

SUSTAINABILITY REPORT 2020

Protecting the things we value

through innovation and smart design, we create adaptable plastic-free packaging solutions which have a high impact on your customers and low impact on our oceans.

We want this sustainability report to reflect us as a business, people and as lovers of the ocean and environment. We want to be ambitious with our commitment to stewarding the earth - going past the idea of neutrality, to reduce the amount of plastic entering the oceans and to lessen the amount of carbon in the atmosphere than when we started.

OUR ETHOS

Flexi-Hex is the creation of twin brothers and passionate surfers Sam and Will Boex, who were concerned about the amount of plastic pollution in the seas, both at home in the UK and globally. A poor experience when buying surfboards online led them to find an alternative material and solution to the industry standard bubble wrap. Using their skill set and design background they developed a product that was easy to use, added value and reduced the impact on our planet, Flexi-Hex was born.



At Flexi-Hex we want to tread lightly. Our company was born out of a love for the sea and a desire to design a packaging solution that doesn't persist in the environment, and negatively impact the ocean.

Climate change is a reality and a serious threat to both marine and terrestrial ecosystems. If we truly want to be a sustainable company, we must act on our carbon emissions as well as tackling plastic pollution. We are doing what we can to reduce our carbon emissions by empowering our staff to make personal changes, analysing and adapting our global distribution networks, choosing to use only recycled materials in our product and where we cannot make reductions, we are offsetting our emissions and contributing to rewilding projects.

We do not believe in 'greenwashing' or making decisions on public opinion - We are actively seeking the latest truth, based in science on how humans impact the environment and how we as a company and adapt and change. This policy is a statement of intent. These are not empty promises, or an attempt to win cheap PR points. We feel a duty and compulsion to steward our environment, so that it can be enjoyed by future generations.

Fact box 1

8300 million metric tons (Mt) as of virgin plastics have been produced to date. As of 2015, approximately 6300 Mt of plastic waste had been generated, around 9% of which had been recycled, 12% was incinerated, and 79% was accumulated in landfills or the natural environment. If current production and waste management trends continue, roughly 12,000 Mt of plastic waste will be in landfills or in the natural environment by 2050.

Source; <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0956053X18302447>

Fact box 2

Global carbon emissions must start to fall by 2020, if we are to keep the planet below 1.5. Current plans are nowhere near strong enough to keep temperatures below the so-called safe limit. Right now, we are heading towards 3 °C of heating by 2100, not 1.5 °C

Source: IPCC https://report.ipcc.ch/sr15/pdf/sr15_spm_final.pdf

“8.3 billion tonnes of plastic have been produced since the 1950s this is likely to be 34 billion tonnes by 2050, the majority of which will end up in landfill or polluting the world’s continents and oceans”



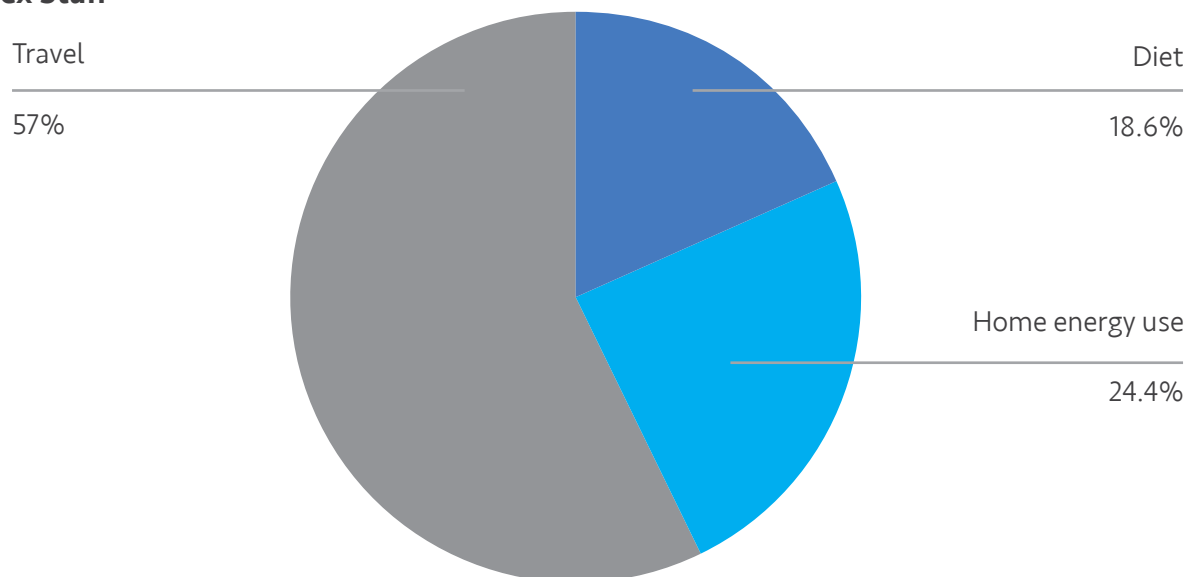
OUR PEOPLE

Action on climate change is urgent, and it is a shared responsibility. It is not just the responsibility of governments and big corporations to make change - individuals and small businesses have a critical part to play.

As a company, we have an opportunity to empower our staff to reduce their impact on the environment. We work with Carbon Fit to analyse our staff's carbon footprint and find manageable actions to help them shift to low-carbon lifestyles. As our team grows, we will design our employee benefits to further empower positive environmental behaviours.

We are blessed to have an environmentally conscious and engaged team. Every staff member walks to work, has an environmentally conscious diet. Below is a breakdown of our staff carbon emissions by type. We'll use this information to see where our efforts should be directed to help our team reduce their personal emissions.

Flexi-Hex Staff



Fact box 3

Countries that are most at risk from climate change are those that contribute least to it. The Climate and food vulnerability index shows that the hungriest nations produce the least CO₂. Below is a list of the equivalent CO₂ footprints of someone from Burundi.

1 UK citizen = over 200 Burundians

1 US citizen = 581 Burundians

1 Russian = 454 Burundians

1 Saudi Arabian = 781 Burundians

This highlights the stark inequality in global society and the need for us all to curb our carbon emissions drastically. Our actions have consequences for those across the world.

OUR PRODUCT

Motivated by the challenge to create user friendly, well-engineered packaging using simple biodegradable materials, Flexi-Hex is designed as a reliable, adaptable alternative to single use plastics in packaging systems.

The Flexi-Hex[®] product embodies our commitment to the environment. Our adaptable packaging solution is plastic-free, made from 100% recycled material and has a minimal amount of printed surface. The PVA adhesive is non-toxic and under the right conditions will biodegrade in 6 weeks. The product itself can be reused up to 5 times.

Flexi-hex achieves the core tenet of sustainability - it does not have consequences for the future generations. Flexi-Hex breaks down and biodegrades readily, is non-toxic and is made of recycled material, which has a lower carbon footprint than using virgin cardboard.



Fact Box 4

- 70% less energy is needed to recycle paper as opposed to making it from raw materials.
- Each tonne of recycled paper can save 17 trees, 380 gallons of oil, 3 cubic meters of landfill space, 4000 KW of energy and 7000 gallons of water.
- Using recycled paper produces 73% less air pollution than if new paper was made from raw materials.
- Paper is still one of the most recycled materials in the UK, over 82% of it is recycled.

Source: defra, 2016 // <https://www.recyclingbins.co.uk/recycling-facts/>



OUR OPERATIONS

Business development:

We run a tight ship here at Flexi-Hex. Much of our sales and business development activity is done online or over the phone, reducing our need to travel. This in turn limits our travel related carbon emissions significantly. However, we still need to get to the odd trade show, and transport our units to and from our local warehouse. Here's a breakdown of what we do each year;

Activities:

- International flights 2 people once a year (roughly 3tCO₂)
- Internal flights (UK) 2 x flights per year (roughly 1tCO₂)
- Warehouse mileage 1000 miles in van (equates to 0.2tCO₂)

So our estimated total carbon footprint for our business development activity is less than half that of a person living in the UK (10tCO₂).

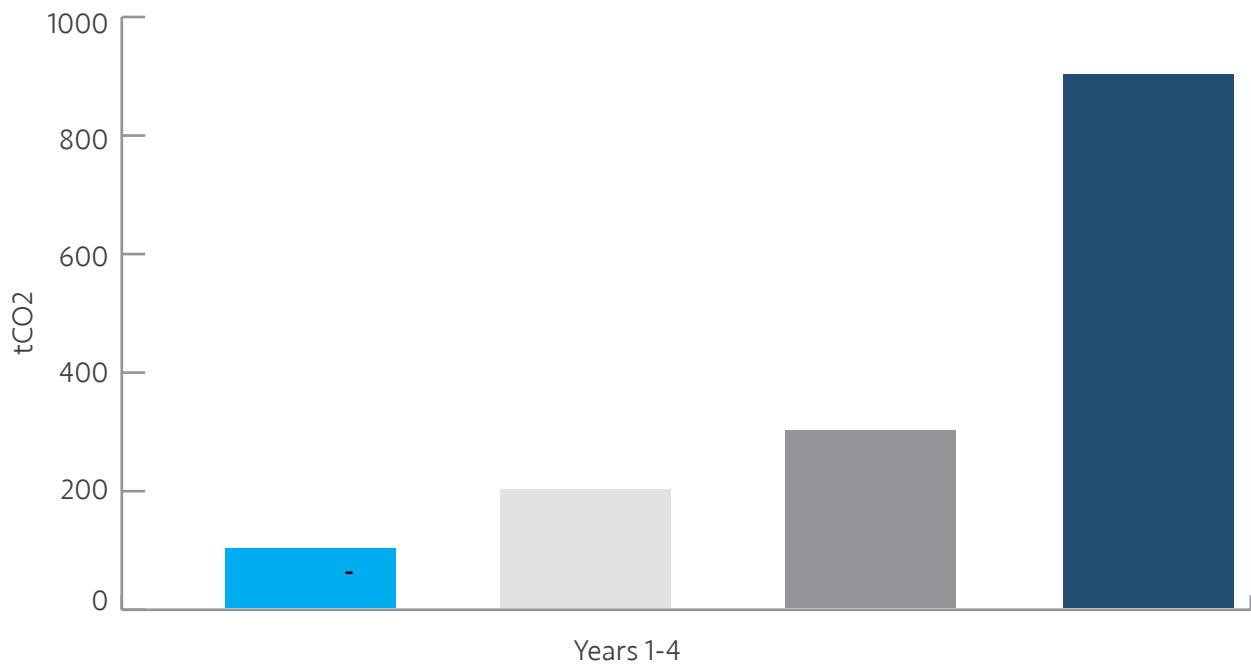
Distribution:

Flexi-Hex is by its very nature a low volume product. When it is opened it expands up to 35 times its width creating a rigid protective shell around the object. In terms of shipping you can fit up to 1000 (Lite) sleeves on a single pallet and when compared to the equivalent quantity of bubble wrap the latter would be 5 pallets in volume. The compact nature makes Flexi-Hex cost effective to ship and transport as well as saving space within dispatch warehouses.

However, our distribution accounts for the vast majority of our carbon emissions. We ship our products across 5 different territories from our manufacturing centre in China. We use ships and lorries, avoiding the high-emission airfreight option. We work out our emissions relating to distribution by volume of sales, weight, travel distance and freight-method. This is a key area for us to improve, and we are working with our partners to find low-emission solutions.



Emissions from distribution



*This figure gives emission projects if our distribution network remains broadly similar, with higher volume of sales.

Distribution:


We are currently working to make our distribution as efficient and low-impact as possible. We're considering the route it takes, the distribution companies' commitment to the environment, carbon-neutral couriers and other options. However, we can never reduce the emissions to zero. We're choosing to calculate our carbon footprint relating to operations and staff and offset this (and more).

We are offsetting with Carbon Fit and Mossy Earth.

Carbon Fit helps companies to reduce their emissions by giving manageable actions, grounded in the latest scientific understanding. Once the reductions have been made, the company is passed onto Mossy Earth. They also helped us ground this sustainability policy in scientific truth. <https://www.carbonfit.co.uk/>

Mossy Earth offset carbon by planting native trees, which have GPS coordinates and pictures to prove they exist, and are taking 1MtCO₂ per 4 trees out of the atmosphere. They also run quarterly rewilding projects to encourage ecological growth and biodiversity.

We whole-heartedly believe that you should reduce as much as possible before you choose to offset. Offsetting is not a license to pollute, it is a way of achieving carbon neutrality (or better, in our case) with the tools that we have. As technology moves on, and we move to better, cleaner ways of travelling, distributing and generally doing business, Flexi-Hex will adapt and change as well. With our packaging solution, we are part of that movement.

A low-angle photograph of a dense forest with sunlight filtering through the green leaves, creating a dappled light effect. A tree trunk is visible in the lower right foreground.

**Each tonne of recycled paper can save 17 trees,
380 gallons of oil, 3 cubic meters of landfill space,
4000 KW of energy and 7000 gallons of water.**

IMPLEMENTATION

As we grow as a business, so will our commitment to doing the right thing for the environment. This sustainability policy will be revisited yearly to make sure we are on track and we will amend and update it as we grow and adapt. This Sustainability Policy will be reviewed every October, with the first review taking place in October 2020. This is also when we will calculate our emissions and offset them.



What we are doing right now

Staff:

Every staff member has had a personalised carbon footprint report produced, and has recommendations on how they can improve. These reports look at their travel habits, diet and home energy use. These reports do not distinguish between our teams home life and their work life - we want to empower them to make positive steps when they're off the clock too.

We have also had the high-level results of these reports, and we are using them to make sure our employee benefits help our team make positive environmental choices. We are actively scoping out new ways to do this, like incentivising using the train for annual leave instead of flying, cycle-to-work schemes, green energy deals and more.

Our Product:

We are going to be delving deeper into the emissions behind the manufacturing of Flexi-Hex. We intend to work with our manufacturing partners to reduce emissions further and offset where necessary. Our core products are made from 100% recycled material, which has 70% lower emissions than using virgin material. Our product is non-toxic, and plastic-free. We will be investigating bio-adhesives to remove our reliance on petroleum-based glue.

Our Operations:

We run a lean business with limited emissions. We do this by travelling only when necessary, working digitally and talking to clients on the phone. We are currently analysing our distribution network to see how and if it can improve.

OUR FUTURE GOALS

We are carbon-negative (better than neutral) as of 2020, having calculated our emissions from our staff, distribution and operations and with Mossy Earth. Moving forward, we will continue to find opportunities to reduce our environmental impact by working in partnership with other organisations.

Our staff:

We want our team to share our commitment to the environment. Therefore, as our team grows, we will have reports produced for them and help them to engage in positive environmental behaviours. We will periodically reassess whether we are helping in the most effective and impactful way. An added benefit of our team growing is the influx of new ideas and perspectives. We actively encourage our staff to bring new initiatives to reduce our impact.

Our Product:

We are and will continue to engage in R&D to make our product as good and as low-impact as possible. The lighter our product gets, the less carbon it takes to ship across the globe. The less reliance our product has on petroleum-based products, the less carbon it takes to create.

In time, we will also be working with our manufacturing partners to fully understand the environmental impact of making our product, and where we can be better. We aim to influence and impact other companies to make positive environmental steps.

Our operations:

We will continue to work in a low-impact way, and will keep our eyes and ears open for new innovations that help us work in better ways and lessen our environmental impact. We will have strategic partnerships with like-minded freight companies that utilise the latest technologies and services to limit the carbon emissions and pollution into the ocean and land.

The boring (but important) stuff:

We are working with our partners to evaluate which environmental certifications or accreditations we should seek to gain. Such as ISO14001, B Corporation Certification, Forest Stewardship Council, Planet Mark and other related schemes. This will ensure that we hold ourselves to account for our impact on the environment.

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