



# My Role in Tackling Climate Change

The professionals in energy management, sustainability and environmental roles play a key part in organisations' plans to deliver on energy efficiency and Net Zero targets. By performing their everyday roles, investing in professional development and exchanging of ideas and experiences with others, they are contributing to tackling the risks of climate change on organisational as well as national level. With all the varied roles and tasks, we are keen to showcase our members' skills and day-to-day tasks.

In this issue, we have asked Hayley Williams about her role as the Sustainability Manager (Built Environment) at the John Lewis Partnership.



## What attracted you into the industry?

I've always had a passion for

our environment. This passion and interest are why I opted to study Geography at school, and then a BSc (Hons) in Geography & Environmental Management. After graduating, I started work in the industry, yet was keen to develop my knowledge further. So, I studied for a MSc in Climate Change & Sustainable Development which set me up to work within the sector, and really support our shift to a sustainable future.

## How have you started and progressed through the industry?

My first industry relevant experience was as an intern at a solar PV installer when the Feed In Tariff was in full swing. This gave me initial exposure to the renewables market, with an understanding of the technology challenges, as well as the financial mechanisms put in place to support the adoption of such technologies. From there, I have held varying roles within

the energy and sustainability space, most recently on client side overseeing estates through the sustainability lens.

## What does your current role entail?

In my current role as the Sustainability Manager (Built Environment), at the John Lewis Partnership, I have been responsible for developing our Responsible Property Framework. This is our internal framework to ensure we are upholding our Partnership values of working in Partnership for a Happier World. It is applicable to all our buildings, new and old, and comprises of the following themes: Climate Change; Health & Wellbeing; Nature & Biodiversity; Resource Use; and Socio-Economic.

In addition to this, I am also responsible for overseeing our carbon reporting and net zero roadmap, for our building related emissions (i.e., predominantly Scope 1 and 2). We have a

commitment to reduce our operational carbon footprint to zero by 2035, and we are well on that journey.

We are also currently going through the process of setting Science Based Targets, involving greater measurement of our scope 3 emissions, and setting relevant targets. From a buildings' perspective, it is requiring us to get a detailed understanding of the embodied carbon within all our building related projects. This is still very much a developing area, and is something we will be looking at in greater detail over the coming months.



**In your opinion, what role does a Sustainability Manager as a whole play in tackling climate change?**

Much of what being a Sustainability Manager involves, is around bringing colleagues on a journey and getting their buy in. Ultimately, to achieve the bold aspirations many businesses have set themselves, it's not just down to the Sustainability team to deliver - all employees need to be engaged and understand the part they can play.

**What are the main challenges in tackling climate change/ delivering Net Zero targets at your organisation?**

The John Lewis Partnership is a large organisation, with about 80,000 Partners and lots of moving parts. With this, there are often competing initiatives for funding, which can make it challenging to deliver sustainability and net zero related projects. Fortunately, our sustainability aspirations are very much linked to the Purpose of the Partnership, enabling us to place many of the initiatives at the heart of what we do.

**How is the current energy crisis affecting energy efficiency and the delivery of carbon reduction targets at your organisation?**

The current energy crisis has

heightened everyone's awareness to the value of energy. This has enabled us to have an even greater effort on reducing energy consumption across all the Partnership buildings. Ultimately this has reduced our carbon footprint, particularly through the winter months where we have reduced gas consumption.

**What projects will you focus on this year?**

Over the next year, I am going to be working on developing our plans around capturing embodied carbon data for the materials we specify within our buildings. This poses a number of challenges as suppliers don't necessarily always have this information, so we will be looking to work closely with our suppliers.

Another area of focus for 2023 is to embed the Responsible Property Framework further within the Partnership. Working with both internal and external stakeholders to see where further opportunities lie.

**What advice would you give to someone who is just starting their career in sustainability?**

Sustainability can

mean different things to different people. I think it's important to find which particular areas within sustainability interest you, and focus then on finding somewhere you can work in a relevant role to gain experience.

No matter what your role is within sustainability, sustainability related projects and strategies often involve changing how we do things. Change can take time, so it is important to ensure you have the tools to be resilient and lots of patience!

**Author's profile:**

Hayley is a Chartered Energy Manager and an accomplished sustainability professional, having held a range of sustainability and energy roles since 2010. This has included working for a renewable technology installer, an energy supplier, and an architectural practice, but the majority of her experience has been working client side to embed sustainable strategy and behaviours.

