



Bring the Third Sector
Declaration on Climate
Change to life

Ministerial Statement

Every third sector organisation – big or small – can help make a difference in tackling climate change. By taking action now to reduce our carbon dioxide emissions, together we can avoid the worst impacts of climate change – which especially affect the most vulnerable, at home and abroad. We can create a better future for our communities, with a healthy environment for everyone.

We recognise the special contribution that third sector organisations can and do make to the efforts across the country in tackling climate change.

Each organisation can look at its own activities to see how to reduce its own emissions of greenhouse gases, increase energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy.

Organisations in the third sector pioneer new ways of working and innovative ideas for engaging diverse communities and bringing them together to tackle climate change. The third sector has a good track record in innovation – the public and private sector can often learn from this.

Third sector organisations connect and engage with hundreds of thousands of people, supporting them as individuals, and mobilising them as a growing environmental movement. Around 40% of national greenhouse gas emissions result from decisions taken by individuals, who look to the third sector to inform and encourage them to make low carbon choices, particularly around travel and energy in the home. As trusted organisations with established and growing audiences, third sector organisations are particularly powerful communicators, giving a strong voice to all those concerned about climate change, and campaigning for solutions. The sector can become as much an environmental movement as a social one. From the power of the increasing numbers of volunteers - now above 20 million - to the ability to inspire community activism on climate change - the third sector knows citizens are on their side in the commitment to environmental justice.

The Third Sector Declaration on Climate Change signals the welcome commitment of the sector as a whole to act now on climate change by reducing carbon dioxide emissions. We very much support the contribution which organisations will be making as a signatory to this Declaration. Together we can tackle climate change.

Note: This is a joint Ministerial Statement from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs; the Department of Communities and Local Government; the Office of the Third Sector and the Department of Energy and Climate Change in support of the renewed Third Sector Declaration on Climate Change.

The Third Sector Climate Change Declaration

Everyone has a right to a clean and healthy environment. We know that climate change is a major challenge to this right, ours and future generations'. Climate change is not only about the environment. It can have positive and negative impacts on our ability to support a prosperous and fair society.

Climate change projections continue to show that the UK will increasingly suffer from climate change and that it will also have a massive negative impact on the poor in this country and others around the world. So we need to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change now.

There can be no excuses for doing nothing. We need to just act.

Regardless of our mission and vision or how we define our organisation - voluntary community group, non governmental organisation or social enterprise - we know we need to take action, for the following reasons:

- climate change will bring around one of the greatest social, environmental and economic threats to society. Issues such as health, housing, transport, waste, food production and equality will all be affected by the impacts of climate change such as flooding or more extreme weather events
- injustice, poverty, exclusion and disadvantage all reduce the ability of countries, communities, families and individuals to respond positively to that challenge
- reducing our carbon emissions enough to avoid the worst impacts of climate change will require a transformation in our economy and society, and it's essential that this transition to a low carbon future is fair and equitable

For those reason we accept that we must:

- Act – on climate change because it is inextricably bound to our work on environmental and social justice
- Commit – to taking positive steps to reduce any negative impacts we may have on climate change
- Partnerships – work with our partners to communicate inspiring and effective initiatives
- Help – to create or support progressive national policies
- Reduce – the worst impacts of climate change specifically for the most vulnerable people in society

- Strengthen – as well as build our organisation's, project's or group's resilience to climate change
- Adapt – our services, projects and campaigns to ensure that the people we work with and for, act on and are resilient to climate change

To achieve social, economic and environmental benefits of tackling climate change, we commit our organisation, group or project to a sustained, comprehensive and accountable response to the challenge of climate change whilst encouraging similar action amongst those we work with.

We therefore commit [*the organisation*] from this date to

- Publicly support the need for urgent action to deliver behaviour change at all levels to combat climate change.
- Produce plans and appropriate strategies to reduce our carbon dioxide emissions.
- Make sure our plan is made public within a year.
- Ensure the plan is monitored and evaluated, at least annually, and the results are easily understood, accessible and published.
- Work with central and local government and others to advocate for, and support policies and initiatives that will assist the UK to reach or exceed the national target to reduce carbon dioxide emissions.
- Act as a leader in encouraging and enabling our members, service users and clients to adapt to the impact of climate change, to reduce their carbon emissions and take other relevant initiatives.
- Inform, inspire and encourage action as part of a wider movement that can make a real difference on climate change.

Lead trustee, employee or volunteer:

Signed by _____

Chair/Director/Founder/Trustee/Project Leader

Date _____

Supporting operational employee or volunteer:

Signed by

Operations Officer, Project Officer, Trustee

Date _____