



This course is a 5min read
with additional time required
for exercises

An introduction to...

Carbon action

Zero carbon living is achievable and necessary for everyone

The UK has committed to zero carbon by 2050. Bath & North East Somerset Council announced they want to be carbon neutral by 2030. Taking action on carbon emissions sounds like a good thing, but what does it actually mean?

It's well established that carbon emissions have a negative impact on our environment. They damage our ozone layer which affects our climate, making changes that contribute to extreme weather conditions internationally, such as floods and heatwaves. These impacts damage our health, food supplies, water supply... almost everything we take for granted!

Global warming is a massive threat to humanity. Without carbon action, we all suffer. So what do we need to do?

Governments, businesses and individuals all have a part to play. It's about taking responsibility for your emissions and questioning whether you can reduce them to zero. Rather than take the car, can you walk or use a bike? Rather than buying supplies from overseas, is there a local recycled alternative? To reach carbon zero, you might have to change what you are doing, and/or the way you are doing it.

Depending on the nature of your charity, taking carbon action might open up new opportunities e.g. innovations or collaborations. The nature or demand for your services might also change with global warming. For example, charities helping refugees or tackling homelessness may see an increase in demand for their services as people may become more displaced.

Global warming is a reality we have to respond to. What change will you make?

Terms or skills to define

Global warming

This isn't really about temperature, but more about the instability of the environment – droughts, floods, climate chaos, etc.

Carbon

Often used as a shorthand term for the increase in greenhouse gases e.g. methane.

Zero carbon

Any 'carbon' impacts that you have, offset by benefits like planting trees. 'Net zero carbon' is the ability to offset.

Top tip

Develop an action plan for YOURSELF

It's easy to forget that we all hold responsibility for the way our climate is impacted by carbon. That's why it's important to focus on what **you can do** now and aim towards in the future, how you can stay engaged with this responsibility, and help move towards zero carbon living.

One good place to start is to **walk through a typical day** in your mind. What do you do? How do you do it? What do you have around you? Start to question the environment to identify areas where changes could be made.

From these possible change points, you can develop a personal **action plan** – build from where you are now, and identify what changes you could make to **personally** move towards zero carbon living.

For example, you might try:

- Calculating your carbon footprint
- Watching a webinar about the impact of carbon on our planet
- Getting involved in Earth Day or Climate Strike activities

Bigger picture context

Zero carbon isn't going to happen overnight. It needs everyone to make sustained changes to their day-to-day lives. However, as we all need a little nudge sometimes, here's some wider changes that contribute to us achieving a carbon neutral future:

1. Legal framework

It wasn't too long ago that the target was 80% reduction in carbon emissions by 2050. Now, the goal is zero carbon by 2050. There is no reason why this couldn't be accelerated further.

In 2019, the UK became the first major economy to pass [net zero emissions law](#).

2. Social attitudes

People's opinions, especially youths, have shifted to become more concerned for the environment. Younger people are looking to organisations to demonstrate a proactive environmental stance.

'[The Values Revolution](#)' research conducted independently by both Global Tolerance and Deloitte show young people want to work for companies that make a positive impact on the world, particularly to repair damage caused by climate change.

3. Business context

There's a financial context to any change. Even financial investments are having a green shake up, with divestment becoming more mainstream as a result of carbon awareness and societal value change.

Carbon neutrality has an overwhelming impact on business financials, particularly through avoided costs. For example, switching to digital-first approaches removes the use of ink and paper; energy efficiency and use of more efficient boilers all have financial returns. There are even ways to reuse old furniture, which is a win-win, as waste becomes an income stream, leading to a circular economy.



This activity takes 15min

Activity: SWOT Analysis on Climate Impacts

Think about the impact of our carbon footprints and the responsibility we have. Do you know what kind of impact you already have on the climate in your day-to-day life?

- Create a SWOT analysis for climate impacts
 - Think about strengths – how would zero carbon impact the climate positively? Are there any weaknesses?
 - What are the opportunities? Does the way society is moving provide opportunities for us to expand on achieving zero carbon living?
 - What are the threats? Does it damage us?

Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	Threats

Further resources

- [The Future Economy Network](#) e.g. business breakfasts