



# Ethical Procurement Policy 2025

18 August 2025

## **Introduction**

This document is designed to set out Adfree Cities' commitments in the area of purchasing/procurement and sustainability. As an organisation, we work towards the mitigation of climate and environmental impacts, a fair and socially just world, and an economy beyond consumerism. Adfree Cities has a firm anti-oppression stance, and we are committed to our ongoing work to stand against racism and all kinds of discrimination. Our procurement and purchasing should be in line with our mission and values wherever possible.

This policy sets out how we will aim to ensure that any procurement by our organisation minimises impacts on the climate and environment, ensures workers are treated and paid decently, prevents animal cruelty, minimises waste, refuses genocide, and ensures human rights are upheld in supply chains.

This policy will be communicated effectively to all staff. Staff will commit to making best efforts to adhere to the policy in any funding applications and procurement decisions, while recognising that occasionally this will be difficult; for example, road transportation required for art installation outreach or event attendance.

## **Where does this apply?**

Adfree Cities does not have structural supply chains or regular suppliers, unlike, for example, a textiles business. Our procurement is in large part ad hoc purchasing of items such as, but not limited to: office supplies and equipment, art supplies, utilities, banking and insurance, catering, merchandise, printing, creative and communications contractors and travel.

Adfree Cities' policy for purchasing can be divided into these main categories; others can be added when this policy is reviewed. This policy will cover all areas of procurement.

## Overarching principles for material items

**Circular economy:** wherever possible, we will purchase recycled, refurbished and second hand items, and will repair broken items for continued use.

New items will be purchased only when second hand or repaired options are not available. In this instance, consideration of supply chain ethical, environmental and climate impacts will be especially important; this includes food and catering.

**Boycotting genocide:** we will not procure items from companies profiting from genocide in Palestine. A list of such companies is available on the [BDS website](#).

## Overarching principles for non-material items

**Pro-climate and socially just:** in decisions regarding the procurement of non-material items, for example, banking, travel or accommodation, we will prioritise climate-friendly and socially just options wherever possible.

## Ethical Procurement Policy context

This policy will cover all areas of procurement and have a clear set of standards to which all suppliers (for example, internet providers, equipment manufacturers, contractors), will be expected to meet, including:

- Comply with the law in all areas of their operations
- Comply with the Modern Slavery Act 2015
- Respect human rights, including non-discrimination in employment for reasons of gender, race or religion
- Provide a safe and healthy working environment
- Provide acceptable working conditions and clear terms of employment
- Pay a living wage
- Respect the right to join trade unions and bargain collectively
- In business practice, pay invoices promptly
- Comply with relevant tax regimes and anti-bribery legislation
- Comply with environmental regulations.

## Ethical Procurement in practice

This policy for purchasing can be divided into a number of main categories, which can be reviewed at any time. This section outlines guidance on procurement principles for these categories:

- Office supplies and equipment
- Art supplies
- Utilities

- Banking and insurance
- Food and catering
- Merchandise
- Printing
- Creative and communications contractors
- Travel and accommodation.

## Office supplies and equipment

The guiding **procurement principle** is to purchase only recycled, refurbished and second hand items as far as possible.

- All electrical equipment should be refurbished or second hand unless absolutely impossible. The impacts of new electricals on the environment, nature, human rights (including children) and the climate is well established, and there is a good availability of refurbished electrical goods for many options such as phones, keyboards and laptops.

This may not be possible for items like chargers, and staff members (naming no names) are encouraged not to lose them to minimise the need to buy replacements.

- Any non-electrical equipment, for example office chairs, laptop stands, tables, should be second hand where possible.
- For items such as office stationery, we will seek out local, recycled and ethical options, and can explore [ethicalsuperstore.com](https://ethicalsuperstore.com) and [thegreenoffice.co.uk](https://thegreenoffice.co.uk) for supplies if financially viable.
- Any cleaning products should be vegan and free from animal testing, and should be environmentally friendly.

## Art Supplies

- Paint and other art supplies will be assessed for environmentally friendly components and materials.
- Any paper should be recycled or re-purposed where possible.

## Utilities

Our studio rent covers the supply of water, energy and broadband to the office. We are not able to influence the decision making around this currently; however, we will ensure that any suppliers in future are kept under annual review to ensure ethical supplier standards (for example, renewable electricity providers) and cost effectiveness.

## Banking and insurance

Adfree Cities will not use any bank that invests in unethical and climate-harming industries such as arms or fossil fuels. We currently bank with the Co-operative Bank.

Similarly, we aim to ensure that our insurance is an ethical provider. In 2025 this is a work in progress; we aim to move to an ethical provider in 2025-2026.

## Food procurement and waste

Adfree Cities will aspire to meet principles of local, organic and cruelty free procurement of food, including external catering.

This particularly applies to shared food or that provided by Adfree Cities for an event, for example office snacks and external catering for a conference or trustees meeting.

Although individual staff members are encouraged to choose cruelty-free food options when they are using the organisational budget, for example, buying food while traveling for work, we recognise that 'individual choice' is a dominant cultural value in today's society and the availability of more ethical options is sometimes limited .

This policy recommends that food procured by Adfree Cities is:

**Locally produced**, so as to support local producers, boost the local economy and lower carbon emissions.

**Organically grown**, minimising the loss of biodiversity, soil degradation, and pollution and agro-chemical resistance caused by industrial farming.

**Cruelty-free**, choosing plant-based food to prevent animal cruelty and slaughter.

**Fairtrade** or similar respected certification to make our best efforts to ensure human rights and the environment are respected in the products' supply chain.

**BDS-aligned**, using the most up-to-date information on which companies are profiteering from genocide, we will not purchase food from, e.g., McDonalds.

**Plastic free**, ensuring that any food and catering minimises the use of disposable plastic.

We will aim to reduce food waste, and will use composting and food waste arrangements wherever possible.

## Merchandise

- Adfree Cities occasionally purchases merchandise such as badges, as an outreach tool. We will endeavour to ensure these are ethically sourced.

- Any procurement of fabrics, for example for t-shirts, should use second hand clothing where possible; where new fabrics are purchased, this should be from ethical suppliers and include a thorough assessment of the company's supply chain to ensure there are no human rights implications.

## **Printing**

- Printing will be on recycled paper wherever possible.
- We will not print on vinyl or other plastics.
- This includes office printing, and the use of external printers for leaflets and other campaign materials.
- We will assess the environmental sustainability of printer suppliers, including the use of renewable energy to power printing operations and the use of eco-friendly inks, and aim to use these suppliers where possible.

## **Creative and communications (and other) contractors**

- Adfree Cities often works with creatives and communications professionals. We will ensure that contractors we work with are independent from harmful industries such as fossil fuels.
- Adfree Cities recognises the harms caused by Artificial Intelligence to the creative profession (amongst many other harms). We will not use AI where we could employ a creative professional (please refer to our [AI policy](#))

## **Travel and accommodation**

- Adfree Cities will not support staff members to fly to locations for work purposes.
- We encourage staff to use public transport for working outside of the office both in and outside of Bristol. We recognise that this may not always be possible, for example given childcare responsibilities or the availability of public transport.
- Adfree Cities aims to ensure that staff can use public transport or active travel to get to work. We allow flexible working, and aim to rent office space that is convenient for staff in Bristol.
- Staff are encouraged to use the Cycle To Work scheme for more affordable bikes and e-bikes. Information on the scheme and Adfree Cities' Cycle To Work policy are [here](#).
- Adfree Cities has a [Climate Perks policy](#). Staff are rewarded by up to two days additional annual leave if, on those days, they choose to travel via land or sea rather than by air.

- While fundraising, we will aim to budget for sustainable travel options, for example, traveling by rail to conferences in Europe. We will consider the climate impacts of projects while writing funding proposals; for example, the use of diesel vans to transport art installations, against the deliverability of the project and the structural change we aim to achieve.
- We will aspire to avoid companies with unethical practices such as Uber and Deliveroo.
- Occasionally staff may require accommodation if traveling for work and unable to stay with friends or family. We will aspire to avoid companies with unethical practices such as AirBnB, and to support local and independent accommodation options where we can.