

The Unicorn Theatre Sustainability Policy

The Unicorn Theatre is the UK's leading professional theatre for young audience, and our mission is to transform young lives through theatre by

- Recognising that climate action is vital to protecting children's futures, and actively reducing our environmental impact on the planet.

We understand that meeting the needs of our current generation should not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own. We aim to be a model of good environmental practice for both our audiences and our industry and will set annual SMART objectives, as part of our business plan around environmental action, alongside the goals in our action plan.

This Policy should be read alongside our:

- Sustainability Action Plan
- Procurement Policy
- Ethics Policy

Our three core values of Curiosity, Respect and Courage, are our touchstones for artistic activity and organisational practice, and they apply to our sustainability goals in the following ways:

Curiosity

- We consistently ask how can we do better? What alternatives are available? What have we not considered yet and what have we taken for granted as the way it has always been done?
- We consider what else our industry is doing and how we can both share knowledge with and learn from other theatres, our audiences and our supporters.
- We look outside our industry to understand the root causes, and possible solutions to the climate emergency from scientists, government agencies and international organisations.

Respect

- We respect our planet as our only home.
- We respect our place within the larger ecology of the natural world, and our connection to other living beings we share the earth with.
- We respect our audiences who as young people will inherit what we leave behind.
- We respect our staff through providing sustainability training and listening to the suggestions they present to improve our practice.

Courage

- We will be public facing in our aims, achievements and challenges in order to inspire and learn from others.
- We will actively engage our artists, staff and funders in what may be challenging conversations in order to better understand how to meet our sustainability goals together.
- We will set ambitious targets, understanding the scope of the climate emergency and what is required of each of us to sustain a healthy planet.

Programming:

- We will consider the climate emergency as a *context* in which we are creating work in order to tell resonant stories, draw out relevant themes and inspire change.
- This is not to say that our shows will be on the *topic* of climate change, but rather that we consider this context as part of our artistic planning in the same way we consider the context of diversity or the context of financial parameters.

Narratives with heart, optimism and action are celebrated throughout our season and we aim to inspire children to understand and question their world, including their natural environment and the impact of our choices on the future.

Our Roadmap

Our approach to meeting the goals outlined above uses the three volumes of the Theatre Green Book as a roadmap, and continued engagement with the Arts Council England programmes facilitated by Julie's Bicycle.

The Theatre Green Book has brought together theatre-makers and sustainability experts to create a common standard for making theatre. Widely embraced by the industry it is quickly becoming the sustainability standard for making shows, running venues and operating our businesses.

Organised into three volumes, the Theatre Green Book covers:

- Sustainable Productions
- Sustainable Buildings
- Sustainable Operations

The Unicorn Theatre has been an early adopter of the Theatre Green Book, particularly concerning Volume 1 Sustainable Productions, and has to date trialled shows at all three levels of standard. Key Unicorn staff were also instrumental in the initial creation of Volume 1 Sustainable Productions.

The Theatre Green Book provides a road map for continual improvement by outlining standards at Baseline, Intermediate and Advanced standards. As the industry continues to improve we will move closer to Advanced standard being attainable and in fact the norm for our sustainable working conditions.

While the Artistic Director and Executive Director are responsible for the overall organisational commitment to the Theatre Green Book, the task of implementation will be the responsibility of the management team as follows:

Vol 1 Sustainable Productions

- Lead by Senior Producer and Technical and Production Director
- All productions the Unicorn creates as the lead producer from 2023 onwards will be to Baseline Green Book standard as a minimum.

Vol 2 Sustainable Buildings

- Lead by Technical and Production Director, General Manager
- The Unicorn Theatre will make use of the Home Survey Tool available through TGB Vol 2 in order to create a plan of Easy Wins, Maintenance Goals and Capital Projects to maintain and improve the building's environmental footprint. The MOL Business Climate Assessment will also form part of this action planning.

Vol 3 Sustainable Operations

- Lead by Director of Marketing and Communications, General Manager, FOH Manager
- All areas of operation to aim for Baseline standard as a minimum

In addition to providing guidance to moving towards more sustainable working practices, the Theatre Green Book also provides a common framework and language for freelancers working across venues and projects. By committing to the implementation of the Theatre Green Book across our operations the Unicorn Theatre is supporting freelancers to move seamlessly between venues without re-learning a new set of sustainability guidance at each turn.

Julie's Bicycle are a pioneering non-profit organisation mobilising the arts and culture sectors to take action on the climate and ecological crises. The Unicorn Theatre engages with Julie's Bicycle across two programmes – the Spotlight programme and the Creative Green programme.

The Spotlight programme works with NPO organisations to achieve measurable reductions in their environmental footprint through developing good environmental management practice and setting achievable yet ambitious Environmental Impact Reduction Targets. The Unicorn Theatre currently reports on our Scope 1 and 2 emissions through the Spotlight Programme, and commits to year on year reduction targets in terms of our building's energy use. The Spotlight Programme ends in 2023 and this section will be reviewed at that time in light of the potential replacement programme.

The Creative Green Programme provides sustainability consultancy, peer-to-peer knowledge sharing and Creative Green certification to an international network arts and cultural organisations. The Unicorn Theatre currently holds a five star rating through this programme, and makes use of regular monitoring and support days to improve our environmental targets and knowledge.

Currently the management of reporting to Julie's Bicycle sits with the General Manager, although all staff have access to the learning resources and mentoring opportunities available.

Training:

Carbon Literacy is an awareness of the carbon costs and impacts of every day activities and the ability and motivation to reduce emissions on an individual, community, and organisational basis. It provides the underpinning knowledge required to create a vital shift in how we live and work in society in order to mitigate against the worst outcomes of the climate emergency and learn to adapt to the changes already occurring.

Through understanding the root causes, impacts and likely outcomes of the climate emergency the training provides the background to implementing the tools available through industry resources such as the Theatre Green Book. Through learning the terminology and science behind the climate emergency the training gives staff across the organisation and the industry a common language to discuss issues and create solutions.

We are committed to providing Carbon Literacy Training for all full-time staff members, in order to create a baseline of knowledge and understanding about the climate emergency across our staff team, and to gather insights and actions from staff to move us forward on our sustainability journey.

Our goal is to include freelance artists working on forthcoming seasons and casual hourly staff in this training as much as possible through offering free opportunities to participate. In the interim managers and directors will be tasked with creating a plan to disseminate their learning to their teams.

This could happen in the following ways:

- FOH training
- FOH monthly meetings
- Production casual inductions and toolbox talks
- Design Parameters meetings
- Artistic planning conversations with creative teams
- Engagement facilitators planning and training sessions

The Unicorn will invest in the certification of Carbon Literacy of its core staff team and encourages all staff to make ambitious personal and professional commitments as part of this process. The Executive Director will ensure the budgetary allowance is made available for this, and the General Manager will lead on the organisation of the provision.

Procurement

The Unicorn's Procurement Policy prioritises local suppliers who are actively working to reduce their environmental impact. With this policy will come an exploration and interrogation of responsible procurement, and how the needs of a fast-paced industry are balanced against our environmental commitments.

All products and services which come into the building will be assessed for their circularity, including the embodied carbon in their manufacture, the transport required to get them to us, and the end-of-life pathway prior to their purchase. These guidelines will be laid out in our Procurement Policy to assess environmental, social and economic impacts of purchasing options and to provide staff with clear structures in which to make choices which support our sustainability goals.

In year two of the policy and action plan, we will request Sustainability Policies from some suppliers, not to automatically discount them from working with us, but in order to encourage firms to consider this as a necessity of doing business in the near future.

Sharing Information:

We will work with our industry partners to share information and research on suppliers or materials to reduce the amount of staff capacity required of individual organisations to do this work.

A copy of this policy is made available to all freelancers working in our building and is available on our website alongside all recent data that holds us to account.

Success

Success in these endeavours will be marked by:

- Continued sector-wide recognition as an industry leader in environmental understanding and commitment to sustainability.
- Staff, artists, audiences and supporters recognising environmental values as core to our identity.
- Continued reductions in energy use and waste management, coupled with continued improvements in material use and circularity.

This policy aligns with the current NPO funding cycle which runs to 2026. It will be reviewed annually and rewritten in line with the new funding period.

Signed by:

Vanessa Ogden, Chair of the Board of Trustees

Bailey Lock, Co-Executive Director

Policy created by Bailey Lock, Ria Tubman, Jennifer Taillefer (Sustainability Consultant)

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