

Carbon Footprint Report 2023/24

Commitment to achieving Net Zero

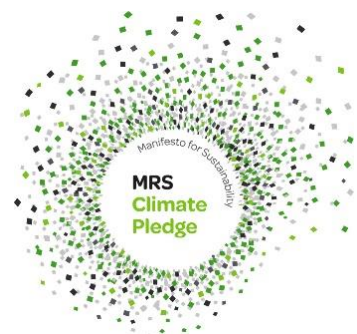
M.E.L Research isn't a standard agency. We grasp the nettle of social responsibility and push for social value - both in how we work and who we work with. We believe that all businesses have a duty to be socially responsible. To re-invest in society, to be active contributors to the local community, and to minimise their environmental impacts.

Our vision is to make a positive difference to organisations, employees, customers and wider society. We push for social value – in why we work, how we work and who we work with. To realise our social value commitment, a delivery team drawn from all levels of the organisation was established in early 2022. This ensures that delivery in this area is being shaped by the passions and interests of our team members. The team meets on a quarterly basis to report progress made across 4 key areas and agree the main activities for the next quarter. Environment is one of the four key areas.

In 2021, we signed up to the Market Research Society Net Zero Pledge. This is a pledge specific to the research sector. By signing the pledge – a manifesto for sustainability – M.E.L Research commit to:

			
Making our business net zero by 2026.	Tracking and publishing our carbon emission, working to reduce and offset those emissions and publishing these figures annually in an Industry Report.	Collaborating across our sector and beyond, to share learning and best practice to achieve the above goals.	Supporting and encouraging conversations and call outs by our employees, partners and clients about environmental concerns and viewpoints.

Following a strategy session in October 2023, the MRS Sustainability Council decided to revise the 'Net Zero' Pledge in order to better reflect the evolved global understanding of net zero and encourage greater levels of positive behavioural change across the industry. The new Climate Pledge has introduced four important pillars of Climate Action. We have aligned these within our own business goals.



1 TRACKING

CLIMATE ACTIONS

Calculate carbon emissions each year and make improvements in data collection and calculation processes, to support greater data quality in the long-term.

2 REDUCTION

CLIMATE ACTIONS

Make tangible changes each year that should result in year-on-year reductions (per staff member) – in emissions (measured in tCO₂) and energy use.

3 TRANSPARENCY

CLIMATE ACTIONS

Complete the MRS' Annual Climate Pledge Tracking Survey, disclose an annual carbon footprint and a summary of reduction actions for our organisation.

4 COLLABORATION

CLIMATE ACTIONS

Support conversations and call outs by staff, partners and clients about environmental concerns and viewpoints e.g. participate in sector discussions of progress; and actively educate employees; create an in-house committee to ensure climate impact is included in methodological decisions.

In summer 2023 we published our first carbon reduction plan along with our first set of carbon emissions related to scope 1, 2 and 3, using financial year 2021/22 as our baseline year. This report provides an update on our 2022/23 figures and how we as an organisation will continue to improve our processes to more accurately monitor and report our carbon emissions, and more importantly, what actions we have taken to achieve true Net Zero.

Emissions Footprint

The table overleaf shows our 2022/23 emissions in comparison to the baseline year of 2021/22. Noticeable increases can be seen as we became better at capturing data to monitor our carbon emissions and calculating relevant figures. We will continue to monitor the trend with the goal to reduce our tCO₂e per FTE on an annual basis moving forward.

Financial year	2021/22 baseline	2022/23	% change
Scope 1	0.000	0.000	0%
Scope 2	0.187	0.285	52%
Scope 3	151.025	233.185	54%
Total Emissions (tCO ₂ e)	151.212	233.470	54%
tCO ₂ e per million £ turnover	57.905	99.291	71%
tCO ₂ e per FTE	3.761	7.731	106%

The biggest sources of our carbon emissions are business services (31%, where printing postal surveys was the greatest contributor), upstream freight - mainly related to delivering and receiving postal surveys (29%), and information technology (20%).

Emissions reduction targets

As we continue to improve our internal processes to more accurately capture and report our carbon emissions, we remain committed to achieving Net Zero. We will strive to achieve science-based net zero by reducing our baseline carbon footprint by 90% by 2040.

Carbon Reduction Initiatives

Current practices

Practice	Detail
Hybrid working	Staff are no longer required to travel into the office each working day, therefore reducing the impacts that day to day commuting has on the environment. When staff do come into the office, we encourage the use of public transport.
The wise use of paper	All staff are encouraged to print documents double-sided and only when absolutely necessary. The vast majority of our communication with our staff, stakeholders and clients is by email. All office paper is recycled using the facilities provided by our serviced offices.
The wise use of energy and water	All office equipment, heating and lighting is turned off as soon as all staff leave for the day. We chose BE Offices workspace as our head office because of their green credentials and commitment to being carbon neutral by the end of 2025. We have also chosen for our company website to be hosted on servers running on sustainable energy.

Reducing air pollution

Staff are encouraged to use public transport wherever this is within reason. Our offices are based in the city centre, near Birmingham New Street, Moor Street and Snow Hill.

Where face-to-face research fieldwork is required to be carried out in locations outside of West Midlands, we use locally based interviewers through regional supervisors or fieldwork agencies.

The company offers an electric car salary sacrifice scheme to staff.

Where possible and appropriate, we encourage clients to move from traditional face-to-face qualitative research methods to telephone or online based approaches, e.g. telephone/video interviews, online communities.

Waste reduction

Food waste, all cardboard, non-office recyclable paper and drinks cans are recycled at the on-site facilities in our serviced offices managed by BE Offices. All staff are encouraged to bring lunch in reusable cartons rather than food wrapping such as cling film or foil. We also implement a no bin policy in the office.

BE Offices have been implementing a zero waste to landfill policy since 2015.

Single use plastic reduction

We are committed to reducing the use of single use plastics from the business. Our on-site facilities provided by BE Offices make available reusable mugs, glasses and cutlery.

Re-use and recycling of equipment

Any de-commissioned printers are taken by our IT support contractor and where possible are reconditioned and sent to Third World countries, as part of their wider Corporate Social Responsibility.

Working with greener suppliers

This includes engaging in business with suppliers who are accredited for ISO14001, PAS2060, or are a certified B Corporation.

As mentioned previously in the report, printing and mailing of postal surveys is one of the biggest contributors to our carbon emissions. Our main supplier has committed to upgrading their building by installing a new roof, LED lights, secondary glazing to all the windows and a 65 KW solar panel system, with the aim to achieve an A+ EPC rating.

Future aims

We will explore ways to incentivise our staff to make their homes more energy efficient and sustainable, for example by installing solar panels. We are also looking into Net Zero data storage and how our current data centres are taking steps to achieve this target.



Offsetting

To offset any unavoidable carbon emissions, we will continue to explore ways of achieving this, for example by supporting high quality carbon reduction projects. Our first priority, however, will be to reduce our emissions as much as possible.

Declaration and Sign Off

This Carbon Reduction Plan has been completed in accordance with PPN 06/21 and associated guidance and reporting standard for Carbon Reduction Plans.

Emissions have been recorded and reported in accordance with the published reporting standard for Carbon Reduction Plans and the GHG Reporting Protocol corporate standard¹ and uses the appropriate Government emission conversion factors for greenhouse gas company reporting².

Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions have been reported in accordance with SECR requirements, and the required subset of Scope 3 emissions have been reported in accordance with the published reporting standard for Carbon Reduction Plans and the Corporate Value Chain (Scope 3) Standard³.

This Carbon Reduction Plan has been reviewed and signed off by the board of directors.

Signed on behalf of M·E·L Research:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'K. Emenage'.

Managing Director

Date: 15/09/2024

¹<https://ghgprotocol.org/corporate-standard>

²<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/government-conversion-factors-for-company-reporting>

³<https://ghgprotocol.org/standards/scope-3-standard>