

VISITLANARKSHIRE BUSINESS SUPPORT
SUSTAINABILITY RESOURCE GUIDES

Awareness

How to increase awareness
of sustainability and get
started on your green journey



[VisitLanarkshire.com](https://www.visitlanarkshire.com)

Green
Tourism



About this guide

Sustainability is no longer a moral choice. Setting sustainable standards in policy and upholding them in practice brings benefits for tourism businesses far beyond feeling like you're 'doing your bit' for a greener future for our planet. Running a tourism business sustainably can be better for your bottom line.

For instance, according to the Department of Energy & Climate Change, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) could potentially reduce energy costs by up to 25% through behaviour changes and efficient practices as simple as using LED lighting – and switching off lights.¹

But it's a journey. The first step to sustainability is awareness. In this guide, we look at how to increase awareness of the key sustainability issues affecting your business and provide some tips on how to get started on your green journey.

¹ Energy Saving Trust: A guide to energy efficiency in the workplace

Six ways to increase awareness

1. Training

Source training – both for yourself and for your employees. You could even make such training part of your staff inductions. For example, [Keep Scotland Beautiful](#) offers free online training, many training organisations have online modules on sustainability in the hospitality industry, and [Adaptation Scotland](#) is also an excellent source of information on sustainability and climate action.

2. Resources

As well as training, keep staff informed with the necessary resources, tools, and information to implement sustainable practices in their daily activities. As well as training, keep staff informed with the necessary resources, tools, and information to implement sustainable practices in their daily activities. Look out for free webinars on sustainability, the environment, and climate change on LinkedIn, Eventbrite, and YouTube. Look at your energy and water providers' websites as they have tips and suggestions for reducing your utility usage.

3. Engagement and ownership

If you do have employees, encourage them to share ideas and suggestions for improvement. Assign a green champion or create a 'green team' and involve them in decisions related to sustainability to foster a sense of ownership.

4. Specialist advice

Specialist advice is important to keep your business up to date with current legislation and opportunities for improvement. For example, from **SEPA**, **Scottish Enterprise**, and the **Ellen MacArthur Foundation**, as well as government bodies and specialist consultants.

5. Communication

Develop a dynamic Green Action Plan that looks at various factors such as energy use, transport use, and waste disposal. It should have targets and time scales for undertaking any actions. If you have staff, share it with your team to ensure everyone is aligned with mutual targets. Be transparent by publishing your plan online (if you have a website) and develop informative materials, such as brochures, signage around your premises, and digital content, to keep your customers informed of your commitment to sustainability.

6. Certification

Working towards achieving a widely recognised sustainability certification such as Green Tourism is a great way to raise awareness of your commitment to staff, customers, and tourism sector peers in the region.



Six top tips for getting started on your green journey

1. Establish a baseline

Evaluate your business's environmental impact to establish your sustainability baseline. Keep records of your utilities and business travel. If you do not have a database, then you cannot determine if the actions you are taking are providing results. You also need a bank of data if you are going to start to track your businesses carbon footprint.

There are several good free carbon footprint calculators for small businesses available online such as those from [Royal Bank of Scotland](#), [SSE Energy Solutions](#), [SME Climate Hub](#), and the [Carbon Trust](#). The [Hotel Carbon Measurement Initiative](#) is specifically aimed at hospitality businesses.

You will need to have (usually 12 months of) data: from your energy supplier and refrigeration, staff vehicle, public transport and electric car usage, and where renewable energy contracts are used.

2. Create an action plan

Make an initial green action plan based on your evaluation, prioritising areas with high environmental impact and low implementation costs, also focus on legal requirements. Look at areas where you can save energy, such as changing to LED bulbs, or sensor-controlled lighting. Adjusting heating settings, installing aerators on taps, reducing the volume of WC cisterns. These quick fixes do not cost much and will make a difference.

3. Refine and expand your plan

Once you have established some quick fixes, then look at more advanced actions, and set targets and timescales. For example, are you able to change to induction hobs? Are your cisterns dual-flush? Have you got a good composter that can deal with the amount of food and organic waste that your business produces? Be realistic in your aims according to your budget and time and resource constraints.

4. Develop a green purchasing policy

Your procurement choices reflect your values so publicise your sustainable supplier selection process using tools like our Procurement Checklist.

5. Declare your sustainability commitment

Develop a clear sustainability policy and share it online and on your business premises. VisitLanarkshire provides a helpful Sustainability Policy Template that you can tailor for your business.

6. Share your achievements

Use social media, your website, and internal communications to keep raising awareness of how you're progressing on your green journey. Our Communication guide provides lots of tips advice

By following these steps, you can not only raise your business's sustainability standards but also inspire others to join the movement toward a greener future for Lanarkshire.