

Leeds Mind Policy



For better
mental health

Leeds Mind and the environment

Why do we need this policy?

We believe that everything we do individually, collectively, and as an organisation, has an effect on our environment. This is important to us in two ways: -

- We have a responsibility to protect and nurture our own, and the global environment, in any way we can
- As a mental health organisation we have a particular responsibility to help develop the environment in ways that are positive, rather than damaging, to people's health, especially their mental health.

We are also aware that funders are becoming increasingly likely to require a green policy.

Who does it apply to?

All paid staff, volunteers, members of the Executive Committee and, where appropriate, people who use our services.

Introduction

This policy is far more about encouragement, and aiming to change attitudes and behaviour over time, than about compulsion.

We want to help to create and foster a sustainable environment for everyone involved in Leeds Mind and, as far as we are able, for the wider world.

By 'environment' we mean all the external conditions that affect our development and survival, individually, collectively and organisationally. This includes such things as: -

- the way our offices and buildings are designed and used
- light, furniture and temperature inside our offices and buildings
- the natural environment around us
- the way we relate to the wider world around us

Many of the actions we could take have a cost implication for Leeds Mind. Some things will cost us money; some things will save us money. This should be considered alongside thinking about the cost to the environment of not taking action.

An environment group has been in existence in Leeds Mind since August 2004. During that time we have introduced fairly traded tea and coffee throughout the organisation, coordinated recycling, explored the possibility of more ethical banking, and a number of other things. We intend that these things will become mainstream within the organisation.

Policy

Mental health and the environment

We recognise the link between people's mental health and their environment. We therefore seek to: -

- develop our work in ways that encourage staff and service users to relate positively to the natural environment

- minimise the damage done to the mental health of staff and service users by a negative environment
- protect and nurture the diversity of the natural environment whenever we can within our work

Reducing waste

We believe that the amount of waste is an important factor in the destruction of the local and global environment. We aim to continually reduce the amount that we waste. We seek to do the following, as far as possible: -

- use products which can be reused and/or recycled
- re-use materials including paper, envelopes and carrier bags
- recycle as much as possible, including glass, cans, plastic and paper
- buy in bulk to reduce packaging
- use email instead of bulk photocopying and mailings

Ethical purchasing

We recognise that we can use our power as a purchaser to buy things, as far as possible, which minimise negative affects on the environment and, where possible, contribute positively. We seek, as far as possible, to buy: -

- non-polluting cleaning products
- fairly traded goods such as tea, coffee and sugar
- organic food
- ethical financial services
- local goods and services

We also seek to influence positively companies with which we deal, with respect to the environment.

Energy use

We recognise the negative impact on the environment caused by the excessive use of non-renewable energy sources. We seek to minimise such energy use in the following ways: -

- ensure all our buildings are properly insulated
- ensure heating systems in our buildings are as efficient as possible
- use renewable energy sources whenever possible
- consider the most environmentally-friendly options in all respects when taking on new/converted buildings
- reduce water consumption by collecting and using rainwater, and by taking other measures
- encourage walking, cycling, use of public transport, car sharing/pooling, as appropriate

Local communities

We recognise the value and importance to the environment of building sustainable local communities. We seek to do this in the following ways: -

- buy things locally where possible
- build positive relationships with people and organisations in localities in which we work
- work to improve the local environment whenever we can within our work

Work environment

We believe that staff thrive in a comfortable and positive environment. We seek to: -

- ensure that all staff work within as comfortable an environment as possible in terms of noise and temperature
- provide appropriate and comfortable furniture

