

Title: Ethics and Environment Policy

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Contents

Aims and Objectives:

This policy intends to clarify and express our organisation's stance on ethical and environmental aspects of our business, and to commit us to high standards on these issues.

Scope

This policy applies to Tameside Oldham and Glossop Mind, and any subsidiary social enterprises (i.e. Topaz Café and similar). Paid workers and volunteers are expected to adhere to the content below.

The Policy

Ethics

Fair to our staff

Paying a living wage and providing proper entitlements and benefits

All employees will be paid a living wage. The level of the minimum employee wage will be as good or better than the outside-London rate suggested by the Living Wage Foundation.

All employees will receive, at minimum, their legal entitlements to holiday, sick leave, parental leave and other benefits. Unless finances make this impossible, Tameside Oldham and Glossop Mind will aim to provide entitlements superior to the legally required minimums.



Work-life balance and flexibility

Tameside Oldham and Glossop Mind expects employees to work their contracted hours – no more, and no less. Working unpaid overtime is strongly discouraged (this does not prevent employees from also volunteering for the organisation if they wish to do so).

Employees will accrue TOIL (time owed in lieu) when they work extra hours, which they can use to start late, leave early, or take days off as they wish and in a way that fits with their work commitments. No more than 15 hours of TOIL may be accrued in any calendar month. Time owed above that will be cancelled.

Employees have the right to request flexible working (changing or reducing their working hours). This will be accommodated as far as is reasonably possible. Tameside Oldham and Glossop Mind is supportive of part-time work and flexible working arrangements.

Treating staff as respected professionals

Employees will be treated as respected professionals; not as cogs in a machine. Tameside Oldham and Glossop Mind will make every effort to include and communicate with all members of staff as fully as possible, and information will not be withheld unless there is good reason to do so.

Employees will have regular (at least monthly) supervision meetings, as an opportunity to discuss any areas of concern and resolve issues with the support of their manager.

Fair to our volunteers

Covering all expenses and costs

Tameside Oldham and Glossop Mind will encourage all volunteers to re-claim any agreed expenses they incur through their volunteering activities, and will provide processes for doing this that are as simple as possible.

Working to ensure volunteers get out of it what they want to get out of it

Tameside Oldham and Glossop Mind wants volunteers to benefit from their volunteering experience, so provides a range of support, training and informal development opportunities. Volunteers are encouraged to be assertive in making clear what they hope to get out of their volunteering, and Tameside Oldham and Glossop Mind will accommodate this as far as reasonably practicable. Tameside Oldham and Glossop Mind will provide a reference for volunteers upon request, providing the request is within two years of termination of volunteering.

Being flexible

Tameside Oldham and Glossop Mind recognises that volunteers often have conflicting demands on their time, and is responsive to requests to adapt or suspend volunteering

activities. Volunteers can take up to a 3 month break from volunteering without the need to reapply.

Treating volunteers as respected professionals

Volunteers will be treated as respected professionals and valued as equally as paid workers. Tameside Oldham and Glossop Mind will make every effort to include and communicate with volunteers as fully as possible, and information will not be withheld unless there is good reason to do so.

Fair to the public that come to us

Providing excellent services, adapting to what works best for people

Tameside Oldham and Glossop Mind will endeavour to provide the services that are of greatest benefit to local people, within the remit of our funding and contractual requirements. Tameside Oldham and Glossop Mind will adapt services over time to find the best fit with the needs and preferences of local people, as far as we can gauge this.

Making services as accessible as possible

Tameside Oldham and Glossop Mind will make all its services as accessible as reasonably practicable. This includes not charging prohibitive amounts for services, providing services at venues that are easy to reach and are as accessible as reasonably practicable for people with disabilities, and providing easy-to-read and easy-to-access information about our services to allow people to make an informed choice.

Treating people as respected independent individuals

Tameside Oldham and Glossop Mind will treat all persons using our services as respected individuals. This entails respecting their independence, choices and privacy, consulting with the person directly (and not with their family members or support workers without their permission), representing our services honestly to the public, and not withholding information without good reason.

Fair to our funders

Doing what we say we'll do

Tameside Oldham and Glossop Mind will make every effort to honour its commitments to all funders.

Tameside Oldham and Glossop Mind will not knowingly misrepresent what we do for the purposes of accessing funding.

Being good value for money

Tameside Oldham and Glossop Mind will always seek to keep costs to a minimum (within the boundaries of this policy and other policy commitments), and will not spend money extravagantly.

Fair to our suppliers

Paying fair prices for bought-in products and services

Tameside Oldham and Glossop Mind will endeavour to always pay fair prices to all our suppliers of goods and services, and will not put pressure on suppliers to reduce costs below what would provide them with a living wage.

Tameside Oldham and Glossop Mind will always buy Fairtrade goods when this option exists.

Fair to the rest of society

Supporting local businesses

Tameside Oldham and Glossop Mind is committed to buying locally-produced goods and services from small local businesses. This is to support the local economy and attempt to redress the disadvantage that small businesses often experience relative to larger and more powerful ones, and the importance of local small businesses in providing decent jobs for local people. This will be balanced against our other ethical and environmental commitments regarding sourcing.

Helping other good things to happen

Tameside Oldham and Glossop Mind is happy to, where practicable, ‘allow the fruit of our tree to fall in other people’s gardens’. Where side-benefits from our work can be created, we will encourage this. We will endeavour to provide the greatest possible benefits to the local community and wider society, even where these benefits cannot necessarily be counted by and credited to ourselves.

Avoiding causing negative impacts where possible

Tameside Oldham and Glossop Mind will, as far as possible, avoid knowingly causing negative impacts in society. We will not actively seek to outcompete other organisations where there is a viable option of collaborating or co-existing.

Tameside Oldham and Glossop Mind will not seek to grow as an organisation simply for the sake of growth, and will not compromise its ethics for the sake of expansion. Should there come a time where our only options are a serious compromise of our ethics or the dissolution of our organisation, we will choose the latter.

Environment



Energy use in our buildings (gas and electricity)

Heating and cooling

Workers will heat the building no more than necessary, aiming to maintain a temperature of 19 – 20 degrees. Heating is our biggest single use of energy on our premises.

Workers will limit use of air conditioners and free-standing heaters to the absolute minimum, preferring to open/close windows, put on/take off layers of clothing before using them.

Tameside Oldham and Glossop Mind will take proactive steps to improve the energy conservation ability of any building that it expects to be using for three years or longer, and the efficiency of any heating or cooling system within it, to the highest standards that can be afforded within generous but realistic budget constraints.

Lighting

Tameside Oldham and Glossop Mind will use the minimum lighting necessary. This includes not lighting spaces so that they can be seen by the public out of hours as a form of publicity (i.e. shop window lighting). It also includes turning off lights in areas not in constant use, even where this requires more switching on and off by occasional users of the space (e.g. toilets). Tameside Oldham and Glossop Mind will explore options for motion-activated lighting for such spaces.

Tameside Oldham and Glossop Mind will use the most efficient forms of lighting available, with only minimal exception made to allow lighting to be more visually appealing – energy efficient forms of visually appealing lighting will instead be sought.

Workers will turn lights off if a space is not in use, or is adequately lit with daylight.

Use of kitchen appliances

Topaz Café will only switch on appliances as needed, and not leave them running for the purposes of convenience, unless they are expected to be in use again shortly and take a lot of time or energy to become ready (e.g. a deep fat fryer). Appliances will not be left on overnight unless absolutely necessary (e.g. fridges).

Topaz Café will work to keep their need for fridges and freezers to a minimum, recognising that these are very high users of electricity. This means not buying foods in bulk where these will require refrigeration or freezing for long periods of time, and preserving harvested foods (i.e. from the allotment) in other ways where possible (e.g.. bottling rather than freezing tomatoes). All fridges and freezers will be routinely serviced to maintain their efficiency. If the purchase of extra fridges or freezers is being

considered, it will always first be thoroughly considered whether there is the potential to instead reduce the amount of fridge or freezer space needed. Warm or hot foods will not be put in fridges or freezers until they have fully cooled down.

Topaz Café will heat only as much of an item as is needed. This means only heating the portion needed from a batch of food, rather than heating the whole batch (of soup, for instance), and not heating large containers of water when a smaller amount is needed.

Use of office appliances

All equipment should be turned off at the main power switch, rather than left on standby, after each use – not just at the end of the day. This includes the photocopier, shredder, PCs, monitors, fax machine, and secondary printers. It does not include the main printer, which is in use frequently during the day, or the franking machine and server, which have to be left on at all times.

If new electrical equipment is being purchased/hired, a no-power option will first be considered. Failing that, the person choosing it will always proactively seek equipment that is the most energy efficient of its kind, and which has obvious and easy-to-reach on/off switches that completely cut power to the appliance (rather than put it on standby).

All equipment will be regularly serviced where this will improve its efficiency or reduce environmental impact.

Tameside Oldham and Glossop Mind will only use powered appliances where there is no non-powered option available.

Use of other building appliances

All other power-using equipment in the building will be turned off when not in use. This includes the water boiler in the brew room, which should be switched off by the cleaning staff at the end of each working day, or by the office staff on any day that cleaning staff will not be coming in.

Energy and other impacts embodied in the supplies that we use

Kitchen supplies

Topaz Café and any other food activities run by Tameside Oldham and Glossop Mind will continue to be either meat-free or a mixed menu containing an equal proportion or majority of vegetarian options, in recognition of the vast strain placed on the planet's land and resources by the livestock industry. Any meat or poultry used will be locally free range and locally reared.

Topaz Café and any other food activities run by Tameside Oldham and Glossop Mind will continue to use some dairy products, but – in recognition of the vast strain also placed on the planet by the dairy industry – the use of these will be minimised where possible, and

vegan alternatives will be preferred to ones that use dairy. This need will be balanced with the need for our food to be accessible to people that are new to meat-free and dairy-free diets. We will only use free range eggs.

Produce from our own local, organic allotments and gardens will be used in the café to the greatest possible extent, reducing as much as possible our needs from other sources. It will continue to be transported from the allotment to the café using the most energy-efficient means possible, currently an electric bike with trailer, so as not to erode the environmental benefits by using a car to transport small loads (which is very inefficient).

We will truly endeavour to use organic ingredients whenever we can, unless no organic option is available and it is highly necessary to use the product in question. This is because considerably less energy is used in the production of these compared to non-organic equivalents. Products do not have to be from organically-certified sources however, as long as we have good reason to believe the sources use low-impact or close-to-organic methods.

Local products will always be preferred to those that have travelled a long way, unless there are other reasons to consider distant products more environmentally-friendly or ethically-sound. Tameside Oldham and Glossop Mind will consider the energy used in full production cycle of the product rather than just where the end product is made (for instance, cheese from local cows fed on Brazilian soya is worse than cheese from Scottish cows fed on local grass and fodder). We will also consider the energy that is used in getting the product to our premises (as a vehicle driving 20 miles just to bring us a small delivery may be worse than buying a less local product that has been transported in bulk).

Topaz Café and any other food activities run by Tameside Oldham and Glossop Mind will not use anything disposable except where there is no repeat-use alternative or the alternative is higher-impact. When disposable items do need to be used, biodegradable items and packaging will always be chosen where available.

Office and building supplies

Tameside Oldham and Glossop Mind aims to minimise the quantity of all products being brought on to the premises. This is because all products take energy to produce – sometimes surprisingly large amounts – and to transport, and then require storage space when here (we want to avoid the need to acquire – and then heat and light – extra space just for storing stuff). No product should be bought unless it is definitely needed and there is no workaround that could be used to remove the need for it.

Preferring second-hand, recycled, and more sustainable goods

Tameside Oldham and Glossop Mind will always attempt to find items second-hand before buying new items, as this reduces the waste stream and does not create a demand for more production.

Tameside Oldham and Glossop Mind will buy recycled, locally-produced and/or sustainably produced items wherever possible, and will proactively seek these out and request them from suppliers.

Paper and ink

Use of paper and printing ink will be kept to a minimum. Documents should only be printed when:

- a) They are to be given to another person (i.e. an info sheet, feedback form, letter, etc)
- b) You need to use them when away from a computer (i.e. a map, kitchen stock list, etc)
- c) You will be reading the document for more than 20 minutes at a time, and doing so on a computer screen would be too tiring for your eyes.
- d) There is a genuine need to annotate the document and this can't be done on the computer or be substituted by making notes in a notebook rather than on the document itself.

When printing multiple copies of documents, workers should print the minimum number needed. If the documents are for use in a group meeting, documents can be shared between a few people.

Printing should always be double-sided and, where possible, multiple pages per side unless there is a clear reason not to do it this way. Documents that spill over so that the last page has just a few lines on it should be amended so that it fits onto fewer pages without leaving lots of wasted space. Always consider specifying the pages you want to print off and not necessarily the whole document.

Use of outside printing (i.e. for flyers, leaflets, etc)

Attempts should be made to realistically estimate how many printed items are really needed, especially for one-off events where the item will soon be obsolete.

Choice of supplies

Tameside Oldham and Glossop Mind will use environmentally preferable paper, print cartridges, stationery, cleaning products, bathroom supplies, paints, and other products where this option exists.

Garden supplies

Tameside Oldham and Glossop Mind's allotments and gardens will use organic production methods. This includes not using chemical fertilisers or pesticides, avoiding composts containing peat, and actively encouraging wildlife and a sound outdoor environment. Wherever possible, materials used will be reclaimed, recycled, local or otherwise sustainably sourced. Care will always be taken to buy the minimum necessary new

goods. Goods will be purchased from suppliers that share these values and operate in a similar way, such as Hulme Community Garden Centre and good online suppliers.

Energy use through work-related travel

Reducing the need to travel

Workers will be allowed and encouraged to work from home or from a location they are already at, if they have tasks to do that are suitable for that location, and they have fulfilled other location-based needs (i.e. they still come into their usual work premises often enough to stay in touch with other staff, help with communal tasks, etc).

Workers will be encouraged to use phone calls, emails, teleconferencing and videoconferencing as an alternative to travelling to another location for a meeting, where this would not substantially detract from the effectiveness of the meeting.

Workers will make every effort to combine appointments at close-together locations so that they take place one after the other on the same day, thereby halving the amount of journeys needed.

Travelling as part of work

Use of cars, vans and taxis for work purposes should be kept to an absolute minimum, and all staff and volunteers will be encouraged to use methods other than driving wherever possible. This means using public transport, our electric bike, workers' own bikes, or going on foot in all circumstances unless visiting a location that is inaccessible by these means. All mileage expenses claims must be accompanied by a reason why the journey could not be made by other means. This may mean that more time is spent travelling than would be the case when making a car journey – this is accepted by Tameside Oldham and Glossop Mind as a valid use of work time to conform to our commitments as a social enterprise. The longer journey and any work done while on the bus or train can be counted as part of working hours.

Vehicles owned or operated by Tameside Oldham and Glossop Mind

In recognition of the fact that any vehicle, once available, is a temptation to use it rather than lower-energy transport options, Tameside Oldham and Glossop Mind will only purchase or operate its own vehicles when absolutely necessary.

Any vehicles will be chosen with energy efficiency as a priority consideration, and will therefore be the smallest and/or most efficient vehicle suitable for that purpose.

Any vehicles purchased or operated by Tameside Oldham and Glossop Mind will be chosen or modified so as to minimise the use of fossil fuels and the production of greenhouse gases. Electric vehicles that can be powered using renewable electricity, or vehicles powered with waste vegetable oils (NOT biofuels produced solely for fuel purposes), will be chosen in all instances except where this proves impracticable.

Commuting to and from work

To minimise commuting distances, efforts will be made to enable staff to work sometimes, often or always at the Tameside Oldham and Glossop Mind premises closest to their home, when they have tasks to do that are suitable for that location.

Commuting to work on foot, by bike, and by public transport is encouraged by Tameside Oldham and Glossop Mind, and car sharing is encouraged whether other options are unfeasible. Any work done while on the bus or train can be counted as part of working hours. No designated free parking space will be provided for staff cars at Tameside Oldham and Glossop Mind premises, so as not to subsidise and thereby encourage the use of cars for commuting.

Energy supply to our organisation

Procurement of electricity

Tameside Oldham and Glossop Mind will continue to source all electricity from the supplier that uses the greatest available proportion of environmentally-friendly and ethically-sound renewable sources in its power mix. Consideration will be given to the validity of claims by energy companies to be ethical and environmentally-friendly (for instance, electricity sourced from large-scale dam projects will not be considered environmentally friendly, due to the vast amounts of non-carbon greenhouse gases produced by such projects, nor will the use of biofuels for electricity generation be considered ethically-sound. Companies' claims will always be investigated by reference to third parties).

Procurement of gas

Tameside Oldham and Glossop Mind will continue to source all gas from the supplier that uses the greatest available proportion of environmentally-friendly and ethically-sound renewable sources in its power mix (for instance, preference will be given to gas-from-landfill schemes, and damaging gas production schemes such as shale gas/fracking will be avoided).

Procurement of other fuel (i.e. for vehicles, for use on outdoor sites, etc)

See 'Vehicles owned or operated by Tameside Oldham and Glossop Mind' under 'Energy use through work-related travel'.

Any fuel needs at outdoor sites such as the allotment will be covered by renewable sources to the greatest possible extent. This includes using wood-fired stoves rather than portable gas stoves, and using electric generators only where every other option has been exhausted. Renewable fuel will be sourced firstly from the waste stream, and secondarily from local supplies wherever possible (e.g. wood from on site hedges and trees, donated scrap wood, local coppice workers off-cuts).

Use of water and embodied water

In our buildings

Tameside Oldham and Glossop Mind will seek to keep water use to a minimum, including by taking active steps to reduce water use by installing water-efficient appliances such as 'hippo bags' in toilet cisterns.

Workers will minimise water use, by not leaving taps running or otherwise wasting water. Repairs to water dripping etc will be made promptly.

In our gardens

Workers will create water collection facilities at garden sites and will insist upon the use of collected water, only resorting to tap water when collected water has run out or is unsuitable (i.e. for hand washing).

Plants will be watered only as much as necessary (lots occasionally rather than little and often), encouraging the growth of deeper, more resilient root systems. Soil will be improved to retain water.

The waste we produce

Tameside Oldham and Glossop Mind will reduce, reuse and recycle to the greatest possible extent.

Workers will dispose of the following materials in the relevant recycling bin:

- Paper and cardboard (Ashton – bin between office and waiting room)
- Glass, plastic bottles and tin cans (Ashton – bin at top of stair lift stairs)
- Biodegradable kitchen waste (Ashton - brown bin outside the back kitchen door)

Unwanted furniture and other re-saleable items will be taken to a nearby charity shop.

All plant waste, food waste, and paper and card will be composted at the allotment or gardens, or burned as cooking fuel. Glass, plastic bottles and tin cans will be taken to a recycling facility when possible (but car trips to the allotment solely for this purpose would be counter-productive).

The space we take up

Much of the UK's land space is now covered by buildings, roads and other non-wildlife-friendly development, greatly reducing sources of habitat and food for other species. Wherever possible, Tameside Oldham and Glossop Mind will create green roofs and other wildlife habitats and food sources on and around its buildings.

The Procedures

How this policy will be put into action and monitored

Ongoing improvement to this policy

All workers are encouraged to bring further ideas to improve our ethics and reduce our impact on the environment. Suggestions can be made at team meetings, by internal email, or to a supervisor or manager, and will always be given full consideration.

Acting on our policy commitments

Accompanying this policy is the Ethics and Environment Targets and Action Plan. This document records the targets and plans we have set for ourselves.

The Targets and Action Plan will be reviewed at a team meeting every three months. It will be the responsibility of the Social Enterprise manager (Horticulture) to make this an agenda item, and to monitor progress against any related actions. This document will also be an input to the Annual Report, to be reviewed at the AGM.

Communicating responsibilities to staff

Responsibilities of Tameside Oldham and Glossop Mind

Where this policy states that a measure is the responsibility of Tameside Oldham and Glossop Mind, this responsibility sits first with the Executive Committee, delegated to the Chief Exec, who may then delegate aspects of this to appropriate workers.

Existing staff and volunteers

Staff and volunteers will be provided with a summary document outlining their responsibilities under this policy. All workers are welcome to discuss and query these responsibilities and propose alterations to the policy.

An ethics and environment display board will be created within the Tameside well-being centre (and potentially other spaces we use) to describe our progress on related matters, and to engage the team to support this policy and to propose ongoing improvements.

Questions about our performance in this area will be included in any annual staff and/or volunteer surveys conducted.

New staff and volunteers

All new staff and volunteers will be made aware of this policy at their induction and will be actively encouraged to follow our ethical and environmental guidelines, as applicable to their role. They will be provided with a short document outlining their personal responsibilities in their role.