Inspiring a love of learning since 1992

Sustainability Statement 2027

Making a difference

Our plan for tomorrow

Introduction

Our mission as a business remains the same as it did over 30 years ago; to be inclusive and meet the needs of all EYFS and primary school children. In more recent years this mission has taken on a slightly different meaning. Not only are we focusing on supporting children's **educational** needs but their needs for the **future** and their **future planet.**

As a small business, we recognise that a little can go a long way. Whether this is in the context of providing a classroom with a few key quality resources to prompt children's education, or changing our internal and external processes to support our struggling planet.

Our sustainability report is designed to bring these "little" actions to light. Here we lay out the specific actions that we are currently undertaking to reduce our impact on the planet, from our internal processes to our products, packaging and shipping. Also within this report are our goals and plans for the future to reduce our impact on the planet and thus support the future needs of all children.

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A letter from our MD

Every day at EYR we ask ourselves, **“how can we be better?”** This goes for product innovation, service, delivery, packaging and our customer experience as well as many other factors within the business. Along with our ethos of “there is no such thing as a bad idea”, we are always looking for new and innovative ways to challenge and improve ourselves. For a company of our size, the journey to becoming more sustainable is not straightforward. Relying on suppliers and therefore accepting their processes, packaging and shipping, is one of the many challenges we face along the way. But at EYR we don’t like to shy away from any challenge, large or small. We may not have the answers now but by thinking outside the box and trusting in our innovation we will find the right solutions as we continue on this journey.

Starting small

In 2023 we launched our first sustainability report which laid out clear guidelines and boundaries as to what we would determine to be eco-friendly. This forced us to look a lot closer at some of our suppliers, materials and general procedures and really assess “how can we be better”. Whilst we are proud to say we have made great leaps in this last few years regarding sustainability, this analysis really showed us we have a long way to go.

As a business, we make mistakes, reflect on them and try again. For us, continuous improvement is key and so we are more than happy to share what has worked and what hasn’t. This way, others can learn from our mistakes and as a community, we can all learn how best to navigate the way to a more sustainable future.

With that, we introduce to you our fourth sustainability statement for you to see the progress we have made in these years and where we intend to go in the future. I hope that you find this informative and honest and will be here to see the changes that we will soon be implementing!

Payman Mostaan
Managing Director and founder, Early Years Resources

A bit about us

Early Years Resources began 34 years ago with one man and his vision to source and provide education solutions for childcare providers. Going door to door and asking different practitioners what they needed was the first step into business and the catalyst for our first catalogue – one sheet of double-sided A4 paper.

2007 saw EYR enter the world of eCommerce, swiftly followed by the creation of our first downloadable resource. These free resources, designed by in-house teachers were created to ensure that all practitioners could be able to provide educational support and entertainment to the children in their care, regardless of budget, size of setting or educational background.

By 2012 we had begun developing our own exclusive EYR range. Following the trend of the past 20 years in business, the products in this range were designed and created to respond to customer needs. Using insights from our customers as well as the expertise of our in-house teachers and education specialists, the range has expanded over the years to continue to provide solutions to various childcare and teaching needs.

Fast forward to the present day and that one-man band has transformed into multiple departments, all working to preserve the original vision. Despite time moving on, we are still asking our customers the same questions we did back in 1992, allowing us to keep up to date with the ever-changing world and putting our customers at the forefront of everything we do.

Our values

Innovation

Inclusivity

Quality

Integrity

Our mission

To be inclusive and meet the educational needs of all children.

Our product sustainability plan

At the start of 2022, we evaluated our impact on the world – from our products to our internal processes – and conceived our product sustainability plan. This plan is focused specifically on our vast range of products and provides us with guidelines and a roadmap to slowly make sure that our offering is as eco-friendly and sustainable as possible.

In the phases which we have outlined below, we refer to the terms “eco” and “sustainable”. We understand and acknowledge that this might not necessarily be how you define the terms. However, for the purposes of providing ourselves with a clear **roadmap for the future**, we have defined what we mean by eco and sustainable in each of the **3 phases** for full transparency.

PHASE 1

Product composition

In this phase, we will be focusing mostly on the product composition and more specifically the materials used in manufacturing. The terms “eco” and “sustainable” here refer only to products that:

- **Are made from recycled materials**
- **Are made from sustainable materials**
- **Are upcycled or recycled**
- **Do not use harmful dyes or chemicals**

This currently accounts for 31% of our products

PHASE 2

Supply and packaging

Building on the product composition laid out in phase 1, **Phase 2** additionally focuses on the supply and packaging of the products. Within this phase – the terms “eco” and “sustainable” are extended to products for which:

- **No plastic is used in the packaging**
- **Packaging is made from sustainable or recycled materials**
- **Packaging is recyclable**

PHASE 3

Manufacturing

Within **phase 3** we will be focusing on how we deliver our products to customers as well as how our suppliers manufacture products. This includes the ethics of our suppliers and the treatment of their employees as well as the shipping and manufacturing methods used.

Here, products will be defined as “eco” or “sustainable” if they have one or more of the following characteristics:

- **Products are made in the UK and not flown in from overseas**
- **Transport methods used to get the product to our warehouse are sustainable**
- **Manufacturers offset the emissions made from producing the products**
- **Treatment of workers creating the resources is ethical**
- **Workers producing the resources work in a safe environment and are fairly paid**

Making a conscious effort when selecting new products for our range to ensure theyare as “eco” as possible

Working hard to remove or replace any existing products with more “eco-friendly” alternatives

Adding products to our EYR developed range that are sourced locally

Taking a closer look at the packaging used by our suppliers

What are we working on?

Liaising with suppliers on our EYR exclusive resources to minimise the use of unnecessary packaging

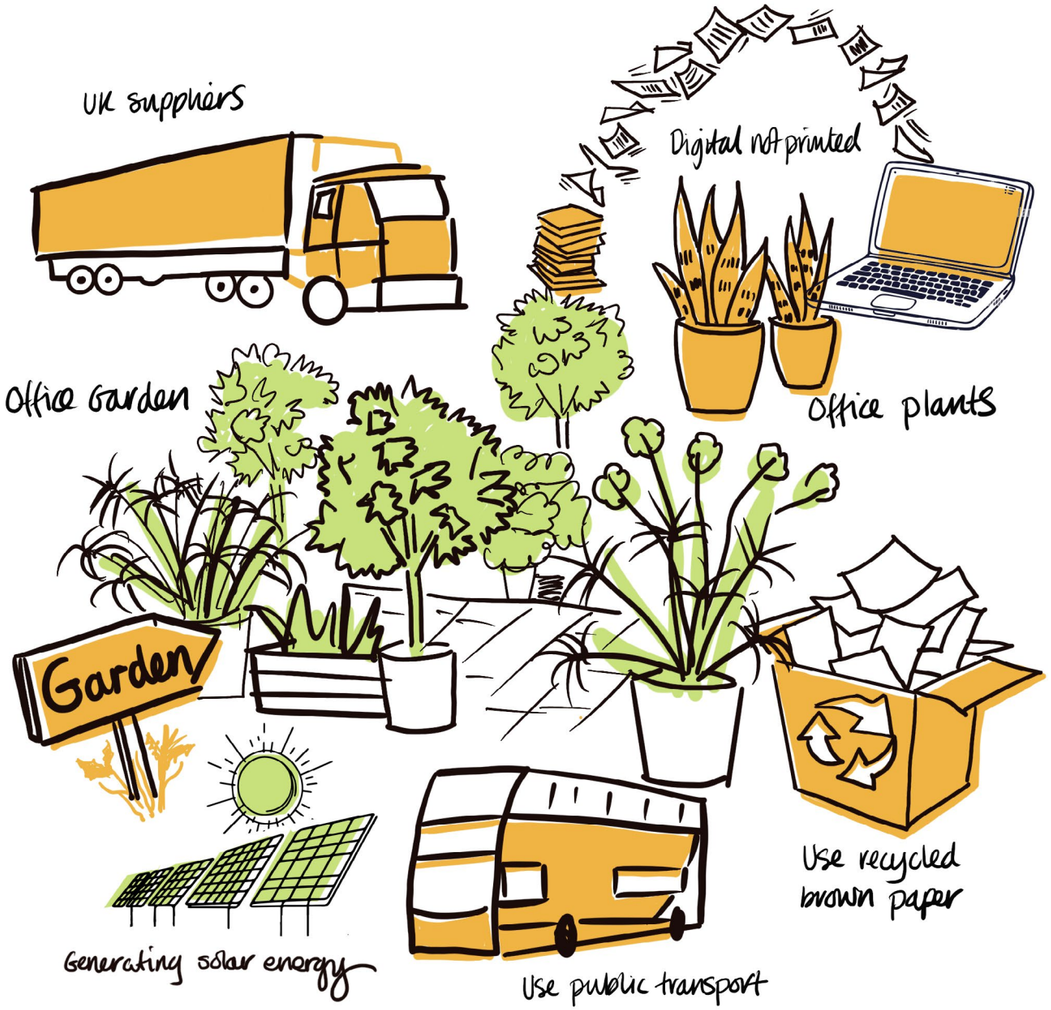
Asking questions to our suppliers about the details of their products and the material composition

Increasing transparency of the material composition of our products on our website

Working hard to develop “eco-friendly” alternatives to existing products

In 2027... our goal is to hit a target of 90% of all products classed as eco

Using the guidelines outlined in phase 1, this currently accounts for 31% of all our products”



Our internal efforts

- Source our own products where possible from **small** and **local UK suppliers** to keep our local community thriving
- **Built an office garden** in the industrial estate on which we are based, with a solar-powered water fountain for any wildlife
- **Oxygenating plants** in our offices
- Use **recycled brown paper** in our boxes instead of bubble wrap or other plastic alternatives (we will be looking at supplier packaging in phase 2)
- Use of **digital forms** internally instead of printed documents
- Various **charitable work** in the local community from foodbank donations to resource and monetary donations (read more about Extras with EYR here)
- Switching 95% of our office lights to eco-friendly **LED lights**
- Installed **solar panels** on our roof to power our electricity
- **Upcycle** old boxes to use as packaging for our products

Our future

Beyond the phases – our pledge for the future

We can appreciate that as a distributor and a business we cannot guarantee that our products in any of the 3 phases outlined will be 100% eco-friendly and sustainable. Therefore we have created a pledge for the future. This pledge outlines our plans for becoming more eco-friendly in the coming years. The aim of this is to continue to bring you the resources and service you know and love at the same level of quality but in a sustainable and more environmentally friendly way.

We pledge that by the year 2035 90% of our product offering will be eco-friendly

To achieve this, we will launch:

Phase 1: 2023 – 2027

Phase 2: 2028 – 2032

Phase 3: 2033 – 2035

Why not 100% by 2035?

The reason behind the 90% target, as opposed to 100%, is to factor in a percentage of error. As mentioned previously we do not envision our path to a sustainable future as being wholly straightforward. Pledging a guarantee of 90% product sustainability, therefore gives us a margin of error, whether this be issues that arise with suppliers or our own processes. At the end of the phases laid out, we will of course reset this target to work towards 100%.

Why not do everything all at once?

The use of carefully spaced-out phases allows us to take care of our company's sustainability and ensure that our targets are realistic and achievable for our team to work towards.

What happens after this?

At the end of these phases, we will review our carbon footprint – including the emissions from our staff getting to work, running our offices and the products we supply, create and distribute - and detail the ways in which we plan to offset these emissions. At this point in the future, we will be in a better position to be able to provide an official date that we intend to be carbon neutral.