4.1 We will ensure we operate within all environmental, legal and other requirements as imposed by EU and UK law and best practice.

4.2 This policy can be shared with external stakeholders including members of the public and commissioners.

4.3 Where applicable, the British Red Cross will comply with commissioners' environmental/carbon reduction policies and initiatives.

5 **Monitoring and compliance**

5.1 Management systems certified to ISO14001:2015 standard are in place to monitor this policy and ensure compliance.

6 **Review and maintenance**

6.1 This policy was reviewed in June 2018. It is next scheduled for review in June 2021, but will be updated earlier as required.

7 **Appendices**

7.1 Appendix 1: related documents

7.2 Appendix 2: document provenance

Appendix 1: related documents

Document title	Relationship to this policy
Travel and expenses policy	Related policy
Overarching ethical policy	Related policy
Guidance to Implementation of Environmental and Carbon Reduction Policy; and Environmental Impact Assessments	Related documents supporting implementation of this policy
ISO 14001 manual	External best practice manual

Appendix 2: document provenance

Date endorsed	Category	Summarise changes made	Reason for changes	Consulted	Changes endorsed by
November 2012	Scheduled review	Scheduled review completed	To reflect improved practice		Board of Trustees
July 2014	Interim change	Update to guidance note	To reflect improved practice	People and Learning	ED People and Learning
April 2015	Interim change	Continuous improvement note added	ISO 14001 accreditation process	People and Learning	ED People and Learning
June 2018	Scheduled review	Updated onto new corporate template, included new commitments on plastics, and other minor updates	Scheduled three yearly review	People and Learning, Governance	ED People and Learning