

## Sustainable Procurement Policy

Brief Description & Purpose:	The University is committed to sustainable procurement, ensuring our purchasing decisions minimise environmental impact, promote ethical practices and deliver long-term value.  The Policy is overseen by the University Sustainability Management Group. Progress is reported via the Sustainability Annual Report.		
Applicable to (list cohorts):	Staff: All staff	Students: All students	Third Parties: Suppliers
Date Created:	16 June 2021	Last Review Date:	01 June 2026
Approval Authority:	University Sustainability Management Group	Approved:	15 June 2026
Executive Owner:	Prof John Woodward	Business Owner:	Dr Paul Steadman
Next Review Date:	15 June 2028	Publication External Y/N	Yes

### 1. Introduction

Northumbria University recognises that its procurement activities have a significant impact on the environment, society and the economy. The University accepts its responsibility to effectively manage and minimise these impacts, ensuring the products being sourced are obtained in a responsible and sustainable way, that the workers involved in making them are safe and treated fairly and that environmental and social impacts are taken into consideration during the sourcing process. The University is committed to embedding sustainability into all aspects of its procurement activities. By making responsible purchasing decisions, we aim to reduce environmental impact, support ethical supply chains and deliver long-term value for money. This policy provides a framework to ensure that our procurement practices reflect our commitment to sustainability, social responsibility and sound financial management.

The Carbon Management Strategy 2020–2030 embeds the University's commitment to reduce carbon emissions from our activities and those of our supply chain. The Environmental Sustainability Policy also identifies the role of procurement in promoting the circular economy by embedding sustainable, ethical, and life cycle considerations in purchasing decisions.

This policy applies to all staff who specify and purchase food, products and services on behalf of the University.

### 2. Policy Detail

#### 2.1 Commitments

The University will promote sustainable procurement by working with staff and students to:

- Raise awareness and promote best practice in sustainable procurement across the University.
- Support the reuse of existing assets and resources wherever possible.
- Reduce demand for products and services by applying the waste hierarchy (reduce, reuse, recycle).

- Publish an annual statement in line with the Modern Slavery Act, confirming zero tolerance for modern slavery and human trafficking in our supply chains.
- Ensure environmental, social, and whole life cost criteria are included in purchasing decision-making to ensure best value for money.
- Source all timber and timber products, including paper, from certified sustainable sources (e.g., FSC, PEFC).
- Promote sustainable food, products, and services that minimise environmental impacts and contribute positively to society and the economy, including Fairtrade products.
- Minimise the impact of catering operations on the environment by ensuring that food is sustainably farmed, and to promote sustainable practices and consumption.
- Incorporate circular economy principles into procurement, use, and disposal of products and services.
- Ensure duty of care obligations and compliance with all relevant legislation throughout procurement and product disposal.
- Promote the use of ethical suppliers and supply chains, including active membership of Electronics Watch to improve conditions for workers producing commonly purchased goods.
- Communicate the Sustainable Procurement Policy to staff, students, contractors, and suppliers, developing good practice through networks, benchmarking and training.

## **2.2 Targets and Actions**

The University will:

- Embed sustainability-related questions in tender exercises to achieve positive sustainability gains and manage negative impacts.
- Require suppliers to consider the social, economic, and environmental impacts of their activities and take positive steps to improve performance.
- Require suppliers to comply with national and international standards on environmental and human rights matters and adopt a partnership approach to sustainable progression.
- Require our supply chain and outsourced services to minimise packaging waste and comply with our Waste Management Policy and Single Use Plastics and Disposable Items Policy.
- Require procurement activities within our supply chain and outsourced suppliers include consideration of the disposal of the item and any associated waste. All efforts should be made to reduce the waste arising from the order or contract, including but not limited to IT, equipment, stationary and building/demolition contracts.
- Promote awareness of the University's sustainability policies, objectives, and aspirations within the supply market.
- Remove barriers to entry to widen supplier diversity, encouraging local, SME, and minority-owned suppliers to compete for contracts.

Progress against sustainable procurement objectives will be reviewed by the University Sustainability Management Group.

### 3. Key Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
University Sustainability Management Group	Review policy progress, receive quarterly supplier reports and provide oversight.
Procurement Team	Embed sustainability, ethics and circular economy principles in procurement processes.
Staff specifying or purchasing goods/services	Apply the policy and consider sustainability in all procurement activities.
Suppliers and Contractors	Minimise environmental and social impacts, comply with sustainability policies and support innovation.
Commercial Operations (Finance)	Ensure procurement aligns with broader University sustainability strategies.

### 4. Definitions

- Sustainable Procurement – Procurement that considers environmental, social, and economic impacts across the product/service life cycle, seeking long-term value beyond cost.
- Circular Economy – A system that eliminates waste and continually reuses resources through reuse, recycling, and sustainable design.
- Whole Life Costing – Evaluation of all costs of a product or service over its lifetime, including acquisition, use, maintenance, and disposal.
- Modern Slavery Act – UK legislation requiring organisations to address and report on risks of slavery and human trafficking in their operations and supply chains.

### 5. Related Policies, Procedures and Other Resources

- Environmental Sustainability Policy
- Carbon Management Strategy 2020–2030
- Waste Management Policy
- Sustainable Food Policy
- Single Use Plastics and Disposable Items Policy
- Electronics Watch membership
- Modern Slavery Statement

### 6. Document Control

Version No.	Reviewer	Date	Changes
1.0		16.06.21	Created
1.1		20.06.24	Target update
1.2		24.06.25	Strategy, Policy format
1.3	P. Steadman	01.06.26	Policy Review