

British Red Cross Carbon Reduction Plan



Our aim

As a humanitarian organisation, we aim to mitigate our impact on the planet by reducing our carbon emissions. The climate crisis affects communities across the world, increasing extreme weather events and displacement. We strive to protect livelihoods, support those affected, and foster a sustainable future.

A British Red Cross electric vehicle.

Net zero commitment

We have set a strategic goal to reduce our carbon footprint to net zero, in line with the Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi) methodology. Our near-term objective is to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from our direct operations (Scopes 1 and 2) by 70% by 2030, against our 2019 baseline. We will also continue to develop plans to help us achieve our long-term target to be net zero by 2045, guided by our five key focus areas.

We will:



prioritise measuring and reducing direct and indirect emissions before offsetting them



support the development of innovative and integrated approaches to net zero



continuous improvement by maximising new opportunities to reduce carbon through managing and understanding our Scope 3 emissions, following best practice

The story so far

We made carbon reduction a goal of our refreshed Strategy 2030. In 2024, we refined our focus and set out a clear pathway to net zero, supported by the key initiatives outlined below:

Building the basics

- Aligning our strategic ambitions with the Science-Based Targets initiative
- Signing the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) Climate and Environment Charter (Q1 2024)
- Bringing carbon accounting and reporting in-house to improve transparency, consistency and understanding across the organisation (Q4 2024)
- Establishing the Green Response Programme, with an initial 18-month plan of work alongside a five-year roadmap (Q3 2024)
- Building a Power BI-based Carbon Dashboard (see the [Definitions section](#) at the end) for performance tracking (Q1 2025)
- Achieving ISO 20121 certification (see Definitions) for sustainable event management (Q1 2025)
- Relaunching our Environmental Sustainability Policy (Q2 2025)
- Including sustainability questions in supplier engagement

Cutting the carbon

- Moving to 100% renewable electricity and green gas contracts for our owned buildings (in Q2 2025)
- Installing LED lighting across our retail shops (259 properties)
- Progressing smart-meter installations – completed at 37% of targeted sites so far (88 properties)
- Introducing electric vehicles to our fleet, with uptake increasing across the organisation (ongoing)

Engaging our people


- Launching the Green Responders network (Q1 2025) to empower staff to take everyday action and advocate for sustainable behaviours
- Tracking culture and awareness of sustainability in staff surveys (Q2 2025)



Forests in Lamu County, Kenya.

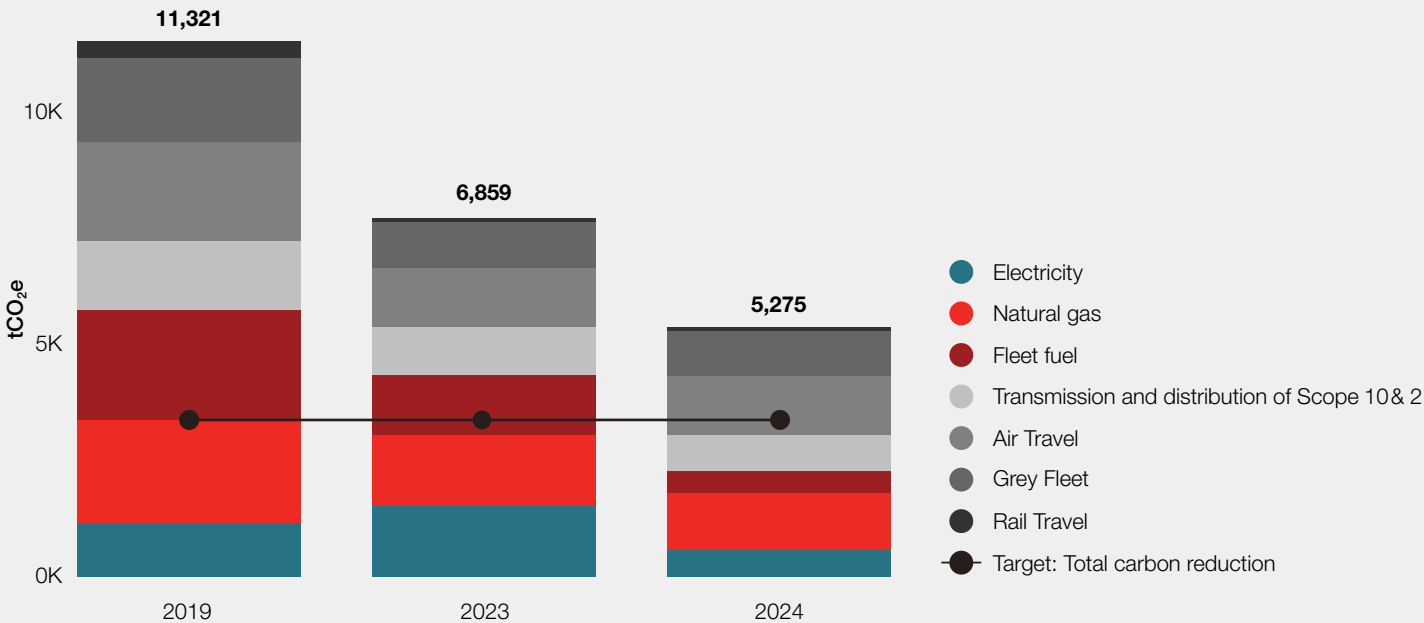
Our carbon reduction progress

- Since 2019, we have reduced our operational Scope 1, Scope 2 and (a subset of) Scope 3 emissions by 53%, saving 6,046 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent. Our Strategy 2030 sets out how we'll deliver our mission, with an organisational goal focused on reducing carbon emissions.
- We're aiming for a 70% fall in Scope 1 and 2 emissions by 2030. With a 60% reduction already achieved by the end of 2024, we're firmly on track to meet this target. The initiatives mentioned on page 2, as well as the downsizing of our property portfolio, have allowed us to make significant carbon savings.



Staff and volunteers from the Pakistan Red Crescent Society respond to extreme flooding in the country's north in 2025.

Our carbon reduction progress since 2019



Emissions reporting for 2019, our baseline year

Emissions	Total (tCO ₂ e)
Scope 1	3,323
Scope 2	2,305
Scope 3 (Included sources)	5,693 Transmission and distribution of all Scope 1 & 2, Grey Fleet, and Air and Rail Travel
Total emissions	11,321 tCO ₂ e

Emissions reporting for 2024

Emissions	Total (tCO ₂ e)
Scope 1	1,781
Scope 2	445
Scope 3 (Included sources)	3,049 Transmission and distribution of all Scope 1 & 2, Grey Fleet, and Air and Rail Travel
Total emissions	5,275 tCO ₂ e



Hossain Miah’s house in Barguna, Bangladesh, was badly damaged during a cyclone in 2024.

Focus areas for action

To accelerate our journey to net zero, we have identified five focus areas that will guide our work. First, we will be data driven, building robust information and reporting so we can measure progress and set ambitious targets with confidence. We will work to reduce demand by cutting our use of energy, travel, and waste across operations. Alongside this, we will green our supply, moving to renewable energy and lower-carbon fleet options to reduce reliance on fossil fuels. Through procurement with purpose, we will partner with suppliers who share our environmental ambitions and embed sustainability into purchasing decisions. Finally, we will turn awareness into action by equipping staff and volunteers with the knowledge, tools, and training they need to make sustainable choices every day. Together, these focus areas set a clear direction for how we will reduce emissions, cut waste, and embed sustainability into the heart of the British Red Cross.

We've outlined some near-term commitments that will help us achieve net zero
measuring against baseline year 2019 when relevant:

Be data driven



- Build on current data sets to see if a more ambitious long-term net zero target year (currently set at 2045) can be achieved
- Set a short-term 'net zero 2030' target for combined Scope 1, 2 and a subset of Scope 3 emission categories (within a reasonable emissions boundary) by Q4 2025
- Expand carbon reporting to incorporate more Scope 3 categories

Reduce demand



- Reduce electricity and gas consumption by 45% by 2027
- Reduce business travel and Grey Fleet emissions by 45% by 2025
- Develop a plan to divert and eliminate waste to landfill by 2027

Green our supply



- Switch to 100% renewable electricity and green gas in our buildings by 2025
- Review our vehicle fleet to identify opportunities for transitioning to electric vehicles (EVs), with the aim of reducing carbon emissions and decreasing reliance on fossil fuels, as well as aligning with government legislation

Procurement with purpose




- Engage our key suppliers to understand their net-zero goals and how they align with our environmental ambitions
- Further embed sustainability criteria into our tendering and decision-making processes
- Prioritise suppliers who demonstrate clear climate action and a commitment to reducing their environmental impact

Awareness to action



- Expand the Green Responders network to engage more staff and volunteers across all areas of the British Red Cross
- Develop a sustainability training hub informed by IFRC guidance, to encourage and empower staff and enhance volunteer learning
- Run awareness campaigns that inspire everyday action and embed environmental thinking into our culture

Declaration and Sign Off

<p>Governance and responsibilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Green Response Programme Board: Endorses this plan and oversees implementation.- Executive Leadership Team (ELT): Approves this plan and ensures its integration across directorates and teams.- Chief Operating Officer: Policy owner, ensuring alignment with strategic objectives.- Environmental and Carbon Reduction Officer: Leads implementation and progress tracking.- All staff and volunteers: Responsible for complying with this plan and contributing to environmental sustainability efforts. <p>By implementing this Carbon Reduction Plan, the British Red Cross will actively contribute to global climate goals, reduce its environmental impact, and strengthen resilience among the communities it serves</p> <p>This Carbon Reduction Plan has been completed in accordance with PPN 06/21 and associated guidance and reporting standard for carbon reduction plans. It will be published on our website as well as reviewed annually and updated within six months of our financial year-end.</p> <p>Emissions have been reported and recorded in accordance with the published reporting standard for carbon reduction plans and the GHG Reporting Protocol corporate standard. It uses the appropriate government emission conversion factors for greenhouse gas company reporting.</p> <p>This Carbon Reduction Plan has been reviewed and approved by the ELT and endorsed by the Green Response Programme Board.</p>	
<p>Signed: </p> <p>Clive MacTavish</p>	<p>Date:</p> <p>19th August 2025</p>



The British Red Cross UK Climate Adaptation Team and the Harborough Woodland Community Volunteers hold a tree planting event in Great Bowden.

Definitions

Net zero (SBTi definition)

A company reaches net zero when it decreases its total emissions (Scope 1, 2, and 3) by 90-95%, and removes the remainder using high-quality and permanent carbon-removal methods. The carbon emissions created are balanced by removing the same amount of carbon from the atmosphere. Companies can't just buy carbon offsets (e.g. through tree planting) or move to renewables to achieve net zero.

Carbon footprint

The total amount of greenhouse gases, like carbon dioxide, released into the air as a result of our activities (e.g. driving, heating buildings, or using electricity).

Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi)

A global framework that helps organisations set clear, science-backed goals to reduce their emissions in line with what's needed to limit global warming.

Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions

Gases that trap heat in the Earth's atmosphere and contribute to climate change. Greenhouse gases include:

Scope 1, 2, and 3 emissions

- **Scope 1:** Direct emissions from things we own or control (like heating our buildings or using company vehicles).
- **Scope 2:** Emissions from the energy we buy, like electricity and gas.
- **Scope 3:** Indirect emissions from things we don't control but still rely on e.g. staff travel, products we buy, or how our waste is handled.

Baseline year

The starting year we use to measure our progress on cutting emissions (ours is 2019).

Carbon accounting

The process of measuring how much carbon (and other greenhouse gases) we produce through our activities.

Power BI Dashboard

An interactive visual tool created using Microsoft Power BI that displays data in charts, graphs and summaries to help users easily track and understand key information.

Renewable electricity

Electricity that comes from natural sources that won't run out e.g. wind, solar or hydro power.

Green gas

Green gas (known as biomethane) is a renewable energy source produced by breaking down organic materials (like food waste, agricultural residues, or manure) through anaerobic digestion.

Smart meters

Devices that digitally measure energy use in real time, helping us monitor and reduce consumption.

LED lighting

Energy-efficient lightbulbs that use much less electricity than traditional ones and last longer.

Electric vehicles (EVs)

Vehicles that run on electricity instead of petrol or diesel, producing significantly lower emissions.

Grey Fleet

Staff using their own personal cars for work travel. This still counts towards our emissions.

Value chain

All the steps and people involved in delivering our services – from our suppliers to how things are used and disposed of.

tCO2e (tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent)

A standard way of measuring different greenhouse gases in terms of how much carbon dioxide they are equal to, to compare their impact.

Transmission and distribution (T&D) emissions

Greenhouse gases released when electricity or gas is moved through the national grid and pipes to reach our buildings.

ISO 20121 certification

An international standard that shows we are managing our events in a way that's environmentally and socially responsible.

Carbon credits

Permits that allow us to 'offset' our emissions by supporting projects that reduce or remove greenhouse gases somewhere else (by planting trees, for example).

Offsetting

Paying for activities that remove or avoid emissions (such as reforestation) to compensate for emissions we can't yet reduce ourselves.

Decarbonise our fleet

Switching our vehicles from petrol/diesel to lower-carbon options, like electric cars or hybrids.

Zero waste to landfill

Ensuring none of our waste goes to landfill sites. Instead, it's reduced, reused, recycled or composted.

Climate and Environment Charter

A shared agreement among Red Cross and Red Crescent societies to take climate action and reduce environmental harm.

Sustainable behaviours

Everyday actions that are better for the planet - like reducing waste, saving energy or travelling greener.

Environmental sustainability policy

A statement outlining the organisation's commitment to reducing its environmental impact, guiding staff and operations to act sustainably and meet legal and strategic goals.

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Where we are

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