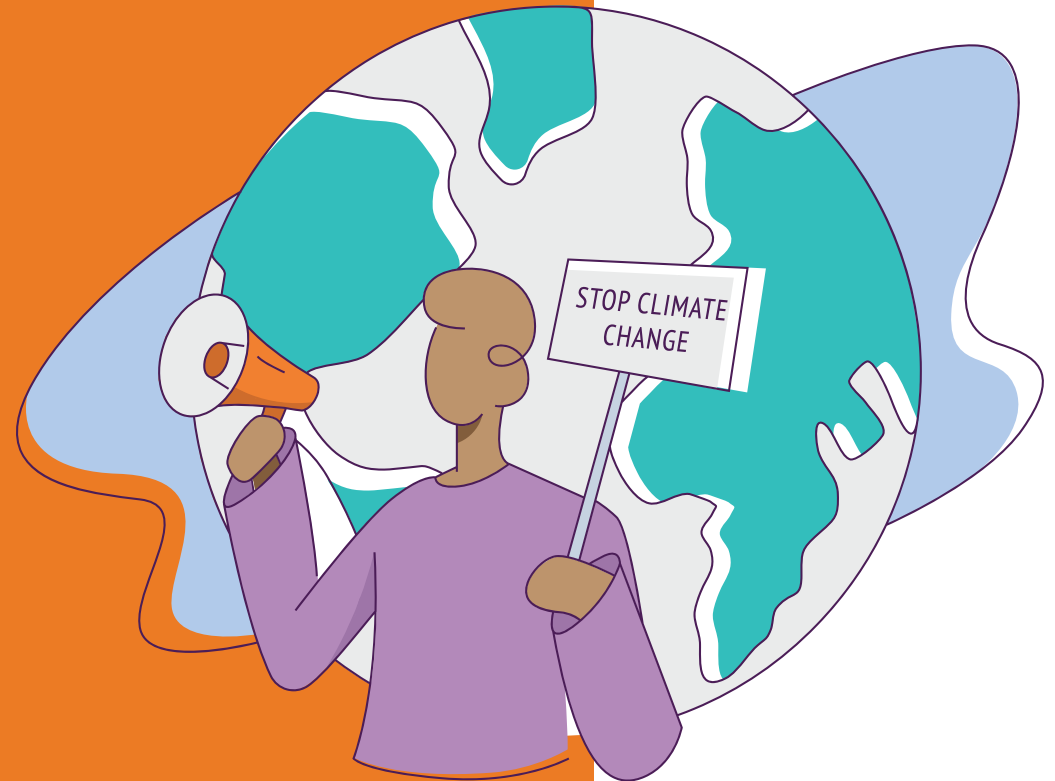




YOUR ACTION PLAN - FIRST STEPS



YOUR ACTION PLAN - FIRST STEPS

What actions can you take to reduce your company's emissions? In this resource we're sharing suggestions under each element to get you started with your thinking. This isn't an exhaustive list and there's no right or wrong way to reduce your emissions - you just need to be reducing them! You need to really think about your business as a whole and how it operates to find solutions that work for you. We're covering our suggested minimum requirements which are everything in Scope 1 and Scope 2. For Scope 3, it's employee commuting, business travel accommodation, employees working from home, water usage, waste and purchased goods and services as a minimum. You also need to consider reducing any other Scope 3 elements highlighted as material for your business. Scope 3 emissions beyond our suggested minimum can be extremely difficult to measure and reduce and we don't cover that in this course, but you can use our [list of useful organisations](#) to find help with reducing these emissions.

Use your company's carbon footprint data to see which elements are relevant to your business and therefore need reducing. But you can also reduce your emissions on elements that aren't material to



Every business can be a force for good
Updated in October 2023

your business, and you haven't measured. If you can see a way to reduce any emissions, just go for it!

Once you've worked your way through this resource, you'll be able to start putting together your net zero action plan using our [action plan example](#).



Every business can be a force for good
Updated in October 2023

SCOPE 1

Electricity - onsite electricity generation

It's unlikely you'll have onsite electricity generation, but if you do, are suggestions are:

- Make sure you're allowing your equipment to perform to its best ability. If you have solar panels, clean them regularly and check that nothing is shading them. Have you got any weeds growing on your roof? They could be affecting the performance of your panels.
- Maintain, service and inspect your equipment for any issues. Regular maintenance will flag any issues that you'll be able to respond to quickly. Inverters might need maintenance or replacement after 10 years - check your maintenance records for details.
- Once technology has reached the end of its life, replace it with more energy efficient equipment.



*Every business can be a force for good
Updated in October 2023*

Gas

- Turn down thermostats and don't let employees control them. Set an average office temperature (around 21°C is standard) and only use the heating if it's below that. You can cut fuel consumption and costs by about 8% through a 1°C drop in average temperature.
- Audit and monitor when and where you're heating your buildings. Only heat spaces that are used and don't heat the building out of office hours. And in the warmer months when windows are open or the air conditioning is on, heating is counterproductive.
- Install fan coil units for heating instead of radiators. They heat a room quicker, meaning the heating is on for less time.
- Once the fan coil units reach the end of their useful life, retrofit them with units equipped with self-regulating fans.
- Install timers or more sophisticated control systems to be sure you're only heating your building when you need to.
- Do an energy audit to find opportunities for efficiency gains and making reductions. Some efficiency gains could be:
 - Service your heating equipment so it's running efficiently.
 - Check if you have double or triple glazing and wall insulation and install draught seals where needed to reduce heat loss.
 - Insulate exposed heating pipes and water cylinders to prevent heat loss.



*Every business can be a force for good
Updated in October 2023*

- Keep your radiators free of obstacles that could block the heat. Bleed them and fit reflectors to improve efficiency.
- Replace hot water tanks with electric point of use water heaters. This reduces gas consumption and lets you more accurately match the hot water demand of your business.
- Once your boiler has reached its end of life, replace it with lower carbon technology such as a heat pump, or with a more efficient boiler.

Refrigerants - owned by you (optional)

- Reduce the number of appliances, fridges and air conditioning units you own if possible.
- Only cool your building when necessary. The standard office temperature is around 21°C. Air conditioning shouldn't be switched on until temperatures reach 24°C - or can you use natural ventilation instead?
- Install timers or more sophisticated control systems to be sure you're only cooling your building when you need to. Don't unnecessarily cool the building out of office hours or in unused spaces.
- Service your appliances to check they're not leaking. Regular servicing will flag any issues that you'll be able to respond to quickly.



Every business can be a force for good
Updated in October 2023

- Clean appliance filters and adjust the maintenance routine according to how dirty your filters get.
- Do your fridges and air conditioning units get filled up with gas? If so, ask your engineer to refill the coolant with a gas of lower global warming potential.
- If you have an onsite data centre, set the air conditioning to the optimal temperature of 20°C - 24°C.
- Once technology has reached the end of its life, replace it with more energy efficient equipment.

Transport - company owned vehicles

- Audit your company owned vehicles' journeys and routes to see if they can be combined. If that's possible, you'll also save money!
- Audit your company owned vehicles' carried loads. If there's a lot of unused space, downsize your vehicles. This can also be applied to company cars - are saloon cars or 4x4s actually needed?
- Provide training sessions for drivers on how to drive more economically. This also means they'll drive more safely.
- Stop providing company vehicles to employees as an incentive - use public transport season tickets instead.



- Browse the many other alternatives to having your own company vehicles. Use memberships to car clubs like [Zipcar](#) and [Enterprise Car Club](#) or journey sharing schemes such as [Liftshare](#). Have a company taxi account that uses zero emission vehicles such as [Green Tomato Cars](#) or [GLH](#) which uses a mix of electric and hybrid cars to transport people and packages across the city.
- Develop a [green transport policy](#) and share it across your business.
- Electrify your fleet of vehicles - you can get [government grants](#) to do this.



Every business can be a force for good
Updated in October 2023

SCOPE 2

Electricity - purchased electricity

- Move to a renewable energy provider - it's often the same price or cheaper! Here's a handy, but not exhaustive, [list of providers](#). If you can't move to a renewable energy provider due to landlord restrictions, consider moving to a premises where you can.
- If it doesn't need to be on, switch it off. Leaving something on standby isn't the same as switching it off. That goes for lights, electrical appliances, heating, cooling and computer equipment.
- Turn down thermostats and don't let employees control them. Set an average office temperature (around 21°C is standard) and only use the heating if it's below that. You can cut fuel consumption and costs by about 8% through a 1°C drop in average temperature.
- Audit and monitor when and where you're heating your buildings. Only heat spaces that are used and don't heat the building out of office hours. And in the warmer months when windows are open or the air conditioning is on, heating is counterproductive.



*Every business can be a force for good
Updated in October 2023*

- Make sure heating and cooling setpoints don't overlap and run at the same time. Avoid this by adjusting temperature settings so there's at least a 2°C range in which neither heating or cooling is taking place. For example, heat up to 21°C, cool down to 24°C, with no heating or cooling in between.
- Install fan coil units for heating instead of radiators. They heat a room quicker, meaning the heating is on for less time.
- Once the fan coil units reach the end of their useful life, retrofit them with units equipped with self-regulating fans.
- Install timers or more sophisticated control systems to be sure you're only heating your building when you need to.
- Reset thermostats regularly as employees often set them to maximum or minimum, including thermostats on radiators or room controllers.
- Install timers or more sophisticated control systems to be sure you're only heating point of use water heaters when used. Does your point of use water heater have timers installed and are they set to working hours?
- Are employees using individual heating appliances? If they need to be using them, make sure they're switched off during breaks.
- Install energy efficient LED lighting. They can be up to 80% more energy efficient than conventional bulbs!



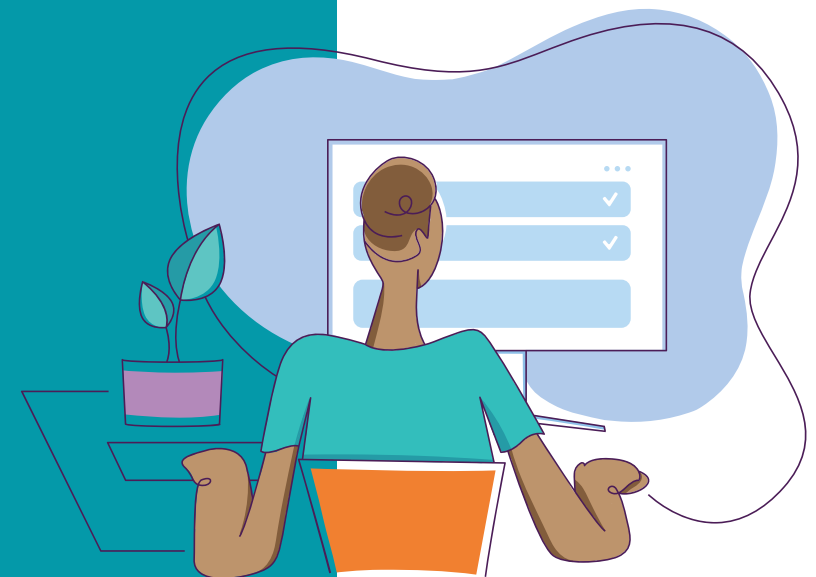
Every business can be a force for good
Updated in October 2023

- Install light and presence sensors so lights are only on when they need to be. They can be installed as zonal sensors so only areas being used are lit.
- Set power management functions such as sleep mode on printers. You can also set a business wide shut down time to enforce appliances being switched off. Employees can have the option to reject the shut down if they're still working.
- If you have an onsite data centre, move to an offsite cloud based data centre. It's even better if you move to a cloud-based server powered by 100% renewable energy.
- Move from desktop computers to laptops, as they use less energy.
- Once technology has reached the end of its life, replace it with more energy efficient equipment.
- Make sure any new equipment you buy is A* rated in the EU energy label.
- Do an energy audit to find opportunities for efficiency gains and making reductions. Some efficiency gains could be:
 - Service your heating equipment so it's running efficiently.
 - Service your fridges and freezers to they run efficiently.
 - Check if you have double or triple glazing and wall insulation and install draught seals where needed to reduce heat loss.
 - Insulate exposed heating pipes and water cylinders to prevent heat loss.



Every business can be a force for good
Updated in October 2023

- Keep your radiators free of obstacles that could block the heat. Bleed them and fit reflectors to improve efficiency.
- Do you have any lights where they aren't needed? For example, above cupboards - can you move or remove them?
- Use natural lighting. Are appliances blocking windows? If yes, move them. Encourage employees to switch off the lights if the natural light is bright enough.
- Encourage employees to take the stairs instead of using the lift if they can. Display signs that tell people how much energy is saved from walking, along with the wellbeing benefits.
- Make sure the dishwasher is full before switching it on - or can you go a step further and remove the dishwasher?



*Every business can be a force for good
Updated in October 2023*

SCOPE 3

Transport - employee commuting (tube, train, bus, taxi, metro, motorbike or air)

- Engage or educate employees on more sustainable ways to commute.
- Incentivise green transport. Provide a cycle to work scheme and season ticket loans, and set up a step challenge with a prize to the employee taking the most steps.
- Provide bike racks for employees to safely store their bikes during the workday.
- Promote flexible and remote working. On the days employees work from home they won't be commuting, and it can also benefit employees' wellbeing.

Transport - business travel (tube, train, bus, taxi, metro, motorbike or air)

- Do you really need to travel? If you can't do the meeting virtually, walk, cycle or use public transport to get there.
- Do you really need to take that flight? Using video conferencing instead can make a big difference - it'll cut emissions and save money. It's also a good wellbeing consideration if your employees are travelling and spending time away from home.



*Every business can be a force for good
Updated in October 2023*

- If flying is unavoidable, book direct flights as take-off and landing creates most of an aircraft's carbon emissions. Consider making economy tickets your standard, especially for short flights. First class tickets produce a lot more carbon emissions than economy.
- Use a company taxi account that uses zero emission vehicles such as [Green Tomato Cars](#) or [GLH](#) which uses a mix of electric and hybrid cars to transport people and packages across the city.
- Disincentivise non sustainable travel. If journeys can be made by public transport and employees choose not to, only reimburse public transport.

Accommodation - business travel

- Reduce trips where people need accommodation. Can the meeting be held virtually?
- If accommodation is required, you could provide standard rooms instead of suites. Usually, the larger the room the more technology, lighting and cleaning is needed. This all contributes to larger emissions.
- Use accommodation providers that have their own net zero plan. Booking companies such as [Staze](#) are focused on net zero and sustainability



*Every business can be a force for good
Updated in October 2023*

Employees working from home - electricity and heating

The same actions can be taken for hybrid working

- Engage employees and provide training to educate them on reducing their emissions when they're working from home.
- Encourage employees to switch to renewable energy suppliers. You could provide incentives for them to switch.
- Encourage employees to heat their homes for less time and turn down their thermostats. Turning down the heating by just 1°C can save them up to £90 a year.
- Encourage employees to use energy efficient LED lighting. They can be up to 80% more efficient than conventional bulbs!
- Encourage employees to turn off appliances instead of leaving them on standby, including laptops. You can also set a business wide laptop shut down to enforce turning off devices. Employees can have the option to reject the shut down if they're still working.
- Encourage employees to improve the energy efficiency of their homes. Draft proofing the home can save £4 a year. Adding loft insulation can save £135 a year. Installing a new boiler can save £220 a year.
- Technology has a large carbon footprint associated with it and can be affected by many variables. The main emissions come from the energy needed to manage, transport and store data. A few suggestions to reduce the emissions from communications:



Every business can be a force for good

Updated in October 2023

- Send messages on Teams (or equivalent) instead of emails.
- Don't send large attachments on emails - share the document's location instead.
- Turn videos off for external events and some virtual meetings if you can.
- Only include relevant people in email chains. Often 'reply all' isn't needed!
- Have a quick question and need to contact a colleague? Call them on your mobile instead of having an online video call.

Water

- Reduce water consumption. The UK water industry generates 1% of UK carbon emissions so reducing your consumption can have a huge impact.
- Ask your water provider if they have any advice or initiatives. City of London businesses can book a free [Thames Water smarter business visit](#). A water expert will recommend solutions for your business and fit water devices suitable for your premises.
- Improve the efficiency of your plumbing system:
 - Install low-flow toilets. A regular toilet uses up to 13 litres in every flush - an efficient one uses 4-6 litres. Innovations like [PropelAir](#) only use 1.5 litres!



*Every business can be a force for good
Updated in October 2023*

- Install taps with aerators to reduce water waste from high pressure streams.
- Fix leaks. Leaking toilets are very common and can waste up to 400 litres of water a day and dripping taps waste around 15 litres. Use your regular water consumption data to set a benchmark - if you notice any irregular or excessive usage, you might have a leak.
- Put signs up in bathrooms reminding employees to turn off the tap while washing their hands. This can save around 9 litres of water per minute. You can go further and install taps with sensors.
- Install water-saving showerheads to improve water efficiency.
- Train your colleagues on the importance and practices of water efficiency.
- If your toilets are in good condition and don't need replacing, look at water saving additions. Cistern displacement devices are available for free from most water companies and can save up to 5,000 litres of water per year.
- If you have a dishwasher, wait until it's full to run the cycle, and use the eco wash setting.
- Regulate the building's water pressure. It should be somewhere between 65 - 80psi - anything higher could damage pipes and lead to bursts.



*Every business can be a force for good
Updated in October 2023*

Waste from operations - including general office waste

- Does everything in your workplace get thrown away together? This takes up more space and costs more to dispose of. Speak to your waste management provider about clearly labelling bins so people know how to separate general and recyclable waste. Location is key - get rid of individual desk bins and create central recycling points. Let employees know they should always rinse out food and drink packaging before recycling.
- Hard to recycle items such as crisp packets, sweet wrappers and coffee cups aren't usually accepted in standard recycling collections. Companies like [Terracycle](#) offer recycling programmes through zero waste boxes for these items.
- Educate employees on waste and recycling. You can't expect them to know everything without training!
- There's a major need to stop sending waste to landfill. Check that your waste management provider guarantees that none of the waste collected goes to landfill. Check in with them regularly to be sure it's being upheld.
- Look at waste saving initiatives such as [commuting wood recycling](#) which is a good one for construction companies.
- Reuse, reuse, reuse! Lots of office stationery gets thrown away when it could be used again, such as plastic wallets, envelopes and paper.



*Every business can be a force for good
Updated in October 2023*

- Do you have office furniture or equipment you no longer use? Donate anything that can have a second life, either to employees, local shelters or schools. List items on reuse platforms like [WrapIt](#) and [Waste Match](#), that redistribute these items to charities that need it. Lots of organisations safely wipe IT equipment and donate to schools and charities: [Tech-Takeback](#), [Camara](#), [Computers for Charities](#) and [WeeeCharity](#).
- If you have useable construction materials, don't throw them away - list them on sites like [enviromate](#).
- A lot of office waste is made up of paper. Setting the default on printers to double-sided reduces consumption and potential waste by 50%. Set the margins wider as standard to reduce the amount of blank space, and if you can print in black and white only, you'll save money too! You can audit employees' print accounts to get those that print the most to reduce it.
- We've learnt from the pandemic that you can have paperless meetings. Make it a business standard when you're back in the workplace. You can be just as effective in meetings without unnecessarily printing information.
- If your post goes straight in the bin, invest a little time in sending back unwanted mail and removing your company from mailing lists. To avoid unsolicited mail, register with the [Mailing Preference Service](#). On the flip side, also consider the marketing materials you're sending out - ask recipients to confirm how they'd like to receive materials.



*Every business can be a force for good
Updated in October 2023*

- If you provide catering for client meetings or events, avoid over-ordering. If you do end up with leftovers you can stop it going to waste by signing up to [FoodCycle](#) or [Olio](#): they collect leftover food and redistribute to charities and the community.
- Compost food waste. Compost removal services are available, or have your own compost bin in the workplace.
- Audit your waste to see where the biggest changes can be made. For example, if there's a lot of single use coffee cups you can engage employees around reusable cups, or if there's paper waste try to go paperless.
- Have conversations with suppliers about the packaging they use if you believe it's not needed. It can reduce your waste and help them on their net zero journey!
- Replace single use paper towels in the kitchen with cloth tea towels.
- [The balance small business](#) has more general office waste reduction tips and ideas.

Purchased services and goods (measured by monetary value)

- Reduce the amount you purchase and try not to over buy 'just in case'.
- Are your suppliers helping or hindering you in reaching net zero? Buy from sustainable and eco-friendly suppliers, including for employee gifts.



*Every business can be a force for good
Updated in October 2023*

- Many businesses have contracts with suppliers for next-day delivery and receive orders every day of the week. Plan what you need to buy and order items together so there's one delivery instead of lots of smaller deliveries. You could also group deliveries in your building and arrange with your supplier to only deliver two days a week, regardless of when orders are made.
- Buy locally to reduce the travel distance of products and services.
- Get your goods delivered by a cycle courier instead of a car. You could use [CitySprint](#), [Pedian](#), [Xeroe](#) and [Pedal Me](#).
- Planning an office move? Consider [second hand alternatives](#) for office furniture, or [repair and update your existing furniture](#).
- Audit your equipment around the workplace, from printers to kettles. Rent equipment you don't use often, and donate items you have too many of.
- When ordering supplies, choose less packaging or long-lasting items. For example, choose crockery and cutlery over their single-use alternatives.
- Make sure any equipment you buy is A* rated in the EU energy label.
- Create a procurement policy to make your sustainable changes official.



*Every business can be a force for good
Updated in October 2023*

- If you give new starters business branded items, ask them first. Some new starters may not need it, and it'll save you money too! You can also update your branded items to more sustainable alternatives, such as biodegradable phone cases, notepads made from recycled paper and reusable coffee cups.
- Reduce event giveaway items. If they're still needed, explore eco-friendly promotional options.
- Buy fewer meat-based products. Try an office meat-free Monday or vegan lunch at an event.
- Talk about your efforts and reductions targets to your supply chains. You can also work with them to develop the best solutions. One of our ambassadors, Salesforce, [has a good example](#).

Other suggestions

- You can [claim tax relief](#) by claiming capital allowance when you buy some energy saving equipment for your business.
- Look at the impact of your web-based emissions and work to improve them. Organisations such as [EcoPing](#) can suggest how to improve.
- Move to a green web hosting provider for your website and online presence.
- Offset your emissions with a credible offsetting provider and take accountability for the emissions you're producing.



*Every business can be a force for good
Updated in October 2023*

- Have an internal communications plan so all employees are aware of the actions you're taking. Clearly explain what you expect from employees and tell them how they can achieve that.
- Update your standard search engine to [Ecosia](#) or [Ekoru](#). There are lots of other social good search engines, so have a browse at what would be the best fit for your business.
- Reduce the amount of emails you send. You could add something like this to your email signatures: *'An average email generates 18g of carbon dioxide so I don't send 'thank you' or 'received' emails. Please assume that I'm grateful'*.
- Unsubscribe from unwanted emails, they're annoying and bad for the environment!
- Delete duplicates and old documents from your drives and delete old, unnecessary emails. Storing them on your servers, either onsite or cloud based, takes up space which needs to be powered by electricity.
- Turn off auto-play to prevent a video replaying automatically and close tabs that aren't in use.
- Encourage employees to use wifi instead of 4G hotspots as it produces fewer carbon emissions.
- Don't send anything by air mail. See if you can send the items from the country where they'll be delivered.



*Every business can be a force for good
Updated in October 2023*

- Are your investments with companies that have a negative impact on the environment, such as oil and gas? Could you move them to greener options? [Make My Money Matter](#) gives [guidance on pension investments](#).
- Consider how your end product or service is being used. Can you run education campaigns for consumers around how they can use your product or service more sustainably?
- Help your employees choose low carbon travel when they go on holiday. Organisations such as [Climateperks](#) help you offer extra annual leave if a low carbon journey takes longer.
- Encourage your employees to think about their own carbon footprint. Get them to [measure their personal carbon footprint](#) and share tips they can incorporate into their personal lives. A quick switch they can make is [choosing click and collect](#) instead of having parcels delivered to work or home. This reduces the number of freight vehicles on the road and helps employees be more eco-friendly about their purchases.



Climate for SMEs: 4 Steps to Action is funded by the City of London Corporation in support of its Climate Action Strategy targets for a net zero and resilient Square Mile



*Every business can be a force for good
Updated in October 2023*