



UNITE EDUCATION

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UNITE Reps and the Environment Day 4 and 5 ACTIVITIES





Unite learning contract – code of practice

On most education programmes we negotiate ground rules with participants. We would like to take this concept a stage further and adopt a Code of Practice which fits in with our values and has a person-centred approach to education in unions.

Respecting the unique worth of every person

We believe that regardless of status each and every individual should be equally valued.

We welcome the contributions and respect the wealth of experience that all participants attending our education courses will bring with them. We acknowledge that some organisational procedures are not open to debate, but that on occasions it is helpful to critically examine issues to assist in our learning.

We consider that valuable methods of learning involve discussion, listening and constructive challenge.

Encouraging people to fulfil their potential

We support this value unreservedly and aim to make relevant training available to all members within the regions and sectors.

We fully endorse the General Secretary's statement on "preventing discrimination on the grounds of Sex/Gender, Marital Status, Race, Sexual Orientation, Religion, Disability".

All education courses should reflect an anti-oppressive approach to practice. We aim to assist in developing an understanding of how and why oppression occurs and how it impacts on certain groups. In the learning environment we believe it to be important to discourage adversary positions or competition. We aim to work cooperatively and to promote an atmosphere of mutual trust and support, sharing, listening and affirmative behaviour.

Working with change

We acknowledge that learning involves change and that change is not easy but possible. We owe it to our members to constantly review and improve our practice. It is our hope and expectation that people attend courses with an open mind and a positive attitude to the education being offered.

Exercising responsible stewardship

Education is a resource in which Unite invests. We wish to provide an efficient and effective service which meets organisational targets and matches training needs identified and prioritised through negotiation with the relevant partners.

Working Together

We need the cooperation of all to use the training resources with responsible stewardship, to make full use of courses in a planned and effective way and to assist in the process of evaluation by completing application and evaluation forms.

Behaviour, language etc

We acknowledge that both participants and tutors share the responsibility to challenge any negative stereotyping language, or disparaging comments which are oppressive towards any group.

We aim to promote safe learning environments for all and recognise the need to be able to explore often difficult and sensitive areas. We also aim to create an atmosphere conducive to exchanging ideas, exploring concepts, constructively criticising practice and identifying good practice.



Confidentiality

At the beginning of courses tutors often negotiate the issue of confidentiality as a ground rule. This is a complicated issue and we feel it is only right for us to be clear on this point.

Our stance is:

1. Course participants have a right and a responsibility to choose what information they wish to share with both the tutor and colleagues.
2. It is to be expected that participants and tutors will perhaps want to share their experience of training with other people e.g. friends, family, other colleagues but it is incumbent upon participants not to share personal information about other individuals which has obviously been given in confidence and where individuals can be identified.
3. Sometimes issues come to the attention of the tutor which cause serious concern for the safety and well-being of other participants. In such a case the tutor may wish to discuss the matter further with the individual concerned and decide if the issue needs to be pursued further.

We will strive for an inclusive and courteous service which should be reflected throughout all our education activity.

The preceding pages are intended to offer a clear statement of the expectations we have of both ourselves and course participants and any tutor who contributes to Unite education.

We also welcome any feedback on the way in which the work of the Education Department in Unite lives up to its own Code of Practice.

In solidarity

JIM MOWATT
Director of Education, UNITE the Union





UNITE REPS AND THE ENVIRONMENT ACTIVITIES

CRISIS AND OPPORTUNITY

ACTIVITY 1	RECAPPING OUR ACTIONS
ACTIVITY 2	THE STORY OF SKILLS
ACTIVITY 3	A COP26 OUT?
ACTIVITY 4	A JUST TRANSITION IS A WORKER’S TRANSITION
ACTIVITY 5	EQUALITY AND THE ENVIRONMENT
ACTIVITY 6	OUT OF TIME
ACTIVITY 7	DEVELOPING POLICY
ACTIVITY 8	NEGOTIATING POLICY
ACTIVITY 9	A CALL TO ACTION
SUPPLEMENTARY ACTIVITY (TO BE COMPLETED AS A PART OF 2 DAY BLOC RELEASE)	
ACTIVITY A	REVISITING ENVIRONMENTAL AUDITS

The background of the slide features several large, overlapping, wavy shapes in a muted olive green color. These shapes originate from the right side and flow towards the left, creating a sense of movement and depth. The text is centered over these shapes.

ACTIVITIES

**CRISIS AND
OPPORTUNITY**



ACTIVITY 1: Recapping our actions

AIMS: To help us –

- To establish what actions have been taken since the last course
- Identify outstanding actions
- Learn from the actions of others

TASK:

1. Your tutor will ask you to introduce yourself, make notes on the following headings:
 - a) Name.
 - b) Workplace and job.
 - c) Any other positions in the union e.g. Workplace Rep, Safety Rep, Learning Rep, Equalities Rep.
 - d) What actions that you have taken since the first stage of the course. In your feedback you should include:
 - What communication you have undertaken with members on the environment.
 - How you have worked with other representatives in the workplace.
 - How you have engaged with your employer, for example in audits of supply chains, waste etc...
 - Other actions that you have taken in your workplace or in your community relating to the environment.
2. What barriers you have faced in delivering your action plan and how you have/will overcome them?



ACTIVITY 2: The story of skills

AIMS: To help us –

- To examine the changing nature of work and skills.
- Understand past, present and future skills.
- Understand the shift in skills over time, to better prepare us for the future.

TASK A:

1. What do we mean by the term ‘skills’?
2. Thinking about your current, previous or another job. Use the table below to describe the jobs that you undertake and the skills that you need to do them. The first table gives an example of a retail worker and the jobs that they may undertake.

<i>Example - Job: Retail worker</i>	<i>Example – Skills: Retail Worker</i>
<i>Operating check out</i>	<i>Numeracy, working with machinery/technology, customer service, working to deadlines etc...</i>
<i>Stacking shelves</i>	<i>Patience, using initiative, customer service skills, lifting, attention to detail etc...</i>
<i>Assisting enquiries</i>	<i>Good communication, knowledge of products, patience, stress management, time management etc...</i>
<i>Stock check</i>	<i>Numeracy, literacy, IT skills, working well under pressure</i>
<i>Loading/Unloading</i>	<i>Manual handling, driving relevant vehicles, operating machinery etc...</i>

My own Job:	My own Skills:



TASK B:

In the past ‘it was a simpler time’, but the present is full of uncertainty. As for the future, it is mired with worry and doubt that we cannot overcome the obstacles that face us in society. The reality is, the future was always this way, whether in the 1800s, 1900s or today. There is no doubt that we face an extraordinary challenge to our way of life/work and this can often be a daunting prospect. This said, now that we have looked at our skills, let us delve in to the past present and future and look at the skills needed for each of the jobs below.

1. In your groups, look at the following pictures. What skills are required for the following jobs:



Skills needed for steam train conductor in the past



Skills needed for cabin crew at present



Skills needed for starship crew member in the future

TASK C:

1. What do you notice has changed in terms of the skills required for different jobs over time?
2. Thinking of your own job, what changes to your own skills have been required during your time with that employer?
3. What changes do you see coming in the next 20-30 years in your own workplace? How will you develop new skills?

ACTIVITY 3: A COP26 out?

AIMS: To help us –

- Explore how we turn ideas in to action.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of climate conferences.

As Greta Thunberg proclaimed at the COP26, there is ‘too much blah, blah, blah’ when it comes to tackling the environmental crisis. You should watch the video found within the resources for this activity.

TASK:

1. Once you have watched the video, discuss any examples of the ‘Blah, blah, blah’ approach to the environment:
 - In the workplace or sector.
 - In politics.
 - In wider society.
2. Watch the young climate activists video contained in the resources. How will young workers demand more from future COP’s (Conference of Parties)?
3. Watch the STUC video contained in the resources. What do you feel the value of COP26 and future conferences have been and will be?
4. What can we do as a trade union movement to influence future conferences to ensure that workers voices are heard and acted upon?





ACTIVITY 4: A just transition is a worker’s transition

AIMS: To help us –

- Understand what is meant by the term ‘just transition’
- Why we need to put workers at the heart of any new economic model.
- Understand the role of Trades Unions in this transition.

A ‘Just Transition’ is a framework developed by the trade union movement to encompass a range of social interventions needed to secure workers' rights and livelihoods at a time when economies are shifting to a regenerative economy, that is to say, sustainable production, primarily combating climate change and protecting biodiversity.

TASK A:

Read through the definition of a ‘just transition’ above. Discuss in your group what this statement means to you and how it affects our:

- Workplaces
- Local communities
- Local economies

TASK B:

Looking at the tables below, consider the three crises that workers have experienced in modern memory. In your groups answer, what the effect on the workplace, local communities and local economy were/are. Then explain what injustices prevailed for workers, examining what, if we don’t act, injustices for workers are of the climate crisis.

Attacks on workers in the 1980s	Banking Crisis	Climate Crisis
<ul style="list-style-type: none">•How did this affect<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Workplaces?•Local Communities?•Local economies?•What was unjust for workers?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•How did this affect<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Workplaces?•Local Communities?•Local economies?•What was unjust for workers?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•How will this affect:<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Workplaces?•Local Communities?•Local economies?•Why could it be unjust for workers?

TASK C:

1. What examples can you think of where workers are securing a just transition in their workplaces, local communities and economies?
2. How can you achieve a ‘just transition’ in your own workplace, local community or economy?



ACTIVITY 5: Equality and the Environment

AIMS: To help us –

- Consider the impact on equalities of the environment crisis.
- Understand the impact on underrepresented and marginalised groups by a changing planet.
- Identify our role as a rep can influence these issues.

“A culture that places so little value on black and brown lives that it is willing to let human beings disappear beneath the waves, or set themselves on fire in detention centers, will also be willing to let the countries where black and brown people live disappear beneath the waves, or desiccate in the arid heat.” – Naomi Klein

Read through the case studies in the resources file.

TASK A:

Read case study A. Imagine the stress and anxiety when a parent has no option but to go for the cheapest products in order to fill the bellies of their children. Imagine how it feels to know you’re not teaching your children by example, not for any other reason than economic reality.

1. Consider from your own experience whether green products are affordable in our shops and supermarkets and if not, why this is the case?
2. What changes could be made to make environmentally friendly products more affordable, is there anything local or central government could do to address this issue?

TASK B:

Read through case studies B and C. Then, imagine it is night time and you have finished work, had something to eat and have just begun to wind down for bed. The rumours about flooding earlier that day have just been realised as a text alert, followed by a siren klaxon sounding outside of your house.

1. How would you feel?
2. What would you do?
3. What the impact would be on physical or mental health?
4. How might this scenario affect those with protected characteristics?

TASK C:

1. How do we work with employers to protect workplaces vulnerable to the effects of the climate crisis?
2. How do we ensure that in doing so, underrepresented groups are at the heart of our discussions with the employer?



ACTIVITY 6: Out of time?

AIMS: To help us –

- Understand global inequality.
- The cause and effect of global climate change.
- Develop communication networks across the globe.

TASK A:

- What is meant by the term 'Global South' and 'Global North'?
- What environmental injustices are faced in the 'Global South'?
- Which countries are most at risk from or are already experiencing significant effects of Climate Change?

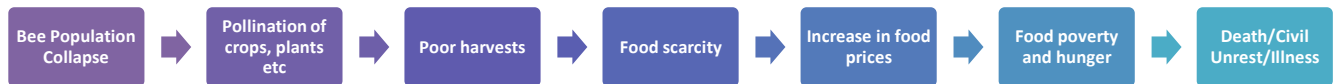
TASK B:

There is no 'Planet B'. We have already looked at the effects of climate change on supply chains in previous activities, however we should consider the impact on nature's own supply chains – of which we are a part.

For example, Bee populations have, in recent years, declined in part due to climate change. The worrying impact of this is the knock-on effect of pollinating the foods that we rely upon, which are in turn manufactured into human, pet and other food stuffs.

Select one of the following. Complete the blank chart below to show the effects on our environment of:

- Rising sea levels
- Desertification
- Deforestation
- Forest fires



Blank chain:



TASK C:

Select a country from the Global South and identify a contact that you can communicate with on the topic of climate change. For example, this could be a trade unionist or climate change activist. In essence we are asking you to develop a 'pen pal' relationship on behalf of either your branch or sector. **The focus of your communication is to show solidarity and identify any practical links that we could make.**

When communicating you should think about:

- How will you send this message so that it does not look like Spam?
- What communication barriers may there be (could you use Deepl translate to overcome these?)
- What timescales are realistic for a response.
- What you will do with their response.
- Which communication mediums you could use, for example Twitter, Facebook, Email, considering if the recipient will be able to access the medium you have chosen (for example, restriction by country)
- Whether a GUF (Global Union Federation) can help you with this task.



Droughts in the USA



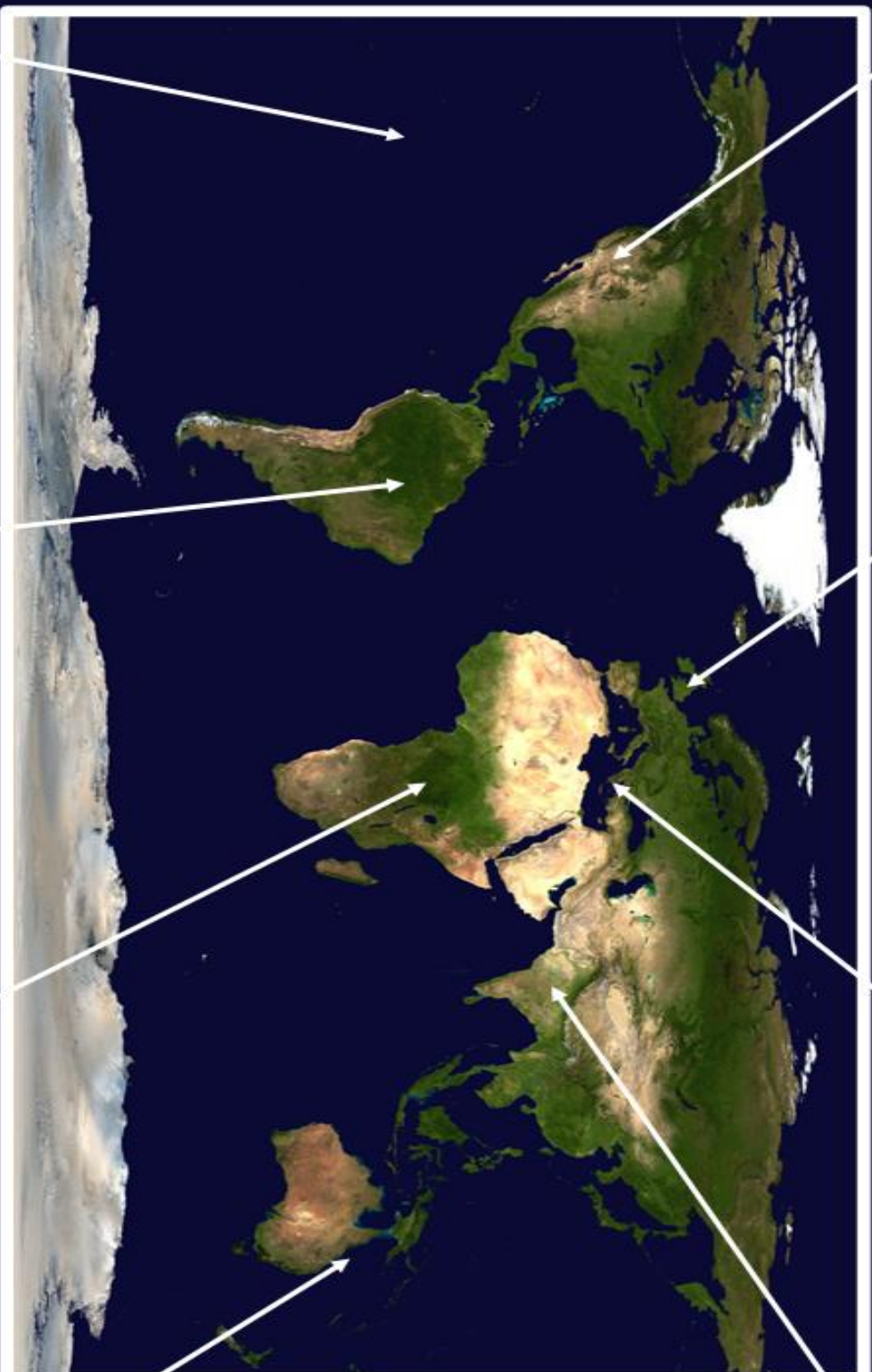
Saddleworth Moor Fires



Greece forest fires



Air pollution across Asia



Destruction of the world ocean



Destruction of the Amazon Rainforest



Cobalt mining in the DRC



Bleaching of the Great Barrier Reef



ACTIVITY 7: Developing policy

AIMS: To help us –

- Practice negotiating and raising environmental issues in the workplace.
- Understand the scope of an environmental policy.
- Identify key arguments that will engage the employer on environmental issues.

TASK:

You work for an organisation that does not have an environmental policy. You have invited your employer as a workplace branch to submit a proposal for a new workplace environmental policy. Given the climate emergency, this has been high upon your branch's agenda. The employer has a large carbon footprint in offices, although people have been working from home, logistics and also in its manufacturing division. The workplace has recently flooded on several occasions due to what has been described as 'once in a hundred' year rain events. Your members have raised issues with Safety reps complaining of excessively high temperatures in the workplace in the summer months. Safety reps have accessed data in the workplace and have noted an increase in respiratory illness over the previous years.

Keeping to our commitment in Unite, nobody should be left behind. Equalities are at the heart of what we do and who we are. You are tasked to draw up a proposal environmental policy that enhances protections for our members, makes a difference to the environment and that also supports sustainability.

Your environmental policy should contain brief statements on the following:

- The key environmental issues that apply to the workplace.
- Trade Union involvement
- A commitment to prevent pollution and effectively manage your significant environmental impacts.
- Clear objectives in the reduction waste, improvement in recycling and monitoring of supply chains.
- The expectations that the employer has in relation to external parties such as suppliers and contractors.
- Recognition of compliance with relevant environmental legislation as a minimum level of performance.
- Education and training of employees in environmental issues and the environmental effects of their activities.
- Monitoring progress and reviewing environmental performance against targets and objectives on a regular basis (usually yearly or in the first six months initially).



ACTIVITY 8: Negotiating policy

AIMS: To help us –

- Practice negotiating and raising environmental issues in the workplace.
- Understand the scope of an environmental policy.
- Identify key arguments that will engage the employer on environmental issues.

TASK:

Following on from the previous activity and with the example policy that you have developed, your tutor will split the course into groups. You should consider what tactics, skills and communication/negotiating strategies that you would utilise to win the employer around (and other unions if in a multi-union workplace).

One group will be the Unite negotiating team, which could consist of representatives of all disciplines (workplace, safety, equality, learning reps etc).

The other group will take the position of the employer which could consist of senior management, health and safety officers, equality and diversity leads, HR partners.

If course numbers allow, another group may be formed to represent another union in the workplace.



ACTIVITY 9: A call to action

AIMS: To help us –

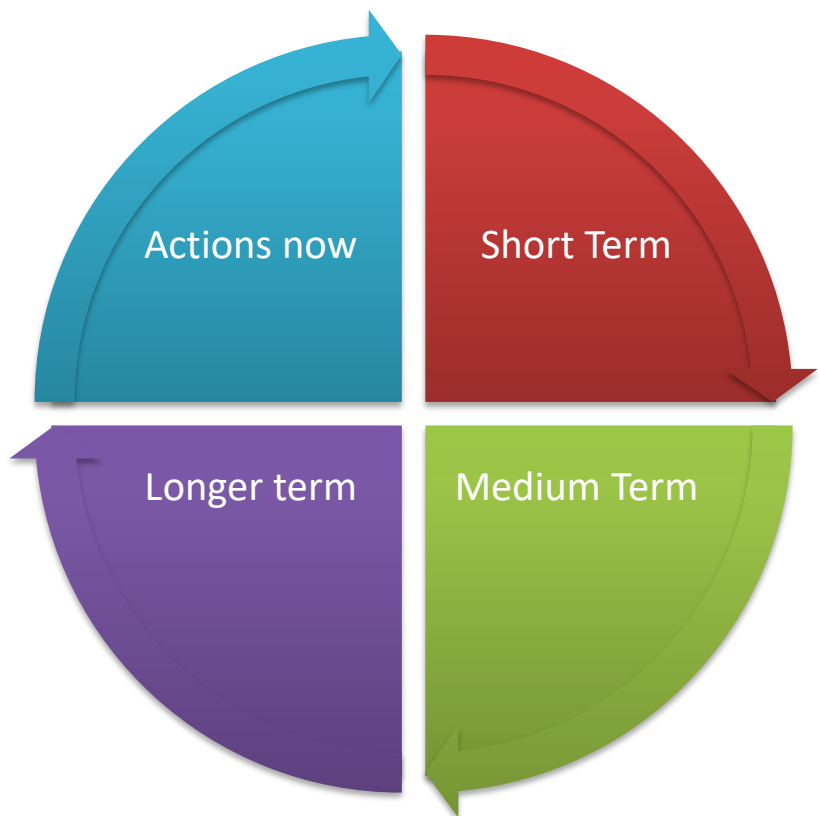
- Decide on the issues that you will deal with in the coming period.
- Plan how you will deal with these issues.
- Consider how you will involve membership, branch, FTOs etc.

TASK A:

In groups, look at the graphic below and considering the discussions that we have had throughout the course, identify which actions that you will realistically take upon your return to the workplace. Then identify the short (within 12 weeks), medium (within 6 months) and longer-term actions.

TASK B:

Consider how you can develop a project for your workplace or organisation that tackles environmental change and the impact on supply chains. You should think about building alliances with Unite community and retired members branches, other workplaces and the broader movement.





ACTIVITY A: Revisiting Environmental Audits

AIMS: To help us –

- Identify what progress has been made in environmental audits in your workplace
- What further actions need to be undertaken in this area.

TASK:

Some time may have elapsed since you attended stage 1 of this programme. Revisit the audit below to identify what areas you have seen progress and which areas need further work.

Note: For those that are undertaking this course that have not been able to fully deploy your action plan from stage 1, use the audit questions below to envisage any barriers that you may face from your employer and how you might overcome them.

1 = Never

2 = Occasionally

3 = Mostly

4 = Always

5 = Not applicable

Audit Questions	1	2	3	4	5
Does your employer fully map its supply chains?					
Does your employer map the environmental impact from its supply chains?					
Does the organisation understand, and explain, its carbon footprint?					
Does your employer have written environmental policies and/or an accredited Environmental Management System (e.g. EMAS, ISO14001, Carbon Trust Carbon Management Scheme)?					
Does the organisation have a carbon or environmental management plan and is it committed to work with workers and their unions?					
Does the organisation publish key environmental indicators?					
Does the employer use power saving features at work (motion sensor lights, IT power downs)?					
Does the employer use low energy appliances (bulbs, monitors etc)?					
Does your employer provide training on practical steps to reduce your carbon footprint?					
Does your employer consult with the union on its training offer?					
Does the employer have a commitment to seek ways to minimise the use of resources, including energy, paper, raw materials, packaging and disposable items?					
Is heating or cooling on in areas, or at times of year/day, when it doesn't need to be?					
Is the workplace properly insulated and draught-proofed?					
Is any equipment left on when not in use?					
Is everything recycled that can be?					
Does the employer have water saving measures in place?					
Does the organisation have an up-to-date travel plan that promotes low-carbon transport and reduces unnecessary travel, negotiated with the union?					
Are catering arrangements satisfactory or is food over-processed or packaged?					
Does the organisation offer any carbon reducing schemes outside of the workplace (carpooling, bike to work etc)?					
Does the employer consider and act upon environmental impacts in procurement of goods and services?					
Does the organisation undertake environmental audits and implement recommendations in full?					

Discuss your findings with the wider group to establish best practice and areas for improvement.