Carbon Reduction Plan

Stepping Stones Services Ltd

Part of Optimo Care Group

Information	Details
Supplier Name	Stepping Stones Services Ltd
Head Office	Broadfield House, 91 Manchester Road, Rochdale, OL11 4JG
Other Branch Office	Maple House Maple Estate, Stocks Lane, Barnsley, South Yorkshire, England, S75 2BL
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Publication Date	10th June 2026
Baseline Year	2024
Reporting Year	2025
Last Updated	10/06/2026
Signatory	Benjamin Hales, Group Commercial Director
Signature	

1. Supplier Details and Organisational Boundary

Requirement	Draft response
Supplier	Stepping-Stones-Services Ltd, trading as Stepping Stones Supported Living Services.
Group Context	Stepping Stones operates as part of Optimo Care Group and benefits from group-wide policies, quality assurance systems, environmental controls and governance arrangements that apply across group organisations.
Operational Profile	Supported living, homecare / outreach, tenancy support and community-based care and support activity delivered through office-based management, digital systems and field-based operational staff.

Stepping Stones' operating model makes carbon management relevant across both administrative and front-line service delivery. The organisation coordinates office-based leadership, recruitment, compliance, care coordination and quality functions, while its core support is delivered in the community and across supported living settings.

The emissions boundary therefore reflects the way Stepping Stones operates in practice, including office energy use, staff deployment, business mileage, employee commuting, digital systems, procurement of operational goods, supplier deliveries and waste generated through day-to-day activity.

The Plan is supported by Stepping Stones and Optimo Care Group's arrangements, including our Environmental & Sustainability Policy, Quality Assurance Policy, Business Continuity arrangements and established digital systems. These provide a practical management framework for:

- Reducing Consumption.
- Limiting Unnecessary Travel.
- Controlling waste.
- Encouraging Local Working Practices.
- Monitoring Improvement.

2. Commitment to Achieving Net Zero

Stepping-Stones-Services Ltd is committed to achieving Net Zero greenhouse gas emissions across its UK operations by 2050.

This commitment covers Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions, together with the required Scope 3 categories set out within the Government Carbon Reduction Plan reporting standard. It is supported by annual measurement, transparent reporting, senior leadership oversight and practical reduction activity across operational management, procurement, travel, building use, waste and staff practice.

Net Zero is embedded as part of Stepping Stones' wider approach to responsible care delivery and continuous improvement.

Optimo Care Group's Environmental & Sustainability Policy commits us to efficient use of energy and water, responsible procurement, waste minimisation, recycling, pollution prevention and staff awareness. Stepping Stones will use those arrangements, alongside our quality assurance and management review processes, to turn the Net Zero commitment into measurable action over the life of this Plan.

3. Baseline Emissions Footprint

Baseline emissions are the reference point against which future carbon reduction performance will be measured. Stepping Stones has established 2024 as our baseline emissions year. This baseline covers the UK operational activities of Stepping-Stones-Services Ltd and includes Scope 1, Scope 2 and the required Scope 3 categories under the Government Carbon Reduction Plan reporting standard. Emissions are reported in tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO2e) using the GHG Protocol corporate standard and the appropriate UK Government conversion factors for the reporting year.

Our baseline reflects the nature of Stepping Stones' care and support model. As a supported living, homecare / outreach and community-based provider, our footprint includes emissions from office and operational-base energy use, organisation-controlled vehicles where applicable, business mileage, employee commuting, waste generated in operations, procurement and supplier distribution. Travel-related emissions are particularly important because front-line staff and managers deliver support across community and supported living settings rather than from one static location.

Baseline Type	tCO2e	Data Required / Status
Scope 1	12.40	Fuel use from any organisation-owned or controlled vehicles, and any direct fuel use from premises where applicable.
Scope 2	8.60	Purchased electricity and purchased heat / cooling for offices or operational bases.
Scope 3 – Upstream transportation and distribution	3.20	Delivery and upstream transport where applicable and material.
Scope 3 – Waste generated in operations	0.85	Waste volumes / collection data for offices, schemes or operational bases.
Scope 3 – Business travel	86.50	Business mileage, public transport and other work-related travel not already included in Scope 1 or Scope 2.
Scope 3 – Employee commuting	112.40	Commuting methodology and workforce travel assumptions or survey evidence.
Total baseline emissions	**223.95**	

4. Current Emissions Reporting

The current reporting year is 2025. Emissions are reported using the same organisational boundary and emissions categories as the baseline year, allowing Stepping Stones to monitor progress consistently and compare year-on-year performance on a like-for-like basis. The reporting scope covers the same sources of emissions across office activity, supported living and outreach delivery, transport, staff commuting, operational waste and supply chain activity where applicable.

Stepping Stones will review the current-year footprint annually and use the results to assess whether reduction measures are delivering measurable progress. Where operational activity changes, for example through growth in supported living provision, changes to property use, new contracts or changes in staffing levels, the impact will be considered within the annual review so that emissions performance can be interpreted accurately.

Current Type	tCO2e	Data Required / Status
Scope 1	11.80	Current-year fuel and vehicle data.
Scope 2	8.05	Current-year electricity and energy consumption data.
Scope 3 – Upstream transportation and distribution	3.00	Current-year supplier delivery / transport data where applicable.
Scope 3 – Waste generated in operations	0.75	Current-year waste data.
Scope 3 – Business travel	82.25	Current-year business mileage and travel logs.
Scope 3 – Employee commuting	106.80	Current commuting data / staff survey assumptions.
Total current emissions	**212.65**	

5. Emissions Reduction Targets

Stepping Stones has adopted a staged reduction pathway to support achievement of Net Zero by 2050. The pathway focuses on the emissions sources most relevant to the organisation's care delivery model, including transport, electricity, fuel use, waste, procurement and supplier activity. Annual progress will be measured against the baseline year and reviewed through the organisation's management and governance arrangements.

The reduction strategy prioritises actions that can be directly influenced by Stepping Stones, including travel management, digital-first administration, efficient rota planning, office energy efficiency, recycling, responsible procurement and staff awareness. As emissions data becomes more mature, we will strengthen supplier engagement, improve building-energy monitoring and review the feasibility of

lower-emission vehicles, lower-carbon travel options and renewable energy supply where operationally and commercially practicable.

Target year	Projected Emissions (tCO2e)	Reduction from Baseline	Status
2028	185.00	17.4%	Initial Reduction Target.
2030	165.00	26.3%	Medium-Term Checkpoint.
2035	125.00	44.2%	Progressive Reduction Target.
2040	75.00	66.5%	Longer-Term Milestone.
2050	Net Zero	100%	Complete.

6. Completed Carbon Reduction Initiatives Already Evidenced

Stepping Stones has already implemented environmental management measures and operational controls that support carbon reduction and will remain in effect when performing public contracts. These measures are embedded through Optimo Care Group's policy framework, Stepping Stones' digital operating model and the organisation's existing quality and governance arrangements.

6.1 Environmental Management and Office Controls

Optimo Care Group's Environmental & Sustainability Policy applies across our entire group organisation and includes and supports environmental management within Stepping Stones.

The policy commits us to efficient and environmentally responsible use of energy and water, responsible procurement, minimising waste production, reusing or recycling waste where appropriate, reducing and preventing pollution, minimising transport impact from company activity, and raising staff awareness of environmental impact. Practical office and building controls include replacing light bulbs with low-energy bulbs where possible, managing heating so that unoccupied rooms are not heated unnecessarily, using point-of-use water heaters, considering low / high flush systems, reducing paper use and operating recycling systems for paper, plastic and cardboard. Confidential waste is recycled through Shred-it.

6.2 Digital Systems, Reduced Paper Use and Operational Efficiency

Our service model is supported by digital systems that reduce paper use and improve operational efficiency. Access Care Planner is used for support planning, risk information, daily notes, incident pathways and care documentation. Access PeoplePlanner supports rota planning, training oversight and workforce deployment. Radar Healthcare provides centralised management of incidents, complaints, safeguarding, medication errors, learning actions and improvement tracking. QCS supports policy management. Together, these systems reduce reliance on paper records, allow information to be

accessed securely, support timely management oversight and reduce duplication in care, quality and compliance processes.

6.3 Local Recruitment and Travel-Conscious Working Practices

Our operating approach also supports reduced travel intensity. The Environmental & Sustainability Policy confirms that the organisation employs people from within the local community, uses local services and trades wherever possible, offers flexible shift patterns and encourages car sharing where appropriate. This supports a lower-carbon delivery model by reducing avoidable mileage, improving local workforce resilience and aligning staffing with the communities where support is delivered. The policy also recognises that community-based care remains transport-dependent, so travel reduction is managed in a way that maintains safe, reliable support for people using services.

6.4 Governance, Training and Continuous Improvement

Environmental commitments are supported by wider Optimo Care Group governance. Our Environmental & Sustainability Policy allocates environmental responsibilities across departments, requires appropriate staff training and provides for monitoring and review of environmental performance. Stepping Stones also operates within a broader quality assurance structure that uses audits, management review, supervision, service reviews and continuous improvement. This gives our Carbon Reduction Plan a practical delivery route: environmental actions are monitored through existing governance processes rather than being managed separately from operational quality, safety and service improvement.

7. Planned and Future Carbon Reduction Projects

Stepping Stones will continue to strengthen environmental performance through a practical programme of future carbon reduction projects. The projects below have been selected because they align with the organisation's care and support delivery model and can be monitored within the annual Carbon Reduction Plan review cycle.

- Formalise an annual energy review for offices and operational bases, including meter data collection, comparison by site and review of avoidable out-of-hours consumption.
- Implement a structured travel and mileage reduction plan covering journey planning, business mileage review, safe car sharing where practical and lower-emission options for business journeys.
- Strengthen procurement controls by requesting environmental information from key suppliers, prioritising local suppliers where appropriate and reducing unnecessary packaging or single-use materials.
- Develop an employee commuting evidence base through workforce travel monitoring or staff survey evidence to improve the accuracy of Scope 3 reporting.
- Embed carbon awareness into staff communication and training so that energy use, paper reduction, recycling and travel choices are treated as routine operational considerations.

- Review renewable electricity tariffs, low-energy equipment replacement cycles and, where applicable, phased transition of organisation-controlled vehicles to lower-emission alternatives.

These actions build directly on our existing environmental procedures, digital systems, local recruitment practices and governance arrangements. They are designed to reduce emissions while maintaining safe, responsive and person-centred care delivery.

8. Governance, Monitoring and Annual Review

Responsibility for this Carbon Reduction Plan sits at senior management level, with oversight by Benjamin Hales, Group Commercial Director, on behalf of Stepping-Stones-Services Ltd.

Operational delivery is supported through the leadership, quality, environmental and departmental arrangements used across Stepping Stones and Optimo Care Group. This ensures that carbon reduction is linked to day-to-day management rather than being treated as a separate procurement document. Emissions data will be reviewed at least annually, and this Plan will be updated and re-published to reflect progress against the baseline and reduction targets.

Any assumptions used in the calculation of emissions will be recorded and reviewed during each annual update. Carbon reduction actions will be monitored alongside wider governance activity, including policy review, quality assurance, operational management, audit findings and continuous improvement planning.

Monitoring Area	Proposed Approach
Annual Emissions Update	Update Scope 1, Scope 2 and required Scope 3 data using the same boundary and methodology each year.
Target Review	Compare annual performance against the reduction trajectory and revise actions where progress is off track.
Policy Integration	Use environmental, quality, procurement and workforce arrangements to implement and monitor actions.
Board / Senior Review	Present annual CRP update for review and sign-off at senior level before publication.
Website Publication	Publish and clearly signpost the updated plan on our website.

Declaration and Sign-Off

This Carbon Reduction Plan has been completed in accordance with PPN 006 and the associated guidance and reporting standard for Carbon Reduction Plans. Emissions will be reported and recorded in accordance with the GHG Protocol corporate standard and the appropriate UK Government conversion factors for company reporting. Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions will be reported in accordance with SECR requirements, and the required subset of Scope 3 emissions will be reported in accordance with the published reporting standard for Carbon Reduction Plans.

Signed	Entry
Name	Benjamin Hales
Position	Group Commercial Director
Signature	
Date	10/06/2026