

# PROJECT LOWER

## Investing in your office for a sustainable future...

There are a number of ways to improve your office's sustainability, regardless of whether you are in a rented office space or working from an owned building. However, the initial costs of creating an office that is sustainable for the future can add up.

**Follow our checklist for investing in and improving your business's energy efficiency for the long term.**

### #1 CONDUCT AN ENERGY AUDIT



Discover how your business is using energy by carrying out an energy audit. This will provide you with the opportunity to take an in-depth look at your equipment and processes, and subsequently identify and monitor any spikes in energy usage that might occur throughout the year.

Your energy audit should take into account how your building or office space is:

- Heated     Cooled     Lit     Built     Maintained

#### YOUR STEP-BY-STEP ENERGY AUDIT

- 01. Collect your energy bills from the last few years and add to this information any further details you are able to obtain. This should be a significant amount of data, and enable you to create a table or graph indicating year-on-year differences as well as spikes in usage.**
- 02. Make a list of energy-consuming appliances in your office, taking into account kitchen appliances as well as computers, televisions, heating and lighting. Then, ascertain the energy efficiency level of each piece of equipment.**
- 03. Discern the age of hardware and appliances used within your office, as older items are likely to be substantially less environmentally friendly and could be costing you more to run.**
- 04. Investigate the premises. Talk to your workforce about how they use energy within the workplace to help identify where energy is being wasted.**
- 05. Include your night time energy usage in your audit. Use your energy audit to discover whether employees are leaving lights, heaters and computers switched on overnight and therefore allowing energy to be eaten up and costing your business money unnecessarily.**

**HAVE YOU COMPLETED YOUR ENERGY AUDIT?**



## #2 ENLIST AN ECO-TEAM

Recruit a team of volunteers from within your business to assist with your sustainability efforts. Task each member with a responsibility that will help improve the energy efficiency of your workplace while allowing you to manage and monitor the effects of your plan on the office environment.



Your energy audit should have provided you with a vast amount of data regarding energy usage in your organisation, giving you and your eco-team the valuable information you need to create a sustainability plan.

Use the data gathered from your audit and any further information that your eco-team can bring to the table to create an energy guide detailing your findings and highlighting how energy is wasted during an average working week.



Your guide should emphasise the changes employees can make to their daily behaviour, and then get distributed throughout your organisation. It can be valuable to stress the impact employees can have by simply ensuring that their computer has been switched off at the end of a working day – a single computer left to function for 24 hours could cost a business up to £50 per year.

### HAVE YOU ENLISTED AN EFFECTIVE ECO-TEAM?

## #3 UPGRADE YOUR APPLIANCES AND HARDWARE

Your energy audit should have provided you with a valuable insight into the environmental status of your appliances and hardware. Using this information, methodically work your way around the office space replacing items that are no longer efficient.



Begin by assessing the items causing a significant spike in energy usage such as dated computers, kettles and lights, and determine energy efficient alternatives. White goods throughout your organisation such as fridge-freezers and dishwashers will also have an energy efficiency rating on the label between A and G, where A signifies the greatest efficiency.

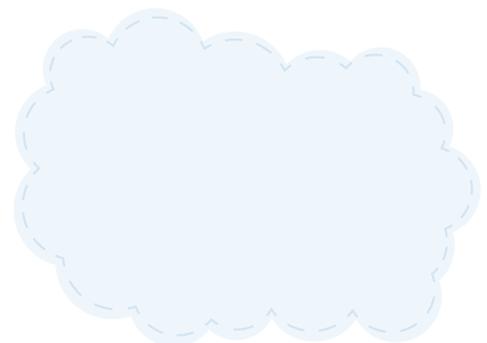


Since 2012, all new fridges, fridge-freezers and freezers must have a minimum rating of A+. However, if your appliances are older, it is less likely that they are energy efficient and they may be costing you more to run than it would to replace them in the long term.

For smaller items such as kettles that are used a significant number of times and that can eat up large amounts of energy as a result of re-boiling, there are alternative options to simply purchasing a new kettle.

Replacing your kettle with a hot water tap can provide employees with instant boiling water, removing the need for boiling a kettle altogether. It can also save your staff precious time and reduce the amount of water wastage your business accumulates.

### HAVE YOU UPGRADED YOUR APPLIANCES AND HARDWARE?



## #4 THINK CREATIVELY ABOUT YOUR ENERGY

### 01. From files to Cloud storage

Making the switch to a paperless office can begin with less costly tasks such as swapping bulky filing cabinets for Cloud storage. This will not only free up valuable space but also make everything on your server accessible to staff members wherever they are; all they need is a compatible device and a password.



### 02. Share documents virtually

Where possible, distribute reports and other information on tablets and sharing platforms rather than printing on vast quantities of paper, affording you savings in a number of areas including the cost of toner, ink, paper, the energy it takes to run the printer and time.

Introduce tablets and e-readers into your office or use Dropbox and similar media sharing platforms to ensure that your content is being seen by the relevant people in a manner that is both time and energy efficient.

### 03. Explore the alternatives

There are various alternatives to paper for the modern office environment. Spend time discovering which is the most suitable for your business and investing in the relevant technology. For instance, as well as the large number of tablets now available, technology companies including Paper Logic and Sony have introduced products onto the market that are designed for the workplace as a paper alternative.



### 04. Motion detectors

Install motion sensitive lights in infrequently used rooms such as bathrooms and meeting rooms. This will help ensure that as little energy as possible is used unnecessarily.

### 05. Encourage flexible working

Flexible working can save you and your employees time and energy, while reducing the impact their commute has on the environment. Provide your workforce with access to the resources they require to work remotely such as access to your internal server, video conferencing and Dropbox, alongside a policy suggesting that staff work from home one day each week.



**HAVE YOU THOUGHT CREATIVELY ABOUT YOUR ENERGY?**

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## #5 GOVERNMENT INCENTIVES

Are you making the most of Government energy incentives for businesses?

Schemes such as the Enhanced Capital Allowance (ECA) help businesses improve their cash flow by decreasing their tax bill. The ECA scheme provides businesses with a 100% first-year allowance when they invest in approved equipment and machinery. It is therefore possible for your business to write-off 100% of the cost of the equipment against taxable profits in the year that the purchase was made.



**Find out more about what technologies are included in the scheme and how your business could benefit.**

[www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/368320/ECA272\\_A\\_guide\\_to\\_equipment\\_eligible\\_for\\_Enhanced\\_Capital\\_Allowances\\_\\_6\\_.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/368320/ECA272_A_guide_to_equipment_eligible_for_Enhanced_Capital_Allowances__6_.pdf)

**ARE YOU TAKING ADVANTAGE OF GOVERNMENT INCENTIVES?**