



Environmental Sustainability Policy

Introduction

The Critical Fish acknowledges the harmful impact that human activity has had on both the local and global environment and is committed to minimising the negative impact we have in delivering our work.

The Critical Fish have pledged with Culture Delcares Emergency and both Co-Directors are involved with local climate activism. Care for the planet is central to our work and as an organisation that is fiercely against greenwashing practices, we commit to using our influence to promote environmental messaging.

We do not manage a building or own any assets as we operate as a collective who come together to deliver activity (with and without funding). As such, individual freelancers and volunteers are responsible for their own resources and this is beyond the control of The Critical Fish.

However, we encourage and offer guidance to freelancers about the practical, achievable steps they can make to develop a more environmentally sustainable practice.

This policy outlines some practical ways in which we commit to caring for our planet in the places where decisions are regularly made or influence exerted.

The Critical Fish's Environmental Sustainability Officer is Lauren Saunders, whose role it is to challenge unsustainable practices within The Critical Fish and provide guidance and signposting when required.

Our Influence

- We believe that environmental issues and the role of culture in the context of crisis is key to the work of The Critical Fish.
- Therefore, wherever possible, our activities should engage with environmental, conservationist or climate themes.
- The Critical Fish facilitators should feel confident to challenge unsustainable practices both within the organisation, and within partnering organisations. The Environmental Sustainability Officer will support in any challenges.
- The Critical Fish are committed to sharing intellectual resources and knowledge so that we learn from each other's expertise. This also means that energy is not wasted generating the same knowledge.
- The Critical Fish offers guidance, support and signposting to our freelancers, volunteers and participants who are looking to lead more sustainable lives and practices
- We will promote local, national, and International environmental campaigns - such as Hull Friends of the Earth, the Hull Food Partnership and Culture Declares Emergency, on our website and through activity delivery.

The Waste Hierarchy

The waste hierarchy identifies ways to be more environmentally friendly, in priority order. We aim to use this hierarchy to inform decision making when it comes to resource management.

1. **Eliminate** - Avoid producing waste in the first place
2. **Reduce** - Minimise the amount of waste you do produce
3. **Re-Use** - Use items as many times as possible (this includes borrowing)
4. **Recycle** - Recycle what you can only after you have re-used it.
5. **Dispose** - Dispose of what's left in a responsible way

Activity Materials and Resources

- Endeavour to use materials which are natural, found, biodegradable, repurposed, or otherwise manufactured from recycled waste.
- Materials purchased for activities should be the greenest type possible
- If work requires new materials, set a limit (e.g. no more than 25% new materials) and prioritise new materials to be the most used/essential to the least used/essential.
- Use non-toxic materials (you can always ask suppliers for material data safety sheets)
- Using unbleached or chlorine-free (ECF/TCF) papers and canvases
- Using refillable or reusable stationary equipment instead of single-use ones, where available and appropriate.
- Choosing vegan, plastic-free brushes and other tools
- Use eco-friendly and/or natural colours and solvents
- Avoid glitter!
- When ordering stationery or materials, do so in bulk. We can ask The Critical Fish members if they wish to add to the order, as it costs less and reduces transport costs.

- Minimise the number of photocopies required for delivering activities, and encourage participants to share information sheets rather than having one each.
- Instead of purchasing new materials, facilitators should aim to use what is already available.
- Instead of purchasing new equipment, facilitators should aim to borrow from their network where possible.
- Shift funding from new materials to labour and transport (for sustainable sourcing/reclaiming)

Printed Publications

- Digital communications should be prioritised ahead of printed leaflets, posters and flyers.
- Printed issues, zines or publications from The Critical Fish should be made with unbleached and recycled stock, ideally FSA approved
- No plastic or vinyl sheens/laminate should ever be ordered as this prevents our printed materials from being recycled or biodegrading naturally.
- Choosing printers who use non-toxic, environmentally-friendly inks
- All printed publications should be made available digitally on our website (or a third party, such as Issuu)

Managing Waste

- Activity planning should involve the minimisation of waste, or re-using waste
- Efforts should always be made to recycle waste, such as cardboard, glass, paper and plastics, and compost food waste.
- Any hazardous items used (oils, chemicals, electronics, batteries) should be disposed of properly and not just dumped in the bin or poured down the sink.

Energy Use

- Be conscious of energy usage when working on partner premises
- Freelancers, volunteers, participants and others should be encouraged to turn off lights, televisions, monitors and other equipment when not in use during the delivery of The Critical Fish activities
- Where practical, heating should be turned down or off when delivering in venues.
- Ensure doors and windows are not left open during activity delivery in cooler months

Water Use

- Be conscious of water usage when working on partner premises
- Use water frugally and turn off taps fully, which we may use to refill water, or wash art materials/equipment.
- Use and promote refillable water bottles, especially during activities in warmer months.

Digital

- Consider if emails really need to be printed to help minimise paper use
- All paperwork should be kept digitally where possible
- The Critical Fish website should be optimised (e.g. unused images being deleted) to minimise server pressure (and in turn, minimise energy usage)

Emissions and Transport

- Promote the use of public transport to get to in-person activities to facilitators and participants
- Minimise emissions by holding meetings online, where practical
- Coordinate meeting timings and locations to minimise additional travel.
- Where private transport must be used (i.e. transporting heavy goods or for accessibility), sharing transport with others heading to the same venue is encouraged
- Source goods and services locally, or at least in the UK, where possible
- Where postage is utilised, minimal, plastic-free packaging should be used (using recycled or FSA approved options where possible)

Procurement and Services

- The Critical Fish uses local banking that does not invest in industries harmful to the planet (HEY Credit Union)
- The Critical Fish commits to sustainable procurement; outsourcing, contracting and purchasing resources, specialist services and products
- Procurement preference is given to other (ideally local) businesses, contractors and freelancers with similar ethical aims
- Where equipment is required (e.g. gazebos, sound systems), it should be borrowed
- When purchasing refreshments for workshops and/or meetings, where possible encourage the use of fair-trade tea and coffee (and other products), vegetarian/vegan, options, milk alternatives and locally-produced/UK fruit. Purchasing yellow label/reduced items can also help minimise food waste.
- If plates/cutlery/mugs are needed for an event, aim to borrow these, bring from home or encourage attendees to bring their own, instead of purchasing disposables. If disposables are inevitable, avoid plastic products and opt for cardboard or wooden instead.

Policy Date:	Review Date:	Adopted by:
12/12/2023	Due December 2026	Jill Howitt
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