



Climate change in the UK charity sector

Contents

Introduction: Climate change in the UK charity sector	1
1. Charity attitudes towards climate change	3
2. The impacts of climate change on the charity sector.....	5
3. How digital affects environmental sustainability	7
4. Sustainability in the workplace	10
5. Climate leadership in the charity sector	13
Summary	16
About Us	18



Introduction: Climate change in the UK charity sector

This survey from Charity Digital aims to find out the attitudes within the charity sector towards sustainability and climate change so we can better work together to find solutions in the future, including through digital technology.

Climate change is one of the most pressing issues facing our planet. While scientists and climate experts from across the world impress the urgency of the issue upon us, not enough action has been taken globally to limit the worst effects of climate change.

Charity Digital believes in helping charities to maximise their impact through technology, so we feel a responsibility to show charities how their use of tech relates to the climate crisis. We, and the rest of the charity sector, need to play a greater part in tackling climate change.

We launched the *Climate change in the UK charity sector* survey to gauge attitudes to the climate crisis and identify key areas where charities could act, whether that means taking steps to formally embrace environmental, social, and governance (ESG) policies or creating an internal sustainability committee.

Our survey found that, broadly speaking, the charity sector is already on board, but many are struggling to identify the next steps. The vast majority (88%) of charities are concerned about the impacts of climate change (Fig. 1), but most charities rate the sector's efforts in addressing climate change at just six out of ten (Fig. 2). Our awareness is high, but many are failing to act.

Our failure to act may come from a failure to prioritise. Indeed, more than a quarter (26%) of charities identified having more pressing priorities as a barrier preventing them from taking more climate action, followed by 17% who said lack of knowledge and 13% who cited cost (Fig. 3).

Fig. 1 Is your charity concerned about climate change?

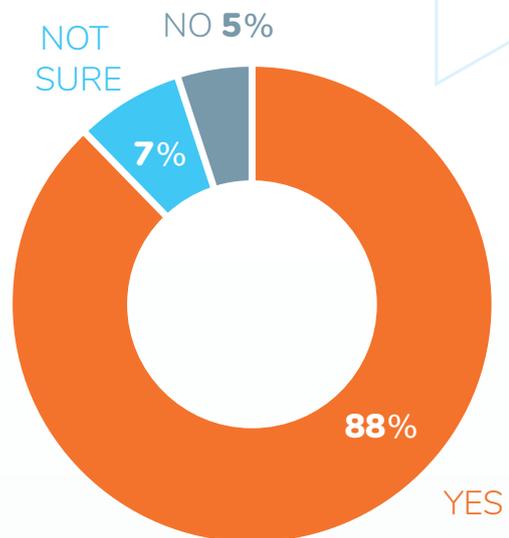


Fig. 2 How well do you think the UK charity sector is working to enact sustainability in their organisations? (Rate out of 10)

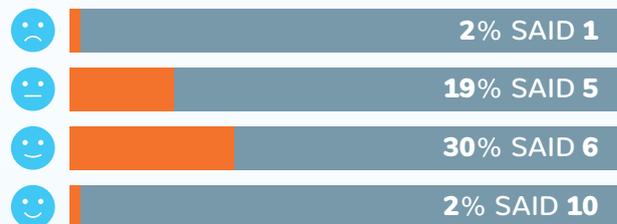
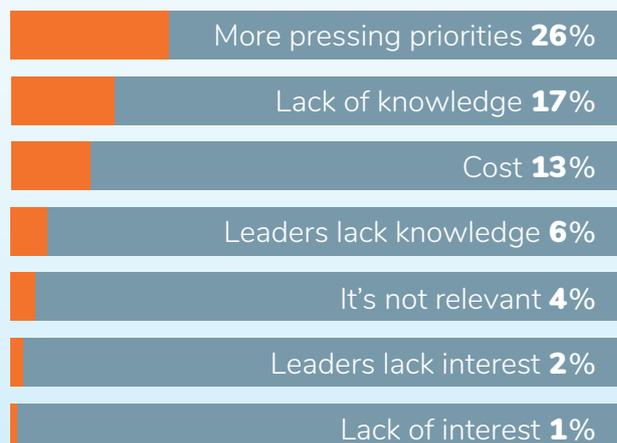


Fig. 3 What has prevented your charity from taking more [climate] action?*



* Where totals do not add up to 100%, some respondents did not provide an answer

In this report, we dig deeper into the results of the survey to discover the charity sector's concerns around climate change, learn more about their efforts to tackle it, and reveal how charities rate the actions they've taken at present.

About Charity Digital's Climate Action campaign

At Charity Digital, we launched our Climate Action campaign with the aim of educating and empowering the charity sector to take action against climate change and limit its impacts on society.

We chose to do this for three reasons:

1. The charity sector exists for the benefit of the communities we serve

The consequences of climate change, from food scarcity to natural disasters, will have an impact on the work that charities do, the work they are able to do in the future, and the communities that we all serve. Addressing climate change should be seen as necessary future-proofing for the benefit of those communities, not an afterthought.

2. Digital is both the problem and the solution to climate change

As a charity that exists to help other charities achieve their mission with digital, we want to acknowledge that digital technology comes with its own carbon footprint and encourage the sector to think about the sustainability of the tech they use and how they can use digital strategically.

3. The charity sector has a responsibility to lead on ethical issues

For charities, having an impact on climate change issues is a matter of carving out impact where we can and leading by example. Charities have a [trusted voice in the UK](#) and an opportunity to support their communities through upcoming challenges while becoming leaders in climate action themselves.

What can you expect from the report?

In order to build for the future, we must first take stock of where we're at currently. In *Climate change in the UK charity sector*, we outline five key themes around climate change in the charity sector.

The five themes are:

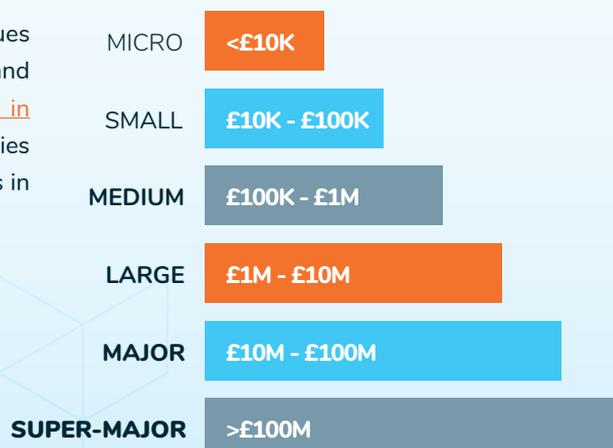
1. Charity attitudes towards climate change
2. The impacts of climate change on the charity sector
3. How digital affects environmental sustainability
4. Sustainability in the workplace
5. Climate leadership in the charity sector

By examining the above themes, the report will highlight areas where charities are performing well on environmental sustainability, while also showing areas of improvement.

With the window of [climate action](#) increasingly closing, the time for charities to address climate change is now.

Survey methodology

This survey was conducted between January and February 2023, with 206 charity professionals taking part. Respondents worked in charitable organisations across a wide range of fields – including arts and culture, community, and health – and represented a variety of roles, from volunteers to CEOs and trustees.



1

Charity attitudes towards climate change

The overwhelming majority of charities are concerned about the impacts of climate change, but many are yet to take serious action in addressing these.

As mentioned in our introduction, 88% of charities said they were concerned about the impacts of climate change – a percentage that roughly corresponds to the number of people in the UK who reported feeling [worried about climate change in 2019](#) (85%). Charities of all sizes reported being concerned about the impacts of climate change, with 89% of micro-charities saying so alongside 100% of super-majors.

Of those who work in environmental charities, 96% of people said that they were concerned about the impacts of climate change – and none of them said they weren't concerned. Among the fields reporting the lowest concern about climate change impacts were health and domestic aid.

This could be for a number of reasons, including that the charities are facing more immediate issues or a perceived lack of connection between their areas of work and climate change. Almost half (47%) of respondents from health charities said climate change was not relevant to their charitable purpose.

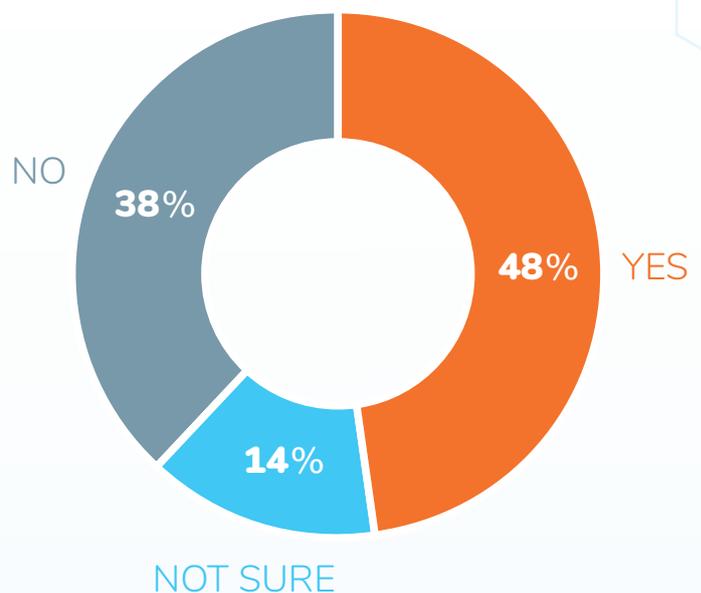
But climate change will have a direct impact on both these fields – for example climate change disproportionately affects [marginalised and lower income communities](#) and has [consequences on their health](#). [Research by the Imperial College London](#) found that the highest levels of air pollution, for example, were experienced by those with lower socioeconomic status.

Of those who work in finance, 40% of respondents said they were unsure about their concerns regarding the impacts of climate change, the highest of any job role.

Those in leadership and governance positions were more decisive on how they felt about the impacts of climate change with none saying they were unsure, but nearly one in ten said they were not concerned.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, 100% of those who worked in sustainability were concerned about the impacts of climate change – potentially putting them at odds with those 9% of unconcerned charity leaders.

Fig. 4 Has your charity taken serious action to address climate change?

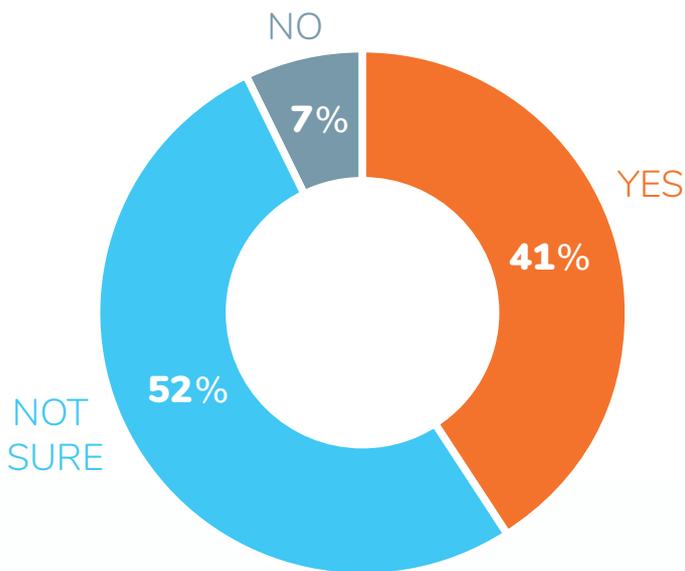


While the vast majority of charities appear to be concerned about the impacts of climate change, the survey suggests that they have taken little action to address it. Fewer than half of respondents said that their charity had taken serious action to address climate change (see Fig. 4).

Charities working in the 'local and community', 'family and children', and 'health' fields were the least likely to say they had taken serious action, showing a clear correlation between those who earlier said they were concerned about the impacts of climate change and those who have worked to address it. More than nine in ten (93%) environmental charities said they had taken serious action. Once again, charity size was no factor, with consistent percentages across the board.

The survey also showed that the sector is not sharing information on their efforts to tackle the impacts of climate change – more than half said they were not sure whether other charities were taking serious action to address the emergency (see Fig. 5).

Fig. 5 Are other charities taking serious action against climate change?



Most charities rated the sector’s efforts to address climate change at six out of ten. The comments cited “lack of available assistance”, lack of perceived relevance to their mission, and “limited funding” as reasons why other charities were not taking action.

“Environmental charities are doing well in my opinion but it’s not enough,” commented one charity professional, stating that finance and “huge policy/legal changes” are needed before non-profits can make practical changes.

Another added: “Climate change is on the radar but not yet seen as a priority issue.”

“Those [charities] who aren’t related [to climate change] are still in a bubble of not thinking it is relevant/a priority,” concluded another respondent. “But we have seen that charitable work is really important in the face of the impacts of climate change e.g. weather extremes and the cost of energy/fuel and the rising cost of food.”

When it came to sustainability within charities themselves, respondents were similarly ambivalent. More than a quarter of charities (28%) rated the sector’s efforts at enacting sustainability in their organisations at six out of ten (see Fig. 6). In fact, almost two thirds (65%) of charities rated internal sustainability efforts at between four and six out of ten – just 3% gave them full marks.

Fig. 6 How well do you think the UK charity sector is working to enact sustainability in their organisations? (1-10)



This response indicates once again that, although charities are becoming increasingly cognisant of the importance of climate action, many are yet to proceed beyond basic action.

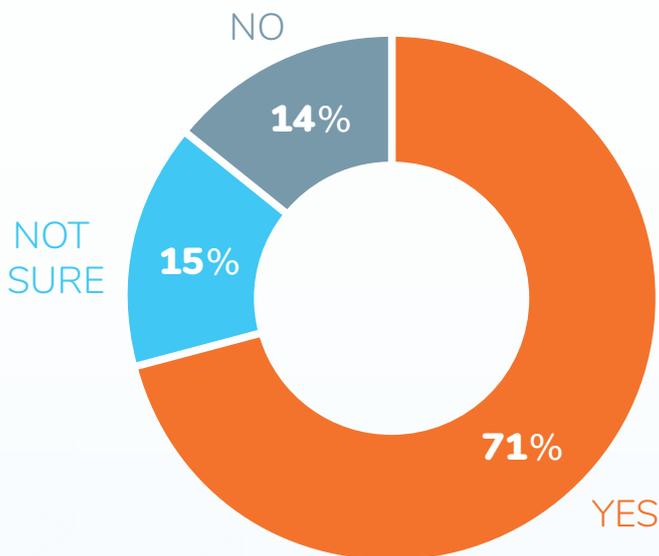
As with appraising the sustainability efforts of the sector as a whole, most comments imply that there are variable degrees of sustainability efforts, a higher focus on funds and financial sustainability, and a lack of clarity in many organisations beyond smaller scale initiatives as opposed to structural change.

“Charities are naturally conscientious of not wasting energy and resources, and not taking part in harmful activities, but as always more could be done,” commented one respondent, while another stated: “Minimal attention has been given to practices like recycling and travel, but beyond that, not much.”

2 The impacts of climate change on the charity sector

The survey shows that charities are already feeling the effects of climate change. Is tackling the climate crisis essential to all charities, regardless of their purpose??

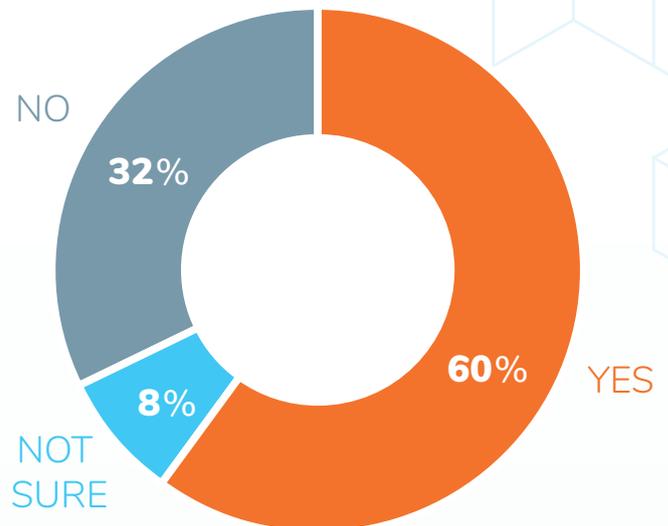
Fig. 7 Do you think the impacts of climate change has affected your charity in the past, or will affect your charity work?



While the actions that charities are taking to tackle climate change vary across the sector, it appears that many are already experiencing its impacts. More than seven in ten charities say that the impacts of climate change have affected their charity in the past or will do so in the future (see Fig. 7).

That this percentage is lower than the number of charities who were concerned about climate change demonstrates that it is an issue felt widely, not simply because of its impact on our charity work. However, that so many have experienced or are expecting the impacts of climate change in their work also demonstrates that climate change is far from a partisan issue for charities.

Fig. 8 Is climate change relevant to your charitable purpose?



Three in five charities said that climate change was relevant to their charitable purpose (see Fig. 8), with the majority of charities across all sizes saying so. This percentage is heartening, in that it indicates that charities beyond those who work in the environmental sector see climate change as important to them and their charity work.

The percentage of those who said climate change was relevant to their charity purpose declined slightly for respondents who worked in leadership and governance positions, with more than a third saying climate change was not relevant to their purpose and 57% saying the opposite.

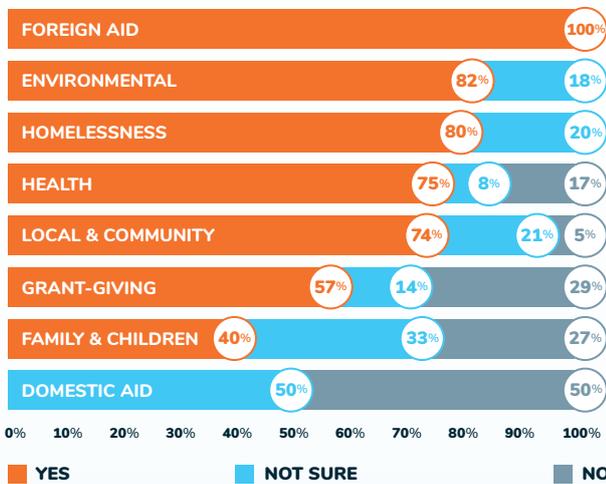
Though those working in finance roles were the most unsure about how much climate change was a concern to their organisation, 80% said that it was relevant to their charity purpose.

Marketing and service delivery professionals were most unsure, with 15% and 18% of respondents in those areas saying so respectively. Such differing levels suggests that there needs to be further clarity as to what constitutes a charitable purpose, or perhaps, around how climate change can affect it.

Domestic aid charities were the least likely to say they had been affected by the impacts of climate change or would be in the future, with no respondents working in the field saying yes to this question (see Fig. 9).

Contrastingly, 100% of respondents working in foreign aid said they had been or would be affected by the impacts of climate change – perhaps a reflection of [worsening natural disasters](#) across the world and the losses experienced in developing countries.

Fig. 9 Do you think the impacts of climate change have affected your charity in the past, or will affect your charity work? (By field)



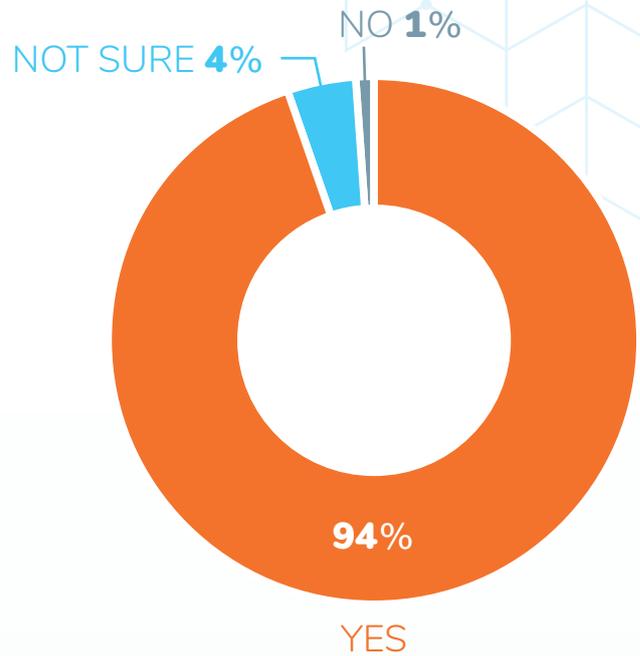
Despite almost a third of charities (32%) saying climate change isn't relevant to their charitable purpose, 94% of respondents to the survey said that the charity sector has an obligation to address climate change (see Fig. 10).

This is a fascinating outcome from the report, indicating a gap between what charity professionals understand as their charitable purpose and issues they believe the sector should address.

One could also infer from the percentage difference that individual organisations are relying on collective action, rather than taking the lead on it themselves.

Furthermore, it makes the fact that the majority of respondents rate the action from the sector at six out of ten yet more concerning; that more than nine in ten believe the sector has an obligation to address climate change shows there is significant appetite for the sector to do more.

Fig. 10 Do you think the charity sector has an obligation to addressing climate change considering our position and our focus on impact?



Ultimately, the charity sector seems to differ on whether climate change is relevant to their individual purpose but the desire for collective action remains.

There are [legal complexities](#) around charities engaging in political campaigns and discourse – they are permitted to do so as long as it furthers their charitable objects, is not the sole object of the organisation, and is not party political. Considering that 71% of charities have experienced or expect to experience the impacts of climate change, having a voice on the matter does not appear to contravene that legislation.

3 How digital affects environmental sustainability

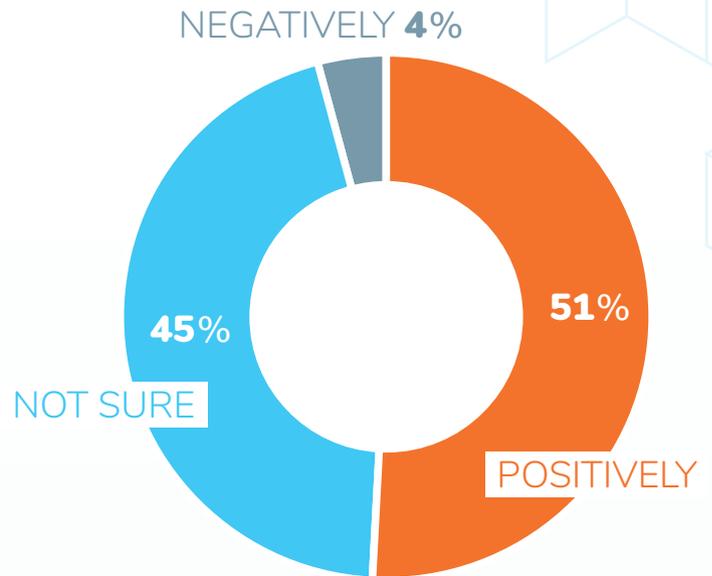
Can digital technology help charities become more sustainable and are we thinking enough about its carbon footprint?

We know that digital technology has a mixed impact on climate change with every video, every email, and every saved file in the cloud contributing to carbon emissions. But we also know that digital can help decrease our carbon footprint too, whether it's reducing the need to travel in for in-person meetings or helping us go paperless.

So weighing up the environmental pros and cons of digital technology is complex. It is more important to ensure that the way we use digital is strategic and sustainable. Digitally mature charities are demonstrably more likely to achieve their mission goals, according to [research from Salesforce](#), so we understand how vital embracing digital can be in impacting our charity work.

When it comes to using digital to tackle climate change, however, the sector is more uncertain (see Fig. 11). Just more than half of respondents (51%) said that digital would positively affect climate change in the future, while 45% said they were not sure. Very few charities believed digital would negatively affect climate change.

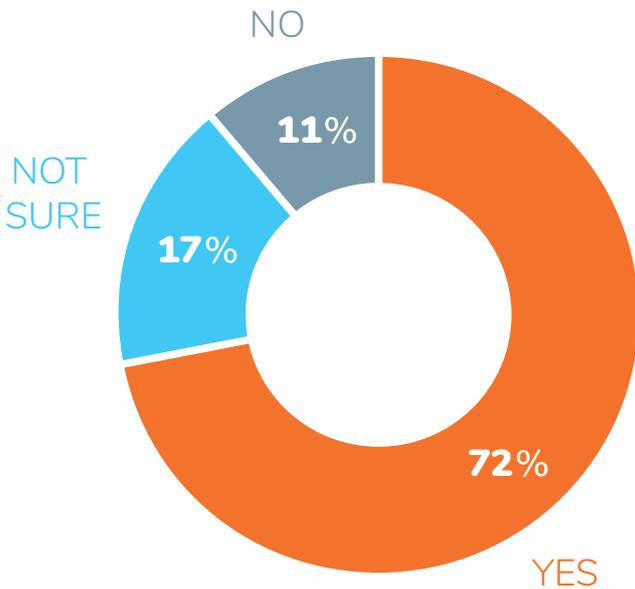
Fig. 11 How will digital technology affect climate change in the future?



On the above question, we noticed a significant difference in perception between charities of different sizes. Micro charities were the least likely to say that digital technology would have a positive effect on climate change, with only a third saying so. More than one in ten (11%) said it would negatively affect climate change, the most of any other charity size.

This suggests that micro charities, who are most likely to have limited resources and budgets when it comes to embracing digital technology, are less able to see its benefits. More than half of micro charities (55%) said they weren't sure of how digital would affect climate change, ten percentage points more than charities of every other size.

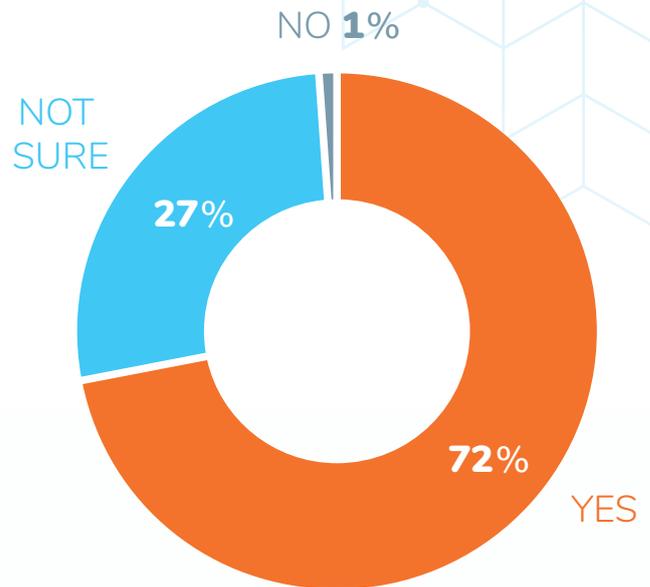
Fig. 12 Has digital technology helped your organisation to become more environmentally sustainable?



Indeed, micro charities were also the least likely to say that digital technology had helped their organisation to become more environmentally sustainable, with just 44% saying it had and a third saying it had not – 22% said they weren't sure either way. Once again, this contrasts with super-major organisations, all of whom said digital had helped them become more environmentally sustainable.

Overall, 72% of the charity sector said that digital technology had helped them become more environmentally sustainable (see Fig. 12). Fewer respondents said that digital technology would not help them become sustainable, but more were unsure, with more than a quarter saying so.

Fig. 13 Do you think digital technology could help your organisation to become more environmentally sustainable in the future?



Perhaps unsurprisingly, 82% of charity professionals who work in digital roles expect digital technology to help them become more environmentally sustainable in the future.

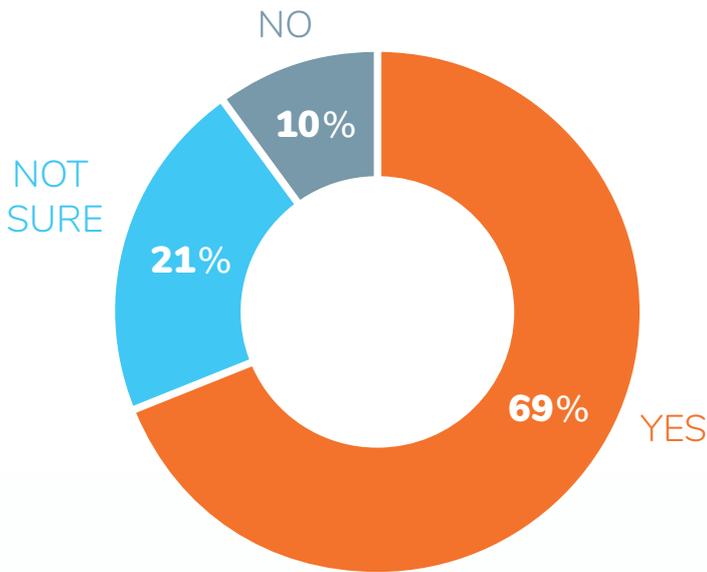
Those in leadership and governance positions were less certain – 69% said that it would, but 31% said they were not sure. Interestingly, finance was the only field in which anyone said digital would not make them more environmentally sustainable.

Some of the ways that charities expect digital to help them in sustainability include reduced travel, better communication channels for training and increased reach, and the ability to track impact.

One respondent said: “Any advances with digital comms which enables us to reach people and increase our reach digitally can help us remain sustainable.”

Some organisations remained conscious of the negative impact digital can have on the environment and expressed the need to investigate the sustainability of individual tools. One respondent said: “Digital first isn't always a climate-positive solution...Emissions from digital platforms such as the carbon cost of servers could in fact make a charity's digital footprint larger.”

Fig. 14 Are you aware of the environmental impact of technology?

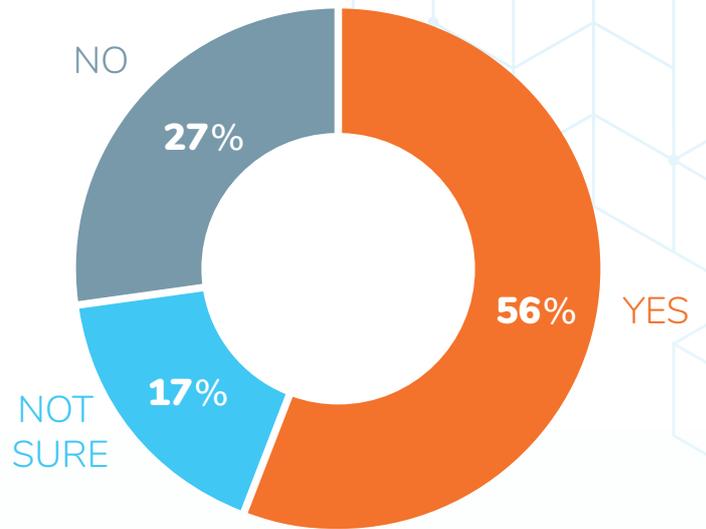


Micro charities were the least aware of the environmental impact of technology, with 44% saying they were unaware or unsure, suggesting that their technology is used with other priorities in mind.

Micro charities were by far the most likely to say they weren't aware of the environmental impact of technology, with a third saying so, more than 20 percentage points clear of any other charity size.

Our findings show a direct correlation between charity size and awareness of the environmental impact of tech. Simply put: the larger the charity, the greater the awareness.

Fig. 15 Do you consider the environmental impact of the technology you use?



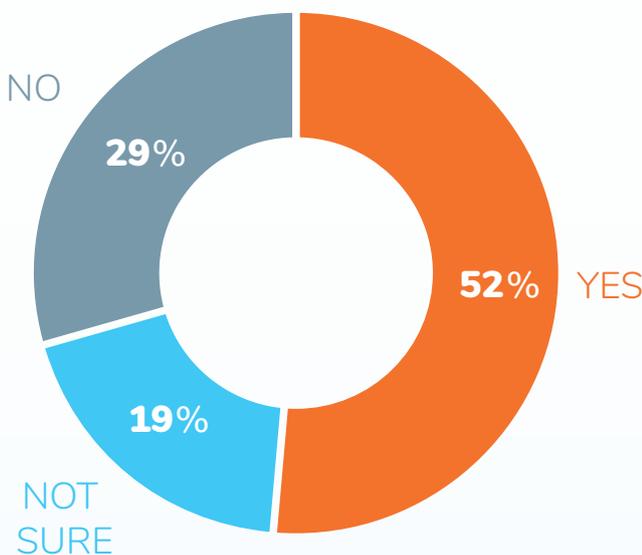
The report revealed a disparity between those who said they were aware of the environmental impact of technology and those who considered it within their organisation. Though 69% of organisations overall said they were aware of the environmental impact of technology, fewer said the same about the technology they actually use.

Just over half of charities overall (56%) said they considered the environmental impact of the tech they use, while more than a quarter said outright that they did not. The findings demonstrate that, although charities may be aware of the environmental implications of tech, they are yet to apply that awareness internally. The steps between understanding and taking action are often the steepest.

4 Sustainability in the workplace

Charities are taking steps to address climate change with varying degrees of success. We look at the importance of sustainability in the workplace and how eco-conscious charity professionals feel on an individual level.

Fig. 16 Is environmental sustainability a priority for your organisation?



Charities are well-versed in juggling multiple priorities. But despite 88% of charities suggesting that the impacts of climate change were a concern for their charity, only half (51%) said it was a priority for their organisation. Three in ten (29%) said it was not.

This is a challenge, particularly for sustainability managers. Three in five respondents working in sustainability roles said that environmental sustainability was a priority for their organisation – the other two fifths said it was not.

This is only a concern for charities who have employed someone responsible for sustainability in the organisation in the first place. Only two in five charities (39%) say there was someone responsible for sustainability, while more than half (51%) have yet to take this step.

Fig. 17 How informed is your organisation about climate change?



Fig. 18 How informed are you personally about climate change?



Exactly half of respondents felt that their organisation was somewhat informed about climate change. This broadly reflects how people feel about climate change personally. While more people said they were extremely informed personally (38%) compared to their organisation, more people (58%) also said that they were somewhat informed.

This suggests there is further opportunity for charities to take the lead on educating their staff about climate change and particularly the action they can take, including considering the environmental impact of tech, as seen in the previous chapter. There is currently very little evidence to suggest charities are taking this step. When asked if their charity offered any training on climate change, almost three quarters (74%) said they did not. Only 20% said they did; the rest were not sure.

There were signs of a correlation between charities who had people working in sustainability and those who offered training. Three in five of charity professionals working in sustainability roles said their organisation offered training on climate change – three times the amount who said they did overall.

Fig. 19 How sustainable is your work culture?



When it comes to work culture, half of respondents said that it was somewhat sustainable, once again reiterating the average level of sustainability action we've seen elsewhere in the survey. There is some heart to be taken in that though only 13% of charities said their work culture was very sustainable, only 2% said it was not at all.

Once again, the above demonstrates that the charity sector on the whole is at the start of their sustainability journey – there is certainly room for growth.

The same story is broadly true in terms of the sustainability of the workplace itself. A fifth of respondents said they did not know how the extent of sustainability in their workplace, again demonstrating the need for more communication around workplace environmental practices.

Two in five charities said their workplace was somewhat sustainable – ten percentage points less than those said the same about their culture. More than a quarter (27%) said their workplace either wasn't very or wasn't sustainable at all.

This demonstrates a slight gap between culture and more integrated climate action – a sustainable culture has not necessarily led to a sustainable workplace. Once again, climate action is eluding many of us.

Fig. 20 Is environmental sustainability a priority for leadership at your charity? (Leadership and governance roles)

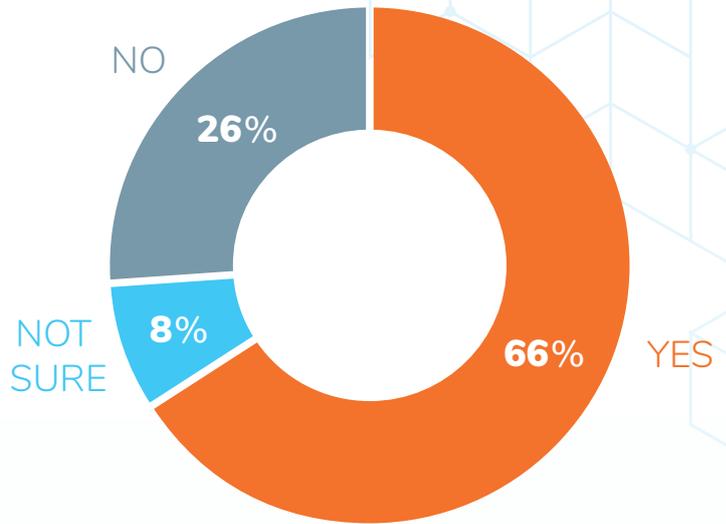
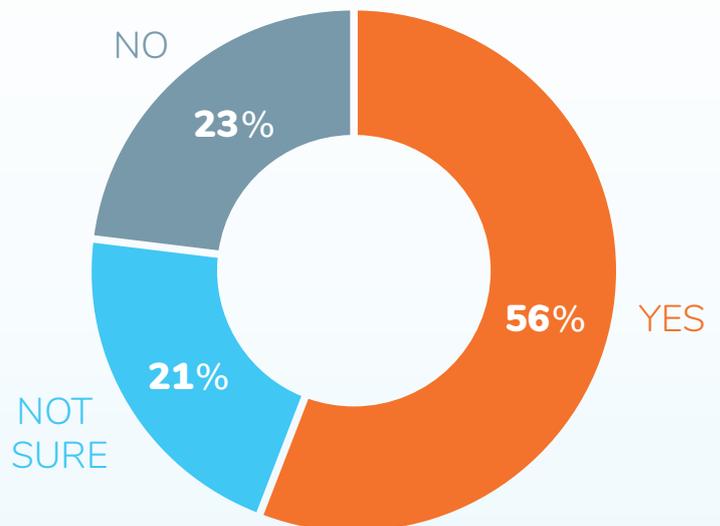


Fig. 21 Is environmental sustainability a priority for leadership at your charity? (All roles)



Any reticence towards climate action is likely due to competing priorities. Charities exist for the benefit of their service users and delivering those services and securing funds will always be top of an organisation's to-do list.

But climate change will affect all of us. So putting it on the agenda now is a vital part of future-proofing the sector (see Figs. 20 and 21).

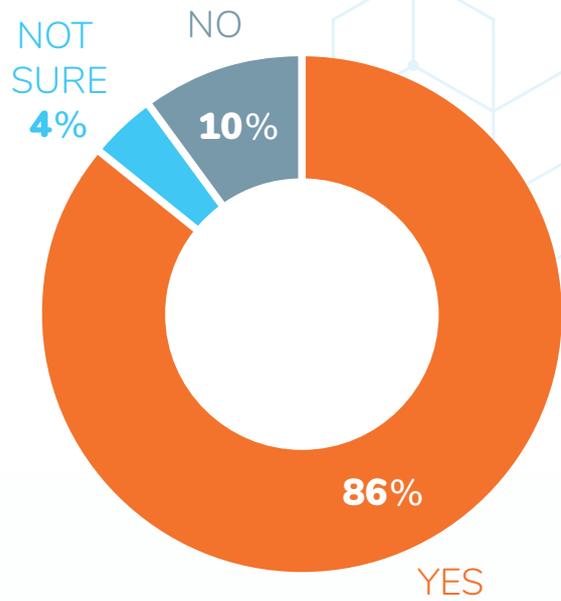
There also seemed to be a slight disconnect between how those in leadership roles prioritise environmental sustainability and the rest of the sector overall. More than half (56%) of all respondents said that environmental sustainability was a priority for leadership at their charity – 66% of those in leadership roles said the same.

One fifth of respondents overall said they were not sure if it was a priority for their organisation's leadership and almost a quarter (23%) said it was not. Those in leadership roles tended to be clearer either way – just 8% were not sure. More than a quarter (26%) of leaders said it was not a priority for leadership.

This demonstrates, once again, a lack of clarity as to how important sustainability is to a charity moving forward. Despite 86% of respondents saying environmental sustainability was a priority for them personally, only 51% said the same about their organisation.

This gap will likely have a knock-on effect on staff recruitment and retention, as well as charity reputation, but it's also a clear reason behind the sector's mixed level of environmental sustainability in the workplace. Charities need to ask themselves, if not now, when?

Fig. 22 Is environmental sustainability a priority for you personally?



5 Climate leadership in the charity sector

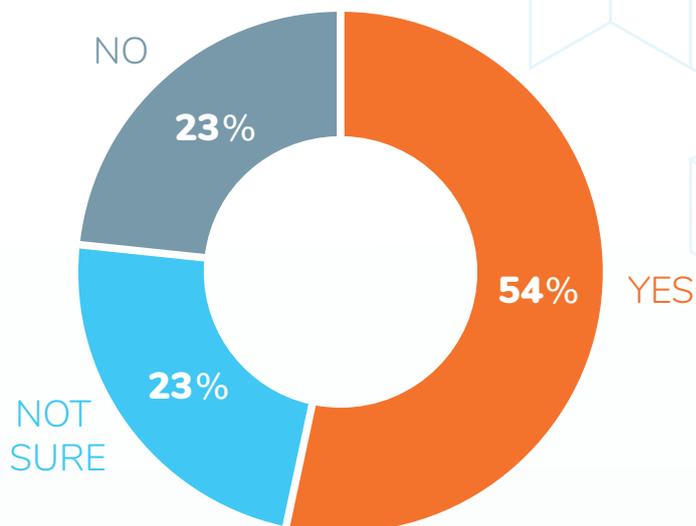
How do charity leaders feel about environmental sustainability and does this match with employee expectations?

Although environmental sustainability is clearly on the charity agenda to some extent, it is not universally seen as a priority, particularly by leaders in the sector, despite increasing focus on ESG and sustainability from both external and internal audiences.

Communication remains a huge problem. Fewer than half of all respondents to our survey told us that their leadership regularly talks about environmental sustainability. Two in five said they did not, showing that while environmental sustainability is creeping onto the agenda, it is still not seen to be driving any decisions internally.

Seven in ten (71%) respondents working in leadership and governance positions said their organisation was extremely informed about climate change, while 65% said the same personally. This suggests that some charity leaders have more faith in their organisation's understanding of climate change than their own – 43% said they were not sure how informed they were personally.

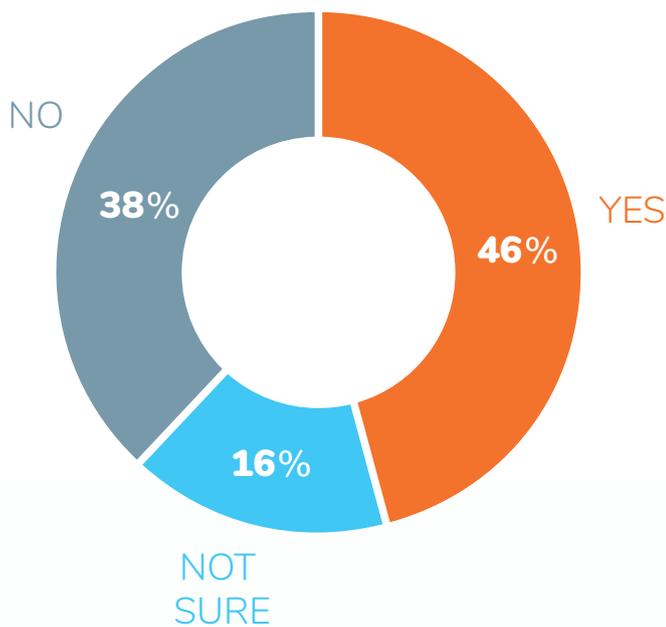
Fig. 23 Does sustainability factor into your organisation's decision-making?



Only 11% of micro charities said that sustainability factored into their organisation's decision-making. More than half of charities of every other size said the same. This perhaps reflects the more limited resources available to smaller charities, but also highlights the risk that smaller organisations in the sector are often left behind in matters of environmental sustainability.

Three in five (60%) respondents working in leadership and governance roles said that environmental sustainability factored into their decision-making – a similar proportion to those who said that it was a priority for them (66%) in the previous chapter.

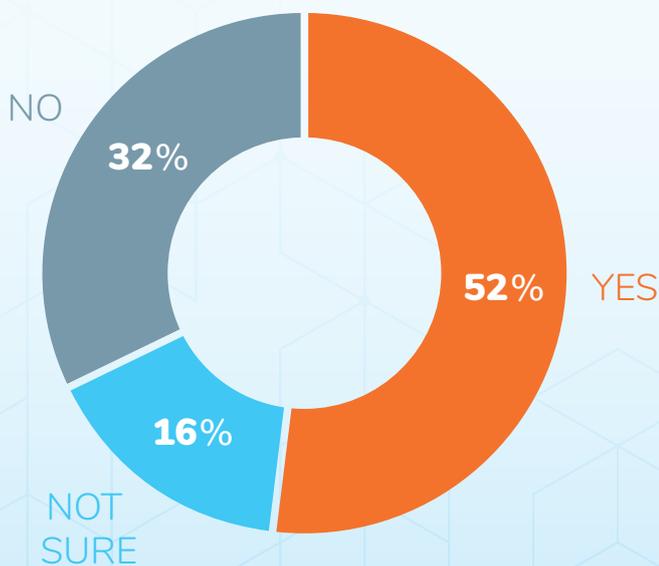
Fig. 24 Does your leadership talk regularly about environmental sustainability?



Despite this, only 46% of respondents said their leadership talked about sustainability regularly (see Fig. 24). Once again, there appears to be an emerging gulf between how seriously charity leaders are taking environmental sustainability and what is being communicated internally.

This is true even among leadership roles themselves – despite 60% saying it factored into decision-making, only 43% said they talked about it regularly. More (49%) said they did not talk about it regularly and around 8% did not know either way.

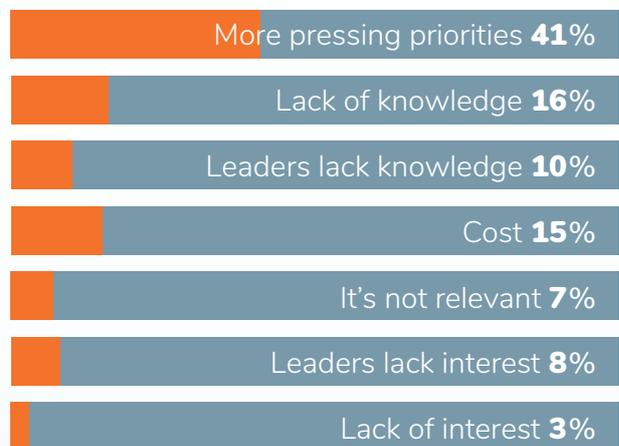
Fig. 25 Does environmental sustainability feature in your strategy?



More than half of organisations said that environmental sustainability featured in their strategy – naturally, a very similar proportion to those who said it factored into their decision-making. It is interesting that fewer said their leaders are talking about it regularly. Once again, this is true of those in leadership roles themselves – 54% said it featured in their strategy, while 69% said they did not talk about it regularly or were not sure if they did.

More than half (55%) of micro charities, with a revenue of less than £10,000 per year, said that environmental sustainability did not feature in their strategy. For charities of all other sizes, at least half said that it did feature.

Fig. 26 If sustainability does not feature in your strategy, what are the barriers preventing that?



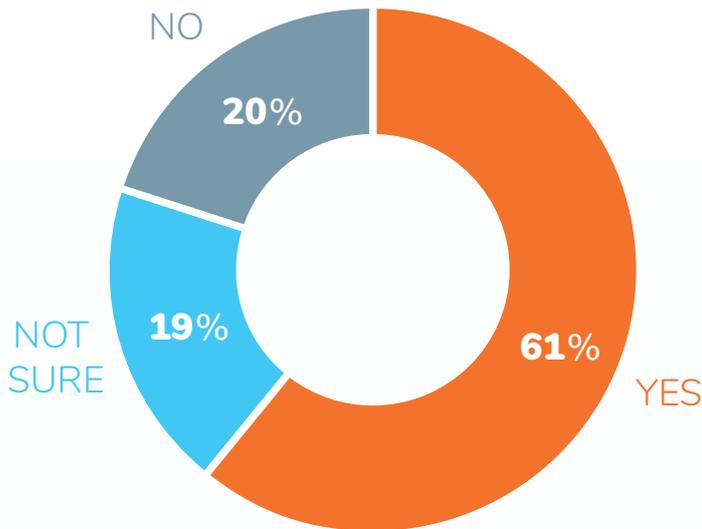
Unsurprisingly, for those charities who did not include environmental sustainability in their strategy, more pressing priorities were the biggest barrier, with two in five (41%) saying so. Lack of knowledge was the second most cited barrier (16%), followed by cost (15%).

Additional comments from charities who did not include environmental sustainability in their strategy indicated that lack of direction from leadership and other areas of the organisation was an issue. One respondent said that “lack of clarity about precise changes we should make relating to our use of IT” was a barrier to this, adding that IT was “the area where I think we could make the most obvious changes”.

Other comments revealed concerns around the priorities of funders, with some suggesting there wasn't a focus on environmental sustainability from both leaders and funders, and as a result, there was “difficulty in marrying sustainability with our charitable activity”.

It is interesting to note that 60% of charities told the survey that climate change was relevant to their purpose – including 67% of micro charities. Only 22% of micro charities said that environmental sustainability featured in their strategy.

Fig. 27 Do you feel empowered to implement environmentally sustainable improvements within your charity?



The good news is that, even for those charities whose leaders do not talk about sustainability or include it in their strategies, 61% of respondents said they felt empowered to implement environmentally sustainable improvements within their organisation regardless.

This included 44% of micro charities – though the same proportion said they were not sure, once again demonstrating the need for charity leaders to communicate further their aims when it comes to sustainability.

Those working in service delivery and operations felt the least empowered to make environmentally sustainable improvements, with 73% saying they did not feel empowered or were not sure.

Perhaps most surprisingly, only 60% of respondents working in sustainability roles said they felt empowered to implement environmentally sustainable improvements within their charity – two in five said they did not know.

Once again, more pressing priorities were highlighted as the biggest barrier to respondents making sustainable improvements, closely followed by there being no clear way of doing so. Additional comments revealed hesitancy to act due to not being in decision-making roles.

It is vital, therefore, that charity leaders drive sustainable changes where their employees feel they cannot. Likewise, leaders should communicate clearly how important environmental sustainability is to the organisation, either through talking about it regularly, factoring it into decisions, adding it to their strategy, or a combination of all three. Having more pressing priorities will always be true in the charity sector but leaders have the power to push sustainability up the agenda.

Summary

When we started this report, we wanted to gauge the attitudes of the sector towards addressing climate change and many of the findings have been heartening.

That 86% of charity professionals consider environmental sustainability to be a priority for them personally is encouraging, as is the fact that 88% say their charity is concerned about the impacts of climate change. This shows that climate change and environmental sustainability are front of mind in the sector, despite competing priorities.

Other findings, on the other hand, are concerning. That 71% of charities say they expect to be affected or have already been affected by the impacts of climate change shows that it is a problem relevant to the sector. However, only 52% of charities include it within their strategies. While this is a strong start, it remains true that environmental sustainability could be addressed as a bigger priority to organisations, alongside similar issues such as diversity, governance, and financial sustainability.

Overall, the survey revealed three key themes, as shown below.

1. Charities are concerned about climate change but have yet to take action

We know that charities and those working in them at all levels are concerned about climate change and environmental sustainability. However, the report also showed that charities were less clear about the actions they were taking now and in the future. More than nine in ten respondents working in leadership and governance roles said their organisation was concerned about the impacts of climate change. Yet only 60% said it factored into their decision-making. Most respondents marked their charity's environmental sustainability efforts at between four and six out of ten.

2. There is no universal notion of environmental sustainability in the UK charity sector

The report also revealed that attitudes towards and understanding of environmental sustainability varied greatly across the sector and across fields, job roles, and charity size. Many of the comments around how well charities believed the sector was addressing the impacts of climate change praised the efforts of climate and environmental charities, but suggested the way forward for other fields was less clear.

Similarly, there were some notable differences, particularly between those who included environmental sustainability within their charity strategy and the smaller group who said it was relevant to their purpose. These results provide perhaps the reason for the poor level of action highlighted above, but also demonstrate the need for the sector to come together to share sustainable solutions. There seems to be a lack of direction and a lack of clarity around what the sector is doing to address climate change. Charities could benefit from learning from each other and being able to benchmark their sustainability efforts against the work of their peers.

3. Charities are unclear about the importance of environmental sustainability in their organisation

Perhaps unsurprisingly given the previous two themes highlighted from the survey, the results showed an increased need for communication around environmental sustainability within charities, particularly when it comes to embedding it as a priority. Almost a quarter (23%) of respondents said they were not sure if environmental sustainability factored into their organisation's decision-making. A fifth of respondents said they did not know if it was a priority for their charity's leadership.

It is worth saying that this survey is just a snapshot of the attitudes towards climate change in the UK charity sector. The growing emphasis on ESG and sustainability, plus increasing coverage of the climate crisis and its impacts in the media, likely mean that climate change will become of more importance to charities as time goes on.

Indeed, while many charities cite more pressing priorities as a barrier to taking serious action, all charities are willing to do so, whether they are highly resourced or limited. It is not lack of concern that is holding them back.

It's clear climate change affects every area, but also every person. Charities must not forget what is important to their employees. [Three quarters of people](#) say they feel more fulfilled by a job when they have opportunities to have an impact on environmental and social matters.

Climate Outreach's [research](#) into the attitudes of the public towards climate change found that it is seen as a concern for everybody across the political spectrum, across all sections of society. Simply put, climate change should not be a [partisan issue](#).

Finally, investing in environmental sustainability does not need to be costly – in fact, in some cases, it can save you money – while there are plenty of freely available educational resources that charities can use to address climate change, including sustainability strategy templates and carbon calculators. You can find all these resources and more in the [Charity Digital Climate Action Hub](#).

About us

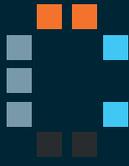


Charity Digital partners with leading technology providers to deliver the UK's only software donation platform, Charity Digital Exchange. The charity aims to improve digital awareness and access, connect charities to the digital expertise and talent they need, and raise the bar for digital skills and understanding for non-profit organisations of all kinds.

Since 2001, Charity Digital has helped over 400,000 charity professionals learn about digital transformation through our media platform and enabled over 68,000 to save in excess of £260 million on technology investments.

Whether it's the [COVID-19 pandemic](#), the [cost-of-living crisis](#), or [climate change](#), we help charities use tech to enhance the ways they work and collaborate when faced with current challenges. For more information about climate change and the charity sector, check out [Charity Digital's Climate Action Hub](#).



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