

The PSS green guide to sustainability





Sustainability at PSS

Sustainability at PSS isn't just about saving our planet, it's about creating a community of PSS people who can come together and help make small changes that lead to big results.

Being kinder to our planet, looking after the environment, reducing our carbon footprint and supporting local communities are all part of our PSS Big Plan.

The PSS Big Plan

Our Big Plan has been broken down into five themes. The fifth theme is all about sustainability. It looks at things like how we can have a positive impact on our sector, local communities, the people within them and the planet we live on. This makes sense really; we want to make sure that the amazing work that we're doing now keeps us around for future generations. We might be over 100 years old, but there's no stopping us yet!



Your green guide to sustainability

Tip #1 – water meters

If you live in England or Wales and don't have a water meter already installed, you can get one fitted for free. This means you'll only pay for the water you use, rather than a flat rate.

With a water meter, you might end up paying a lot less or you might be more mindful about the water you're using (say goodbye to the days of leaving the tap running whilst you brush your teeth).

[Find your local water supplier >](#)

If like us, you also like free stuff, why not look into getting some free (did we mention they were free?) products from **Save Water Save Money**.

You can get nifty little gadgets that you can add to your toilet and shower to help reduce the amount of water you're using – winner!



Tip #2 - Don't despair! Repair your electronics!

How annoying is it when you've brought yourself a new little gadget that's promised to make your life easier and better in every way possible, but then after a couple of months (years if we're lucky) it stops working or won't charge anymore.

We've got to a point where it seems almost like a habit to just replace your smartphone every two years or just throw your electronic device away if it stops working. But that's where the problem is, lots of people don't try and repair something and instead chuck it in the bin, where it ends up in a landfill.

Fear not – there are lots of awesome campaigns going on across the country to support people like you and me to repair our gadgets and gizmos rather than sending them on their not-so-merry way.

So, if you've got a broken Hoover, TV, gaming device, washing machine, laptop etc, why not see if there's somewhere near you where you can take it to get it fixed?

You can try the **Repair Café** if you live in England or the **Repair Café Wales** if you live in Wales. You can also join the **Restart Network** or try your local community Facebook groups.



Tip #3: Recycle medicine blister packs

Medication blister packs are plastic packets that are used to store people's weekly or monthly medications. They're really common and lots of people use them to stay on track with their medication.

Even though they're great for helping people - yay, sadly, they're terrible for our environment - boo. The plastic used to create blister packs is terrible for our environment and takes decades to break down.

Luckily for us (and our planet) they're also recyclable in lots of Superdrug stores.

Superdrug have teamed with Terracycle to create drop-off points in some of their stores meaning that the blister packs won't be sent to a landfill but instead, they'll be made into plastic pellets which can be used to garden furniture! Not only that, but Superdrug are also donating £1 to Marie Curie for every kilo they collect.

[Find your nearest participating Superdrug >](#)





Tip #5: Slow down fast fashion

We've all been there. It's your friend's wedding or birthday party, and everyone has bought a gorgeous new dress, new jeans, or a new suit to wear, so you feel like you need to spruce yourself up, too. Or payday has come, and you've earned yourself a shopping spree. Rightly so - we all deserve to treat ourselves, but did you know that roughly 50 million garments are bought and worn just once every summer in the UK alone? Every 16 seconds a pile of clothes the size of the Eiffel Tower is thrown into a landfill.

Fast fashion is causing the fashion industry to be one of the largest polluters. So, what can we do? We're not saying that you should never buy new clothes, but there are a few things we can do to help look after our lovely world whilst looking amazing at the same time.



Here's our top tips:

- Donate preloved items and shop for 'new' items at your local PSS Swap Shop. Haven't got a Swap Shop in your centre or office? Get in touch with Joseph Tyson from the quality team to get one set one up.
- Buy less, choose well - a good tip that we found is to ask yourself, 'Do you really need this? Would I wear it 30 times?' If the answer is yes, buy it! If not - put it back. Make smarter fashion choices.
- Repair before you replace - small rips, holes, and missing buttons can easily be fixed. If you're not confident doing this yourself, support a local business that can help.
- Swap and sell - check your local area for 'swap and sell' events or sell your items on sites like eBay or Vinted.
- Check out your local charity shops and vintage fairs - it's the best way of recycling and reusing! We love a good charity shop find
- Pay a bit more, wear it a little longer - sometimes you really do get what you pay for. Money's tight for a lot of us at the moment, but if you can invest in some staple items that are higher quality, you might get a lot of wear out of them.





Tip #6 - Vampire devices

When we think about cutting down our energy usage, we think about doing things like not leaving lights on, not over-filling the kettle, and keeping the windows closed when the heating is on. But did you know there's an even bigger energy drainer in your house? Yep, the Edward Cullen of energy waste – vampire devices.

Vampire devices suck up all our energy even when they're not in use and drain 135,000 hours of electricity per household, per year!

Here's some common vampire devices:

- Smart home devices (like Alexa or Google Home)
- Mobile phones/tablets – when they're charging but not on/or are fully charged
- Laptops – when they're charging but not on/or are fully charged
- Printers, faxing machines, shredders
- White goods (Tumble dryers, washing machines, dishwashers)
- Kitchen appliances (Coffee machines, kettles)
- Games consoles
- PC monitors
- Microwaves
- Televisions
- Digital Radios
- Alarm clocks
- Music speakers

So, what can you do to stop these appliances from draining wasted energy? The quick answer – turn sockets off and pull plugs out whenever something isn't in use!

Confused.com have got lots of great advice on **how to improve your household energy efficiency.**



Tip #7 - On yer bike

Life is like riding a bike, to keep your balance just keep moving. In the warmer months (or the colder ones if you fancy it) why not leave the car and hop on a bike? This will benefit your health and wellbeing, as well as help our beautiful planet too.

With the prices of petrol higher than ever, now is the perfect time to get 'on yer bike'. You'll also be more eco-conscious, save some money, and get regular exercise too. Win-win in our opinion, but if you're not sold take a look at why we think cycling is a 'wheely' good way to look after yourself, and the environment:

- Riding a bike is a pollution-free mode of transport.
- Increased fitness and muscle strength.
- Cycling is a great way to reduce stress and improve your mood.
- Riding a bike, as with most aerobic exercises, can improve sleep.

PSS is committed to looking after the environment and encourages our staff to do so too. One of our many staff perks is the option to use Cyclescheme. Cyclescheme is the UK's leading cycle-to-work benefit. Anyone wishing to purchase a bike to cycle to work will benefit from 25% off on bicycles and bicycle accessories in a salary sacrifice arrangement.

Are you new to cycling or haven't tried it for a while? It's natural to feel a bit daunted, especially in a busy city. The Big Bike Revival have got lots of great tips on [how to get started](#).

Still not sold? [Read about Toby](#) and how cycling transformed his life.



Tip #8 - Get composting!

Did you know by composting at home means you could save the equivalent of years' worth of kettle boiling in CO2 gasses?

Not only that, but composting is great for your garden too.

So, instead of chucking out your food scraps and garden waste, why not think about creating a compost heap?

The Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) and Recycle Now have some great tips on [how to make your own compost heap](#) and [why composting is great for your garden](#).



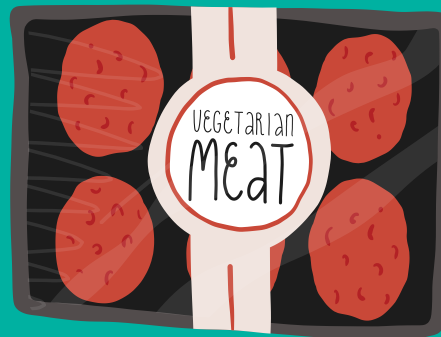
Tip #9 – Make red meat a treat!

Whatever your dietary preference, mixing things up and having a variety of food is a great way to eat healthy and live well. But when it comes to looking after our planet and reducing our carbon footprint, a plant-based diet is the greener choice.

Not all animal-based meals are the same though. Chicken and pork have a relatively small climate impact. Dairy and lamb sit in the middle, while beef is nearly always the least sustainable choice.

Even just choosing to eat one plant-based meal a week or having one less red meat meal per week, will have a positive effect on the environment. Cutting down on meat in our diet means we can save some animals, **save ourselves some money**, and save our planet – winner, winner *not* chicken dinner!

Cookie and Kate have some tasty **meat-free recipes** you can try this week.



Tip #10 – Get more for your money when it comes to fuel

We know that using public transport or riding your bike isn't always an option for some of the journeys you have to make. Sometimes, you've just got to use your car. Using fuel is fine, but wasting fuel isn't! So many people are wasting fuel without even realising it. More fuel wasted means the more we've got to fill up which is not good for our bank balance or the planet. Here's some tips from the RAC on how to get the most miles for your buck (quid):

- 1. Maintain your vehicle** – regular maintenance and servicing improve vehicle efficiency and having tyres at the correct pressure can help eke out your mileage.
- 2. Watch that right foot! Accelerate gently** – you are not Lewis Hamilton (apologies if you are and welcome to PSS).
- 3. Use the highest gear possible for the speed you're travelling at.** Change up through the gears as quickly as you can with the lowest revs possible (about 2000rpm).
- 4. Look ahead** – sharp braking and then re-acceleration is going to smash through fuel so drive as smoothly as you can.
- 5. Stay in gear while slowing down** to ensure the fuel cut-off switch in your engine is activated (this means you use no fuel when braking).
- 6. Cruise control helps fuel economy** – but only on flat surfaces! It's not responsive enough for hills and will worsen your fuel consumption in that situation. Great for motorways though.
- 7. Reduce drag** – take off roof boxes and racks when not in use and close windows, particularly at faster speeds.
- 8. Air con and heating use engine power** and therefore fuel so dress for the weather when travelling.
- 9. If you need to make numerous stops on a journey, make them as quick as possible.** A warm engine is more efficient than one that's allowed to cool down between the legs of a journey.
- 10. Lose the unnecessary weight** – I'm talking about the random stuff in your boot of course!



Tip #11 - 10 ways to make your garden a sustainable haven

Having space outdoors, no matter how big or small can be the perfect place to unwind and relax. Whether it's a balcony, yard or garden, you can make it your safe haven away from the hustle and bustle of the outside world. But did you know that by making some small changes to your garden, you can make a big difference to the world around us? By planting trees and plants and attracting more nature, means we can turn our green spaces into nature's playground.

Here's some tips from the Royal Horticultural Society:

1) Plant a tree

Trees are brilliant at drawing down carbon from the atmosphere. If all 30 million UK gardeners planted a medium-sized tree in their community, school, workplace, or garden and nurtured it to maturity, they would store enough carbon equivalent to drive you more than 11 million times around our planet. Want to know how to get started? Here's everything you need to know about **[trees and how to plant them](#)**.

2) Water the way nature intended

Say goodbye to the hosepipe and water your plants using rainwater. You can collect water that falls onto your roof or into a watering can by learning **[how to save water in your garden](#)**.

You could also have a go at making your own pond. You can make a pond using lots of different recycled materials like sinks and bathtubs. By creating your own pond you'll encourage local wildlife and boost plant diversity – winner!

Here's how to **[make your own pond](#)**.

You can also take a look at what our amazing volunteers did when making the **[pond at Dutch Farm](#)**, our urban allotment in Liverpool.



3) Go peat free

Peatlands are the world's largest carbon store on land. They provide valuable ecosystems for plants and animals and act like sponges, reducing the risk of flooding. When we take peat for our gardens, carbon is released, and habitats are damaged. Keeping peat in bogs – not bags – is a crucial part of the fight against climate change. Our planet's billions of acres of peat hold more carbon than all the world's forests combined.

4) Make your own compost

Every 1kg of homemade compost typically saves over 0.1kg of fossil CO₂ emissions, which could save more than 5.1 kg of carbon, per gardener, per year.

5) Plants for pollinators

Loss of habitat is one of the main reasons why we see fewer bees, butterflies and other insects visiting our gardens. Help slow and reverse the declines in bees, butterflies, moths, hoverflies and other pollinators by growing a wide variety of plants including a mixture of native, near-native and exotic plants to support pollinator diversity.

6) Grow your own bunch of flowers

Some imported flowers have up to 10 x the carbon footprint of UK-grown bouquets. Buying UK-grown cut flowers or learning **how to grow your own flowers** can save up to 7.9kg of carbon per bunch compared with buying some imported bunches.

7) Electrify your garden

An average petrol power tool emits 0.848 kg carbon per litre of petrol used. Not only do they emit carbon, but they add to noise pollution too. If the 21% of UK gardeners who use power tools switched from fossil fuel to green energy electric-powered tools, it would save enough carbon equivalent to drive around the planet 29,820 times.



8) Help map garden UK plant biodiversity

Add your garden plants to RHS My Garden online. Together we can help map UK garden plants, helping to conserve and grow this important biodiversity now and for future generations. So far, we have 122,000 users who have added 2.4 million plants consisting of 77,600 different types of cultivated plants. All you need to do is **create a free account**.

9) Eat more home-grown, UK and local and seasonal fruit and veg

Buying locally sourced and home-grown produce can save significant amounts of greenhouse gas emissions. Eat more home-grown UK, local and seasonal fruit, and vegetables from local sources or **learn how to grow your own in your garden** or allotment. Growing at home allows you to choose not to use pesticides – another plus for the planet.

10) Pull up a paving slab

Garden soils and perennial plantings play an important role in storing carbon. If 30 million gardeners pulled up a single paver and planted 1m² of perennial plants (either herbaceous, shrubs or trees) in their community, school, workplace, or garden and allowed it to develop to maturity (depending on the plants grown) this would be equivalent to heating between 86,000 to more than one million homes for a year! There are a lot of things you can do to **spruce up your front garden**.



Tip #12 - Make your own cleaning products

Get ready to roll your sleeves up and make your own cleaning products. Move over Mrs Hinch, we've got the cleaning tips you need.

Making your own cleaning products is a great way to reduce plastic pollution and avoid harmful chemicals in your home. There are lots of **benefits to making your own cleaning products**.

Using household items like vinegar and baking soda means you'll be using natural ingredients that cost next to nothing. Team this with using the cleaning bottles you already have means we'll be reducing our plastic use dramatically. There are lots of different ingredients you can use to make **brilliant homemade cleaners**.



Tip #13 - Plant a tree

We've already talked about the benefits of planting trees earlier *immediately scrolls back up* but if you don't have space to plant a tree in your own garden, take a look at some of **these organisations** that are planting trees around the world. You could plant a tree for someone's birthday or in memory of someone who has passed away with **The National Trust** or **The National Forest**.



Tip #14 - Don't be a litterbug!

Littering is a massive pet peeve for lots of people. And rightly so, litter ruins the aesthetics of our parks, streets, and local areas, whilst slowly ruining the environment too!

Why not get involved with some litter picking, there are loads of **[litter-picking events](#)** across the country to get involved with. You can join an organised event or just pick up rogue litter when you see it and pop it in the bin.

Why is litter picking good for the planet?

- Litter causes damage to marine life, seas, and rivers
- Litter creates visual pollution
- Littering is accountable for the death of millions of animals
- Littering can cause soil, water, and air pollution

Check out how you can **[volunteer in your local parks and spaces](#)** to litter pick, too!





Tip #15 - How to take the fright out of flights

We know that finding eco-friendly travel methods can feel like an uphill battle, especially when looking at air travel. While flying isn't the greenest way to get you from A to B, there are ways you can reduce your climate impact. Follow these travel tips to help you fly sustainably without sacrificing the comfort and convenience of air travel.

1) Book direct flights

Booking direct flights is one of the easiest ways to reduce the environmental impact of air travel. Instead of jumping on a connecting flight that has to hopscotch across the globe, fly on a direct flight and reduce fuel consumption by 20%.

2) Choose airlines who are eco-friendly

Lots of airlines have high rankings for eco-friendly travel practices. Businesses like Virgin Atlantic and Singapore Airlines offer green options which means reduced pollution and carbon emissions, which minimise their environmental impact.

3) Take public transport to get to the airport

Instead of driving your car to the airport, opt for public transport, biking, or walking. If you have to drive, try carpooling with someone who is also going to the airport on the same day as you. You could ask neighbours, friends or family members.

4) Buy carbon offsets

A great way to do your part and make air travel green is to buy carbon offsets. Buying carbon offsets means you'll pay a company that works to reduce the total amount of carbon dioxide produced in the world, for example by planting trees, which will then offset the carbon dioxide you've used for your flight.

5) Eco-friendly luggage

Using eco-friendly travel luggage means that your suitcase will have been made using recycled materials and in an environmentally friendly way. Don't forget to bring your reusable water bottle and you'll be good to go!





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