

NCH

NATIONAL  
CONCERT  
HALL \ AN  
CEOLÁRAS  
NÁISIÚNTA



**National Concert Hall**

CLIMATE  
ACTION  
ROAD MAP

**July 2024**

# INTRODUCTION

## Climate action mandate

The Climate Action Plan 2021 released by the Government of Ireland sets out a number of ambitious objectives and envisages the public sector leading by examples on climate action to reach the target of reducing Ireland's greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) by 51% by 2023 and becoming climate neutral no later than 2050.

Under the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 and the Climate Action Plan 2023 (CAP23), the Public Sector Climate Action Mandate 2023 requires public sector bodies to demonstrate leadership in climate action by both taking and reporting on actions set out in the Mandate based on four key pillars:

- Our Targets;
- Our People;
- Our Way of Working;
- Our Buildings and Vehicles;

National Concert Hall Climate Action Roadmap structure mirrors these four key pillars.

# 51%

reduced greenhouse gas  
emissions (GHG) by 2023

**300,000**  
visitors each year

## About NCH

The National Concert Hall is Ireland's national cultural institution for music, proudly serving the Irish public since it opened in 1981 through live music performances and significant educational and cultural programmes. We host over 1,000 concerts and events annually and welcome over 300,000 visitors each year.

The National Concert Hall environment comprises of the buildings on the Earlsfort Terrace site, the staff of the NCH and National Symphony Orchestra, our three choirs and several resident organisations including Music Network, Crash Ensemble, Irish Baroque Orchestra and Chamber Choir Ireland. Bars and catering at the NCH are operated by With Taste, a third-party hospitality company which is governed by its own sustainability policy.

## NCH Sustainability Agenda

Following the United Nations definition, the National Concert Hall considers sustainability to be striving towards having a positive social, economic and environmental impact in everything we do. We are committed to excelling in environmental sustainability, and in supporting all artists, productions, events and personnel in running greener operations, avoiding unnecessary waste wherever possible.

Our commitments under The Climate Action Plan 2021 (CAP21) and subsequent (CAP23) has enabled the NCH to create a Climate Action Roadmap. The NCH is aligning with public sector targets which are to improve energy efficiency by 50% over the 2009 baseline and to reduce CO2 emissions by 51% over their 2016-2018 average baseline.

**By 2030, every public sector organisation is required to achieve:**

**51%**  
reduction in energy-related  
greenhouse gas (GHG)  
emissions

**51%**  
reduction in thermal (heating  
and transport) related  
greenhouse gas emissions

**50%**  
improvement in  
energy efficiency

NCH is currently planning for a major redevelopment of all facilities as part of the National Development Plan and Project Ireland 2040. We will continue to work with SEAI and EPA to achieve these ambitious targets, ensuring environmental sustainability is at the heart of our new campus.

# Our Targets

## Carbon emissions analysis

The National Concert Hall will establish a process for monitoring and reporting, to ensure there is an annual review of carbon emissions, as well as to track progress towards achieving carbon reduction goals. This process will adhere to the National Climate Action Plan and emission reduction target of 51% by 2030. This roadmap will be updated upon completion of our carbon footprint analysis. This will include calculating emissions from all organisational activities such as energy consumption, transportation and waste management. This operational shift, in conjunction with the forthcoming carbon footprint analysis recommendations and other planned improvements, will position the National Concert Hall on a promising trajectory towards achieving its 2030 emissions target.

Energy  
Electricity use in 2023 was down

12.2%

In 2022

but gas use, and specifically heating gas, was up by

28%

## Monitoring our Carbon Footprint – Current Position 2023 Key Stats

Recycling Rate of

82.4%

Dry mixed recyclables

7.75  
Tonnes

Waste

1.66  
Tonnes



## Travel/Accommodation

NSO flights for deps:

268

Car/train/bus/ferry journeys:

260

Accommodation:

1960  
overnights.

*\*Based on estimates*

Water Consumption

3,697  
cubic metres

# Our actions going forward

We have identified key areas of priority in relation to:

## Printing, ticketing & communications

### Completed /Ongoing Actions:

- We have replaced our printers with energy-efficient models.
- As of 2023, at the end of the financial year we inform each of our teams how much print they've generated and use this as a benchmark for reduction.
- We've pre-set all of our computers to print double sided and turned off colour printing.
- We've equipped our core administrative team with laptops, resulting in a reduction in printed materials
- We have reduced our ticket printing by 53.9% between 2018 and 2023.

### Actions to be realised:

- We aim to recycle 100% of the paper we use in our buildings.
- As of 17th January 2024, we have rebranded our "Print at Home (Physical Attachment)" tickets as "eTickets", which will incentivise a reduction of Customers coming into the NCH with printed tickets.
- Children and Families programming to integrate sustainability themes and key messages as part of annual programming

## Waste & recycling

We recognise that processing waste, even by recycling, is highly carbon intensive. As such, we've taken the following measures to reduce waste.

### Completed /Ongoing Actions:

- We provide clear signage for everyone using our buildings to limit the waste they bring on site, including recyclable products. We will increase this in 2024 in key areas.
- We are committed to a core principle of reducing and re-using across all areas of our work.
- Each full-time staff member has received a reusable keep cup and our partner With Taste provide a discount when used. We will continue to promote this discount.

### Actions to be realised:

- We will ensure that we use the most sustainable materials when printing performance and seasonal programmes, maximising space and postage efficiency where possible, continuing to explore digital and more sustainable options.
- Working with our partners we will seek to ensure all cleaning products are ecofriendly where possible

## Procurement:

Green Public Procurement (GPP) is a process where public authorities seek to source goods, services or works with a reduced environmental impact. The EPA has published GPP guidance and ten accompanying criteria sets that support the inclusion of sustainable and green practices into public sector procurement procedures.

- The ten criteria sets published are Road Transport Vehicles & Services; ICT Products & Services; Food & Catering Services; Indoor Cleaning Services; Office Buildings Design, Construction & Management; Indoor & Outdoor Lighting; Heating Equipment; Energy related Products and Paper Products & Printing Services.

## Actions to be realised:

- We will introduce green criteria in procurement to support climate action ambitions including improved energy efficiency.

## Data Protection & Privacy

While GDPR (Data Protection Regulation for the EU) would appear to have its natural home under 'Governance' within the ESG framework, we believe the protection of people's human right for privacy has a much wider reach across the organisation.

## Completed /Ongoing Actions:

The GDPR principles are underpinned by the term data minimisation to ensure the sustainable and ethical protection of data under our care. This transparent framework not only reduces our carbon footprint but also brings awareness to our data footprint under the following principles: -

### Data Minimisation

We only hold information that we actively use. While it is a natural instinct to hold onto information 'just in case we need it', we now flip that concept on its head to 'use it or lose it'. DPO working with ITC to introduce 'file clean up' programme.

### Data Mapping

We actively track what information we collect, the purpose and person responsible for the information under a ROPA (Record of Processing). This process also focuses on the footprint of the data. Where it is stored, country of transfer and length of time for storage. ROPA due for review and update Q2 2024.

### Data Retention

From the mapping process, we identify realistic but fair retention and deletion timeframes and act upon them. Ongoing assessment by everyone to consciously process – do we need it, why do we need it, is it held somewhere else, store it with intention or securely delete it

### Data Transfer

Information has the clever ability to 'creep' even under our watchful eye such as sharing information with partners & suppliers, email attachments, photocopying, printing, post-it notes and signing up to apps that promise to make our lives easier. This continuous transferring of information, both personal and business related, without due care to retrieve or delete simply feeds the hungry servers, data centres\* and artificial intelligence algorithms.

The proactive deletion and restriction of data management provides proof that we respect people's privacy, it will reduce the potential for a data breach and have a direct positive effect on our energy use and carbon emissions.

# Our People

The National Concert Hall's senior management team recognises the urgency of addressing climate change and the critical role that the public sector plays in achieving Ireland's climate goals in order to protect the environment and ensure a sustainable future for generations to come.

## Completed /Ongoing Actions:

We commit to engaging, empowering, and training our staff to participate, stay informed and engage with our sustainability initiatives including:

- Regular quarterly meetings of our NCH Sustainability Taskforce team to ensure actions are implemented.
- Regular reminders for staff to encourage engagement with our sustainability initiatives.
- Established in 2023, we run monthly/bi-monthly staff volunteer environmental clean-up sessions for the NCH outside environment – partnering with Dublin City Council arranging waste collection.
- Promote sustainable actions and options to visitors in programmes/What's On Guide e.g., give details of public transport routes to encourage people not to drive, promoting the NOW bike stations and our bicycle racks

## Actions to be realised:

- Staff workshops in partnership with SEAI and other climate and sustainability organisations
- Promote our green credentials e.g., all our energy comes from 100% renewable sources and our LED light conversation programme
- Sustainable ideas for staff collaboration/integration including annual clothes swap, book swap, unwanted Christmas present swap

To achieve this, senior management commit the National Concert Hall to the following actions:

- **Climate Action Roadmap:** The National Concert Hall embraces the Climate Action Roadmap as a vital tool to guide us on our climate action journey. Through this roadmap, we will continually improve our infrastructure, services and resource management, while also fostering behavioural changes among our staff and stakeholders.
- **Supporting Government Initiatives and Ambitious Goals:** The National Concert Hall fully endorses the Climate Action Plan outlined by the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment. We acknowledge the importance of its comprehensive approach to reducing carbon emissions across the nation. The National Concert Hall commits to working towards achieving the ambitious goal of reducing our carbon emissions by 51% by 2030 and aspires to reach net-zero emissions by 2050.
- **Leadership Role:** Senior management are dedicated to setting a strong example for our colleagues, partners, and the communities we serve, and understand that effective climate action requires both vision and accountability.

# Our Way of Working

## Our Plan

- 1: Agree priorities of the outset between key stakeholders
- 2: Embed processes to measure our carbon footprint across areas such as energy usage, wastage, recycling, transport etc.
- 3: Communicate our aims with all stakeholders and discuss methods of measurements and reductions
- 4: Identify initiatives and target reductions
- 5: Develop partnerships and organisations that can assist with monitoring and reducing environmental impact
- 6: Measure and Monitor impacts
- 7: Commit to consistent annual review

# Our Buildings and Vehicles

## Energy Consumption

The National Concert Hall are aligning with the public sector targets which are to improve energy efficiency by 50% over the 2009 baseline and to reduce CO2 emissions by 51% over their 2016-2018 average baseline. By 2030, every public sector organisation is required to achieve:

51%

reduction in energy-related greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions

51%

reduction in thermal (heating and transport) related greenhouse gas emissions

50%

improvement in energy efficiency

## Completed /Ongoing Actions:

- 100% of the energy we use is renewable, provided by Energia.
- Due to the age of our buildings we're unable to generate our own power; instead, we will state and implement energy reduction targets and continue to invest in more efficient hardware including heat pumps and solar photovoltaics in line with our commitments under our Climate Action Plan.
- Our power usage has continued to decrease, mostly due to investing in more energy-efficient and robust hardware across our operations.
- We continue to upgrade all house, orchestral and stage lighting in Main Auditorium to LED (2023/2024)

## Actions to be realised:

- Upgrade lighting in our public and back of house areas to LED (2024).

## Artist, staff & audience transport

We aim to lower emissions by encouraging our staff, artists and audiences to travel in the most sustainable way possible and providing them with incentives and support to achieve this. The NCH encourages and promotes the most efficient routing, shared or renewably powered transport and fewer air miles.

### Completed /Ongoing Actions:

- Encouraging staff to walk to work where possible or to use public transport. We will further promote our bike to work scheme and its incentives.
- Providing clear travel information in advance on the NCH website, e.g. a map of the site and the locality with the nearest bus stops, EV charging points, bike parks and other local transport links clearly marked encouraging audiences to calculate their carbon footprint for the journey

### Actions to be realised:

- Installing 10 additional bike stands to accommodate the increased demand for bike parking spaces. There are currently 46 number of stands on site
- We will monitor transport impacts such as artist travel, transfers, production equipment, deliveries, suppliers and contractors
- We will create a green rider template for all visiting artists and production companies

## Biodiversity

### Completed /Ongoing Actions:

We commit to a minimum 'greening' and maintenance of 2 areas outside NCH building, agreed as:

- Garden Shed to the exterior of NCH, growing creepers/climbers to create a vertical green wall including troughs and planters
- Planting native tree and plant species on site to encourage birds, insects and mammals
- Produce own compost to become self-sustaining
- Provide diverse green spaces for staff to enjoy
- Each full-time staff member has received a reusable keep cup and our partner With Taste provide a discount when used. We will continue to promote this discount.

### Actions to be realised:

- Develop an on-site community allotment for growing fruits and vegetables
- Introduce use of water butts to collect rainwater to nourish planting
- Investigate provision of free bulbs through Dublin City Council

