



mental welfare
commission for scotland

Corporate reports





Sustainability report 2017-19

Introduction

The Commission was originally set up in 1960 under the Mental Health Act. Our duties are set out in current mental health and incapacity law.

We are accountable to Ministers at the Scottish Government for our statutory duties and how we spend public money. We carry out our work and produce reports independently from the Scottish Government.

The Commission, employing 56 staff, operates from a shared building, Thistle House, managed by our landlords, the Scottish Legal Aid Board (SLAB).

We have been advised by SLAB that it will report upon matters such as emissions, waste and water for Thistle House and that we need, therefore, take no action in this regard. <https://sustainablesotlandnetwork.org/reports/the-scottish-legal-aid-board>

Until March 2019 we held a lease on one floor of this building. Going forward from April 2019 this space will reduce to 55% of the floor, with the remainder being leased by Children's Hearings Scotland in a collaborative move facilitated by Scottish Futures Trust. The Commission pays a single charge which covers rent and rates, energy use and other shared facilities (at present this equates to a proportion 18.91%, of the overall cost for the building; this will decrease after April 2019 to 10.41%).

The [Climate Change \(Duties of Public Bodies: Reporting Requirements\) \(Scotland\) Order 2015](#) came into force on 23 November 2015. It is mandatory for all 150 'major players' listed within this order to submit a 2015/16 Climate Change Report by 30 November 2016, using the standardised reporting template, and annually thereafter. The Commission is not part of the '150 major players list' and is not mandated to report however, it is best practice for smaller organisations to voluntarily report on progress on areas where we do have influence.

This report has therefore been produced voluntarily, and covers 2017-19.

The responsibility for consideration of sustainability issues and for reporting upon this has been delegated by the Commission's management, which retains overall responsibility for this matter, to the Green Group; membership of which is drawn from all areas of the Commission.

In our Sustainability Report for 2016-17, we said we would:

- Continue to participate in Accommodation reduction feasibility project with a view to ensuring positive environmental impacts.
- Refresh green messages through use of staff intranet and visual display within the office.
- Investigate possibilities re food recycling.
- Review remote working policy ensuring it is fit for purpose moving forward.
- Participate in National Recycling Week 2018.
- Recycle more electrical equipment where possible.

Actions taken

Achievements during 2016-2019

Carried out Accommodation reduction feasibility project, and on completion went ahead with move to an agile workplace and reduction of floor space by 45% (Smarter working).

All unwanted furniture and IT recycled via Recycle Scotland and the Turin Trust.

Investigated and installed alternative technologies such as more efficient laptops, monitors and sundries.

Introduced flexible working policy and equipment allowing remote working for almost all staff, thus reducing commuting travel.

Introduced signage encouraging people to switch off lights on leaving meeting rooms.

Introduced food waste recycling.

Stopped providing plastic cups.

One of the primary aims to come from our previous report was the realisation of the Accommodation Project. As the figures in the previous section show this has reduced our footprint by 45%. We have decreased our workstations from 58 to 41 and introduced new laptops, monitors and arms which are more environmentally efficient.

The previous furniture and IT peripherals have been recycled.

We continue to support the Cycle to Work Scheme, and two staff members have made use of this service in the last year. We also provide an Annual Travel warrants Scheme to encourage the use of shared public transport to work.

Given the nature of the work and the individual travel required, due to locality, we are limited to how we can influence individual travel further. Travel figures have been stable for the last five years, with staff encouraged to travel sustainably and to car share wherever possible. We use central government contracts for rail travel, taxi travel and hire cars.

Working in Partnership

We continue to work with a local café for our catering requirements. All deliveries are made on foot and with minimum packaging. This supplier also discourages the use of single use plastics by offering a reduction to customers bringing their own cup when buying hot beverages. Our milk supplier is a locally sourcing dairy.

The accommodation project gives us the opportunity to collaborate with our fellow floor occupiers when participating in national campaigns such as Pass it on Week, Earth Hour and Climate week.

Aims for the future

Moving forward in 2019 - 2020

Monitor the result of move to smarter working.

Reduce paper usage, encourage OMG and Board to review papers electronically.

Consider ways to reduce plastic use.

Refresh green messages through revised T&S policy.

Undertake a survey of staff to see what staff feel about recycling and identify potential barriers to improving our recycling.

Collaborate with landlord and tenants to investigate and identify further area of potential improvements to recycling and sustainability.

Introduce planting to the office to increase wellbeing.

Produce a Sustainability Policy.

Consult staff on a Green Manifesto encouraging staff in sustainable practices.

After staff consultation decided to use more sustainable provision of coffee in the shared conference rooms, to avoid use of unrecyclable pods in the machine installed by other tenants.

Explore purchase of fair trade beverages.