



The Gatehouse Environmental Policy

Policy ID Number: P012

Policy Passed by Board of Trustees: From April 2022 - Valid until: April 2025

Introduction

The Gatehouse is a local charity and our aims are to welcome people who are homeless, vulnerably housed, on low income and/or looking for company & community and to provide a place where companionship, dignity and refreshment can be found in a warm, safe and therapeutic environment.

The Gatehouse currently delivers a range of services which include a community centre six evenings a week which offers practical and therapeutic workshops, a café provision, a shower project, a communications project and on the spot practical support with clothing, emotional support, referrals to internal and external services and a sense of community to reduce isolation.

The Gatehouse also delivers one to one longer term casework support, a counselling service, a Women's Hub and facilitates the Lived Experience Advisory Forum in partnership with local services.

Why the Gatehouse needs an Environmental Policy

The Gatehouse recognises that none of us can save the planet alone, but all of us can do something and, as a charity, we should. The Gatehouse already operates with a relatively low carbon footprint due to the processes that we follow (please see below).

However, all those involved in the Gatehouse must think about how to minimise waste and spare resources in terms of their specific contributions to the charity whether that be as trustees, managers, employees and volunteers.

Eliminating and reducing waste

The Gatehouse is largely a donation led organisation and approximately 40-50% of our food provision is donated by a partner agency (The Oxford Food Hub), which reduces food waste as these items have originally been obtained from supermarkets and food wholesalers who, for various reasons, consider them unsaleable (e.g. past the best before date, damaged packaging etc.), and they would otherwise be disposing of them rather than keeping them in the human food chain.

As a charity we have very little food waste in general as the provision is directly delivered to people living in food poverty. The minimal food waste that we do accrue is disposed of in a food waste bin and recycled in the appropriate and responsible way.

The Gatehouse has implemented an on-line data management system to minimise the use of paper materials. Any sensitive data which is paper based and needing to be kept to comply with GDPR is shredded and recycled in the appropriate and responsible way. The Gatehouse also do not

automatically print e-mails and documents, instead we retain them on the hard drive which reduces toner and paper usage. We also make use of e-mail in preference to hard copy mail.

Where photocopying documents is needed we use the double sided printing and back to back photocopying.

Reusing, recycling and disposing

The Gatehouse operates a clothing donation store which allows thousands of donated clothing items, toiletries and bedding i.e. sleeping bags to be reused and recycled each year.

We have and use the appropriate recycling bins (internally and externally) for items that can be recycled and that are used in the Gatehouse operations i.e. clothing that is useable, food packaging, general packaging and we wash and reuse plastic water bottles (which are donated) on a nightly basis to ensure that we are being mindful about reducing and re-using waste.

We also reuse paper based materials as scrap paper (if it hasn't been used for personal and sensitive data) and the Gatehouse disposes of the minimal waste of the above items in a responsible and appropriate way.

Use of energy

The community centre that the Gatehouse uses to operate is rented by the hour, rather than being owned by the Gatehouse. Even though we are not in a position to make structural changes to the building in order to improve its energy efficiency we are mindful and responsible with energy use when occupying the space i.e. the building is not heated all day for three hours of use.

The Gatehouse does not own any vehicles, and cars owned by staff members are only used on behalf of the charity when necessary. There is no car park at our centre and we are based in a busy City where private travel is challenging, meaning that the majority of staff, volunteers, and guests attending our café sessions arrive on foot, by bicycle, or by public transport.

The majority of staff also work using a hybrid model which considerably reduces the need for travel. Practical operating and fundraising materials are also ordered in bulk (wherever possible) to reduce the impact of transportation and to also reduce costs.