



# Environmental Sustainability Policy

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## Background

DIY is a Learning Disability Theatre Company based in Salford. Our vision is a world where performers and arts leaders with learning disabilities are valued as part of the rich diversity of our cultural sector and our society. Leadership by people with lived experience of learning disability is central to our ethos and operation on all levels, from governance, to how projects are planned, developed and evaluated, to training and professional development.

We recognise that our society and the planet face interconnected Climate and Ecological emergencies. DIY has joined Culture Declares Emergency, a growing international movement of individuals and organisations in the cultural sector declaring climate and ecological emergency.

As an organisation, we are committed to minimizing our negative, and increasing our positive, impacts on environmental sustainability. As part of this, we want to increase environmental action both within and outside our organisation – in particular by people with learning disabilities who have to a large extent been excluded from conversations about climate change, biodiversity and other environmental issues.

DIY has created two documents focused on Environmental Sustainability. This document has been informed by, and can be read alongside, an Easy Read / pictorial document using Photosymbols, created by Company members using creative approaches.

## Aims

This Environmental Sustainability Policy seeks to provide direction for DIY in pursuing the following aims:

- a. Minimise our organisational impact on the environment
- b. Encourage our members, stakeholders and all those involved in DIY to engage with environmental issues, and strengthen their own environmental action.
- c. Raise environmental awareness and inspire action for positive environmental change among those we work with through performances, workshops and training.

# Key Policy Areas

## 1. DIY will seek to minimise its organisational impact on the environment

### 1.1. Travel

#### a. We will reduce travel by staff, members and other stakeholders where feasible, using digital technology to connect.

As an organisation, DIY has – during 2020-21 – gone through a steep learning curve in running digital meetings and events. As part of an extensive digital inclusion project, our regular participants now have iPads and have been supported to use Zoom. This means that certain meetings (e.g. Board meetings) and Networks (e.g. national Creative Minds meetings) can be held online – minimizing environmental costs of travel.

However, we recognize that there are trade-offs between the social, cultural and inclusion benefits of meeting face-to-face and the environmental benefits of meeting online. Furthermore, we appreciate the need for further research to understand better the relative impacts of home-based and office/venue-based working. We will therefore evaluate these benefits and trade-offs on a case by case basis.

#### b. Where possible, we will actively encourage staff to use more sustainable modes of travel (e.g. walking / cycling / public transport / electric vehicles) when travelling to and from workspaces and / or different venues

#### c. We will actively encourage members with learning disabilities to use public transport and/or share taxis when attending DIY sessions.

Owing to a range of concerns including persistent bullying on public transport, financial restrictions, mobility and mental health issues, DIY will continue to provide transport for some

members. We will encourage sharing of taxis where appropriate. We recognize this is not always possible and will support members on an individual basis regarding their transport requirements.

## 1.2. Procurement – partners and suppliers

We will reduce our carbon footprint and wider negative environmental impact, and promote social and environmental value, by using local providers and services wherever possible – in particular those that have a demonstrably good environmental track record. We will explore possibilities for some procurement via a consortium (to potentially influence the supply chain)

## 1.3. Resources, Re-Use, Recycling and Waste

- a. **We will seek to reduce our use of resources where possible**, e.g. paper – by communicating with people via email rather than letter. A balance will need to be achieved between principles of access and inclusion and environmental issues: e.g. the aim of reducing paper will sometimes be in tension with the need of some people to have Easy Read documents available.
- b. **We will re-use and re-purpose workshop-related and other materials wherever possible.** We have a Safestore where we store all props, costumes, materials etc. to ensure that re-use and re-purposing of materials is made as easy as possible for practitioners.
- c. **Where re-use and re-purposing is not feasible, we will recycle as many materials as possible, to reduce unnecessary waste.** We have boxes provided by Social AdVentures and Langworthy Cornerstone, allowing us to separate and recycle materials.

## 1.4. Environmental Data

- a. DIY does not currently gather environmental data in relation to energy, water, recycling, waste and travel.

- b. We will research the most effective way of gathering environmental data that is useful / can support us to implement change
- c. We rent space in a big & complex building with many different uses / organisation and will liaise with the Angel Centre regarding best ways to monitor environmental impacts of our activities.
- d. Following a research period we will implement data collection / reporting as appropriate.

## **2. DIY will encourage its members, stakeholders and all those involved in the organisation to engage with environmental issues**

As a Learning Disability Arts Organisation, DIY Theatre Company is particularly aware of the specific impacts of climate change for disabled people globally. Disabled People are disproportionately affected by the impacts of climate change:

“The meaningful participation, inclusion and leadership of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations within disaster risk management and climate-related decision-making at the local, national, regional and global levels, lies at the heart of an approach to climate action that is respectful of the rights of persons with disabilities.”<sup>1</sup>

However, globally, many people with learning disabilities are feeling ignored or left out of conversations about climate change. The fact that members are not being included in conversations about the climate crisis is yet another example of peoples’ lack of agency and exclusion from power / control.

<sup>1</sup> United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner. The impact of climate change on the rights of persons with disabilities. <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/HRAndClimateChange/Pages/PersonsWithDisabilities.aspx>

## 2.1. DIY Members and Participants

- a. **We will develop a range of projects with members and regular participants using nature/green space to meet, develop skills, run workshops and create performances.**

Nature connectedness has been shown to have positive impacts for health and well-being and there is emerging evidence that people who are more connected to nature are more likely to be concerned about environmental issues.

Our 2021 'Inside: Outside' research and development project in Peel Park provides an example of this type of approach.

Planned projects from 2020 onwards include a performance project in Peel Park with the Core Company

- b. **We will develop a range of projects with members and regular participants that explore themes of environment and nature and encourage them to live more sustainably.**

Activism can be an antidote to climate anxiety because it can be empowering for people to feel they are doing something positive.

Our 2021 ten-week Nature and Visual Arts Course provides an example of this type of approach.

Planned projects from 2020 onwards include:

- a drama based environmental arts project with DIY's Youth Drama Group
  - two adult education courses themed around environmental issues.
- c. We will evaluate the extent to which these projects promote environmental awareness and empower people to change their behaviour towards living more sustainably – and we will develop further DIY projects based on the learning from these projects.

## 2.2. DIY Staff

- a. Using our four-monthly health and wellbeing / CPD sessions, DIY will encourage staff to engage with environmental issues and consider

their potential to contribute to positive environmental change in their personal and professional lives.

- b. We will create resources that support staff to make more use of green spaces and introduce environmental themes in their work. An example is provided by 'Reconnecting with Peel Park', a resource created by visual artist Claire Hignett to encourage artists to work creatively in Peel Park.

### **3. DIY will raise environmental awareness and inspire action for positive environmental change among those we work with through performances, workshops and training**

Recognising the urgency of the Climate and Ecological Emergencies, we will aim to tell the truth, take action and seek justice – communicating with people and organisations we work with to raise environmental awareness, support them to discover the truth about the Climate and Ecological Crises and the changes that are needed, and inspire action for change.

- a. We will develop and use performances to pursue this aim. DIY will build on two projects developed in partnership with Peel Park Rangers and Friends of Peel Park during 2021 – an audible sculpture trail, based on sculptures in Peel Park and 'Inside: Outside' Outdoor Arts Project – to create an Outdoor Performance that will be performed in Peel Park. The piece will look back at Peel Park's history as one of the first public parks and face forward to explore how we can learn from the past to protect our green spaces for the future.
- b. We will develop partnership projects to enable children and young people with learning disabilities to explore themes raised in the performances. We will work in and with a number of Special Schools and colleges to develop projects linked to the Outdoor Performance.



- c. We will create digital resources to support other groups and organisations to develop further creative work on the environment and in response to the Climate and Ecological Emergencies.
- d. We will evaluate the performances and related projects in terms of the extent to which they promote environmental awareness and empower people to change their behaviour towards living more sustainably – and we will develop future performances and outreach projects based on this evaluative learning.
- e. We will work in partnership with other organisations engaged in Arts and Culture to imagine and forge shifts in the ways we relate to one another and the world, in our values and behaviours.

Approved by DIY's Board February 2022



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