



Adult Learning Within Reach

Environmental & Sustainability Policy

Owner	Kathleen Formosa, Director of Governance and Company Secretary		
Approved by	Board of Trustees		
Supersedes	N/A		
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Version	Date	Author	Status	Comment
1	July 2022	Kathleen Formosa	New Policy	This is a new policy which forms part of WEA's social value framework. This is a high-level policy supported by specific policies and targets in key areas of WEA operations.
2	June 2024	Kathleen Formosa	Approved	Non-material updates throughout.

Environmental & Sustainability Policy

1. Policy Purpose & Scope

This policy affirms WEA's commitment to sustainability as a key priority for the Association. WEA is committed to raising awareness and to the implementation of sustainable practices in all aspects of WEA's operations and in its delivery of education, and to minimising any adverse impact its activities may have on the environment.

This policy sets out at a high-level WEA's commitment to sustainability across the following three areas:

- **Environmental** – This is the most talked about aspect of sustainability by our learners, staff, and volunteers. Environmental sustainability is the “conservation of natural resources and the reduction of human activities that impact on our ecosystems” – in other words, the environmental impact of human activity;
- **Social** – the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals (“UNSDGs”) demonstrate and support examples of social sustainability that include well-being, quality education, gender equality, and related issues. UNSDGs are incorporated into WEA's business plan and run throughout the Association, linking to policies. The UNSDGs combine social aspects of justice and equality, alongside the environment and the economy. The 17 interlinked UNSDGs were designed to be a “blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all.” The UNSDGs were set up in 2015 by the UN General Assembly and are intended to be achieved by the year 2030. Annex 2 of this policy sets out the UNSDGs WEA has determined to be most applicable to its mission and day-to-day operations.
- **Economic** – WEA is doing its part to work toward creating a greener, cleaner, NetZero economy that provides decent jobs and improves quality of life for all. By buying and supporting sustainable goods and services, and efficiently managing its resources, WEA can lower its carbon emissions, reduce waste and limit pollution. Considering the life cycle of what is used and how it is used in WEA's daily activities not only benefits WEA, but creates positive and innovative social, environmental and economic outcomes.

WEA's Environmental & Sustainability Policy will be made accessible to the communities in which it works, including learners, employers, work-based training providers, partners, contractors, sub-contractors, staff and volunteers.

WEA's Trustees, acting through the Audit & Risk Committee, have overall responsibility for this policy, and for reviewing the effectiveness of actions taken and targets set in relation to it.

2. Guiding Principles

WEA seeks to:

- Embed sustainability across the curriculum, and in education delivery;
- Provide information and training to staff and learners on sustainable practice and related issues;
- Foster behavioural change by encouraging participation and consultation with staff, volunteers and learners on sustainable initiatives; and

- Work in partnership with local communities, local authorities, and metropolitan combined authorities toward sustainable improvements in localities where WEA delivers education or otherwise conducts business.

WEA is committed to being guided by the following principles:

- The practice of responsible energy use and management through reduced consumption and the encouragement of energy efficiency across the Association;
- The creation of a high-quality working and learning environment through the discouragement of litter, noise and light pollution;
- The incorporation of the principles of educational sustainability into the curriculum and its delivery;
- The encouragement of the use of managed transport and the provision of facilities for individuals with disabilities, pedestrians and cyclists;
- The choice of products and suppliers which minimise negative environmental impacts subject to necessary budgetary constraints;
- The minimisation of waste through reduced consumption and the development of effective waste management and recycling procedures;
- The avoidance of using hazardous materials and processes, taking all reasonable steps to prevent damage to either public or ecological health where such materials are in essential use;
- The incorporation (where practical) of the principles of sustainable development into new and existing buildings via energy and water efficiencies.

WEA's Chief Executive & General Secretary ("CEO/GS") has overall responsibility for the implementation of the Environmental & Sustainability Policy. This responsibility is delegated through the directorates represented on the Leadership Team to departments and key staff across the Association.

The Leadership Team has a specific responsibility for ensuring that the Environmental & Sustainability Policy is implemented within their areas of responsibility and with the staff managed by them.

All staff and volunteers have a responsibility for the implementation of the Environmental & Sustainability Policy as members of the WEA community.

3. Roles & Responsibilities

WEA recognises its responsibility to:

- Develop environmental awareness in learners, staff, volunteers, partners and other stakeholders;
- Manage WEA in an environmentally responsible manner, as far as is reasonably practicable, in order to minimise the adverse impact of its activities on the environment;
- Deliver awareness of best environmental practice and encourage sustainable use of land-based resources in its education and training activities; and
- Balance the imperatives of cost efficiency with sustainability, environmental best practice and social and economic issues, to effectively contribute to the well-being of WEA staff, volunteers, and the communities they serve.

All learners, staff and volunteers will be made aware of the Environmental & Sustainability Policy and their role in upholding it through their induction programme.

4. Governance & Reporting

Annex 1 of this policy sets out specific sustainability areas, commitments, and strategies. Each area of this policy as set out in Annex 1 will have either its own delivery strategy or be embedded in an existing strategy, along with objectives and KPIs for delivery of the area's aims.

KPIs and critical success factors relating to social value and identified in WEA's strategy and business plan will be reported to the Board of Trustees via the Audit & Risk Committee. These reports also will form part of WEA's annual reporting at the end of each financial year and will be thereby communicated publicly to WEA's stakeholders.

5. Links to Other Policies

WEA has a number of established policies, procedures and practices which demonstrate its commitment to the environment and to sustainability and how such commitment is embedded across the Association. This policy should therefore be read in conjunction with the Articles of Association and Regulations of the Workers' Educational Association, and the following policies and procedures:

- Complaints Policy
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy
- Investment Policy
- Safeguarding & Prevent Policy

6. Ongoing Input and Development of the Policy

WEA considers its Environmental & Sustainability Policy to be a living document and welcomes input from all stakeholders. WEA encourage staff and learners in particular to offer suggestions on how WEA can improve its sustainability work. Suggestions for additions of changes to this policy may be sent to national@wea.org.uk.

Any ideas for new sustainability projects or initiatives may also be forwarded to the same email address. Suggestions may be made at any time during the year.

7. Review

This policy and its annexes will be reviewed by the Audit & Risk Committee at intervals of no more than three years.