

Wates Family Enterprise Trust (WFET)
Climate Change Policy
June 2026

The policy demonstrates the Wates Family Enterprise Trust's recognition that climate change is a serious issue which must be considered with intent. We are committed to better understanding how our operations, grant making and our own knowledge can develop to ensure risks to climate change are mitigated.

Climate inequality mirrors, replicates and exacerbates wealth inequality. In the UK, the wealthiest 1% of individuals own nearly a quarter of the country's wealth, while the bottom 50% own less than 5%. WFET, therefore, sees climate change as both a social justice and environmental issue.

Every sector of UK society needs to have a plan for how to reach net zero no later than 2050 (the government's legally binding target) and ideally much sooner. This policy, and WFET's pledge to the Funder's Commitment to Climate Change are two ways in which we will work to achieve this.

1 Our ethos and values

- i. WFET, seeks to embed climate friendly values and actions across our work and our grant-making.
- ii. Systemic change is at the root of our grant-making. The environment, climate change and a sustainable society are part of such an approach.
- iii. Our Trustees take responsibility for ensuring integration of climate considerations into decision-making, and we have a named trustee responsible for ensuring it remains a key priority for the trust.
- iv. We will encourage grantees to incorporate environmental consideration into their work and support them to use their voices on relevant environmental issues.
- v. We offer our funding through a range of mechanisms: co-funding, venture philanthropy, participatory grant-making, effective altruism, systems change and system strengthening. We do this through support to activist organisations, large and small NGOs, leadership programmes, backbone organisations, support networks and more.
- vi. WFET believes that all people are valuable. However, we recognise that vulnerable and marginalised groups of society are more adversely affected by the impact of climate change. While we recognise that climate inequity exists on a global scale, across countries, our funding focuses on addressing the inequity in UK society, which increasing includes climate refugees from overseas. As such, our work prioritises deprived UK communities vulnerable to the effects of climate change and works to support their resilience. For example: Our recent strategic work on housing aims to ensure a more equitable and fit for purpose housing stock for the future, while our sustainability theme focuses on putting nature at the heart of nature deprived neighbourhoods.

- vii. WFET uses its funding and support as a catalyst for change and influence. We are keen to shift the systems which contribute to inequality and are damaging the environment. Our approach seeks to build the capacity of those working on environmental and social justice issues, and to strengthen the connective tissue between them. See www.wfet.org.uk for further details on our organisational strategy.

2. Our Operations:

We aim to become carbon-zero in our operations before 2045.

- i. We will achieve this by:
 - I. Calculating our annual emissions using the SME Climate Hub Calculator and creating an action plan with KPIs and annual review cycles. All staff will be asked to contribute to this action plan. Annual reports will be made available on request.
 - II. Working alongside the Wates Group in their ambition to be Carbon neutral in their Scope 1-3 emissions by 2045.
 - III. Ensuring food provided at meetings and events is sourced sustainably, locally and ingredients are in season (as much as possible) and using re-usable cutlery, crockery, cups and glassware.
 - IV. Monitoring the carbon footprint of our website (www.wfet.org.uk). Over the last year, we have made significant changes to bring our [Website Carbon](#) score up to A from E.
 - V. Keeping travel to the office to a minimum and where possible using public transport.
 - VI. Minimising travel to grantees by offering virtual meetings and when a face-to-face visit is required, using public transport if feasible.
 - VII. Keeping sustainability as a rolling agenda point within team meetings, to allow staff to share ideas and best practices on interventions and behaviours to create a culture of camaraderie and continuous improvement.
 - VIII. Providing staff with the opportunities for sustainability-related CPD to influence and support change internally, among our grantees and across their wider personal and professional networks.
 - IX. Facilitating and participating in the Wates Group 'Nature Network', to increase our knowledge and cross-pollinate best practice.

3. Our Grant Making:

The Wates Family Enterprise Trust will commit 1/3 of our strategic funding to issues concerned with ensuring a sustainable environment. This funding stream supports:

- UK communities to increase their resilience to climate change through the increased provision of nature-based solutions
- Climate advocacy and policy development to influence and inform local and national government
- Networks and movements which build climate expertise, knowledge and camaraderie across a range of relevant sectors.

In addition, we will:

- i. Build on our Carbon Literacy training pilot for grantees, offering free sustainability training to grantees at periodic cycles with content based on grantee feedback.

- ii. Participate in, and learn from, relevant sector and philanthropic networks such as the Environmental Funders Network, the Nature Connectedness Network, the Green Infrastructure Partnership and Nature Towns and Cities, in order to ensure trustees and staff are educated, aware of the latest thinking and able to lead by example.
- iii. Apply a 'climate lens' when assessing, awarding and managing grant applications to ensure that no funding awards undermine our climate commitments.

5 Review:

We will review our progress towards this ambition, annually.

Policy approved: June 2023

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