

Environmental Responsibility Statement 2026

We are living through a fast-accelerating climate and ecological crisis, the effects of which are already being felt globally. Arts organisations, particularly those in the Global North, contribute disproportionately to emissions through international travel, art shipping, energy use and material consumption. We also occupy a unique public platform capable of inspiring and influencing change.

In 2024 the Whitechapel Gallery became an Active Member of the Gallery Climate Coalition, which requires making commitments about our environmental impact and sharing our progress. We recognise our responsibility and the opportunity to lead by example.

Our Commitments and Progress

Carbon reporting and monitoring

- Annual reporting of our carbon emissions to Julie's Bicycle and the Gallery Climate Coalition has helped build a more accurate picture of our environmental impact and supported our pledge to reduce our carbon emissions by at least 50% by 2030.
- We calculate our carbon footprint regularly to monitor our progress toward this goal.

Energy and buildings

- We aim to reduce our building's carbon use by 50% through planned capital works, including installation of low carbon technologies, such as air source heat pumps, and thermal upgrades informed by an energy audit.

Transport and logistics

- Having reduced our staff flight emissions 67% since 2019, we continue to promote lower-carbon travel options and reduce the need for air travel.
- We are working toward ensuring that most international shipping is undertaken by sea, rail, or road by 2028. This includes partnering with our shippers to explore low-carbon routes and scheduling our exhibitions in ways that reduce time-sensitive shipments and reliance on air freight.
- We are committed to using only low- or zero-emissions vehicles for local deliveries by 2027.
- We have developed a sustainability checklist for our suppliers and contractors, which allows us to assess their carbon footprint and environmental practices. We

use this to set clear expectations, encourage action to reduce emissions, and seek alternative suppliers where necessary.

Materials, waste, and circular practices

- Our Exhibitions team reuse fabricated items such as plinths, limit wall construction, and re-purpose materials such as plywood across multiple shows. We loan fabricated items and furniture to other institutions and donate materials for community-led projects. We also prioritise eco-friendly products to reduce the environmental impact of our exhibitions.
- We provide a sustainability checklist for artists, outlining our shared approach and inviting participation in working sustainably across projects.

Procurement and partnerships

- We prioritise local suppliers within a 25-mile radius, reducing reliance on large online platforms.
- In partnership with Alba, our onsite café, we've introduced dedicated coffee-cup recycling points.

Staff engagement and governance

- We maintain a Green Team with representatives from across the organisation, meeting every 2 months to track progress on all targets and actions.
- Each Department has Green Objectives which are set annually and monitored quarterly.

We aim to act in line with the principles of climate justice, recognising the connections between the climate crisis and other global injustices. We want our environmental actions to support – rather than undermine or ignore – the needs of people on the frontlines of marginalisation and injustice. We are committed to work in partnership with other organisations, including the Gallery Climate Coalition, to collectively tackle these issues.

We have set these targets and are taking actions in the knowledge that we are not yet doing everything right. We still have a great deal to do and much to learn. We welcome feedback from our artists, audiences and stakeholders on this environmental statement, our targets, and on our plans for action.