



CHARITIES

Energy Efficiency Guide



RUNNING LEANER, DOING MORE.

Charities work with limited resources and tight funding. But whether you run a small office, a support hub, or a community hall, cutting energy waste helps redirect money towards your mission — and reinforces your ethical values with funders and service users.

Where Charities Use Energy

- Heating & Hot Water: Especially in older or poorly insulated buildings
- Lighting: Often left on across whole spaces
- Computers & Plug Loads: Laptops, printers, kitchen appliances
- Shared Facilities: Tenants, sessional hires, or ad hoc evening events



PRACTICAL ACTIONS

Heating

- Install smart thermostats or programmers to avoid running heat when empty
- Only heat areas in use — zone where possible
- Set radiator thermostats to consistent temperatures (18–20°C usually sufficient)
- Bleed radiators and check boiler settings each season

Lighting

- Switch to LEDs across all areas
- Use motion sensors in toilets, corridors, kitchens
- Encourage staff and volunteers to turn off lights in empty rooms

Plug Loads

- Shut down computers, printers, projectors overnight
- Use smart plugs or timers for kitchen kit, water coolers, displays
- Unplug chargers, lamps, and fans not in use

Behaviour

- Appoint a part-time sustainability or energy lead
- Add energy checks to open/close routines
- Add signs: “Please switch off” / “Heating only when needed”
- Share costs and savings with staff or trustees: e.g. “Saving £80 = printing for our next campaign”

Shared/Leased Spaces

- Check lease agreements — are you responsible for energy?
- Ask landlords for meter readings and energy data
- Collaborate with other tenants to align usage and savings

LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY

- Apply for grant funding for **LEDs, insulation or solar**
- Consider **plug-in heat pump units** if boiler replacement isn't possible
- Improve **draught-proofing** on doors and windows
- Use **portable monitors** to track energy by zone or appliance
- Audit usage once per quarter – even a 30-minute walk-round helps

PEOPLE POWER IN CHARITIES

Charities rely heavily on people – and your staff, volunteers and trustees can make or break your energy plan. Because many charities can't afford major upgrades, behavioural savings are vital.

Practical Steps:

- Add “end of day” energy checks to closing routines
- Train volunteers and part-time staff to turn off appliances, lights, and heating
- Use signage: “Last out? Lights out”, “Heating only when needed”
- Share savings transparently: “£60 saved = 300 printed leaflets”
- Appoint an energy lead to check settings monthly and keep things on track

SUMMARY ACTIONS

Area	Action	Benefit
Heating	Use smart thermostats & set temperature limits	Avoids overheating & reduces bills
Lighting	Upgrade to LEDs, add sensors	Lower costs & longer lifespan
Plug Loads	Shut down unused kit & unplug chargers	Reduces standby energy draw
Behaviour	Add end-of-day checks, signage & staff prompts	Builds lasting awareness
Shared Spaces	Work with other tenants/landlords	Aligns savings across multiple users
Draughtproofing	Seal doors/windows to reduce heat loss	Quick comfort improvement
Solar PV	Apply for funding to support renewables	Reduces grid dependency
Monitoring	Use portable monitors or smart meters	Helps track impact and set priorities



Need Support? Let's Talk

We work with charities to help them reduce energy waste, cut costs, and align with sustainability values that funders and stakeholders now expect. Whether you're a two-room office or a multi-use hub, we can help.

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