

FACTSHEET: How small businesses can improve their impact on the environment

We recognise that the extent and type of reporting that you wish to do will depend upon your business aims and size and the sector that you are involved in. However, we believe any size organisation can, and should, measure its own impact and then take steps to improve on this.

We work with a large range of businesses from the smallest single person start ups through to companies with up to £5m turnover, multiple locations and many employees. Reporting on the environment ranges from a single page through to detailed analysis and presentations available to the public.

In terms of the environment our aim is to help you commit to considering the environment; assess, target and reduce impacts; and finally to report your activities in a way that suits you. We offer support and assistance where required, not a prescriptive solution.

Environmental Policy

We have found that all small businesses are able to prepare a suitable single page Environmental Policy if they wish. This can be very useful to have when asked for by a customer. Every business has some impacts and even a single person business providing only their time can record and make available a summary of their decisions in respect to travel, energy and other purchasing.

Aim to keep your policies statement short. Using a word processor such as Word open a single page document and set out headings that you have found to be relevant when assessing your business impacts. The headings should include Aims, Environmental Legislation and Review Procedures. Other headings will be based on the particular impacts you have.

Environmental Statement

The next stage is often a more thorough Environmental Statement. This will often be primarily for internal use but may occasionally be made available to investors, employees and larger customers on an individual basis. Similar to annual accounts in many ways, the Environmental Statement should show performance and position of the business.

Publicising environmental credentials is important or vital to many businesses. If you wish to benefit from increased business respect and growth in sales then you have to let people know what you are doing. In this respect there can appear to be a difficult line to tread. By drawing upon others experiences, remembering that no business has no impacts, and being completely honest, every business that is making efforts to protect the environment can make a good case. The point to get across is your considerations and actions. Remember it is very rare for a business to explicitly publicise their exact carbon emissions, resource usage and waste figures.