

# Connected Voice

## Environmental Policy

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### Document details and review

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This policy will be reviewed annually

Signed: Lisa Goodwin



Date: 9 October 2023

## **1. Environmental Policy Statement**

Connected Voice recognises that it has a responsibility to the environment beyond legal and regulatory requirements. We are committed to reducing our environmental impact and to continue improving our environmental performance as an integral part of our business strategy and operational methods.

To this end, we are committed to achieving Net Zero by 2050. To this end, we will ensure we are compliant with all relevant environmental legislation and implement a process of continual improvement in reducing our environmental impact. We will proactively monitor our usage of consumables, water and energy as a key part of this commitment. Over the next two years, we commit to training our staff so we have a full understanding of the appropriate steps we can take to achieve Net Zero.

This Environmental Policy outlines the measures Connected Voice will take to reduce, reuse and recycle office waste and reduce energy consumption within the organisation:

Connected Voice will aim to do this by:

- ✓ Minimising the organisation's purchase and use of all consumables including water and energy
- ✓ Minimising waste produced in all areas of the organisation, reuse and recycle waste where possible and aim for waste-free processes
- ✓ Encouraging the use of sustainable travel options
- ✓ Monitoring our progress in doing these things and implementing action plans to achieve agreed targets
- ✓ Reviewing the results at the Connected Voice Management Group and publishing the results in our annual report
- ✓ Bringing up environmental issues with the landlord
- ✓ Communicating this policy to all staff and volunteers to ensure that each individual concerned understands the environmental impact of their work and associated activities

## **2. Policy implementation**

All new staff will read this policy as part of their induction.

Changes to this policy will be communicated to staff by email and in whole staff meetings.

The Connected Voice Climate Emergency group will develop action plans based on this policy for:

- ✓ Electricity consumption
- ✓ Water consumption
- ✓ Waste disposal
- ✓ Paper consumption

Action plans will assign named people and completion dates to each action.

The Connected Voice Climate Emergency group will meet regularly to review progress against these action plans.

Any new actions agreed will be communicated to staff by email and through signage, where appropriate. They will also be discussed in section team meetings.

Progress against action plans will be reported at whole staff meetings.

### **3. Waste reduction**

Connected Voice will apply the principles of the “waste hierarchy” in all of its processes and operations.

The waste hierarchy sets out, in order of priority, the waste management options that an organisation should consider as follows.

1. Prevent the waste being produced.
2. Reuse the waste.
3. Recycle the waste.
4. Recovery, e.g. energy recovery.
5. Disposal.

This “waste hierarchy” describes how effective some approaches to dealing with waste are when compared to others, principally that the prevention of the creation of waste in the first place is the best option and is more effective than recycling, while recycling is preferable to disposing of waste to landfill or incineration.

Therefore, Connected Voice will:

- cut down on the number of disposable or throwaway products used and adopt a policy of reuse wherever possible
- cut down on excess packaging and ensure that biodegradable packaging is used wherever possible
- improve its procurement systems by adopting a procurement approach where the organisation buys only what is needed and uses only sustainable sources
- purchase recycled paper and supplies wherever possible
- use durable products that last longer
- repair and refurbish broken or worn items where practicable
- ensure waste is disposed of according to the Connected Voice Waste Management Plan (see Appendix 1)

#### **4. Purchasing**

Connected Voice will assess environmental impact when purchasing equipment, including computers, the photocopier, lighting and other electrical equipment used around the office.

When purchasing, Connected Voice will have a preference for the following wherever possible and appropriate:

- ✓ Products containing recycled materials
- ✓ Remanufactured toner cartridges
- ✓ Buying in bulk to reduce packaging waste
- ✓ Buying in returnable and refillable containers
- ✓ Second hand furniture and other office equipment
- ✓ Cleaning products which do not present a problem to humans or the environment and are biodegradable

#### **5. Energy and water consumption**

Connected Voice is committed to reducing carbon emissions through efficient and responsible use of energy and water. We will monitor this regularly against agreed targets and implement any remedial actions as necessary.

To reduce energy and water consumption Connected Voice has implemented the following:

- ✓ Office lighting is LED
- ✓ SUDS drainage system
- ✓ Renewable energy photovoltaic (solar) panels on the roof
- ✓ BREEAM building – excellent rating – world’s first rating scheme for the built environment
- ✓ Lights automatically switched off in meeting rooms when not in use
- ✓ Heating system is A graded for energy efficiency
- ✓ Lighting and heating centrally controlled by building management to ensure responsible use of energy
- ✓ Photocopier is turned off at night and has a power down setting throughout the day
- ✓ Computers, monitors and printers are turned off at night and have a power down setting throughout the day when not in use
- ✓ Consideration of energy consumption when ordering new electrical equipment
- ✓ Zip tap that provides boiling water for individual cups of tea and coffee
- ✓ Taps are not left running
- ✓ Plumbing is well maintained to avoid leakage of water

## **6. Sustainability**

To encourage sustainability Connected Voice has agreed, whilst still seeking value for money, to:

- ✓ Move our office to a sustainable building
- ✓ Use Fairtrade tea and coffee for staff and meetings
- ✓ Donate desks and furniture to recycling furniture service
- ✓ Ordering supplies of stationery from a local supplier
- ✓ Use community venues for meetings
- ✓ Use community caterers and locally sourced food if possible

## **7. Transport**

Connected Voice encourages staff to:

- ✓ Cycle to work if possible and offers a Bike to Work salary sacrifice scheme as a benefit to staff
- ✓ Keep car journeys to a minimum and to walk or use public transport whenever possible
- ✓ Cluster client visits in the same geographic area to reduce car mileage
- ✓ Car share for meetings wherever possible
- ✓ Use larger taxis to transport staff to meetings instead of using several cars
- ✓ Use public transport for longer journeys
- ✓ Encourage visitors to use public transport by including information on the website about bus stations and metro stations
- ✓ Book venues for events near to public transport links

To support staff, Connected Voice will provide:

- ✓ Cycle racks and showers for staff to encourage cycling to work
- ✓ A mileage allowance for employees who cycle to meetings
- ✓ A discounted corporate metro ticket to encourage employees to use metro system instead of car

## **8. Leadership and influence**

Connected Voice as an infrastructure organisation has a part to play in influencing the voluntary and community sector to be more environmentally aware. This will include:

- ✓ Raising awareness of climate emergency and how it will affect local voluntary and community organisations
- ✓ Providing model environmental policies and advice on action plans
- ✓ Providing skill building sessions
- ✓ Producing a list of achievable actions

- ✓ Including statements about using public transport, bicycles and walking for participants at Connected Voice events
- ✓ Engaging with public sector partners, environmental voluntary sector organisations and universities to use their expertise for the benefit of members
- ✓ Being a voice for the sector and feeding into future plans for new developments and transport plans across Newcastle, Gateshead and other regions
- ✓ Training staff so they can share suggestions on environmental sustainability with the organisations we work with.
- ✓ Our Chief Executive representing the VCSE sector on the Newcastle Net Zero Task Force

## **9. One Strawberry Lane Office**

Connected Voice has made a conscious decision to move to a sustainable building, near to all public transport routes and to have cycling provision to deliver its services.

The Connected Voice office at One Strawberry Lane has the following:

- Renewable energy photovoltaic (solar) panels on the roof
- Energy performance - A rated EPC certificate
- Designed for green commute – emphasis on multi model transport. Car park has electric charging points
- Storage for bikes, showers and changing facilities to encourage cycle to work
- Core of inside of building is lined with a living wall
- BREEAM building – excellent rating – world’s first rating scheme for the built environment
- LED lighting
- SUDS drainage system
- Smart Score building certification – first building in the region to commit to Smart Score
- Wired Score – Platinum rating – highest accreditation available

In addition to this Connect Voice will:

- ✓ Maintain and service all office machinery to optimum operating efficiency and longevity
- ✓ Ensure the landlord maintains the building to optimum efficiency and sustainability as agreed in our service agreement.

## Appendix 1: Waste Management Plan

We will aim to follow the waste hierarchy where possible.



Our main resource materials coming into Connected Voice are:

- Paper
- Cardboard
- Food waste
- Packaging
- Coffee cups
- Office furniture
- ICT equipment

Where disposal is unavoidable, the following details the streams of waste generated by Connected Voice and how each are collected.

Type of waste	Action	Emptying frequency	Executor
Municipal waste (cans, plastic)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plastic is washed and pressed together.</li> <li>• Cans are rinsed and recycled in the mixed recycling</li> </ul>	3 times a week	Contractual supplier

	bins		
Biowaste, including food waste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Waste is disposed of in black sacks in the general waste bin</li> </ul>	3 times a week	Contractual supplier
Paper and cardboard, including packaging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Paper is disposed of in the mixed recycling bin</li> </ul>	3 times a week	Contractual supplier
Coffee cups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>These can be collected separately and disposed of in nearby cafes and restaurants<sup>1</sup>.</li> </ul>	3 times a week	Connected Voice staff
Confidential paper waste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dispose of this in the confidential waste bin</li> <li>Quicksilver is a company that collects and shreds this</li> </ul>	Once a month	Contractual supplier
Hazardous waste (batteries, bulbs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Give to the Office Manager who will take to a disposal bin to be recycled</li> </ul>	As needed	Owner and Office Manager
Print cartridges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Give to the Office Manager who will take to</li> </ul>		

<sup>1</sup> For example:

- McDonald's - Newcastle - Grainger Street, 85/93 Grainger Street, Tyne & Wear, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE1 5JF
- Caffe Nero - Newcastle Eldon Square, Unit 2c, Intu Eldon Square, Newcastle, NE1 7XJ
- Pret a Manger - Newcastle, Northumberland St, 142-145 Northumberland Street, Newcastle, NE1 7AG



	a disposal bin to be recycled		
Glass waste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take home to recycle in glass bin</li> </ul>	As needed	Owner
Old furniture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Donate to other charities if possible</li> <li>Dispose of through an outside agency that recycles it appropriately.</li> </ul>	As needed	Connected Voice
Electrical waste (including keyboards, mouse and small electrical items)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Donate to other charities if possible</li> <li>One Strawberry Lane will collect waste for the full building then external recycling company will collect</li> </ul>	As needed	One Strawberry Lane and external recycling company
IT waste (computers etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Donate to other charities if possible</li> <li>External recycling company will collect IT waste</li> </ul>	As needed	External company

Connected Voice has 5 bins

- 1 general waste bin for all household waste that cannot be recycled
- 2 mixed recycling bins
- 1 coffee cup recycling bin
- 1 confidential paper waste bin

Bins will be checked weekly by the Green Champion for compliance.