

## SIA's Sustainability strategy

### Purpose

The purpose of this strategy is to set out our organisational commitment to addressing environmental issues within SIA and through the services we deliver. This document outlines what SIA will do to identify our environmental impact, how we will adapt to reduce our impact, and the responsibilities of team members in this space.

### Scope

It applies to employees, volunteers, trustees and contractors. It will be shared with members, suppliers, potential partners, funders, consultants and other stakeholders wherever appropriate to indicate our commitment to environmental action.

### Action

SIA is committed to accelerating a just transition to net zero and reducing the impact on the environment from our operations and service delivery. We will address this through the following areas of work:

#### Staff engagement

We will promote responsibility for the environment within the organisation and communicate and implement this strategy at all levels of our team. We commit to ensuring key members of staff have the time necessary to embed this work into our operations and providing further resource where possible and necessary.

We will encourage and support staff to become involved in the established SIA Sustainability Group (ES Group) and/or encourage staff to explore how sustainability can be embedded into their own areas of work. We will aim for the ES Group to be representative of all levels and teams of the organisation.

The purpose of the ES Group is to develop SIA's Sustainability strategy and plans, promote, advice, and encourage within and beyond the charity.

We will support staff wellbeing by considering how we promote positive, action-led messaging about climate breakdown and provide opportunities for them to change the ways they work for SIA in line with positive climate behaviours. We will provide space for staff to discuss this issue, including their own concerns and worries about environmental breakdown, through any wider wellbeing programmes in place.

The Board of Trustees will:

- Recognise that climate breakdown is a strategic and systemic risk challenging the charity's ability to meet its objectives in the long term;
- Support senior management and the wider staff team in addressing climate breakdown.

The SLT and Managers of SIA will:

- Share their expectations of responsibility for the environment to employees, board members, suppliers and partners;
- Demonstrate clear commitment to the environment and lead by example, to ensure that the protection of the environment is promoted to all employees;
- Support team wellbeing and work to combat climate concerns by committing to driving action in the organisation, and setting a positive example.

The employees and volunteers of SIA will:

- be familiar with all the environmental requirements relevant to their role and responsibilities, including exploring the carbon footprint/environmental impact of specific areas of work;
- take responsibility for their own impact on the environment while in the workplace, doing outreach work or working from home, sharing ideas with other staff members on how to reduce personal impact.

## Operations

Our mission is: A fulfilled life for everyone affected by spinal cord injury. The sustainability of our services are paramount to achieve a fulfilled life, and are recognised as important for the SCI community we work with.

As part of delivering our mission in line with our values and charitable objectives, we will assess the environmental impacts of our operations and set objectives and targets annually in order to improve our internal carbon emissions. We will review these targets annually. This work will include:

- Monitoring our utilities consumptions and explore ways to reduce our consumption
- Promoting, encouraging and rewarding green travel choices from employees (hybrid working, cycling to work, use of public transport, car sharing)
- Conscious consideration of the amount of travel necessary for our services to go ahead, encouraging green transportation modes and/or providing remote access to events
- Review our waste and educate employees about effective recycling and reducing use of single use plastic where possible
- Communicate with the communities we work with about climate breakdown and how it is relevant to our mission, vision and values
- Generally increase communications about the climate crisis, to encourage awareness within our networks and the communities we work with
- Comply with all relevant environmental legislation and regulations
- Sign up to ACEVO's [climate leadership principles](#) to structure our work and provide light-touch accountability
- Form a staff focus group who will lead on the SIA's Sustainability Strategy and build an 'SIA's Green Plan to Zero'.
- Continue to upkeep and renew our SIA sustainable technology

Features of our sustainable head office, SIA House, are listed in Appendix 1.

## Governance

Our Board of trustees have overall responsibility for SIA and its strategy. We commit to exploring on an annual basis the impact climate breakdown will have or is having on the SCI community we work with. This work should be led by the SLT and should include, but is not limited to:

- Discussing at least one board meeting per year how our mission, vision and values intersect with climate breakdown. This discussion should include how our beneficiaries will be affected by climate breakdown; where there is opportunity to collaborate and support wider climate action; and how to embed climate actions in our strategy, business planning and organisational goals.

- Providing a short statement in our annual report each year outlining the discussions we have had around climate breakdown and any action we have taken, alongside our aims for the following business year.
- Reviewing our investment policy and seeking to invest in ethical funds wherever possible in line with Charity Commission guidance on balancing ethical investment and financial return.
  - As set out in our Investment policy we invest only in holdings which take into account the need to be responsible in Environmental, Social, and Governance matters, and where the positive societal impacts of the investment approach can be demonstrated.
- Making time to discuss practical strategic actions at, at least, one of Finance and Operations Committee meetings per year. This could include but is not limited to:
  - Including the climate breakdown on our risk register/s, in terms of the risk it poses to finances, reputation and service delivery, and decide on mitigating actions;
  - Reviewing our pension funds and explain to all employees how they can move their pension to an ethical fund if they wish to, in line with our values;
  - Considering the risk of climate breakdown to staff retention/recruitment and exploring how we can improve in this space.

### Suppliers and procurement

SIA expects for their suppliers to uphold the important environment values described in this policy.

Suppliers of SIA will:

- Provide the agreed services in a sustainable way and in accordance with this policy, which will reduce our impact on the environment.
- Share environmental policies or describe planned actions if a formal policy is not in place when entering into any contract or agreement with SIA. This will be done via our due diligence processes.
- Work with us to reduce the impacts of the goods and services purchased from them wherever possible.

We recognise that although we may not be able to reject suppliers based solely on their sustainability credentials that asking questions raises the profile of this issue, and that we may partly influence behaviours through this action alone. Our engagement with suppliers is designed to identify suppliers with values which align with our own, and we will make public our preference to work with organisations who minimise their environmental impact wherever possible.

### Our Partners

SIA expects for their corporate partners to uphold the important environment values described in this document.

As part of our due diligence process, we will discuss our partners' commitments, policies and our expectations described in this document with them.

## Appendix 1 - SIA House

The Charity's purpose-built office in Milton Keynes is fully accessible and environmentally sustainable. Its eco-friendly design shows our commitment to preserving the environment and keeping the Charity's overheads to a minimum.

The following are eco-friendly features of SIA House:

- > Solar collectors on the roof take in energy from the sun through vacuum tubes to heat the building's water.
- > Photovoltaic cells in the car park canopy generate the building's electricity. They convert light directly into power, even in cloudy conditions, generating up to 34 kilowatts an hour.
- > The living green roof (a covering of low-maintenance alpine plants) super-insulates the building and contributes to the eco-system by attracting wildlife. The different roof sections provide spaces to filter light into the depth of the building.
- > The underfloor heating and electronically operated windows are thermostatically controlled to regulate temperature.
- > Internal lights dim according to the amount of natural light entering the building. They also operate on movement sensors to switch on and off automatically to save electricity.
- > Established trees and hedging have been preserved so as to give shading in the summer.
- > Deciduous varieties allow warmth and sunlight through in the winter and provide habitat for local wildlife.

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