



ethical  
consumer

Photo: Ethical Consumer offices in Manchester

# environment report

2016/17

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## Welcome

Improving environmental performance and transparency within business has been a goal of Ethical Consumer since our inception. For over 25 years our ethical ratings system has shone a light on the environmental practices of others.

As an organisation in its own right Ethical Consumer has followed best practice in working to minimise the negative environmental impacts of our operation and maximise the social good.

However, whilst we've had an environmental policy in place for many years, we've not produced an environment report until now.

Under the criteria of our own rating system we are not required to as we have a turnover of less than £10.2m per year and are engaged...

*"in the supply of products with low environmental impacts or which are of environmental benefit or which offer other social benefits".*

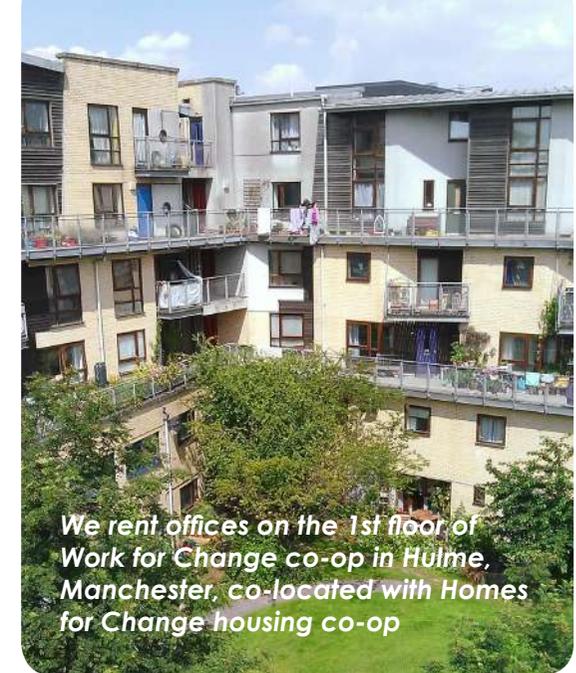
Such companies automatically receive a 'best rating' under our Environmental Reporting category.



## Leading by example

In 2016 we took the decision to formalise our approach to our own environmental management and report on our performance.

Over the last year we've been working to achieve the standard we set for companies which have a turnover 15 times the size of our own. We've measured ourselves against our criteria for environmental reporting (below) using a simple traffic light system.



*We rent offices on the 1st floor of Work for Change co-op in Hulme, Manchester, co-located with Homes for Change housing co-op*

Environmental Reporting Criteria	Our performance 2016/17	
The company or parent company supplied to ECRA or displayed on its website an environmental policy or report which:	●	In early 2016 we updated our Environment Policy which was formally approved by the co-op in June (see p3).
<b>(a)</b> contained at least two specific time and performance targets, AND	●	A new environmental action plan has been developed which includes our targets. This working document is not on our website.
<b>(b)</b> which demonstrated a reasonable understanding of the company's main impacts, AND	●	A full environmental review was undertaken which identified all our environmental impacts.
<b>(c)</b> was dated within the last two years, AND	●	Our policy is dated June 2016; our action plan is continually updated.
<b>(d)</b> was independently verified by an organisation named in the report.	●	This has not been done due to cost, time and applicability for a small organisation with low (negative) impacts.

# our environment policy - adopted 2016

Introduction	We are committed to:	Our performance 2016/17 at a glance	
<p>ECRA Publishing Limited is a multi-stakeholder co-operative (Company Registration Number 30575 R) which was formed in 1989 to research and publish information on the companies behind brand names, and to promote the ethical use of consumer power.</p> <p>We are aware that our activities have an impact on the environment and seek to minimise this.</p> <p>We respect the principle of Sustainable Development and aim to work in a way that meets the needs of today's generation whilst ensuring that future generations can also meet their needs.</p> <p>We will review this Environment Policy annually to check it is up to date and to make sure we are looking at new areas for improvement.</p> <p>Approved by Ethical Consumer co-op 14th June 2016</p>	Minimising resource use by using only 100% post-consumer waste, chlorine-free paper & veg-based inks for magazine printing	●	The paper for both the print magazine and general office use is 100% post-consumer waste recycled and chlorine-free
	Maximising recycling and composting of office consumables	●	We reuse, recycle, compost the vast majority of our waste
	Minimising residual waste produced	●	We produce 1 bag of residual waste per week
	Minimising our energy and water use	●	We minimise our impacts by using controls effectively
	Supporting the least carbon-intensive transport options for business travel and commuting	●	No staff use a car as standard commuting method; trains are used for business travel; we undertake a few flights when no practical alternative
	Purchasing goods and services that are screened for compliance with our ethical/environmental standards; purchase from other co-ops where possible	●	We favour local, social businesses and co-ops where possible. We've recently become aware that 3 of our suppliers have changed from co-operatives to privately owned businesses
	Driving environmental improvements through our supply chain	●	More engagement with suppliers is needed; there's also a need to evidence our engagement
	Being a meat/fish-free organisation in our offices & at our events	●	All meals at events are vegetarian or vegan. Our office is meat/fish free
	Training co-op members, staff and volunteers on our Environment Policy as required	●	Requires integrating with staff induction programme; we also need to evidence completion of training
	Publishing an annual environment report on our website	●	This document is our environment report for 2016/17

Key to assessing our performance:



# Getting Organised

The most important step we've taken over the last 12 months has been to formalise how we tackle environmental management within the organisation.

This has involved:

- Gaining approval from the co-op to review our approach to environmental management
- Appointing a lead and deputy lead for environmental management
- Undertaking an environmental review to assess our environmental impacts
- Refreshing our Environment Policy
- Approving our new Environment Policy and reporting arrangements
- Embedding environmental management within our co-op meetings
- Setting dates for reviewing progress and updating the policy and action plans

The following pages highlight our current environmental practices, as well as the practical actions we've undertaken over the last 12 months.

The Environmental Reporting category can be downloaded from: [www.ethicalconsumer.org/shoppingethically/ourethicalratings](http://www.ethicalconsumer.org/shoppingethically/ourethicalratings)



# Our Offices

Ethical Consumer rents offices at Work for Change, a set of co-operative business units based in Hulme, Manchester.

We now occupy four connected office spaces, plus an additional room for meetings, hot-desking and storage.

# Heating

## Space heating

Office heating is supplied by a wood pellet-fuelled biomass boiler, which heats the whole building complex.

Heating is supplied on a timer control with individual thermostatic radiator valves (TRVs) for adjusting room temperature.

We are not metered for heat use for our offices and are therefore unable to quantify our energy use for heating.

Whilst our offices were designed with high thermal mass (great for heat retention), they are not well insulated (single glazed windows). At times of severe cold, supplementary heating is used (oil-filled radiators and electric heaters).

## Water heating

We don't have plumbed heated water in the office, and hence use a kettle to heat water for washing up and cleaning.

# Electricity

As a tenant at Work for Change, Ethical Consumer is not metered as a separate business, but instead pays for electricity as part of an overall utilities charge.

Therefore we're currently unable to calculate our actual electricity use in terms of kilowatt hours (kWh).

The fluctuating nature of our staff team (changing hours, volunteers, interns, placements, freelancers) means that our electricity use varies over time.

Our primary control measure to minimise electricity use is through staff behaviour.

# Water

We have a single cold tap in our kitchen area, which supplies water for drinks, washing up and cleaning. We're not metered by office unit for water use.



Delivery of the wood pellets for the biomass boiler which supplies Work for Change tenants with heating

## Paper and Printing

We printed around 30,000 copies of Ethical Consumer magazine in 2016/17, amounting to around 825kg of paper.

The number of print subscriptions grew by 6% during 2016/17, compared with 23% for digital subscriptions.

We envisage similar growth rates for 2017/18 and an associated 6% rise in paper consumption for magazine printing.

### Eco-specification for paper & printing

All the paper used for printing the magazine is chlorine-free, 100% post-consumer waste recycled.

The magazine is printed locally, using vegetable-based inks. All of our envelopes meet the same eco-specification.

In the office we use 'Evolution Everyday', 100% post-consumer waste recycled white paper.



We print around 5,500 copies of each issue of the magazine, using high eco-specification paper and vegetable-based inks

## Waste and Recycling

We utilise the services of Manchester-based social enterprise Emerge to recycle most of our waste.

This includes:

- General office paper
- Confidential waste
- Glass, card & plastic bottles
- Waste electronic & electrical equipment (WEEE)

Uncooked food waste is composted through Work for Change.

We produce one small bag of residual waste per week which is collected by commercial waste disposal companies for recovery and/or landfill.

## Purchasing

As a co-operative we seek to support fellow co-ops through our purchasing.

Where this isn't a realistic option, we seek independent (and ideally local) suppliers of goods and services. Our environmental review identified the need to refresh this process and evidence compliance with our policy.

A full list of our current suppliers can be found on page 7.



Emerge Recycling is a Manchester-based social enterprise that undertakes recycling collection services throughout the Greater Manchester. [www.emergemanchester.co.uk](http://www.emergemanchester.co.uk)

## New Internationalist Co-op



In early 2017 Ethical Consumer was one of 3,409 investors supporting the New Internationalist through their 'Buy into a better story' Crowdfunder campaign. We're now a member of the worlds biggest media co-operative!

We did our bit to help by promoting the campaign via our social media channels. It was wonderful to see the campaign go well beyond the £500k target and raise more than £700k to secure the future of this valuable publication.



Our friends at New Internationalist in Oxford celebrate smashing their Crowdfunder target.

## Business Travel

Whilst we don't currently collate our business travel statistics, all UK-based travel is undertaken by train.

### Overseas travel for 2016/17

- Flight to Japan to attend animal welfare conference
- Flights to Japan & Canada for consultancy client audits
- 1x flight and 1x Eurostar to Brussels for tax training, and 1x Eurostar Paris for consultancy client audit



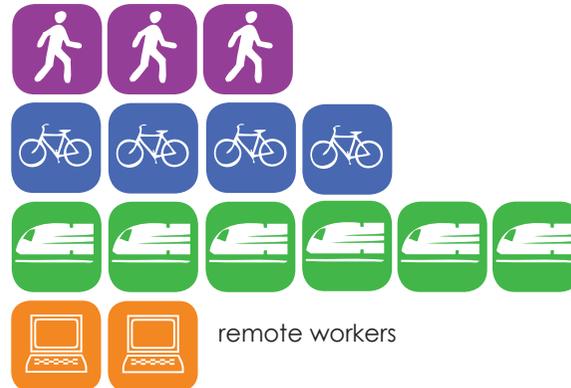
*Big in Japan: great for supporting the development of ethical consumption overseas; bad for our carbon footprint.*

## Visitor Travel

We highlight sustainable travel options for visitors coming to our offices; see [www.ethicalconsumer.org/contactus](http://www.ethicalconsumer.org/contactus)

## Staff Commuting

The primary commuting methods by Ethical Consumer staff, a Fair Tax Mark employee and an embedded freelancer are given below:



We also provide train season ticket loans to staff.

## Training and Awareness

A simple environmental checklist has been produced and circulated to all staff. This covers dos and don'ts for controlling heating & lighting, waste & recycling, computer & printer use, travel & food.

The Environment Policy forms part of our induction for all staff and volunteers. Vigilance by all staff is needed to ensure lights, computers and any secondary heating units are switched off when not needed.

Implementation of our environmental action plan is tracked by our co-op management team.

## Sponsoring Olive Trees in Palestine

Over recent years we've donated £4 from each Ethical Consumer gift subscription to the Trees for Life programme, co-ordinated by the Palestinian Fair Trade Association.

For every gift subscription, we pay for a **new organic olive tree sapling in Palestine**, where olive trees and their harvest provide a livelihood for entire communities.

In the last twelve months, this has sponsored 173 olive trees for farmers who are working hard to support their families, community and future generations. Our contribution is made via the UK co-ordinating body Zaytoun. [www.zaytoun.org/plant\\_a\\_tree](http://www.zaytoun.org/plant_a_tree)



## Meat & fish-free office

In 2016 we decided as a co-op to become a meat and fish-free office. This means staff may not consume or store meat or fish products within our office.

We also agreed not to buy any food containing meat or fish for business events, including conferences.

We also discussed whether or not to go dairy-free, but we felt that this did not accommodate the varying diets of staff.

We purchase soya milk and cow's milk for staff and visitor use. Any biscuits purchased for staff and visitor consumption are vegan.



*As with most workers in the UK our productivity is directly related to caffeine and biscuit consumption. All fair-trade, organic and dairy free! Many of the products have been Ethical Consumer Best Buys.*

## Our Suppliers

as of 31st March 2017

Service/product	Supplier	Co-op?	Local? <30miles
Office accommodation	Work for Change	✓	✓
Press & Advertsing	Simon Birch		✓
Broadband and phones	The Phone Co-op	✓	
Website mangement	Orangetree Digital		✓
IT Support	Open Plan IT		
CRM system and support	Gordon and Gotch		✓
Online payments	Datacash		
Banking services	The Co-operative Bank, Unity Trust Bank		✓ -
Finance support	Phil Boast		✓
Accountants	Slade and Cooper		✓
Design and layout	Moonloft		
Copy proofing	Ciara Maginness		
Magazine printing	Rap Spiderweb		✓
Outlet distribution	Ink Distribution, Central Books	✓	
Franking services	The Mailing Room		
Office consumables	Green Stationary Store		
Office refreshments	The Organic Food Store		✓
Cleaning Services	Self-employed		✓

Ethical Consumer is located on the first floor of Work for Change co-operative workspace



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