

Funder Commitment on Climate Change

UK charitable foundations provide more than £4bn of funding every year to good causes, ranging from medical research to the relief of poverty.

We, the undersigned charitable foundations, recognise that the growing climate emergency¹ is a serious risk to the pursuit of our charitable aims. All foundations, whatever our charitable mission and field of expertise, can play a part in addressing the causes of climate change and supporting adaptation to its effects.

The necessary changes to sharply reduce emissions and to adapt to climate change bring opportunities for new industries, good jobs, a cleaner environment, and improved well-being, but also involve significant costs. Funders can help to bring about these changes, to ensure that everyone has access to opportunities arising from the transition to a low carbon economy, and to ensure that the costs are not disproportionately borne by those who are least able to pay.

The scale of the climate threat, and the scale of the solutions needed, means that this is an issue for all parts of civil society, and for all charitable foundations. Climate change is a health issue, an equality issue, an educational issue, an economic issue, a cultural issue, a scientific issue, a security issue and a local community issue, as well as an environmental issue. Children and young people are showing bold and effective leadership. There is a special responsibility on foundations, whose assets are held for the public good, to use their resources and independence to rise to the challenge.

We, the undersigned charitable foundations, commit to:

1. Educate and learn

We will make opportunities for our trustees, staff and stakeholders to learn more about the key causes and solutions of climate change.

2. Commit resources

We will commit resources to accelerate work that addresses the causes and impacts of climate change. (If our governing document or other factors make it difficult to directly fund such work, we will find other ways to contribute, or consider how such barriers might be overcome).

3. Integrate

Within all our existing programmes, priorities and processes, we will seek opportunities to contribute to a fair and lasting transition to a post carbon society, and to support adaptation to climate change impacts.

4. Steward our investments for a post carbon future

We will recognise climate change as a high-level risk to our investments, and therefore to our mission. We will proactively address the risks and opportunities of a transition to a post carbon economy in our investment strategy and its implementation, recognising that our decisions can contribute to this transition being achieved.

5. Decarbonise our operations

We will take ambitious action to minimise the carbon footprint of our own operations.

6. Report on progress

We will report annually on our progress against the five goals listed above. We will continue to develop our practice, to learn from others, and to share our learning.

Please join with us in this collaborative effort.

¹ The climate is changing rapidly as a result of the burning of fossil fuels and other human activity, including intensive agriculture and deforestation. This is already resulting in more extreme weather, crop failure, increased flooding and other systemic risks. Established science confirms that unless more comprehensive and urgent action is taken in the next decade, we are likely to face levels of global heating that will be catastrophic for the future of humanity. The poorest in the UK and globally, including particularly women and people of colour, are most at risk. The UK parliament, many local authorities, businesses, cultural organisations and others have recognised this situation as a climate emergency.