



## Environmental Policy

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## Vision

Autism Bedfordshire is committed to making a positive impact through outstanding environmental sustainability performance.

## Principles

To protect and enhance the natural environment by reducing our direct environmental impact.

To maximise the wider positive impact of the University's environmental sustainability actions at local, national and international level through communication, collaboration, partnership.

To create a culture where Autism Bedfordshire's community is engaged, empowered and supported in improving their personal and collective environmental sustainability practices

## Priority Areas

- Reduce carbon emissions
- Positive impact through training and enquiry
- Conserve natural resources

### Key Impacts

- Energy consumption
- Resource and waste management
- Biodiversity and ecosystems
- Water use

### Supporting Approaches

- Sustainable travel
- Energy and carbon management
- Sustainable construction & refurbishment
- Environment Management System
- Partnership and engagement
- Sustainable procurement

### Strategy

#### Energy and carbon management

Autism Bedfordshire is committed to tackling human-caused climate change by reducing our carbon emissions. We aim to reduce energy consumption and carbon emissions while supporting plans for growth.

*Objective – to reduce energy use at the Autism Bedfordshire office to under 21,000 kWh this year.*

**Autism Bedfordshire’s office is heated by storage heaters which are manually adjusted to save heating wherever possible. Lights and equipment are turned off by the last person to leave the office.**

#### Recycling and Waste

Autism Bedfordshire is committed to minimise and actively manage waste through elimination, reduction, re-use and recycling.

Paper is recycled whenever possible. Both sides of paper are used for printing where appropriate. Use of the email system reduces the need to print.

*Objective – to achieve continuous year on year reductions in waste resulting from Autism Bedfordshire’s operations. To re-cycle at least 95% of total waste.*

#### Biodiversity and Ecosystems

Autism Bedfordshire is committed to limiting negative and, where possible, having positive direct and indirect impacts on biodiversity and natural ecosystems.

*Objective – to create innovative approaches to minimise negative environmental impacts.*

## Water Use

Autism Bedfordshire is committed to conserving water through efficient use and management.

*Objective – to reduce water consumption by 20% by 2020 against a 2018 baseline.*

### What Can You Do?

- **Wash up your coffee mugs, etc. using standing water, i.e. not under a running tap. Save up a few to do at a time if possible, to maximise on efficient use of hot water and cleaning products.**
- **Remove any bottle-fed water coolers and either use tap water instead or replace with mains-fed version.**
- **Run a water-saving campaign. We have posters you can print or request.**

It's nice to have a refreshing cold drink of water, especially in the Summer. Avoid running the tap and wait for the water to run cold, fill up a jug of water and chill it in the fridge.

**Boiling a full kettle uses a lot of water and energy** - Only fill the kettle with what you need rather than filling it every time, saving water and energy.

## Travel and Transport

Autism Bedfordshire is committed to promoting viable and accessible sustainable travel options for staff for travel to work, travel at work and travel for work which results in a reduction of carbon emissions.

- **Public Transport**
- **Car Share**
- **Cycling**
- **Car Clubs** E-car <https://ecarclub.co.uk/> Co-wheels <http://www.co-wheels.org.uk/>

We will seek to promote measures that reduce the need for travel to and from the Autism Bedfordshire office.

## Sustainable Procurement

'Sustainable procurement' is considering both environmental and social factors when making a purchasing decision. The aim is to minimise your purchases' environmental and social impacts.

Traditionally, only the upfront cost mattered when choosing what to buy but this initial outlay may not be the largest expense. Whole life costs include this initial outlay but also consider the operational and disposal costs of the product.

### What's the greenest item?

The most environmentally sustainable option is to avoid unnecessary purchases. Can you find an alternative through contacts, Freecycle or the Autism Bedfordshire Charity Shop?

### Why Should I Bother?

'Green' alternatives can be more **energy efficient**. Initial outlay may be marginally more but the average payback periods from this energy waste minimisation are measured in months, not years.

**Waste costs** more than you may realise. When you consider the materials, the costs of treatment, energy and wasted labour, you'll find the real price tag on waste is often 5-20 times the cost of disposal.

The conservation of natural resources is becoming increasingly important. If finite resources are not conserved now there will be major **scarcity issues** in years to come.

Considering the **ethical side** of your purchases – could they be Fairtrade, or is it possible to buy from organisations with strong social accountability?

- Is the product made in part or wholly from recycled material?
- Was the product made in the UK?
- Is the product made from a material that can be recycled after use?
- How energy and water efficient is the purchase?
- Can I avoid excessive packaging?
- Is my existing appliance upgradeable?
- Is the product easy to dismantle (separating materials is essential for successful recycling)?
- What are the disposal costs likely to be for the product?
- Can you track the supply chain to make sure there were strong ethical and environmental practices throughout the creation of the product?
- Will the supplier take back old items or waste packaging for reuse or recycling?

### Key quick questions to ask

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### Practical help for buying common items

#### Batteries

1. Where possible buy NiMH (**nickel metal hydride**) or Lithium rechargeable batteries. Most are available in AAA, AA, C, D and 9V as well as specialist sizes.

2. When purchasing batteries try to avoid those containing Mercury (Hg), Cadmium (Cd) or Lead (Pb).

### **Computer equipment**

1. Try to purchase TFT (Thin Film Transistor – flat screen) or LCD (Liquid Crystal Display) monitors. Not only are they much more energy efficient, they are also far easier and cheaper to dispose of than CRT (Cathode Ray Tube – the non-flat screen) monitors.
2. Try to purchase monitors that have the Energy Star Logo. Energy Star accredited CRT and TFT screens are available.
3. When buying a monitor consider the energy use when on standby, as well as when it is active.

### **Domestic electrical equipment**

1. The more efficient an appliance is, the more money you can save – and the more you help the environment. Look for the energy label rating of an item.
2. Look for the Energy Rating of domestic electrical appliances. Unsure of what the energy label means? Consider buying goods with A++ or A+ rating.
3. Consider how large the appliance needs to be. In refrigeration products, the capacity can have dramatic effects on the energy consumption. If you purchase a fridge or freezer that has a 500 litre capacity but only half fill it then you are wasting the energy it takes to cool 250 litres of space.
4. For Ultra-Low Temperature (ULT) freezers or drying cabinets, consider the Equipment Replacement Programme.

### **Furniture**

1. Ask if the purchase is really necessary: is the furniture you require already available elsewhere?
2. Consider rental of furniture for short-term requirements.
3. Purchase second-hand furniture where appropriate: some of the Approved Furniture Distributors also offer second-hand goods.
4. Opt for furniture constructed from recycled materials: there are many recycled products available on the market from countertops and shelving, to desk screens, office chairs and even some recycled steel and aluminium products.
5. Avoid tropical hardwoods such as mahogany, choosing domestic soft woods like pine instead (these grow a lot quicker than hard woods).
6. Choose wood products that come from a sustainable source: FSC and PEFC logos can be an assurance that the product you are buying is from a sustainably managed forest and not, for example, rainforest clearance.
7. Ask if the finishes or glues used in manufacturing the product were solvent-free, formaldehyde-free and have low VOC emissions.

Think about any toxic substances that may have been used in manufacture of the furniture, especially wooden furniture, and specify environmentally-friendly alternatives e.g. water-based rather than solvent-based adhesives and lacquers. These can include wood preservatives, formaldehyde, and hydrochloroflourocarbons (HCFCs). Some foam cushions are manufactured from polyurethane foam made from HCFCs, chemicals that contribute to global warming and the destruction of the ozone layer. Look for less harmful alternatives like foams made with acetone, isoprene and even carbon dioxide.

### **Kitchen equipment**

Many offices have staff kitchens which can be a significant user of energy and producer of waste. There are however some simple ways to reduce the impact of these areas, for instance by:

1. Considering the energy efficiency of kettles and water boilers. Boiling water is very energy intensive, so it's important to consider whether 'instant' hot water boilers or individual kettles are more suited to the situation.
2. Considering waste from kitchen consumables. Many coffee and hot drinks machines can require individually-packaged sachets or cups which can be a large source of waste which is often not recyclable, or are highly contaminated which reduces their recyclable value. When considering which type of machine to use, consider the type and recyclability of the consumables and what packaging they include, for instance preferring bulk amounts rather than individual packaged portions.
3. Consider the use of dishwashers. These can help reduce waste by reducing the need for disposal cups and plates, however they have an energy and water impact each time they are run. Consider whether the kitchen will be used by sufficient staff to create demand for a dishwashing machine, and also opt for models which use less energy and water (for instance A+ energy-rated models)

## Paper

To achieve the 'white' paper we're all used to but without chlorine bleaching (which produces dioxins, a highly toxic group of chemicals formed when chlorine combines with chemicals naturally occurring in wood), look for:

**Processed chlorine free (PCF)** is manufactured without adding any chlorine or chlorine derivatives. However, PCF is used on recycled paper, so if chlorine was used in the manufacture of the original paper, it's still in the finished product - but no more than that. This is the preferred option!

**Elementally chlorine free (ECF)** means instead of chlorine gas, chlorine derivatives are used, which is a process that is used in many recycled papers and tissue products. This still means that chlorine is used.

**Totally chlorine free (TCF)** means there is no chlorine or chlorine derivatives used to make the paper, but this means the paper must come from virgin fibre and not recycled stock.

1. Consider using recycled paper wherever possible. Recent technological advances now mean that there should be no issues with recycled paper and modern printers.
2. Try to reduce the amount of paper bought that has been bleached using traditional methods. Try buying paper that has been bleached through the PCF method.
3. Buying notepads? There are high-quality ranges on the CUFS that are 100% recycled and made in the UK. Buying from the UK also reduces the items' environmental footprint even further.

Also: Try and print on both sides of the paper. If the document is a draft, or for information only print 2 pages per sheet. It is still completely legible at this size for most people. Can you set up printers to default to double-sided and make it departmental policy to print 2 pages per side?

## Photocopiers

1. When purchasing a photocopier, look out for one with low power/ switch-off facilities that enter sleep mode when not used for a specific time period. The equipment will need time to restart again so ensure that this is cost effective for the proposed usage pattern. Also, try to make sure that the model you source has the option to change the frequency of the power-

down mode. This enables you to adapt your photocopier to best suit the needs of your Department.

2. Energy is used for heating, and fixing the toner. If a photocopier is left on all day and used for 20% of that time, it will account for about £350 of energy each year. Switch it off overnight and at the weekends when possible!

3. Think about renting a photocopier, which keeps your equipment as up-to-date as possible and also saves on disposal costs.

4. Try to source photocopiers which use a low melting point toner. These can save up to 40% of the energy used by reducing the warm up time, which also reduces staff waiting time because copying and printing have a faster recovery time from stand-by mode.

5. Most photocopiers have multifunctional capability. This means that as long as they have been networked by the University Computing Service they are also able to be used as a printer. In some cases they are able to print double-sided and up to A3 size. The cost of printing through a multifunctional photocopier is in many cases lower than using a standard desktop printer. There are obvious financial savings to be made by sourcing a photocopier that has the multifunctional capability, and by making sure that it is utilised to its full potential.

### **Printers**

1. Wherever possible buy multifunctional printers, especially in communal areas, as they save space and resources.

2. Try to buy printers from manufacturers that have a sound environmental 'life cycle' policy.

3. Try to buy printers that have the Energy Star accreditation. Part of the Energy Star rating is a TEC (Typical Electricity Consumption) figure, which represents the typical amount of electricity a laser printer consumes in one week. The lower the TEC rating, the higher the energy and cost saving. Also look out for machines with quicker machine warm-up times to encourage staff to switch off overnight, and to save energy on the warm-up itself.

4. Check to see if the machine will print double-sided and save paper, toner, and money. Once in place, set the default setting to print double-sided. Some machines automatically default to double-sided printing by themselves.

5. Make use of recycling schemes to dispose of toner cartridges and printers themselves.

### **Stationery**

1. Look out for the environmentally-friendly logo in suppliers' catalogues (for example a green tree symbol).

2. Try to encourage re-use of folders, flip charts and envelopes.

3. Invest in re-fillable pens and pencils.

4. Try to use self-adhesive notes only for their intended purpose. Staple scrap paper together to make very economical note pads!

5. Water-based correction fluids are preferable to the solvent-based options.