MEDWAY PUZZLES

Charity Number: 1192687

ENVIRONMENTAL AND SUSTAINABILITY POLICY

Policy Version	2026
Date Approved	7th September 2026
Review Date	September 2027
Approved by	Board of Trustees

1. Policy Statement

Medway Puzzles recognises that everyone has a responsibility to protect the environment and to use resources responsibly.

As a community charity supporting autistic children, young people and adults, disabled people, families and carers, we are committed to reducing the environmental impact of our activities wherever this is practical and affordable.

We recognise that our primary responsibility is to provide safe, accessible and inclusive services to our members and families. Environmental considerations will therefore be balanced with safeguarding, accessibility, disability-related needs, health and safety, affordability and the individual needs of the people we support.

We aim to continually improve our environmental performance and encourage trustees, staff, volunteers, members and families to support us in doing so.

2. Purpose

- reduce unnecessary waste;
- use energy and resources responsibly;
- encourage recycling and reuse;
- reduce unnecessary travel where practical;
- consider environmental impact when purchasing goods and services;
- reduce unnecessary use of paper and single-use items;
- encourage environmentally responsible behaviour;
- consider sustainability when planning activities, events and projects; and
- continually improve Medway Puzzles' environmental practices.

3. Scope

This policy applies to Trustees, employees, volunteers, sessional workers, contractors where appropriate, activities and events organised by Medway Puzzles, Medway Puzzles offices, hubs and other premises, and sports, community activities, trips and events delivered or organised by the charity.

Members, families, carers and visitors will also be encouraged to support our environmental aims where appropriate.

4. Waste and Recycling

Medway Puzzles will aim to reduce the amount of waste generated through its activities.

- recycle paper, cardboard, plastics, cans and other recyclable materials where facilities are available;
- reuse equipment and materials where safe and appropriate;
- avoid unnecessary printing;
- encourage the use of reusable cups, bottles and containers;
- minimise unnecessary single-use products;
- dispose of waste responsibly;
- dispose of electrical equipment, batteries and other specialist waste appropriately; and
- consider whether unwanted equipment can be reused or donated before disposing of it.

We will never compromise hygiene, infection control, safeguarding or health and safety requirements simply to reduce waste.

5. Energy and Water

Medway Puzzles will seek to reduce unnecessary energy and water consumption.

- switch off lights when rooms are not being used;
- switch off computers, televisions and other electrical equipment when no longer required;
- avoid leaving equipment unnecessarily on standby;
- use heating responsibly;
- close doors and windows appropriately when heating is being used;
- report leaking taps or other unnecessary water loss; and
- use water responsibly.

Where Medway Puzzles uses premises owned or managed by another organisation, we will work with the landlord or venue provider where environmental improvements are appropriate.

6. Paper and Administration

Medway Puzzles will aim to reduce unnecessary paper use while recognising that some members and families may need or prefer printed information.

- use electronic communication and documentation where appropriate;
- avoid printing documents unnecessarily;
- print double-sided where practicable;
- reuse paper for internal notes where confidentiality permits;
- use electronic forms where appropriate; and
- securely dispose of confidential documents in accordance with our Data Protection Policy.

Accessibility will take priority where a person requires information in a printed or alternative format.

7. Purchasing and Supplies

When purchasing goods and services, Medway Puzzles will consider value for money, quality, accessibility, safety and environmental impact.

- buying durable products that can be reused;
- products made from recycled or sustainably sourced materials;
- reducing unnecessary packaging;
- purchasing locally where appropriate;
- repairing equipment rather than replacing it where safe and economical;
- reusing suitable equipment; and
- avoiding unnecessary purchases.

Environmental considerations will form part of purchasing decisions but will not override safeguarding, accessibility, safety, quality or the responsible use of charitable funds.

8. Travel and Transport

Medway Puzzles recognises that transport is essential for many of the people we support.

Some autistic and disabled people may not be able to use public transport safely or independently. Our environmental commitments will therefore not be used to disadvantage anyone who requires appropriate transport or additional support because of disability, health, safeguarding or accessibility needs.

- plan journeys efficiently;
- avoid unnecessary journeys;
- combine journeys where appropriate;
- encourage car sharing where it is safe and suitable;
- consider public transport where it is accessible and appropriate;
- use telephone or online meetings where an in-person meeting is unnecessary; and
- consider environmental impact when planning trips and activities.

The safety and wellbeing of our members, volunteers and families will always remain the priority.

9. Activities, Events and Football

Medway Puzzles provides a wide range of community, social and sporting activities. When organising football, disability sport, clubs, family activities, outings, tournaments and events, we will consider ways to reduce unnecessary environmental impact.

- providing suitable waste and recycling arrangements;
- encouraging reusable drinks bottles;
- reducing unnecessary single-use items;

- avoiding unnecessary printing;
- planning transport efficiently;
- leaving venues, pitches and public spaces clean and tidy;
- ensuring rubbish is removed or disposed of correctly; and
- respecting parks, wildlife, green spaces and local communities.

Participants should not deliberately leave litter or damage the environment while taking part in a Medway Puzzles activity.

10. Food and Refreshments

- minimise unnecessary food waste;
- avoid excessive use of disposable items;
- use reusable cups, plates and cutlery where practical;
- recycle suitable packaging where facilities exist; and
- purchase sensible quantities to reduce waste.

Food safety, allergies, individual needs and hygiene requirements will always take priority.

11. Donations and Reuse

As a charity, Medway Puzzles recognises the financial and environmental benefits of reusing suitable items.

Where appropriate, donated equipment, furniture, sports equipment and other items may be reused provided they are safe, clean and hygienic, suitable for their intended purpose and in an appropriate condition.

Electrical or specialist equipment will only be used where any necessary safety checks have been completed.

12. Environmental Incidents

Any significant environmental concern connected with Medway Puzzles activities should be reported to the CEO or a Trustee.

- inappropriate disposal of waste;
- pollution or spills;
- significant unnecessary waste;
- damage to wildlife or the natural environment; or
- unsafe disposal of electrical, chemical or hazardous materials.

Where necessary, Medway Puzzles will take appropriate action and seek specialist advice.

13. Responsibilities

The Board of Trustees has overall responsibility for this policy. The CEO is responsible for supporting its implementation within the day-to-day operation of Medway Puzzles.

- follow this policy;
- avoid unnecessary waste;
- use resources responsibly;
- recycle where facilities are provided;
- report environmental concerns;
- consider the environment when organising activities; and
- encourage positive environmental behaviour without placing unreasonable expectations on members or families.

14. Accessibility and Inclusion

Medway Puzzles recognises that environmental initiatives must be inclusive.

No autistic or disabled person should be placed at a disadvantage because of an environmental initiative.

Reasonable adjustments, individual communication requirements, sensory needs, mobility requirements, medical needs, safeguarding considerations and accessibility will be considered when applying this policy.

For example, reusable products, public transport or particular environmental arrangements may not be suitable for every person.

Medway Puzzles will take a reasonable and proportionate approach.

15. Continuous Improvement

Medway Puzzles will seek practical opportunities to improve its environmental performance over time.

- purchasing equipment;
- planning new projects;
- applying for funding;
- selecting venues;
- organising events;
- reviewing transport arrangements; and
- developing partnerships with other organisations.

We recognise that improvements may need to be introduced gradually depending on available funding, resources and the needs of the people we support.

16. Monitoring and Review

The Board of Trustees will periodically consider whether Medway Puzzles is meeting the aims of this policy.

The policy will normally be reviewed annually, or earlier where legislation or relevant guidance changes, Medway Puzzles significantly changes its activities or premises, an environmental incident identifies a need for change, or Trustees identify improvements that should be made.

17. Related Policies

- Health and Safety Policy;
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy;
- Safeguarding Policy;
- Data Protection and Privacy Policy;
- Volunteer Policy;
- Risk Assessment procedures; and
- relevant transport and activity procedures.

18. Approval

This Environmental and Sustainability Policy has been approved by the Board of Trustees of Medway Puzzles.

Signed: _ Signed copy held by the charity

Amanda Birch - Chair of Trustees

Date: 7/9/26

Signed copy held by the charity

Signed: _

Paul Harper - Trustee / CEO

Date: 7/9/2026.

Next Review Date: September 2027