Carbon Reduction Plan

1. Purpose and scope

This policy sets out how Suffolk User Forum (SUF) will measure, manage and reduce the greenhouse gas emissions associated with our operations and services, in a way that is proportionate to our size, resources and rented premises.

It applies to all staff, trustees, volunteers, contractors and suppliers involved in SUF's work and is supported by our Climate Action Plan, which sets out how this policy is delivered in practice.

2. Our commitments

SUF is a small, lived-experience-led charity. We are committed to taking practical, realistic action on climate change while continuing to deliver safe, person-centred mental health support.

We will:

- measure and monitor our carbon footprint using a simple, proportionate approach (currently through Carbon Charter self-assessment);
- work to reduce emissions year-on-year, prioritising direct reductions over offsetting;
- integrate environmental considerations into everyday decision-making, procurement and service delivery, where feasible;
- prevent pollution and reduce waste by increasing reuse and recycling;
- engage staff/volunteers/trustees and people with lived experience in practical, low-carbon behaviours that are safe, inclusive and accessible.

3. Compliance, proportionality and assurance

SUF keeps its environmental responsibilities under review and aligns its approach with relevant UK frameworks where applicable and proportionate, including commissioner sustainability expectations.

SUF is well below the size thresholds for formal carbon reporting schemes such as ESOS and Streamlined Energy and Carbon Reporting (SECR), which apply to much larger organisations.

The SUF Board receives annual updates on carbon reporting and actions, and this policy is reviewed at least annually.

4. Measurement, monitoring and reporting

Accountability is central to this policy. We will maintain a simple emissions inventory covering, where relevant:

- energy use in our rented office.
- business travel and mileage.
- waste and recycling arrangements, including shared recycling facilities at the business centre.
- key operational changes that affect our footprint.

Our approach reflects the Climate Action Plan, and includes:

- quarterly internal check-ins on data and trends.
- an annual carbon footprint update using Carbon Charter.
- comparison against baseline years (2021 and 2025).
- clear, realistic actions agreed each year.

A short summary of progress will be included in SUF's Annual Impact Report and shared with the Board and commissioners where needed.

5. Key focus areas

We will focus on the areas where we can make the biggest difference as a small organisation.

Energy and buildings

- Improve energy efficiency in our rented office (e.g. LED lighting, heating controls, reducing unnecessary use).
- Carry out simple walk-round energy checks to identify quick wins.
- Keep electricity tariff options under review and consider a renewable tariff in future if this becomes feasible and affordable.

- Work constructively with landlords to encourage higher-performing premises where possible.

Travel

- Reduce mileage first by using digital-first or hybrid delivery where appropriate.
- Monitor business mileage and understand changes over time.
- Encourage public transport, cycling and car-sharing where feasible and safe.
- Review travel practices annually rather than operating a formal fleet-transition target.

Procurement

- Prioritise local and lower-carbon suppliers where this offers value and reliability.
- Consider whole-life value, durability, reuse and repair when buying goods and services.
- Aim to increase the proportion of recycled or biodegradable consumables.

Waste and IT assets

- Reduce waste, reuse items where possible and recycle appropriately.
- Ensure safe, compliant disposal of IT equipment and confidential waste in line with data protection requirements.

Service delivery and engagement

- Support staff/volunteers/trustees and service users to make practical, low-carbon choices in everyday activity (for example, reducing single-use items or energy waste).

6. Governance and responsibilities

- Senior leadership is accountable for this policy and for approving the annual Climate Action Plan and priorities.
- The Finance and Administrative Officer is responsible for maintaining carbon data and supporting reporting, in line with the Climate Action Plan and priorities.

- All staff are responsible for recording mileage, reducing waste and using energy efficiently day-to-day.
- The Board provides oversight and receives an annual update on progress.
- Carbon awareness is included within induction and ongoing learning where feasible.

7. Review

This policy is reviewed annually, and sooner if there are material changes to:

- legal or commissioner requirements.
- SUF's size, services or premises.
- our carbon footprint or reporting approach.

The Climate Action Plan is updated alongside this review to ensure policy and practice remain aligned and realistic for SUF as a small organisation.

Climate Action Plan

SUF is a small organisation and is committed to measuring our carbon footprint, working to reduce emissions over time, and to keeping a clear record of what we have done.

Our starting point: We rent a small two-floor office. Ground floor lighting was upgraded to LED in 2025, and we already recycle paper and cardboard.

1. Basics (who will do what)

- **Named lead:** The Finance and Administrative Officer will keep the data up to date and help us review this plan.
- **Everyone:** All staff will help by recording mileage and reducing waste and energy use in their day-to-day work.
- **Review:** We will look at progress every 3 months and update the plan once a year.

2. Baseline data

Our baseline figures come from Carbon Charter self-assessments:

1) **2021 baseline (1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021)**: total footprint 4.40 tonnes CO_2e. This included 1.94 tCO_2e from building energy and 2.46 tCO_2e from vehicle fuel.
2) **2025 baseline (1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025)**: total footprint 3.86 tonnes CO_2e. This was a reduction of 0.54 tonnes CO_2e compared with 2021. This included 2.55 tCO_2e from building energy and 1.31 tCO_2e from vehicle fuel.

3. Calculate and monitor (keep it manageable)

Responsible person: Finance and Administrative Officer

Actions (data, monitoring and reporting)

1) Set up and maintain a Climate Change Spreadsheet to record all carbon-related data in one place.
2) Record electricity and water use each month, or when bills are received.

3) Record business mileage each month using staff record sheets, and note any changes that may affect travel, such as more visits, staff or projects.
4) Record any available information about communal waste and recycling arrangements at the business centre, alongside actions SUF takes itself to reduce waste and recycle well.
5) Carry out a quarterly check-in to review the figures, note any unusual changes and agree any quick actions with the CEO.
6) Complete an annual review from April to March by updating our Carbon Charter footprint, comparing it with the 2021 and 2025 baselines, and agreeing actions for the next year.
7) Report progress to the SUF Board annually, including the carbon footprint figure and key actions taken.
8) Prepare a short summary for inclusion in our Annual Impact Report and for sharing with commissioners where appropriate.

4. What we will do now (simple actions in our office)

- **Purchases:** avoid unnecessary purchases; group purchases into as few delivery dates as possible. Opt for durable/reusable/recycled options.
    - Buy locally where practical.
    - Re-use plastic bags or use long-life shopping bags.
    - Maintain a sustainable supply chain as far as possible within available budgets and operational needs.
    - Buy locally or choose pre-loved items where this is practical, affordable and suitable.
- **Energy:** keep good habits (switch off, sensible heating settings, report maintenance issues).
    - Use energy-saving settings and sensible temperatures.
    - Maintain and make best use of the LED lighting (installed on the ground floor of the SUF office in 2025).
    - Consider remaining non-LED areas for future upgrade.

- **Recycling:** recycle waste properly by separating recyclables and using the correct communal bins.
    - Continue with paper and cardboard recycling and reduce printing where possible.
    - Reduce the use of single-use plastics by ensuring staff have facilities to store sandwiches/lunches.
- **Travel:** use calls/online meetings where suitable; plan visits to reduce mileage; choose lower-carbon travel options where practical.
    - Encourage lower-carbon travel where practical, such as car-sharing and online training.
    - Support hybrid working and efficient journey planning where appropriate to reduce unnecessary travel.
    - Make good use of available technology and journey-planning tools to reduce unnecessary travel and support lower-carbon options.
- **Water:** install toilet cistern bags where suitable, check for leaks or dripping taps, and arrange repairs promptly.
    - Boil just enough water and use refillable water bottles.

5. What we might do next (once we know our biggest impacts)

- Do a simple office energy audit (walkaround checklist) to identify quick wins (heating controls, timers, draught proofing, equipment left on, remaining non-LED lighting).
- Keep electricity tariff options under review and consider a renewable tariff in future if this becomes feasible and affordable.
- Set a realistic travel plan (reduce mileage first).
- Improve recycling further if feasible.
- Consider a light-touch accreditation/training option (e.g., Carbon Charter/Carbon Literacy) if it helps our service or funding requirements.

6. What we will track

- Electricity and gas use (from bills or meter readings).

- Water use (from bills or meter readings).
- Business mileage (from expense claims/record sheets).
- Waste and recycling: a simple note of what is collected and any information provided by the business centre.
- A short log of actions we took (e.g., cistern bags installed, lighting upgrades, policy changes).

7. Review

Annual review process (each year)

1) **Collect data (April to March):** electricity, gas, water, business mileage and any waste or recycling information available.
2) **Review the annual data.**
3) **Calculate our footprint:** update our Carbon Charter figures using the year's data.
4) **Compare and explain:** compare the results with our 2021 and 2025 baselines and explain the main reasons for any change.
5) **Agree next actions:** pick realistic actions for the next year (energy, water, travel, buying) and assign an owner and a target date.
6) **Record and share:** include a short summary in SUF's Annual Impact Report.

We will follow the annual review process above and update this plan once a year (or sooner if there are major changes to our premises or how we deliver services). We will keep actions realistic for a small team and focus on the biggest sources of emissions first.