



Ecological & Carbon Footprint

Most things we do in everyday life impact to some degree on our environment and our whole planet. Together we need to address some of the more harmful actions in order to tackle climate change and live less damaging, more sustainable lifestyles. Here in York, we should aim to reduce our impact on the environment whilst maintaining York's special qualities and enabling our city to grow and thrive.

One way to reduce your impact as a individual here in York is by measuring your ecological footprint. This is a way of measuring the impact your lifestyle has on the Earth's resources.

The ecological footprint is a tool that works out the amount of land that you need to provide a population with all their resources and to absorb all their waste. This can be compared with the capacity of the earth to provide natural resources and to deal with the waste and pollution created. Find out more and calculate your ecological footprint at <http://footprint.wwf.org.uk> or <http://www.myfootprint.org>.

Associated to the ecological footprint is the carbon footprint. The Carbon Footprint specifically measures the total amount of carbon dioxide everyone of us creates through our lifestyle choices and through the products and activities we consume and carryout daily. Its also applies to businesses and organisations.

Find out more about carbon footprinting and calculate your own carbon footprint at <http://carboncalculator.direct.gov.uk/index.html>.

Why not also take action today and think about carrying out some or all of these easy ways to reduce your carbon footprint.

Warmer Homes	
1.	Turn your thermostat down. Reducing your room temperature by 1°C could cut your heating bills by about 10% and typically saves around £55 per year.
2.	Think about insulating your loft. The recommended depth of loft insulation is 270mm, which when installed in a dwelling with no insulation can save around £150 on heating bills a year.
3.	Prevent draughts. Use a tube of sealant to fill gaps and cracks around floors, windows and skirting boards.
4.	Install energy efficient lighting. Energy saving light bulbs use up to 80% less electricity than traditional bulbs. By fitting all the lights in your house with energy saving light bulbs you could save up to £590 over the lifetime of the bulbs.
Buying Better	
5.	Dry your clothes outside. You could save on average £15 a year on your electricity bill and 65kg of CO ₂ by drying clothes outside on a line instead of using a tumble drier.
6.	Don't leave appliances and gadgets on standby. Not leaving products on standby could save you around £33 per year.
7.	Only boil as much water as you need. If everyone boiled only the water they needed every time they used the kettle enough electricity would be saved to run the UK's street lighting for nearly 7 months.
8.	Look for the Energy Saving Recommended Products logo when purchasing new appliances, e.g. washing machines, dishwashers. Doing so will ensure you are buying an appliance which has been stringently assessed for its energy saving performance.
Smarter Driving	
9.	Do you need to drive at all? If you do consider alternative modes of transport such as walking, cycling or public transport.
10.	Drive smoothly and read the road. Anticipate road conditions as far ahead as possible to avoid unnecessary acceleration and braking.
11.	Check your tyre pressure once a week. Under inflated tyres are dangerous and increase fuel consumption.
12.	Switch it off. Modern cars use virtually no extra fuel when they're started, so if you're stuck in a traffic jam for more than a minute switch off your engine.

For more information on how to reduce your carbon footprint visit the Act on CO₂ (<http://actonco2.direct.gov.uk/actonco2/home.html>) or the Energy Saving Trust (<http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/>) websites.

Business

Reducing your carbon footprint is not just for individuals and householders, businesses can also work towards reducing their carbon footprint too. The following actions are easy ways in which you can start to reduce your organisations carbon footprint.

1.	Turn lights off. Encourage staff to turn off lights when leaving a room and at the end of the day. This can help reduce electricity bills by up to 15%.
2.	Switch monitors off. A monitor left on overnight wastes enough energy to print 800 A4 copies.
3.	Make the best use of daylight. Ensure that windows are unblocked and clean to allow natural light into a room. This will reduce the need to put lights on.
4.	Repair dripping taps. One dripping tap can waste 12,000 litres of water per year, which is worth £10-£15.
5.	Print on both sides of the paper. By doing so you can reduce your use by 50%. Set printers to print double-sided by default.
6.	Reduce, reuse or recycle. Look in your bins and audit your waste streams. You can list your reusable items on http://whywaste.org.uk for free.
7.	Measure your usage. Check the metres regularly to see how much gas, electricity, oil and water you are using.

For more information on how to reduce the carbon footprint of your business or organisation please visit:

- The Carbon Trust (<http://www.carbontrust.org.uk>) for expert advice on calculating your carbon footprint, carbon saving advice and interest-free loans;
- Business Link (<http://www.businesslink.gov.uk>) for information on how to improve your business' environmental performance, sustainability in business and pollution control;
- North Yorkshire Green Business Club for environmental information, training, events and resource efficiency support (contact Laura Backhouse on 01904 554638 or email Laura.Backhouse@est-nyh.org.uk).