

Waterplus

Taking responsibility report 2022

for the environment, supporting
our communities and the
impacts we have



At Water Plus, we care about the environment and the community we work in, and we want to protect and enhance it. Taking responsibility for our social impact is also important to us – and we're supporting the UK's push to Net Zero.

Our sustainability steps

Through our work with customers to increase water efficiency, to steps we're taking at our business, we've stepped up what we're doing to limit the impact we can all have on the environment.

From taps to trees – we're taking action for the environment and helping communities.

We've been doing more for the environment since 2020, supporting hundreds of UK trees to flourish, capture carbon, support biodiversity - and help manage surface water.

Our work in the last year, has also included supporting the restoration of peatland, helping the UK towards its Net Zero target and preventing the release of 400 tonnes of carbon emissions, verified under the Peatland Code.

Our actions were recognised with a Green Apple Environment Award in 2021 and we're shortlisted for sustainability awards in 2022, including the Better Society Awards' Environment Award, as we increase awareness around water use by organisations - and encourage others to do more for planet earth.

This report, the first we've published, highlights our aims around Net Zero, and our plan and actions towards Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions goals.

We know achieving the Net Zero ambition is about teamwork with others outside our business. So, we'll be encouraging those we work with, including our suppliers and those who provide services, to take greater action to help the environment too.

We have a focus to do more – and we'll publish a report each year with an update on our progress and the actions we're taking.

Connecting with communities

The report content also covers some of our wider work with communities we – and all our colleagues at Water Plus - get involved with, including a Volunteering Day they can choose to do each year. We cover what we've set out to do and how we're delivering against this.

We're proud of what we've started to do and we hope the content of this report inspires and encourages others, including organisations, to take more steps to help the environment and communities we all work in.



Andy Hughes
Chief Executive

Action for 2022

Establish additional carbon impact data and work to close data gaps, by encouraging updates each year from supply chain.

Funding 500 more trees.
Supporting 3 renewable energy projects preventing CO2 emissions through Carbon Footprint.

Cycle to work scheme introduced.

Engaging with our partners to encourage more action and decarbonisation.



2022

Action for 2023

Reduce carbon by 45% across direct operation.

Supporting renewable projects preventing CO2 emissions.

Suppliers and customers: Continue engagement and sustainable procurement approach, encouraging annual reporting on carbon linked to what we're supplied.



2023

Action for 2024

Reduce carbon by 30% across direct operation.

Suppliers and customers: Continue engagement and sustainable procurement approach, encouraging annual reporting on carbon linked to what we're supplied.



2024

Goal 1

Achieve Net Zero across our operation (by end of 2025) for Scope 1 and Scope 2.

Goal 2

Explore power from 100% renewables.

Goal 3

Continually reduce impact from staff travel and support alternative modes of transport.

Goal 4

Wholesalers have committed to Net Zero by 2030, under water industry approach (Water UK) and 2040 for Scottish Water.



Electric car scheme to reduce impacts on the environment from staff travel and encourage more sustainable transport use.

Certified 100% renewable electricity at our main office. Exploring gas reduction with landlords.

We'll reduce water use by 60% in our main office.

Encourage sustainable transport use and electric vehicle use.

E-vehicle charging at main office.

Employee engagement to reduce impacts we can all have at work and outside work.

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Travel booking system calculates carbon impact.

Our ambition on Net Zero and the actions we're taking also align with the UN SDGs including: SDG 6, which is all about clean water, including water efficiency and protecting it for the future; Goal 14 Life Below Water, along with Goal 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities, Goal 15 Life on Land and Goal 13 Climate Action. See our section on what we're doing with communities, later in this report, for details on the other SDGs we're supporting.

2021 highlights



Transport

Move to new offices with electric car charging. Travel policy updated to help lower environment impacts.



Environmental and Sustainability Forum

Established, with representatives from across our business to help drive action and track against our plan and ambition.



450 data loggers

installed on water meters for organisations to increase tracking around water use for budgeting and risk reduction to operations.



2,023 square metres of new native woodland

Created with The National Trust, to increase biodiversity and, to help manage surface water that can cause flooding. We also launched a new partnership with the charity Trees for Cities - to plant hundreds more trees.



Award winners

For our work with organisations and how we're raising awareness around water efficiency and how it can help the environment.

80%

of employees think more about the impact their actions have on the environment

and do more to reduce the effect they have, after information in the News and that Water Plus shared about the environment.

Additional 2021 highlights

Along with the milestones already mentioned, we:

Moved to new offices in May 2021 where we replaced and updated the boilers to increase efficiency. We gave all colleagues reusable cups with lids and there's a discount for hot drinks at our on-site café, when staff use a reusable cup.

#BeWiseOnWater awareness campaign launched increase action and attention around water in organisations of all sizes, and our employees.

Increased water efficiency amongst organisations, including a Scout group in Stoke-on-Trent who have installed flush-savers and a water butt to reduce mains water use.

Our EcoVadis Sustainability rating increased to Silver, after action we started in 2021, putting us in the top 30% of organisations globally for our approach.

"Small steps with the water you use can make a big difference and save money too!"

Martin Welsh, Assistant Scout leader and chair, 105th Stoke-on-Trent and 15th Stoke-on-Trent Guides management committee

2022 highlights so far

NET
ZERO

March 2022: Launched our ambition on Net Zero and our Cleaner Climate Promise.



Renewable energy projects supported - including hydropower, solar panel farms and the reduction in methane and carbon dioxide emissions at a wastewater treatment plant in Europe, preventing 500 tonnes of carbon emissions



100% of electricity powered by renewables, at main office in Staffordshire.



50 fruit trees planted for communities in Stoke-on-Trent. Started in November 2021 and continues in 2022 (not for carbon offset). Trees also planted at a Glasgow primary school and one in Cumbria.



Initiative to reintroduce 540 native oysters in UK coastal waters launched and working with school pupils and a marine scientist to explore innovative ways we all interact with and use water and natural resources.



Employee electric car, e-bike and cycle to work scheme launching.



Water use reduced by 60% at offices.



Shortlisted for Water Efficiency Project of the Year in the Water Industry Awards 2022, for our work including the #BeWiseOnWater campaign.



Supporting 2022 sustainability award to help drive action for the planet. This is the Sustainable Packaging Award at the Food and Drink Federation Awards 2022, as part of encouraging further progress around lowering impacts on natural resources, including water.

Tracking impacts:

Emissions linked to our organisation and action taken

Scope emissions			Carbon Dioxide			Kilowatt hours			Action taken
			Tonnes	per £1m of revenue	per employee	kWh	per £1m of revenue	per employee	
Scope 1	Emissions from gas used at office site		Due to office move in Staffordshire taking place in May 2021, 2022 is a year for gaining more data around any gas use. Our Scotland office has no gas use.						We continue to explore with our landlord options around reducing gas used at office site.
Scope 2	Emissions from electricity purchase	2021	74	0.10	0.14	322,179	445.87	616	100% certified renewable electricity confirmed through site owners at new office location in Staffordshire.
		2022	182	0.24	0.35	858,212	1,142.98	1,647	
Scope 3	Emissions from fuel combustion from staff work travel mileage claims	2020	105	0.12	0.19	400,257	470.00	707	Electric Vehicle initiative launched 2022 to encourage greener transport options by employees. Communications started to increase uptake and engage employees.
		2021	6	0.01	0.01	22,763	31.50	44	
		2022	7	0.01	0.01	25,791	34.35	50	
	Water wholesalers	2021	79,975.73 tonnes of CO2e (assuming 95% Return to Sewer on the 196,307,641 water volume supplied Jan 2021 to Dec 2021)						Water wholesalers are working towards targets they have announced around Net Zero.
	Employee travel to and from work		Greener transport options launching in 2022 including Cycle to Work and Electric Vehicle initiatives to encourage more sustainable transport by employees.						Cycle to Work initiative launched June 2022. Data being gathered around staff travel modes and distances as part of greener transport initiatives.

We continue to encourage suppliers we work with to take action to reduce impacts on the environment.

Notes on data: Relevant UK energy use includes electricity usage for our England and Scotland offices. In addition, car fuel usage has been calculated from mileage expenses paid, multiplied by the average Conversion Factor for the fuel used. Tonnes of CO2 were converted into kWh using government Conversion Factors for 2020 and Conversion Factors 2021, where relevant.

Business travel, where staff travel during work as part of their roles, comes under Scope 3 emissions, under the Greenhouse Gas Protocols, as Water Plus do not own a fleet of vehicles. Our baseline year for car mileage and emissions during work travel is 2019/2020. Employee commuting to work also comes under Scope 3.

Data for use of electricity for the company offices was prepared using estimates of kWh per square foot, converted into CO2 using government Conversion Factors. **Data on office site emissions is dependent on what information is provided, as we rent our offices in Glasgow and Staffordshire. 2022 is a data gathering year to help track progress.**

Water Plus works to cut down on water waste amongst organisations each year. From 1 January 2021 to 26 May 2022, estimated water loss totalling 1,333,399.46 m3 (around a billion litres of water) at an approximate cost of £4m – has now been stopped due to Water Plus engagement with organisations (statistic based on actual water meter readings for water loss). There are 1,000 litres in a cubic metre of water. Estimate based on water loss running for 12 months.

Note: Achieving decarbonisation and Net Zero, which would include Scope 3, is reliant each year on regular data provision on carbon impacts on products and services provided through supply chain to Water Plus along with the various targets committed to and announced by suppliers.

See also Water Plus published Group Accounts.

Supporting our communities

We're passionate about our local community and want to make a difference to deprived families and support young people and the unemployed into work.

Caring for people needing additional help, by cheering on charities

Throughout each year, Water Plus and its employees fundraise for a range of national charities, while supporting local communities.

Over the last year we've raised funds for a number of charities, with our main focus on North Staffs Mind, our Charity of the Year, chosen by our employees.

In May 2022, fifteen colleagues grabbed rollers and paint in a makeover challenge for three rooms, North Staffs Mind uses for counselling services in their Stoke-on-Trent offices.

It was our first Volunteers Day of 2022, that colleagues can choose to do each year. It also highlighted mental health and wellbeing – and the resources available to support Water Plus

In September and October 2021, Water Plus colleagues also stepped, swam and cycled to support North Staffs Mind to boost money for the charity and raise awareness around the benefits of mindfulness and moving more.

So far, we've raised more than £1,500 for North Staffs Mind.

Supporting early and future careers

As a leading Staffordshire employer, we joined a Careers Hub in 2022, working with Christ Church Academy.

Since May 2022, pupils have had monthly visits to Water Plus to learn about job role, learning, qualifications and other elements of office working life. Workshops with pupils, led by Water Plus staff, are taking place at the Academy throughout 2022.

We've also shared advice on water efficiency with the Academy to help reduce their water costs and to help pupils to learn more about the natural environment.

Highlights

40%

increase in people on apprenticeships (Feb 2021 to Feb 2022). We're doubling the number of Innovation and Technology apprentices in 2022.

65kg

of pasta, tins of vegetables and other foods handed to Stoke-on-Trent Foodbank in March 2022 to create 3 day food packs of 3 nutritionally balanced meals a day.

70+

Christmas presents delivered for children and families at the Gingerbread Centre.

1000

Stoke-on-Trent families in need helped with meals in 2021, following donations from colleagues and after staff voted that money that would have been spent on the Christmas party was given to the charity instead.



Our commitment to communities – and what's ahead

Our CSR activities align closely with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Key ones include Goal 3 - Good Health & Wellbeing, Goal 4 - Quality Education, Goal 5 - Gender Equality, Goal 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth, Goal 10 - Reduced Inequalities, Goal 11 – Sustainable Cities & Communities and Goal 12 - Responsible Consumption and Production.

We have 18 commitments, which also cover reducing the environmental impact we can all have – and the action we're taking on these commitments is included in this Taking Responsibility report.

Supporting our colleagues

We want all our colleagues to enjoy life at work with the flexibility to manage their home, family, and hobbies.

Everyone gets a Birthday day off each year, on us – as well as 25 days' holiday, plus bank holidays. We also provide flexible working arrangements.

We believe health and wellbeing isn't just a nice to have – it's a must have. So, we provide:

- Health Plan and substantial pay if you do become unwell – which grows with your time here.
- Employee Assistance Programme to access 24/7 with support, advice and extra information.
- Free access to fitness training and personal development and wellbeing tools.
- Save when our employees spend with discounts and money back on everyday purchases - plus freebies, including coffee and food items.

Recognition for our work with employees and others

Quality & Customer Experience Forum  Team of the Year Winner 2022



In April 2022, our people development won Quality Team of the Year in the Quality, Knowledge Management & Learning category of the Quality and Customer Experience Forum 2022 Awards.

We were also shortlisted in 2022 for five Better Society Awards for our approach with employees, including the Supportive Employer Award, the Communication and Education Award and the Environment Award. We were also finalists for the Skills and Workforce Initiative of the Year and Water Efficiency Project of the Year, in the Water Industry Awards 2022.

Our approach is also about keeping colleagues connected


We have regular events, quizzes and get togethers so colleagues can connect and get to know each other more.









We are committed to developing our people and provide a range of different learning resources and development opportunities. Plus, we recognise our star performers each month, every quarter - and each year too.

On top of all of this, in October 2021 we received accreditation for one of our training programmes, so our customer service teams now receive a National Qualification in Customer Service. The training is accredited by best practice leaders, The Institute of Customer Service.

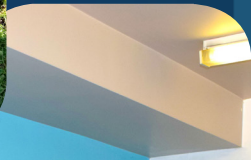


Tracking progress against our commitments to the community

 = the commitment is live, or just launched

Environmental		Status
Minimising our impact on the environment	1 Working towards Net Zero (developing a road map and decarbonisation strategy) for our business.	
	2 Promote the use of electric vehicles and greener transport with suppliers and our colleagues including providing a salary sacrifice schemes for cars and bikes.	
	3 Raise awareness of the carbon impact on water and increase water efficiency at Water Plus, and with our customers.	In progress
	4 Continue to work with suppliers to reduce their impact on the environment.	
	5 Reduce single use plastics within our business.	In progress
	6 Reduce waste and adopt zero waste to landfill.	In progress - Our offices are zero to landfill
Social and community		Status
Supporting our local community and helping young people and unemployed into work	1 Eliminate the gender pay gap and increase Diversity & Inclusion in Water Plus and our supply chain.	In progress
	2 Pay the real living wage to our colleagues.	
	3 Promote health and wellbeing for colleagues.	
	4 Provide colleagues with a minimum of one hour a month for learning and development.	
	5 Provide colleagues with the opportunity to volunteer for up to one day per year for our centrally coordinated Water Plus activities.	In progress
	6 Support unemployed and young people into work.	In progress
Business ethics		Status
Process for decision making, reporting and ethical behaviour	1 Eliminate the risk of modern-day slavery from our business and supply chain.	In progress
	2 Mitigate the risk of unconscious bias in our recruitment processes.	In progress
	3 Eliminate discrimination on any grounds and promote equality of opportunity in the supply chain.	In progress
	4 Adhere to regulatory and ethical commitments within our decisions and actions.	
	5 Continued transparency in our tax arrangements and dealings.	
	6 Introduce procurement practices that promote sustainability and ethical purchasing decisions.	In progress

"Thank you for reading our report.
See water-plus.co.uk and #WaterPlusUK on our social
channels for updates on what we're doing throughout
each year to help reduce impacts on the environment
and to support communities."



Waterplus

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