



Our approach to environmental sustainability

Introduction

Foreword from our chief executive

“We know beating cancer is a long game, and our environmental sustainability strategy is an important part of our wider long-term strategy and how we continue to act as a responsible organisation.”

At Cancer Research UK, we exist to beat cancer. We want to achieve our mission in a way that’s good for the planet and human health, including people affected by cancer and their loved ones.

We recognise and understand the impact of climate change on our mission and how important it is to operate sustainably. **Our research has shown that outdoor air pollution causes roughly 1 in 10 cases of lung cancer in the UK**, while rising temperatures and increased sun exposure are among the growing number of threats to human health and wellbeing, **including increased skin cancer risk**.

We’re now pleased to publish Cancer Research UK’s first environmental sustainability strategy (ESS), which primarily focuses on carbon emissions – the most direct cause of climate change.

Our ESS sets out five objectives:

- To reduce our direct and indirect carbon emissions by 50% by 2030 from our 2022/23 baseline
- To achieve net zero emissions by 2050
- To achieve a 7% average year-on-year reduction of our emissions from 2023/24 until 2030
- To embed environmental sustainability in all that we do and influence our partners to do the same
- To set further goals beyond emissions reduction as we progress

We know beating cancer is a long game, and our ESS is an important part of our wider long-term strategy and how we continue to act as a responsible organisation. It’s an important commitment for Cancer Research UK, helping us to bring about a world where everybody lives longer, better lives, free from the fear of cancer.



Michelle Mitchell OBE
Chief Executive of Cancer Research UK

Our long-term approach

To deliver on our sustainability commitments, we've developed a long-term approach that splits our work into three phases. Publishing our ESS takes us into the second phase of our journey.

Phase 1

Understanding our compliance requirements and environmental footprint

Since November 2022, we've worked hard to understand our existing compliance requirements and map our emissions footprint.

Phase 2

Publishing our first environmental sustainability strategy

Building on what we found in phase 1, our ESS outlines our objectives to reduce our emissions across 2024–2027, highlighting six key focus areas and five key enablers that will help us reach our targets.

Phase 3

Broadening our environmental sustainability strategy

From 2027, we aim to broaden our strategy to address other aspects of the environment beyond emissions, such as nature, waste and water.

The impact of climate change is already starting to be felt across the cancer pathway, including in equipment and medicine supply chains and within the research workforce, and may increase.

This could make it harder to prevent as many cancer cases as possible, diagnose cancers sooner and develop kinder treatments.

The economic, social and biodiversity impacts of climate change in the UK and globally could pose a real threat to carrying out our mission – so it's vital we take action to reduce them.

Our environmental sustainability strategy

Our ambition is to be operationally leading on environmental sustainability in the UK charity sector.

Our ESS sets out the path we'll take over the next three years (2024–2027) to help us achieve this ambition. It outlines a clear aim, underpinned by five objectives, six focus areas and five enablers to success.

Our aim

To play our part in slowing down climate change by minimising the negative environmental impacts of our work

Our objectives

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Our focus areas



Research approach and laboratories



Fundraising events



Retail shops



Electricity and travel



Procurement



Investments and pensions

Our enablers



Sustainable decision-making and governance



Environmentally sustainable sourcing



Working in partnership



Standards, measurement and reporting



Ongoing stakeholder insight

Our six focus areas

To achieve our objectives, we've identified six key focus areas:



1 Research approach and laboratories

As a major funder of research, we'll drive greener practices across the cancer research community. We'll require all our funding applicants to hold the **Laboratory Efficiency Assessment Framework** (LEAF) Silver Award by 2026 and we're working to achieve LEAF Gold in our own labs in 2024/25.



2 Fundraising events

Our supporters want to see us run our events in a sustainable way. By doing so, we can save money through greater efficiency, reduced purchasing and less waste.



3 Retail shops

We sell more than 3,000 of our own products in our shops. We want to think about the types of goods we purchase – especially as we aim to increase the amount we buy over the next four years to raise more money to beat cancer. We've also signed up to **Textiles 2030**, the UK's leading voluntary sustainability initiative in the fashion and textiles industry.



4 Electricity and travel

We aim to look at all the energy we purchase, finding ways to reduce the energy we use and the journeys we make across all our activities.



5 Procurement

We need sustainable decision-making in our procurement processes so we can improve our organisational efficiency, consider the environmental impacts of what we buy and save money through buying less.



6 Investments and pensions

We'll be working with our investment managers and pension providers over 2024–2027 to cut down emissions associated with this crucial area.

Our five enablers

To support and develop emissions reduction across our six focus areas over 2024–2027, we've identified five key enablers.



1 Sustainable decision-making and governance

Environmental sustainability is everyone's responsibility at Cancer Research UK and it's lived through our decisions. We support our people through our sustainability network of nearly 200 volunteer staff, plus a second network of researchers based in our laboratories.



2 Environmentally sustainable sourcing

We'll review how we purchase products, how and where they're used and disposed of and their complete life-cycle impact on the natural world, working together with our suppliers.



3 Working in partnership

By working openly and closely with our corporate and research partners, as well as other charities, we can share learning and best practice, collaborate on activities and broaden our efforts.



4 Standards, measurement and reporting

By keeping up with external standards, we can understand where we need to act and what constitutes good or leading practice. We can also stay informed about what others are doing.



5 Ongoing stakeholder insight

We need to communicate our journey, being transparent in our activities and reporting. We'll work proactively to understand our stakeholders' expectations, developing new and better ways to communicate the actions we're taking and the progress we're making to our supporters.

Our progress so far

We've successfully reduced emissions by 16% from our 2019 Streamlined Energy and Carbon Reporting (SECR) report.

We've achieved this through a number of initiatives, including:

- moving to our new sustainable head office in Stratford, rated 'outstanding' against the BREEAM sustainability criteria with a score of 94%
- moving and renegotiating 100% of the electricity in our head office and shops to Renewable Energy Guarantees of Origin (REGO) contracts
- achieving the LEAF Silver Award for two of our seven labs, while all of them work to achieve the LEAF Gold Award in 2024/25
- upgrading 437 of our 583 retail stores to LED lighting, saving money and 1,560MWh over the last three years



What you expect of us

We wanted to find out from charity supporters and the wider public what role they feel the charity sector should play in sustainability. So, we teamed up with Yonder Consulting and 12 large national charities to survey a nationally-representative sample of over 4,000 people.



More than

7 in 10

people surveyed believe it's important to **live in an environmentally sustainable way**. On average, people are making five conscious changes to live more sustainably.



Almost

8 in 10

people surveyed believe charities have **a responsibility to be environmentally sustainable**.



More than

4 in 10

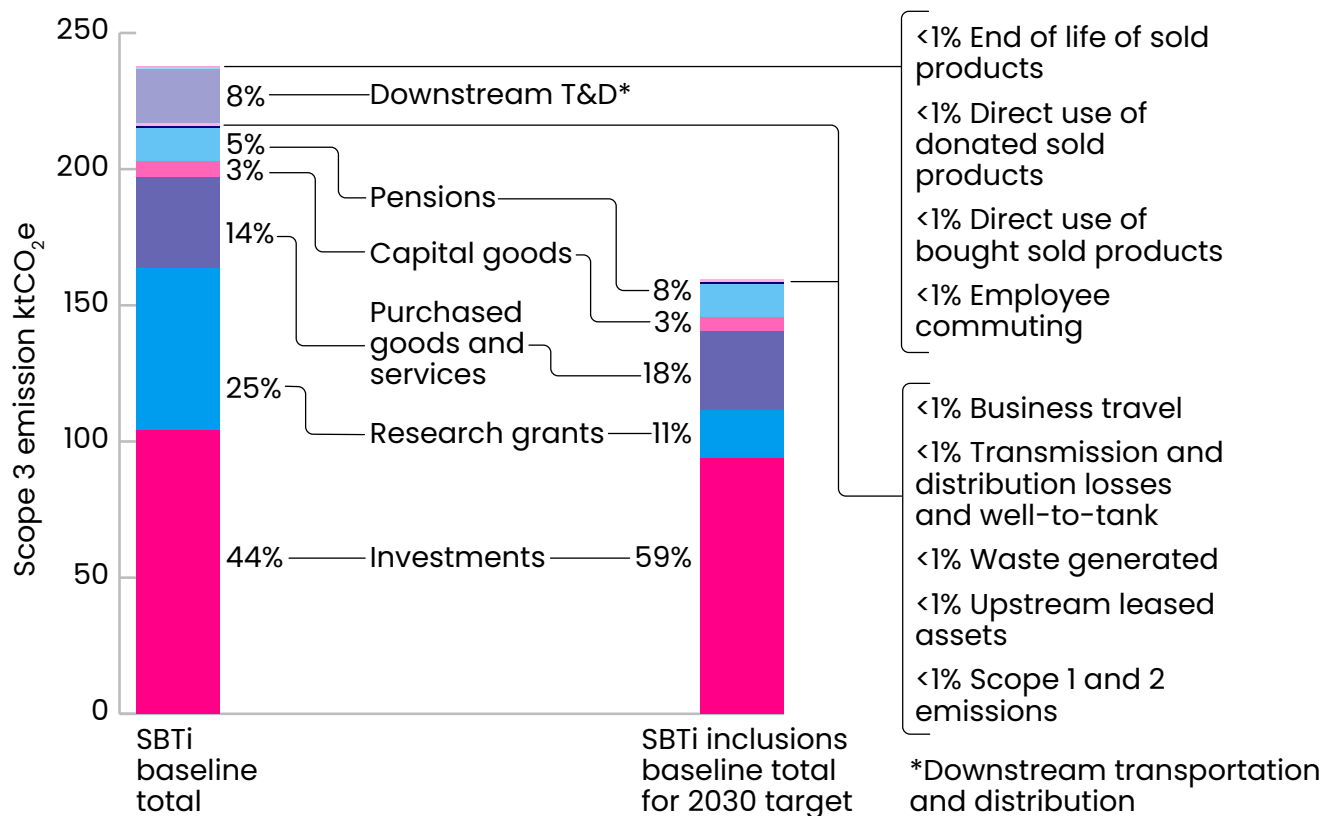
people surveyed said they were **more likely to donate to a charity** if they heard the charity invests funds into operating more sustainably.

Source: CRUK x Yonder sustainability tracker September 2023
- online survey to 4,137 nationally representative UK adults

Our emissions mapping over 2022/23

We've followed international best practice in setting our targets by using the **Science Based Targets initiative** (SBTi) methodology. We're currently in the process of formally submitting to them for verification.

Cancer Research UK Group SBTi emissions baseline 2022/23 following SBTi methodology



Following the SBTi methodology, we've opted to set a 2030 target for 66% of our baseline emissions. There are areas of our emissions that we can't affect and there's a lack of technology available to reduce them in the next six years. We've chosen to take a comprehensive emissions mapping approach covering our full Scope 1, 2 and 3, and feel we can make the most meaningful reductions by focusing on our included areas from 2024 to 2030.

Our full emissions information and methodology is set out in our detailed **environmental sustainability strategy**.

Keep up with our progress

We deliver end-of-year progress updates as part of our **annual report and accounts**. We also publish detailed end-of-year reports specifically on environmental sustainability and emissions data. You can read these on our **website**.

