

Policy & Procedures

Climate and environment

1) About CHWA

The Culture, Health & Wellbeing Alliance is the sole [free-to-join](#) membership organisation for creative health across England. We provide networked, collaborative advocacy, support and resources, supporting health and wellbeing for all through creative and cultural practice. We are based in [Barnsley, South Yorkshire](#).

How we work and what we do

We have 1.6 full-time equivalent permanent employees, and work with a number of freelance contractors each year on projects varying from single-meeting consultations to short contracts (usually under 1 year) for specialist work. CHWA has no physical office space and all work is conducted remotely with the two employees working from home for the vast majority of their time.

We focus on advocacy, resources and networking for the creative health sector, the vast majority of which currently takes place online.

We run events on a regular basis, with the largest being our national conference run every two years with 200-300 people attending. Most events are one-offs with between 20 and 100 attending each session. All our events are currently online barring one annual face-to-face meeting for our regional champions and Board.

Vision, Mission & Values

Our vision

A healthy world powered by our creativity and imagination

Our mission

We want to build a common understanding that creativity and culture are integral to health and wellbeing. This is an approach that engages with prevention and health-creation not just treatment and disease; is asset-based and holistic; and is communal, collective and co-produced. We want to lead by building national, regional and local collaboration to strengthen the collective power of our members.

We are

- Collaborative
- Generous
- Representative
- Committed to positive social change

2) Why are we taking environmental action?

We declared a Climate Emergency in 2019 and sustainability has been a strategic priority since 2019. You can read our [Climate Emergency Declaration here](#).

We work on the basis of this position statement:

Climate justice and health equity are urgent, intersecting issues. Climate change impacts everything from mental health to respiratory health, and affects people unequally.

Many creative freelancers and organisations already take a holistic approach to health in relation to community and environment. We believe that as more and more people do this, we will be able to imagine new futures; empower changemakers; demonstrate sustainable organisational practices; and reduce demand on polluting and energy-hungry health services

We want to help creative and cultural practitioners directly address the connected issues of climate change, environmental degradation and public health. We are particularly interested in accelerating work that creates concrete change at a local level.

Relationship to policy commitments

We connect our work to a number of national and international commitments listed on our online [Climate resource \(Creativity, climate and health: Accelerating impact\)](#). In relation to the UN Sustainable Development Goals our emphasis, based on our strengths as an organisation and our own theory of change (see [About the Alliance](#)) is primarily on Goals 3: Good Health & Wellbeing; 10: Reduced Inequalities; and 13: Climate Action. Our position in relation to Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth is that persistent economic growth may not be an appropriate response to the climate emergency in developed nations.

3) Our environmental ambition

We will continue to ensure CHWA is a low-carbon organisation using the steps outlined below in our Environmental Action Plan. We also believe that our membership offers us the opportunity to influence change across the cultural and health sectors, as well as via our partnerships with local authorities and other community sector organisations.

4) Our environmental impact

As an organisation CHWA has a limited environmental impact. We have already taken the steps outlined below and commit to maintaining this situation. Our impact is monitored annually via Julie's Bicycle Carbon Calculator.

5) Our environmental commitments

(Please also see our [Fundraising and Procurement policies](#) which cover guidance on ethical processes including in relation to climate and environment.)

5.a) Bank and pensions

CHWA banks with the Co-operative Bank, chosen on the basis of their ethical investment including in relation to environmental degradation and climate change. [The Co-operative Bank 2021 Climate Plan is available here](#). Our pensions are provided by NEST, who were also chosen on the basis of their commitments to ethical investment. [NEST's climate commitments can be found here](#).

5.b) Office arrangements

Both CHWA employees (Executive Director and Coordinator) work from their own homes. The bulk of the business of the organisation is conducted via phone, online meetings, email and other digital services. The staff meet approximately quarterly in person.

CHWA employees and non-Executive Directors all commit to using as little energy as possible for heating, lighting and using work equipment. We also commit to a paperless office and encourage all stakeholders to do the same.

5.c) Meetings and events

CHWA is responsible for convening meetings of stakeholders on a regular basis. Each stakeholder group (for example, regional champions or Strategic Alliance Members) meets a maximum of once annually in person to minimise travel. The remaining meetings are conducted online. Stakeholders are encouraged to travel by public transport to group meetings and events where possible. CHWA staff present available public transport options clearly to all stakeholders prior to meetings and events and where appropriate book on their behalf. Face-to-face meetings are held in locations with nearby train and/or bus stations. We recognise however that public transport is not readily available in all parts of the country and may not be accessible for all stakeholders for reasons of geography or access. CHWA also helps facilitate lift-shares where public transport is not possible or presents other risks (e.g. covid).

5.d) Travel

Staff members travel by public transport by default. The Coordinator travels by car only when transporting equipment for events or giving lifts to colleagues/partner organisations).

Staff and non-Executive Directors are committed to no more than 1 long-haul return-flight per annum or 2 short-haul return-flights each in their work for CHWA. Where it is possible to travel by train and/or bus rather than fly, staff and Directors will take this option even if it requires longer travel time.

Staff travel reduced to 10% of its former levels during the pandemic. CHWA is committed to keeping staff travel well below pre-pandemic levels and has reduced its staff travel budget by 58% from £6,000 in 2019/20 to £2,500 p.a. in 2022/3. Giving rising costs this is likely to translate to an approximately 70% drop in travel.

5.e) Paper

The use of printing and paper is avoided unless absolutely necessary, including minimising the use of paper at meetings and events (including conferences) unless it is required to ensure access for people who may not have a digital alternative.

CHWA information is otherwise held and distributed online. CHWA does not produce leaflets. We are aware, however, that people without regular access to computers/smartphones cannot access the information we provide. This may lead to a form of discrimination (see CHWA's [Equality, Representation & Diversity Policy](#)). We assess the balance between on and offline provision annually when this policy is reviewed.

5.f) Online / Technology

- i) **Servers:** We strive to ensure all servers we use are as close to carbon neutral as possible. Our current servers for email and our website are managed by Fasthosts (<https://www.fasthosts.co.uk/>) whose UK data centres run on 100% renewable energy from offshore wind and biofuel". Fasthosts have also reduced their energy consumption by more than 15% in the 5 years to 2022
- ii) **Website:** CHWA uses an online widget to monitor the energy use of its website. We commit to minimising our energy used in our online presence (see EAP below).
- iii) **Hardware:** where new hardware is required for the organisation, CHWA will aim to buy refurbished electronic goods (e.g. computers, phones) where possible, and prioritise according to better efficiency.

5.g) Food and drink at events and meetings

Staff and Directors use re-usable coffee flasks/cups where possible. CHWA caters with vegetarian food *only* at all events, with vegan options available.

Catering in most venues is generous and there is often wastage which can be compounded if delegates are unable to attend and fail to let us know in time. We ask caterers to provide options for cutlery, containers and crockery that has the least environmental impact. For example this may mean crockery that can be washed rather than recyclable coffee cups. The type of food provided is not always within our control but where it is, we choose smaller, artisan caterers over the corporate caterers. CHWA supports local food providers where possible.

5.h) Waste and Recycling

CHWA has reduced its waste to near zero and recycles any waste generated at events where possible. We choose recyclable or biodegradable materials where possible.

5.i) CHWA's steps to encourage best practice in the sector

- CHWA has declared a climate emergency
- CHWA is leading a consortium in the Julie's Bicycle Accelerator programme (cohort 2) with London Arts and Health, Arts & Health South West and the National Performance Advisory Group for Arts, Design & Heritage in Healthcare
- Each month the CHWA bulletin features at least one article relating to climate change/ environmental work
- In 2020 CHWA established an annual CHWA Climate Award, recognising projects or programmes connecting climate change, health and culture/creativity.
- CHWA is providing information to the sector on environmental action including carbon impacts via a new resource launched in May 2022 (www.culturehealthandwellbeing.org.uk/creativity-climate-and-health-accelerating-impact)

6) Review and maintenance of this policy

The Culture, Health and Wellbeing Alliance CIC shall undertake to review this policy, its implementation and effectiveness every two years. The views of all employees and volunteers shall be sought where necessary and reflected in the review process.

Any new legislation or developments in existing legislation will be considered as and when required and the policy will be updated to reflect these developments.

This policy was approved and agreed by the Board of Directors on the date shown below.

Signed:



Name (please print): Matt Walsh

Position: Co-Chair of Board of Directors

Date: 8 December 2022

Review dates: Every two years from the date above

Organisation name: Culture, Health & Wellbeing Alliance CIC

Company Number: 12359172

7) [How our Environmental Action Plan is monitored, reviewed and updated](#)

Our Environmental Action Plan (EAP) was developed in discussion with our Board and staff and has been influenced by our work with organisations including Julie's Bicycle, Happy Museum network, Culture Declares and Fast Familiar – as well as our 2021 conference panels. It is monitored by the Executive Director and sits within our Risk Register. The EAP is monitored and updated annually.



Environmental Action Plan

1) Key objectives

- 1.a) To develop a plan for reducing our digital carbon emissions by April 2023.
- 1.b) To reduce the carbon impact of our 2023 conference (compared to our in-person conference in 2020) by a minimum of 10%
- 1.c) Appoint Board member to oversee EAP
- 1.d) Reduce flight 'budget' for organisation in line with use
- 1.e) To sustain our existing commitments outlined above

2) Detail

Objective	Responsibilities	Deadline	Budget	KPI targets
Plan for reducing our digital carbon emissions by April 2023	CHWA Staff	April 2023	0	This plan will make use of the Digital Carbon Toolkit produced by Fast Familiar and will govern online meetings and online products.
Reduce carbon impact of conference	CHWA Staff	August 2023	5% commitment within conference budget	10% reduction from 2020 in person, based on JB carbon calculator
Board member to oversee EAP	Board	March 2023	0	The Board member will evaluate against and help develop this plan in time for the 2023 Policy Review meeting.
Reduce flight options	CHWA Staff & Board	March 2023	0	CHWA is not currently using its flight 'budget' outlined in 5.d) above. We will reduce the budget to reflect organisational need and set the limit by organisation rather than by staff / Board member to ensure it remains steady even if staff numbers grow.
Sustain existing commitments	CHWA Staff & Board	March 2023	0	See 5.a) to 5.i) above. Commitments will be reviewed in the annual Policy Review meeting.