

Shaping a Better World

Nurturing people, working responsibly,
and safeguarding the planet

acorns
children's hospice

Our environmental sustainability plan



Caring for others... and the planet

At Acorns our aim is to provide care to every child and their family who needs us, now and in the future. We know that to do this we must work responsibly, nurturing people and safeguarding the environment we all live in.

As the largest children's hospice charity in the UK, Acorns delivers vital services to hundreds of children and families across our region every year. We operate three hospices and a growing network of shops, supported by the central functions a charity like ours needs to continue. All this activity consumes resources and contributes to waste and emissions.

It's our responsibility as an organisation and duty to the community we serve, to strive towards sustainability and lessen our impact on the planet. This is what **Shaping a Better World**, our environmental sustainability plan is all about.

This plan covers **2024-2028**, but our ambitions reach well into the future. We will set ourselves targets to **reduce emissions and increase recycling by 2030** and longer term to 2050, which you can read about in more detail in the next section.



The journey so far

To build this plan, Acorns has worked with Bioregional, a specialist sustainability consultancy with over 20 years' experience. Bioregional engaged with teams across Acorns, gathering detailed information through workshops, interviews and analysing data to identify where we can make the biggest impact. This work has helped build an accurate picture of where we are as a charity, and where we want to go. Feedback from across Acorns as part of the process has also shown there's a real desire from people to work more sustainably and a recognition there's even more we can do.

What do we mean by environmental sustainability?

It's a phrase we've all heard before, but it can mean different things to different people. Perhaps your first thoughts go towards recycling or carbon footprints. Whilst this is part of the picture, sustainability covers a much broader set of themes, including social and economic sustainability.

Social sustainability focuses on the wellbeing of people and the community, **economic sustainability** aims to create a balance between economic growth, resources and financial stability and finally, **environmental sustainability** is about safeguarding the natural environment through appropriate policies and practices. Our plan spans all three of these areas.

Why is this plan important?

We've already mentioned our responsibility as the largest children's hospice in the UK, but there are other key reasons why this plan is important.

Becoming a greener, more sustainable organisation goes hand-in-hand with our organisational Values. It reflects

positively on our people, supporters, families and the local community by highlighting our commitment to responsible ways of working.

There are other reasons too. It means Acorns will be in a better position to meet the standards suppliers, corporate partners and charitable trusts expect of us, and it brings us more in-line with the wider NHS sustainability strategy. Also, operating sustainably and using more energy efficient technology and processes means reduced energy consumption, so **more resources can be directed towards providing care for children and families.**

We're only at the start, but this is an exciting journey, one that will involve everyone at Acorns. Whether it's empowering our teams to work more sustainably, growing our voluntary Green Champions network within the charity, or encouraging our customers or suppliers to make more sustainable choices.

Acorns strives for excellence, and we hope that by leading the way in our sector, others will be inspired to follow in our footsteps. Together we will ensure Acorns continues delivering the vital care local children and families need, and through that – **shape a better world**, for generations to come.

T. Johnson

Trevor Johnson
Acorns CEO



Shaping a Better World

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Our purpose

Supporting more children and families by leading the way
in sustainable hospice care.

Our objective

Striving for sustainability in the way we support local
families and our people, in our sourcing and products and
across our facilities and operations.

Our purpose for **Shaping a Better World** is built around
three key areas, which we call our **Pillars: People,
Purchasing and Planet.**



1. People

Unlocking potential, supporting wellbeing and building a climate of sustainability.



Our commitments...

Sustainability for all

We will achieve a climate where sustainability is the responsibility of everyone, regardless of our role at Acorns.

Improving wellbeing

We will promote a climate that nurtures the physical and mental wellbeing of our people, the families we support and our customers.

Fostering inclusivity

We will foster an environment which is equitable and inclusive, both for our people and the families we support.

Supporting our community

We will support our local community through employment and volunteering opportunities, helping people overcome the barriers to achieving their full potential.

2. Purchasing

Creating positive change through what we buy and who we work with.



Our commitments...

Sourcing and resourcing

We will consider sustainability in our decisions about what we buy, especially across key areas.

We will work with our suppliers to understand their sustainability processes and encourage them to share our ambitions.

Leading by example

We will lead the way by developing a sustainable charity shop model, sharing learnings and inspiring others across our sector.

Inspiring sustainable choices

We will ensure all new goods sold in our shops are sourced from sustainable origins.

We will engage with our customers and supporters, inspiring them to make more sustainable choices.

3. Planet

Protecting nature and tackling climate change.



Our commitments...

Journey to net zero

By 2030 we will achieve 100% renewable electricity across Acorns.

By 2030 we will achieve a 42% reduction in scope 1 and 2 emissions, stretching to 90% by 2050.¹

We will explore our impact across scope 3 emissions for business travel, waste and water, and set ambitious targets against these.

We will commit to improving energy efficiency across all our sites.

Reduce, re-use, recycle

We will work to understand how we can reduce landfill waste and increase our rate of recycling and set targets against these.

On the move

By 2030 we will work towards 100% decarbonisation of all the vehicles in our fleet, where available.

We will promote sustainable travel choices to our people and customers.

Greening Acorns

We will create opportunities for our people and the local families we support to connect more with nature.

¹ A carbon footprint is made up of 'scopes' of control. Scope 1 emissions are **direct** emissions from activity owned or controlled by Acorns, like gas and other fuels. Scopes 2 and 3 are **indirect** emissions, as a result of activity we don't own or control, like electricity, waste disposal and business travel.

**Our Pillars in a bit
more detail...**

**Pillar 1:
People**

Unlocking potential,
supporting wellbeing
and building a climate
of sustainability.



People

Our commitments...



Sustainability for all

Our aim is for sustainability to be embedded in everything we do at Acorns. We want to give all our people the opportunity to build sustainability into their roles and responsibilities and will offer more training, so people feel equipped to encourage sustainable practices in their teams. We also want to empower the Acorns Green Champions to lead and inspire others, so simple and effective actions like recycling and waste reduction are encouraged across all our workplaces - in our hospices, shops and offices.



Improving wellbeing

When it comes to nurturing people, this plan reinforces the fantastic work already going on across Acorns. We are on a journey towards the West Midlands Combined Authority's Thrive at Work Silver award, demonstrating our ongoing commitment towards everyone's health and wellbeing. We will also explore the WELL Building Principles for future properties - an international standard that measures, monitors and certifies a series of features to promote occupant wellbeing.





Fostering inclusivity

Acorns is already committed to maintaining a welcoming environment for all, regardless of background.

Underpinning this, comprehensive policies and procedures ensure we continue delivering equality of opportunity and inclusive working practices across everything we do. We are also proud to be the first non-educational organisation in the world to be awarded a UNICEF Gold Award for our commitment to the Rights of the Child. This plan complements all our work in this important area. It adds weight to the work spearheaded by our EDI Steering Group, empowering EDI Champions across Acorns and offering further training opportunities, so everyone has the skills, knowledge and expertise to ensure Acorns remains the inclusive workplace we want it to be.



Supporting our community

The positive impact we have as an organisation extends beyond our workforce and the families who receive our vital care. It ripples out across our local community. As part of this commitment, we want to continue our positive work identifying the groups who experience barriers to employment, introducing initiatives to help them overcome these barriers. This is just what we did through the recent Kickstart Scheme in which Acorns offered placements to 33 young people who had been unemployed for more than 12 months, allowing them to develop their skills and in many cases move into paid employment. We'll also accurately measure our social return on investment – calculating our social rather than monetary value – helping us build a picture of where we have most impact, and where we can make even more of a difference.

Our Pillars in a bit more detail...

Pillar 2: Purchasing

Creating positive change through what we buy and who we work with.



Purchasing

Our commitments...



Sourcing and resourcing

When it comes to the way we work, we've thought very carefully about how we can be more sustainable through what we buy and who we work with. We'll review our existing suppliers, work with them to understand their sustainability processes and encourage them to share our ambitions. We'll also include due diligence in our procedures and introduce relevant procurement training for our people. Ultimately, we want to create a more sustainable supply-chain and a model for others in our sector to emulate.



Leading by example

With a growing network of shops across the region, Acorns is well positioned to lead the way in sustainable charity retail and lots of fantastic work is already taking place in this area. Just one example is our upcoming sustainable charity shop model, which when introduced will set even higher standards for every Acorns shop refit. We'll share our learnings across the sector, encouraging others to make strides in sustainability and become more accountable for their decisions.



Inspiring sustainable choices

As part of this commitment we want to inspire our customers and supporters to make more sustainable shopping choices. We'll do this through regular marketing campaigns, reminding people that by shopping sustainably at Acorns you can look good on a budget, whilst at the same time taking the pressure off the environment. An important element of this commitment will be ensuring all new goods in our shops are from sustainable sources.



**Our Pillars in a bit
more detail...**

Pillar 3:
Planet

Protecting nature and
tackling climate change.



Planet

Our commitments...



Journey to net zero

Acorns has a responsibility to protect and reduce our impact on the environment. Our plan outlines the long-term targets

we've set ourselves to bring down different scopes of emissions and achieve 100% renewable electricity across the charity. As part of this commitment, we'll conduct studies to understand the potential for transition away from gas heating towards more sustainable alternatives and assess whether our properties are suitable for solar energy on site.



Reduce, re-use, recycle

We want to do as much as we can to maximise recycling and reduce waste. We'll conduct a study across all our properties to identify current waste practices so we can introduce the right solutions, including the potential investment required to install water saving technology. This area will also be a focus for the Acorns Green Champions who will encourage best practice in our workplaces and offices, so waste reduction and recycling become second nature to all of us, regardless of our role.



In the next section find out what our total carbon footprint is at Acorns, why net zero is important, and what we mean by the three 'scopes' of emissions.



On the move

One of the biggest contributions towards greenhouse gases at

Acorns is travel, both by commuting and the emissions generated by our fleet of vehicles. However, it's also one of the areas we know we can make the biggest difference. We'll encourage our people and shop customers to make more sustainable travel choices and by 2030 we want to work towards a 100% decarbonisation of all the vehicles in our fleet, where available.



Greening Acorns

At Acorns, our beautifully landscaped hospice gardens are a haven for wildlife and a quiet sanctuary where children and adults can have fun, relax and reflect. As part of this plan, we want to create even more opportunities for people to connect with nature and will look at where we can rewild sections of our hospice gardens, promoting native species and flowers for pollinators. We'll also conduct a review of our shops, to see what potential there is across our estate to encourage space for nature.



Our journey to net zero

In **Pillar 3: Planet** – we've committed to work towards achieving net zero at Acorns. This means cutting our greenhouse gas emissions (the gases that raise the temperature of the planet) to as close to zero as possible.

Why is net zero important?

The science shows that to avert the worst impacts of global warming, the temperature increase across the planet needs to be limited to 1.5 degrees C. The UK has a legally binding commitment to reach net zero by 2050.

In order to reach net zero at Acorns, we first needed to calculate our **carbon footprint** – the total amount of greenhouse gas emissions that we add to the atmosphere.

Our carbon footprint is made up of 'scopes' of control

There are three different types of emissions that form our carbon footprint. Scope 1 emissions are **direct** emissions from activity owned or controlled by Acorns, like gas and other fuels. Scopes 2 and 3 are **indirect** emissions, as a result of activity we don't own or control, like electricity, waste disposal and business travel.



We've worked out that over 2022-23 we were responsible for emitting **2,611 tonnes** of CO₂e. That's the equivalent of **320** family homes!



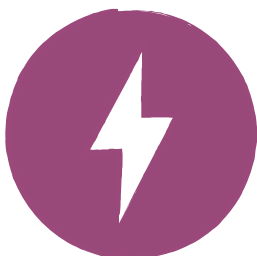
Direct



Scope 1

Scope 1: Emissions from activity owned or controlled by Acorns, like gas and other fuels. Examples include gas boilers and emissions from the vehicles we own.

Indirect



Scope 2

Scope 2: These emissions are a consequence of what we do, but occur at sources we do not own or control. The most common example of this type of emission is electricity purchased from a supplier.

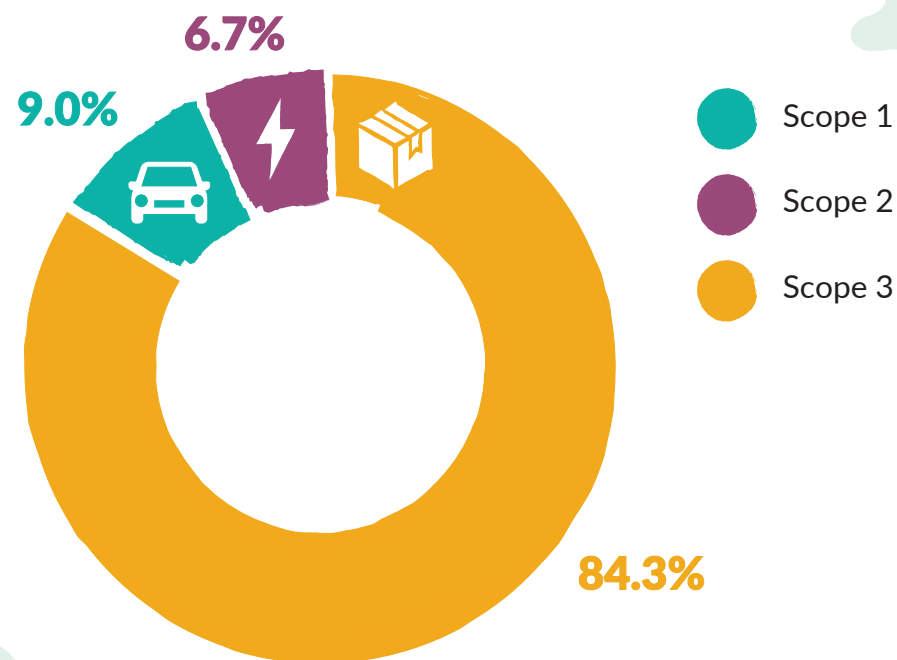


Scope 3

Scope 3: Other indirect emissions we do not own or control. Example activities include purchased goods and services, waste disposal and business travel. Scope 3 emissions are often where the biggest carbon impact lies in an organisation.

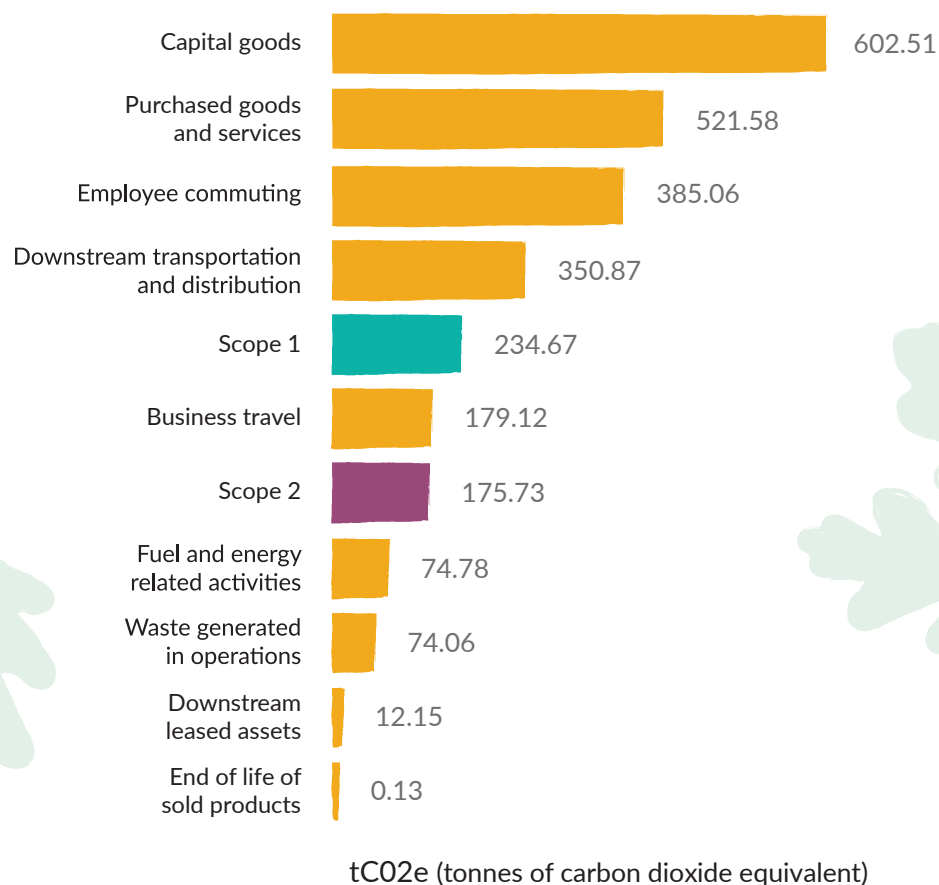
Carbon footprint results

Carbon emissions at Acorns by scope



Like most organisations, at Acorns the majority of our emissions come from **scope 3** - the indirect emissions we do not own or control, including purchased goods and services, waste disposal and business travel (84%).

Carbon footprint results by activity



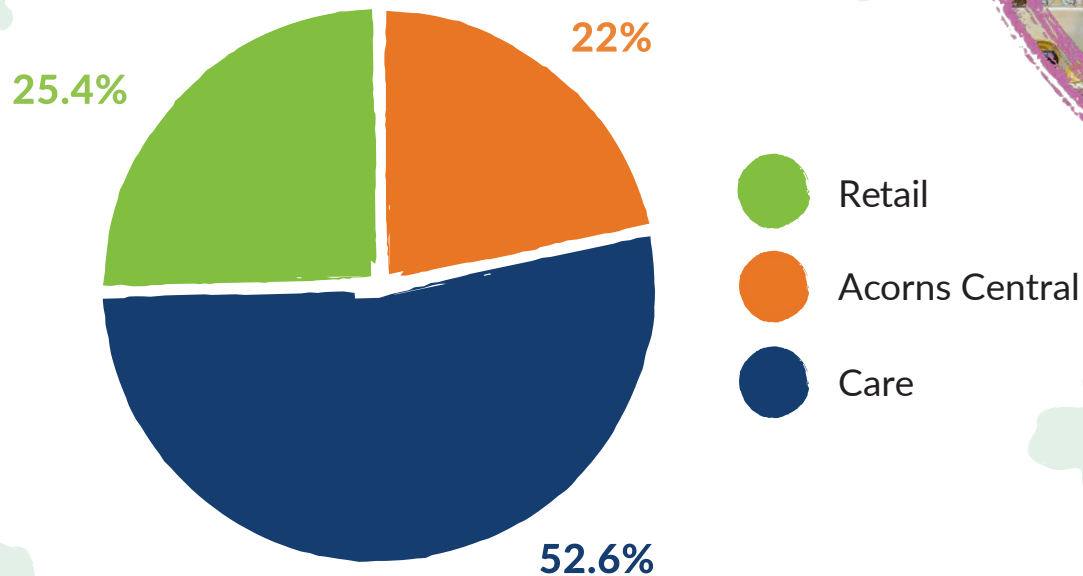
In the year 2022-23, 43% of our emissions at Acorns were procurement related, with a major refurbishment of our Walsall hospice, Acorns in the Black Country, a significant contributor to that total. 14% emissions are from employee commuting. Other emissions 'hotspots' at Acorns include visitor business travel and downstream transportation and distribution (which refers to the onward travel of unsold goods).



A survey conducted as part of our carbon footprint analysis found that in 2022-23 Acorns employees and volunteers were estimated to have commuted almost **1.5 million km** by road. That's about the same distance as travelling **36 times** around the earth's equator, or travelling to the moon and back **3.8 times!**²

² The earth's circumference (measured by the equator) is 40,075km. The distance from the earth to the moon is measured from the centre of the earth to the centre of the moon, and is 384,400km.

Carbon footprint results by area



Different areas of Acorns contribute to different categories of emissions. For example, our hospices use gas for heating whereas our shops do not. However, unlike other areas of the business, the carbon footprint of our shops includes the onward travel of sold goods.

Care services at Acorns account for 52.6% of our total carbon footprint. However, a significant proportion of this during the reporting period was as a result of a major refurbishment of our hospice in the Black Country. In a



normal year, the total carbon footprint of our hospices would likely be similar to that of our shops.

As part of our long-term commitments to reach net zero; **by 2030 we want to achieve 100% renewable electricity across Acorns** and achieve a 42% reduction in scope 1 and 2 emissions, stretching to 90% by 2050. We'll study our impact and set ambitious targets reduce scope 3 emissions for waste, water and business travel and improve energy efficiency across all our sites.

Shaping a Better World

This plan has been formed thanks to involvement from individuals and teams from across Acorns and through the expertise of sustainability consultancy, Bioregional. As a result, Acorns now has a true understanding of our environmental impact, and a roadmap to where we know we can make the biggest difference.

Together, we'll deliver the vital care children and families need, and through that – shape a better world, for generations to come.



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