

Sustainability & Environmental Policy

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1. Introduction

Step into Learning is committed to protecting the environment, the health and safety of our employees and the communities in which we conduct our business. It is our policy to seek continual improvement throughout our business operations and activities to lessen our impact on the local and global environment. We endeavour to do this by conserving energy, water and other natural resources; reducing waste generation; recycling and reducing our use of toxic materials. We are committed to environmental excellence and pollution prevention, meeting or exceeding all environmental regulatory requirements, including ISO 14001.

This document sets out Step into Learning’s sustainability commitment and objectives and provides a framework to reduce the organisation’s environmental impact and prepare staff and learners for a sustainable future.

This policy will be communicated to all staff, learners and subcontractors through training, onboarding and internal communications. The policy is publicly available on our website and provided to interested parties upon request.



2. Scope

This document is for all staff and learners (both full-time or part-time) of Step into learning and all of our Subcontractors.

3. Definition

Sustainability is the long-term maintenance and enhancement of human well-being within finite planetary resources. It is usually considered to have environmental, economic, and social dimensions.

4. Policy Statement

4.1 Aims and Objectives

Step into Learning will manage its operations in ways that are environmentally sustainable, economically feasible and socially responsible. Step into Learning recognises that there is a climate and ecological emergency and that its role includes:

- Minimising the impact of its activities on the environment.
- Enabling staff and employees to meet the ecological and climate challenges that we face and take advantage of the opportunities arising from them.

In order to achieve this Step into Learning will:

- Continually develop and expand the curriculum in order to develop awareness of sustainability
- Reduce energy and water consumption, improve efficiency and reduce carbon emissions
- Protect the environment by preventing pollution and by minimising the use of natural resources
- Reduce waste through sustainable resource management, sustainable procurement, reusing materials where possible and improving recycling
- Step into Learning will comply with all applicable workplace recycling regulations, including the separation of recyclable materials and food waste in accordance with UK and local authority requirements. Waste will be managed in accordance with



the waste hierarchy: prevention, reuse, recycling, recovery and disposal as a last resort.

- Promote and continually improve sustainable travel options and reduce the impact of business travel
- Incorporate sustainability into procurement and sourcing agreements and strategies
- Promote sustainability awareness and practice amongst all staff and learners and provide opportunities for staff and learners to reduce their personal environmental impact
- Comply fully with all environmental legislation
- Step into Learning will operate in alignment with the Environment Act 2021, the Climate Change Act 2008 (as amended), and all applicable environmental regulations and statutory guidance.
- The organisation will have due regard to the UK Government's Environmental Improvement Plan and associated legally binding environmental targets where relevant to its operations.
- Engage with employers, other institutions and the wider community to share best practice and promote environmental responsibility
- Set measurable, time-bound sustainability objectives and key performance indicators (KPIs), monitor progress at least annually, and report performance to the Board of Trustees.
- Where legally required, Step into Learning will comply with statutory environmental reporting obligations, including Streamlined Energy and Carbon Reporting (SECR) requirements. Step into Learning does not currently meet the reporting threshold, but this is reviewed annually.
- Maintain certification to ISO 14001 Environmental Management Standards and ensure continual improvement in line with the ISO 14001 framework.
- Step into Learning recognises the importance of biodiversity protection and enhancement. Where reasonably practicable, the organisation will consider opportunities to support biodiversity through responsible estate management, procurement decisions, and engagement with partners and suppliers.



Step into Learning considers the active involvement of its employees and learners to be vital in achieving its sustainability objectives.

In order to help drive cultural change, staff and learners will be provided with opportunities to develop their awareness of sustainability through staff training, sustainability related curriculum, tutoring and enrichment activities

Step into Learning will periodically review environmental management policies and procedures and activities to ensure suitability, adequacy and effectiveness.

Any public environmental or sustainability claims made by Step into Learning will be clear, evidence-based and compliant with the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) Green Claims Code.

4.2 Roles and Responsibilities

The purpose of this section is to define responsibilities and relationships that promote a positive culture and secure the implementation and continued development of the Sustainability Policy.

4.2.1 The Board of Trustees considers matters affecting Step into Learning, its strategy, operation or management. In order to perform their duties, the Board will:

- Incorporate sustainability into board arrangements
- Satisfy themselves that a policy on sustainability is prepared, implemented and periodically reviewed
- Ensure implementation of the sustainability policy through effective monitoring and audit
- Satisfy themselves that management responsibility for sustainability is clearly designated
- Satisfy themselves that sustainability is an integral part of Step into Learning's overall strategy



- Take appropriate action where commitments are not being met
- Receive and review an annual sustainability performance report, including progress against carbon reduction and compliance obligations.
- The Board formally recognises the declaration of a climate and ecological emergency and this position is recorded in Board minutes. This will be reviewed annually as part of the sustainability governance cycle.
- Receive assurance that ISO 14001 certification is maintained, including review of audit outcomes and corrective actions where required.

4.2.2 The Executive Director

The Executive Director has overall responsibility to the Board for sustainability. In order to fulfil this duty, the Executive Director will:

- Ensure a sustainability policy is prepared, implemented and periodically reviewed
- Ensure that the effective environmental management is an essential element within the overall strategy of Step into Learning
- Clearly designate management responsibility for sustainability
- Commit to maintaining and reviewing an internal Carbon Reduction Plan, with measurable targets and annual Board oversight.
- This keeps the commitment but avoids reliance on an external provider.
- Establish and maintain management control of sustainability within Step into Learning
- Oversee the organisational arrangements for managing sustainability in Step into Learning including training
- Ensure the allocation of sufficient resources to enable the effective implementation of the Sustainability Policy and to meet net zero targets
- Ensure alignment with sustainable procurement practices:
 - Suppliers are encouraged to adopt sustainable practices and improve their own carbon footprint through supplier engagement, procurement policies and contracts, and monitoring reporting mechanisms
 - Commit to a periodic review of supplier sustainability



- Commit to purchasing second hand/refurbished equipment and furniture as an alternative and where appropriate and extending the lifespan of purchased items
- Promote and utilise the emissions travel hierarchy
 - Digital communication
 - Walking & Cycling
 - Public and shared transport
 - EV's and car sharing/clubs
 - ICE vehicles and car sharing/clubs
 - Air travel

4.2.3 The **SEND, Inclusion & Education Delivery Manager** will be expected to:

- Develop curriculum to include sustainable awareness and carbon literacy training for all Learners
- Develop the curriculum in order to provide appropriate educational programs for learners taking into account new technologies, new ways of working and current and future skills gaps
- Determine the needs of employers regarding their climate change and ecological challenges and modify the curriculum in order to ensure that learners can take advantage of employment opportunities that will arise
- Incorporate sustainability into enrichment and extra-curricular activities
- Train teaching staff to incorporate sustainability into the curriculum for all courses

4.2.4 Employees will be expected to:

- Co-operate with Step into Learning and assist with the implementation of the sustainability policy, procedures and initiatives.
- Help to reduce energy consumption
- Reduce wastage, reuse resources and recycle where possible
- Attend training and incorporate sustainable working practices into their normal routines



- Personally, display good standards and promote a culture that is positive to sustainability at all times
- Choose active travel (walking, cycling) and low emissions travel options (car sharing, public transport) where available and appropriate
- Commit to becoming a 'Green Team' and promoting sustainability internally

5. Resources

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/25-year-environment-plan/25-year-environment-plan-our-targets-at-a-glance>

<https://www.parliament.uk/about/sustainability/targets-and-performance/#:~:text=Both%20Houses%20agreed%20the%20following,reduction%20in%20mains%20water%20consumption>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sustainability-in-ukhsa/environmental-policy>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/companies-house-environmental-policy/companies-house-environmental-policy>

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/30>

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/27/contents>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/environmental-improvement-plan-2025/environmental-improvement-plan-eip-2025>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/simpler-recycling-workplace-recycling-in-england>