



## Nicci Russell Action Statement for launch of ACEVO Sustainability Leadership Principles - October 2023

Nicci Russell is CEO of UK environmental campaigning organisation Waterwise and a member of ACEVO's Climate Emergency Members Group. Here she sets out her own Action Statement to support the ACEVO's sustainability leadership principles which is an update on the original statement made in April 2021 and reflects progress of actions since.

### Acknowledgement

I recognise and acknowledge that the climate, extinction and biodiversity crises are systemic and advancing threats to the civil society sector's ability to create the impact it seeks.

I acknowledge that the climate and nature crises have already affected and will continue to disproportionately affect certain groups, both in the UK and globally, with specific and significant impacts on people living in the global south and people from marginalised communities, including people of colour, people living in poverty, and disabled people.

### Ambition

I will champion the need for ambitious leadership within the voluntary sector specifically, in light of our commitment across a range of causes to improving outcomes for people, animals, and the natural world.

As leader of an environmental campaigning organisation, I will personally aim to drive acknowledgement and commitment across the voluntary sector both on the urgent need for water efficiency to protect the communities and service users ACEVO members represent, and more widely on the unequal impacts of the climate emergency. In 2021 I began this with my ACEVO [Twitter takeover](#), my [blog](#) for ACEVO and my active membership of ACEVO's Climate Emergency Members Group.

I will work towards a just transition to net zero emissions, strategising and acting now to support a transition which will help protect the communities and places we work with from further harm - in this work I will emphasise the importance of acting now to adapt, as well as that reducing water wastage also reduces energy bills and carbon emissions as less water is heated in homes and businesses, and pumped and treated. I will also emphasise the need to consider the climate emergency - tackling it and adapting to it - through an intersectional lens.

I will speak publicly and confidently about the climate, using personal and organisational communications platforms to support campaigns asking policymakers for change. Wherever possible, I will contribute to these campaigns with expertise from the communities we serve, to build an intersectional picture of the impact of climate breakdown.

I commit to sharing and learning alongside peers in the sector, taking time to review our actions and the changing situation and adapt collectively.

### Action

I have taken, and will continue to take practical steps within Waterwise and my networks to understand our emissions and how climate breakdown intersects with our vision and values.

As an environmental campaigning organisation, with the vision that water is used wisely every day, everywhere, by everyone, at Waterwise we already explicitly recognise and campaign on the intersections between our vision and values and climate justice, and use this to inform the choices we make about our strategy, services, contracts, communications, policy and regulatory influencing and campaigns.

In terms of our own operations, at Waterwise we have an Environment Policy covering aims and behaviours around resource use and travel, including at our events, and we have a large number of internal sustainability initiatives led by team members, and staff sustainability pledges on our website. We also work from home. We are a small team of 10.

However, drawing on the ACEVO Sustainability Leadership Principles, Starter Questions, and Working From Home Checklist, I committed to further action:

- 1. I will seek to monitor and measure the carbon, water and wider environmental footprint of Waterwise's events, travel, internet use and work, as far as possible.**

*Progress - We created a Sustainability Champion within Waterwise who completed Carbon Literacy training to help give the tools needed to develop our evaluation work. The Champion used this training to develop an action plan on how we can monitor and measure our environmental footprint. We are using Zellar Platform as a tool to log and track our footprint.*

*Next steps - While we are able to easily measure many of our activities (e.g. travel), some things are more difficult as we work from home, so we are creating an employee survey to enable us to set a benchmark and track progress.*

- 2. I will develop more detailed policies and targets on how we work, to include travel, printing, use of emails and the internet, requiring vegan food and tap water at our events, and procurement.**

*Progress - The Sustainability Champion set up a new working group "The dream green team" with relevant members of the team to progress on policies and targets. A five step action plan has developed to focus on the priority areas we agreed on and update policies. As well as this group meeting regularly, the Sustainability Champion is working closely with our EDI Champion and Wellbeing Champion to ensure actions support each other's agendas and align with our values.*

*Next steps - Each team member is setting a personal objective related to sustainability as part of the annual review process. A review of our supply chain will be completed to help ensure our purchasing choices are made with our sustainability policies in mind. We have set an ongoing team meeting*

agenda item so that sustainability is regularly discussed and we continue to develop and adapt our ideas to keep up with latest developments.

- 3. I will use my existing Board support for sustainability to embed climate justice across our work and operations, and update Board on this work on an agreed timescale.**

*Progress - We decided that as well as an internal Sustainability Champion there should also be a Board member who specifically supports our sustainability work. This Board member also completed the Carbon Literacy training to ensure we were starting from a good knowledge base and worked with our champion to develop our action plan. The plan was agreed with the Board in July 2023 and we will be updating on progress via our Board reports and with annual review.*

*Next steps - All Board members are also setting their own sustainability pledge for the year. We will keep updated and are developing further opportunities to communicate the work we are doing to encourage others to take action.*

## waterwise Sustainability 2030

**1** Embed a sustainability framework



**2** Track and report on our travel



**3** Track and report on our energy use at home



**4** Track and report on our water use at home



**5** Review supply chain



**Our total estimated emissions last year were 4.6 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> (same as 1 average car)**