



SOUTH DURHAM u3a POLICY ON ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Aims of this policy

Given the widespread concern amongst South Durham u3a members and wider society about climate change, South Durham u3a have adopted the following guidelines and encourage members and groups to reflect on the way their activities may impact on the climate change, biodiversity loss and the environment.

The aims of this policy are:

- To support groups to put processes and policies in place to ensure their actively aims to limit its impact on the environment.
- For members to take opportunities to inform themselves about environmental issues and the ways in which human activities contribute to waste, pollution and global warming.
- For members to consider ways in which they can minimise their own adverse impact on the environment.

Rationale

This policy has been drawn up to provide suggestions on how South Durham u3a might introduce environmental guidelines within their activities in order to make a positive contribution to sustainability and the environment, and also to help mitigate climate change. More specifically, the measures listed below can help South Durham u3a to:

- address the concerns of members and wider society with regard to environmental issues
- encourage communication and dialogue on environmental issues in South Durham u3a
- encourage a culture of awareness and a sense of responsibility within the membership with respect to sustainability and environmental issues
- provide information to members on how they might reduce their adverse impact on the environment
- minimise the environmental impact of organised South Durham u3a activities

Practical Measures

The following are suggestions to raise awareness and to minimise environmental impact. Please note that committee members and groups leaders have an important part to play in supporting these measures during the activities of the South Durham u3a.

- Consider appointing one member as an Environmental Officer to monitor environmental issues arising within the South Durham u3a.
- Arrange speakers on environmental topics for some monthly meetings.

- Wherever possible incorporate environmental concerns into planning and decision making.
- Consider the impact of activities which take place outside, in natural ecosystems e.g. walking and nature groups and how trips and holidays could be made more sustainable.
- Encourage the formation of climate and environmental groups within the South Durham u3a.
- Check whether venues operate environmentally responsible policies such as using local suppliers, and encourage them to do so.
- Ensure as far as possible that refreshments are served in an environmentally friendly manner e.g. using crockery rather than disposable cups and plates.
- Minimise waste and encourage reuse and recycling.
- Encourage travel to meetings and events by walking, car sharing and public transport where available.
- Conduct a survey of members to seek their views on climate and the environment and suggestions for measures which might be taken by the South Durham u3a.
- Make this policy available on your website and draw your members attention to it.
- Encourage dialogue on climate change issues with the wider population including e.g. younger people.

Definitions

Environmental issues: These are the often negative effects of human activity on the natural world, including climate change, pollution, drought and biodiversity loss.

Environmental protection is the practice of working to slow, halt or reverse this.

Climate Change: The UN defines climate change as referring to long-term shifts in temperatures and weather patterns. These shifts may be natural, but since the 1800s, this is primarily due humans burning fossil fuels. A **Climate Emergency declaration: (or declaring a climate emergency)** is an action taken by governments and scientists to acknowledge humanity is in a climate emergency.

NOTES

Further Suggested reading

The Climate Coalition is a UK's largest group of people dedicated to action against climate change: www.theclimatecoalition.org.

To contact the Climate Change and Environment Subject Adviser, please visit: <https://www.u3a.org.uk/learning/subjects/climate-change>. You can also find out about the u3a Climate Change Network, here: <https://climatechangesubjectnetwork.u3asite.uk>.



Climate Change Committee

An independent organisation, established as part of the 2008 Climate Change Act, it reports regularly to the UK parliament, and the devolved governments on progress in tackling climate change. It is also acts as an independent advisor on the impact of climate change on all aspects of living in the UK: <https://www.theccc.org.uk>.

The IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) is the United Nations body for assessing the science related to climate change. It prepares comprehensive **reports** on climate change, its impacts and future risks, and options for reducing the rate at which climate change is taking place: <https://www.ipcc.ch/>.

Local Government will have policies related to the environment. <https://www.local.gov.uk/about/what-local-government> and we encourage you to research what they are doing in your area.

The Wildlife Trusts are a grassroots movement where members and volunteers work together with local Wildlife Trust to make their local area wilder and make nature part of life <https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/>.

This policy was adopted on: 1st April 2024, reviewed 2 April 2025

Signed
Chair

Signed:
Secretary

Review date: April 2026