



ROYAL
COLLEGE
OF MUSIC

London

ROYAL COLLEGE OF MUSIC

2024/25 SUSTAINABILITY REPORT

'THE RCM IS
COMMITTED
TO DELIVERING
A SUSTAINABLE
FUTURE'

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The Royal College of Music is fully committed to a sustainable future. This means both minimising any negative environmental, social and economic impacts that arise from our operations, and maximising all opportunities for us to have a positive environmental impact. These themes have been brought together in our RCM Strategic Plan and Sustainability Strategy, which sets out our key commitments between 2024 and 2040.

The College has adopted seven of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as focus areas for its strategy whilst actively supporting the remaining SDGs, aspiring to be the leader in sustainable development in the conservatoire sector.

Recognition



Top 10 London
Best performing conservatoire.



Winner: 2024 Reporting with influence
Finalist: Digital Futures.



Since 2014 the RCM has maintained its ISO14001 certification, considered the gold standard in demonstrating a commitment to environmental management.

WELCOME FROM OUR DIRECTOR

The Royal College of Music is committed to embedding the highest standards of environmental and social practices in everything we do, from our teaching and research to our campus operations and supply chain.



Welcome to the Royal College of Music's 2024-25 Sustainability Report. Committed to building a sustainable future, this report highlights the collaborative efforts that have taken place across the College and our key achievements during the last year.

For the fourth year in a row, we have been recognised as the Global No.1 Performing Arts institution in the 2025 QS World University Rankings by Subject. As a leading conservatoire, we recognise our responsibility to act on sustainable development, both within our teaching and operations.

Our Strategic Plan and Sustainability Strategy guide our efforts as we aim to minimise any negative environmental, social and economic impacts while maximising opportunities to foster positive change.

Our work in 2024/25 has seen some particular areas of progress.

I was delighted to see the success of our Green Week, which provided an excellent platform to engage on environmental issues in our daily lives and in music.

I was particularly pleased to see the wonderful results of our collaborations with the Royal Botanical Gardens at Kew and the Natural History Museum, where students composed and performed music inspired by the natural world.

I am also pleased to share our updated net zero carbon targets and carbon management plan. The revised plan aligns the programme more closely with our Estates strategy and our collaboration with neighbouring institutions through the South Ken ZEN+ group, and provides an excellent platform to deliver carbon reductions.

We have delivered a range of decarbonisation projects during the year. Following from the stage lighting upgrades in the Amaryllis Fleming Concert Hall in 2023, we have upgraded the chandeliers. We also installed voltage optimisation and surge protection equipment, which will protect delicate studio equipment and improve energy efficiency.

We continue to make good progress on improving access and diversity. We published a range of new objectives which will continue to guide the work we do to provide opportunities for everyone to experience and learn music, regardless of background.

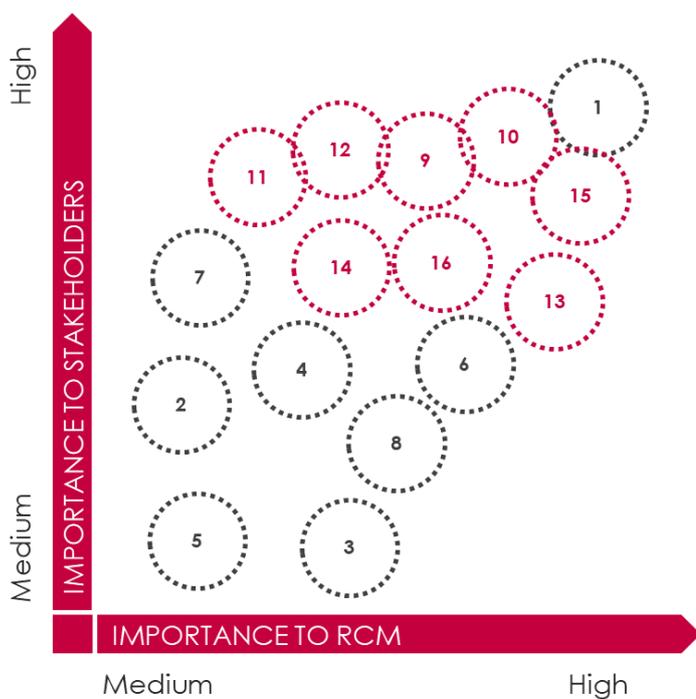
I congratulate my colleagues across the College for their continued efforts and enthusiasm towards a more sustainable RCM.

James Williams LVO FRCM
Director

OUR SUSTAINABILITY PRIORITIES

We have identified the most important environmental and social themes for the College using a materiality process. We have considered the issues where we have the largest impact as well as those that impact us to define our priorities.

Our three most important issues are climate change and carbon emissions, supporting diversity and inclusion, and our cultural contribution.



Environmental

1. Carbon Emissions
2. Biodiversity
3. Construction and Refurbishment
4. Staff and Student Awareness
5. Travel and Transport
6. Sustainable Procurement
7. Responsible Neighbour
8. Sustainability in the Curriculum

Social

9. Health and Safety
10. Diversity and Social Inclusion
11. Support and Wellbeing
12. Growth and Opportunity
13. Accountability and Communication
14. Community Engagement
15. Fair Access and Equity
16. Cultural Contribution

OUR SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

We aim to be the UK’s most sustainable conservatoire, embedding leading environmental and social practices in everything we do.

Our sustainability strategy is focussed on five key themes and underpinned by a commitment to robust governance and transparency.

FIND OUT MORE

[Download our sustainability strategy](#)

SUSTAINABILITY IN TEACHING AND RESEARCH

As a higher education provider, integrating sustainability into the mission of the RCM means to educate new generations of musicians and sustainability stewards to carry on the institution’s core values.

SUPPORT MUSIC, CULTURE AND DIVERSITY

The long-term success of the RCM’s mission is underpinned by the ability to continue to foster talent, ensure equitable access to opportunity and inspire sustained enthusiasm for classical music.

SUSTAINABLE OPERATIONS

In adopting a sustainability strategy, the RCM must take responsibility for the College’s environmental and social impacts and place sustainability at the centre of all operations.

SUSTAINABLE PARTNERS AND SUPPLIERS

Tying sustainability into the terms and conditions for collaborating with others signals the RCM’s commitment to environmental and social responsibility and helps promote good practices elsewhere.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Caring for the safety and ongoing wellbeing of students, staff and alumni is fundamental to sustaining a resilient, passionate and supportive environment in which no one is left behind.

ALIGNMENT WITH THE UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Protecting the planet, human health and the health of the natural world is necessary in order to ensure strong institutions and strong culture. All organisations have a part to play in limiting their environmental impacts and in being ambassadors for the planet.

Through our work, projects and partners, the RCM actively supports all 17 of the UN sustainable development goals and our strategy focuses on the following seven: Good Health and Well-being, Quality Education, Gender Equality, Decent Work and Economic Growth, Reduced Inequalities, Responsible Consumption and Production, and Climate Action.



SUSTAINABILITY IN TEACHING AND RESEARCH

Our aim is to embed sustainability into our formal and informal teaching and research and prepare our students as 21st century citizens, providing knowledge and opportunities to use their musical skills to connect with global sustainability issues.



As a conservatoire we provide specialist music teaching and research, predominantly focussed on performance. Sustainability is still relevant to the formal and informal learning opportunities for students; we have a duty to make sure that students graduate with an understanding of global themes such as climate change, diversity and inclusion, and how they are relevant to their lives and careers.

We incorporate sustainability into our curriculum and provide informal learning opportunities including student initiatives and societies. We provide staff training on sustainability issues to help them incorporate sustainability into their teaching and take action to minimise impact from student travel and commuting.

KEY AREAS

- Incorporate sustainability themes into formal and informal teaching and research, including creative careers,
- Support student sustainability initiatives and societies,
- Staff training on sustainability themes,
- Minimise impact from student travel and commuting.

VISION

By 2025 we will:

- Review how sustainability issues can be formally embedded in both curricular and extra-curricular activities and incorporate those factors into course designs.

By 2028 we will:

- Have a comprehensive programme in place that encourages our students to see themselves as artist-citizens of the future, providing opportunities for them to use their musical skills to connect with global sustainability issues.

KEY SUPPORTING STRATEGIES

Royal College of Music Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) Strategy

Sustainability in the curriculum

As a global leader in music education we recognise our responsibility to prepare RCM students as 21st century artist-citizens, equipped to navigate today's global challenges. Our Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) strategy underpins this work, informing the curriculum and co-curricular opportunities.

RCM is uniquely positioned to champion sustainability and, in particular, to provide an environment that promotes the role of the arts in creating a more sustainable world. We aim for all of our students to be equipped as 'global artist-citizens' and to be able to contribute to the development of a better future for the planet through music, their careers and their everyday lives.

Our ESD strategy incorporated the QAA and AdvanceHE Education for Sustainable Development Guidance and sets out our approach and targets.

FOCUS SUSTAINABILITY THEMES

01 Understanding the environmental impacts of music making

02 Examining the use of natural resources in the manufacture and maintenance of musical instruments

03 Examining the cultural and social impacts of music making, including social justice; inclusive practices (SEND); diversity, equity and inclusion; musical care therapy; and performance health and wellbeing

04 Creating and sharing music that engages with representations of society and the natural world and the role of music in community, communication and activism

05 Research and study of music and sound and its meaning within cultures

IMPLEMENTING OUR STRATEGY

Annual and periodic programme review

ESD is a review criterion for all periodic programme reviews and new programme validations in order to evaluate and enhance how ESD knowledge, competencies and abilities are taught through the College's degree programmes.

Artistic projects

Our students and staff regularly explore ESD themes in artistic projects in order to use music and the arts to examine sustainable development themes in depth.

Student projects

Through self-directed student projects such as the BMus Independent Project and the Masters Professional Project, the College provides resources and mentoring for students to devise and develop their own new work.

Supporting staff

We provide staff with the support and resources to teach sustainability by connecting with external organisations and networks.

Progress update

INCORPORATING SUSTAINABILITY INTO COURSE DESIGN AND VALIDATION

The periodic review of the BMus course is a major project to refresh and enhance our undergraduate curriculum for the future of music. We are taking this opportunity to think more holistically about how SDGs can be embedded in our programme. A new set of core modules will promote professional skills for tomorrow's creative industries. This will include critical understanding of musicians' health and wellbeing, access to high-quality music education, and developing sustainable businesses in the arts.

The review will be submitted for approval in early spring 2026 for first delivery from September 2026.

SUSTAINABILITY THEMES IN STUDENT RESEARCH AND PROJECTS

RCM students regularly choose to explore sustainability as part of their self-directed research projects.

Two MSc projects address social themes:

- Stephanie Pearl (MSc in Performance Science): The Music, Not The Mess: Psychology, Wellbeing and Underrepresentation of Women & Non-Binary DJs
- Rosanna Rowe (MSc in Performance Science): Exploring musician's experiences of poor gynaecological health: a quantitative study

SUSTAINABILITY THEMES IN OUR TEACHING

We continue to offer a range of core and elective modules that explore areas of artistic citizenship, offering students to the opportunity to explore a range of the UN SDGs including:

- BMus L5 Music Leadership 1
- BMus L5 Music Leadership 2
- BMus (elective) L5 Music in Health and Care
- BMus (elective) L5 Education and Teaching Placement
- BMus L5 Education and Teaching Placement
- BMus (Global Conservatoire) Music and Dis/Ability (delivered by our partner MDW in Vienna)
- BMus (Global Conservatoire) Engaging with audiences and communities (delivered by our partner MDW in Vienna)
- Masters The underrepresented in Opera (delivered by our partner MSM in New York)
- Masters (Global Conservatoire) Music, Sound and Environment
- Masters (elective) L7 Women and Music

In total, 267 modules were undertaken during the year, totalling 26,700 hours of learning.

The key UN SDGs addressed are (3) Good health and wellbeing, (4) Quality education, (5) Gender equality, (10) Reduced inequalities, and (16) Peace, justice and strong institutions.



‘Our annual RCM accelerate online careers event highlights sustainability. This year the event featured four graduates talking about their experience of the RCM accelerate scheme and how their projects, which consider sustainability, are unfolding.’

Diana Roberts, Head of Creative Careers Centre

Sustainability in informal teaching

We support our students to engage with sustainability themes through a variety of co-curricular and informal routes.

CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF CREATIVE CAREERS

Our world-leading careers support and talent agency provide students with advice, workshops and presentations to help develop our students and recent graduates develop their professional skills and provide performance experience. We include sustainability within the annual support programme, running at least one event per year focused on sustainability in the music profession.

Each year over 500 Royal College of Music students and alumni benefit from the Creative Careers Centre's professional work opportunities, alongside gaining one-to-one advice, guidance, referrals, resources and a broad spectrum of opportunities. The services of the Creative Careers Centre are available to RCM students for up to five years after graduation, supporting their long-term career development.

Among the thousands aided over the past 25 years is Dani Howard, RCM alumna and celebrated composer, who reflected on the impact of the Creative Careers Centre: 'They were so supportive in offering work opportunities which formed a significant part of my portfolio career, including my first paid commission for the Royal Academy of Arts, leading to a BBC Radio 3 broadcast and a recording of the work. I am so grateful that the Royal College of Music has this vital department supporting the current and past students.'



RCM ACCELERATE

RCM Accelerate supports graduating RCM students to either kickstart a new initiative, or to take an existing initiative to the next level. It promotes proactivity, creativity, and an entrepreneurial mind-set: crucial factors in the post-Covid-19 regeneration of the arts.

Our annual RCM Accelerate online careers event highlights sustainability, as it is a core element of the RCM Accelerate scheme. Last year, the event took place online on Wednesday 28 May and featured four graduates talking about their experience of the RCM Accelerate scheme and how their projects, which consider sustainability, are unfolding.

'As pioneers in our field, we are proud to have reached this significant landmark in the department's history. When founded in September 1999, our mission was to support musicians in bridging the gap between student and professional life, while adapting to the parameters of an increasingly competitive and complex music industry. That mission remains, and we remain committed to nurturing the lifelong careers of RCM musicians.'

Diana Roberts, Head of Creative Careers Centre



Tim Watts presents 'What is Ecomusic and how can we make it?'.

2025 GREEN WEEK

The College and Students' Union run a comprehensive Green Week annually, running events and presentations on key environmental and social themes.

Green Week is an opportunity for students and staff to come together to further their understanding of sustainable practices both at College and in their personal lives, inspiring everyone to make their small but vital contribution.

Running from 17-23 February, Green Week events included a 'Walk-shop' around South Kensington hosted by South Ken Zen's Programme Manager, Tiva Montalbano. The walk-shop uncovered hidden refuges for nature and hearing about how London's plants, animals and people are being affected by our rapidly changing climate.

Professors Carola Darwin and Tim Watt's delivered an event titled 'What is Ecomusic and how can we make it?' The event featured stunning improvisation to sounds heard in nature, including the UAE desert and the peatlands of Northern Ireland.

Finally, the ever-popular Dr Bike returned, offering staff and students free bicycle maintenance to encourage sustainable transport.



Green Week activities included a free bicycle maintenance workshop with Dr Bike.



The Students' Union ran a house plants and pot painting workshop during Green Week.

CLUBS AND SOCIETIES

Our students are able to join RCM clubs and societies as well as those from our neighbour, Imperial College. These offer a wide range of opportunities to learn and engage with key environmental and social topics.

AWARENESS RAISING INITIATIVES FROM THE COLLEGE AND STUDENT UNION

The College and SU run communication campaigns over the course of the year which showcase important sustainability issues for the College.

The SU has also introduced a branded reusable RCM Chilly's water bottle, invested in reusable and recyclable event decorations, introduced plants in the SU bar (BarCM), and use biodegradable wrist bands with wildflower seed in for events.

Second-hand furniture was also sourced to replace the sofas in BarCM during the year.

The SU ran a range of events during 2025 Green Week, including:

- Plants 101 workshop, where students decorated plant pots and learnt how to take care of house plants,
- Creating vegan and sustainable recipe kits with ingredients were handed out to students.

Leila Hooton, President of the RCM Students' Union, completed ethical finance and divestment training in September 2024.



Vegan and sustainable recipe cards were shared with students during the 2025 Green Week.



ENVIRONMENTAL THEMES IN PERFORMANCE

We have continued to explore environmental themes in performances during this year. In Green Week 2025, the RCM Philharmonic and conductor Natalia Luis-Bassa explored a programme of 'myths and magic', featuring Mussorgsky's *Night on Bald Mountain*, and the world premiere of *Migratory Dove* by Pierre Catherine-Buffet, RCM Composition of Screen Masters student. The programme also included a performance of Gabriela Ortiz's *Kauyumari* which represents a blue deer, a Mexican spirit guide that reminds us of our role as guardians of the planet.

Our Green Week programme also included a performance from Carola Darwin, Tim Watts and Oliver Bowes – presenting 'What is Eco-music and how can we make it'.

Our programme during the year also featured performances of music inspired by folklore and nature by the RCM String Orchestra. In a concert entitled *Evergreen*, the String Orchestra showcased *In Winter's House* (Joanna Marsh arr. J Azkoul), *Moss and Stem from Evergreen* (Caroline Shaw), *Be still* (Daniel Kidane) and *Serenade for Strings in C Major op 48* (Tchaikovsky).

Under the direction of Ben Palmer, the RCM Philharmonic performed the UK premiere of Ludwig Goransson's Oscar-winning suite from *Oppenheimer*. The environmental spectre that the atomic age ushered in was also explored through the dramatic *Doctor Atomic Symphony* by John Adams, and contrasted with the serenity of Takemitsu's *Spirit Garden*, one of his last works. Takemitsu drew a parallel between his orchestral style and the nature of a garden: both are 'composed of various different elements and sophisticated detail that converge to form a harmonious whole'.

RETURN TO KEW GARDENS: SOUNDS OF BLOSSOM FESTIVAL

Building on the success of last year's collaboration with Kew Gardens, seven RCM students created original pieces of music that celebrate Kew Gardens' unique landscape, bringing together music and nature to create an engaging multisensory experience for visitors.

Set within Kew's UNESCO World Heritage Site, the spring festival 'Sounds of Blossom' offers a unique fusion of spring blossoms and innovative new music, creating an immersive experience for visitors as they explore the gardens in bloom.

The seven BMus students, Ben Araujo, Molly Frances Arnuk, Finn Mattingly, James Madrilejo, Jacky Zhang, Trang Nguyen Minh, and Margot Pommellet, each chose a unique location around the gardens for their work.

Drawing inspiration from the unique character and atmosphere of their selected locations, their original pieces reflect and enhance the natural beauty of these spaces.

Molly Frances Arnuk reflected on the experience: 'For my piece, I layered recordings of myself playing viola manipulated to sounds such as wind chimes as I wanted to share the sounds that I associate with peace and relaxation in nature. Writing for Kew Gardens has been such a great opportunity to experience a professional commission. Following their brief and coordinating with administrators and sound designers has been such valuable preparation to enter the industry.'



'This unique audio-treat within the stunning surroundings of Kew gardens offers the perfect opportunity for visitors to soak up the beauty of spring and enhance their experience whilst listening to evocative compositions from the incredible students from the royal college of music. We know that exposure to both nature and music offers incredible benefits for our physical and mental wellbeing, so it's wonderful to be able to collaborate with the royal college of music once again to explore the magic of springtime across Kew with these new compositions.'

**Paul Denton, Head of Visitor Programmes and Exhibitions
Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew**

COLLABORATION WITH NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM

Composers and performers from the RCM teamed up with the Natural History Museum to create an immersive musical experience inspired by the Wildlife Photographer of the Year's 60th exhibition.

As part of the faculty's programme to explore what it means to be a composer in today's society, the nine composers from the RCM's BMus course chose images from this year's competition as the inspiration for original compositions. The collaboration culminated in a series of concerts at the Royal College of Music and the Natural History Museum in November 2024.

The first performance saw the RCM's Performance Studio transform into an immersive environment - surrounding audiences with both the music and the photo that inspired the piece. The following evening, the musicians brought the works to life within the Natural History Museum's gallery, allowing audiences to experience the music surrounded by the entire exhibition of wildlife photography.



'We are thrilled to be collaborating with the natural history museum on their wildlife photographer of the year exhibition. The images our composers have chosen, which have acted as catalysts for their creative processes, have inspired them to engage with ideas which connect their imaginations with nature, ecology and the visual arts in wonderfully personal ways. We hope very much that this will be the first of many opportunities for us to creatively collaborate with the natural history museum, as we further explore the interrelations between the natural world and our musical imaginations, and are immensely grateful to the natural history museum for their generosity in opening their doors to us for this unique event.'

Professor Jonathan Cole, Head of Composition

'The natural history museum project challenged me to do something I'd never done – compose based on a photo. I was inspired by the mood and story of my photo which challenged me to write a piece distinctive from what I have composed before. It's been a great experience!'

Christopher Furlong, BMus student

RCM Global Conservatoire

The Global Conservatoire provides RCM students with the opportunity to experience transnational learning in an online setting without needing to travel on a full exchange to another country. During 2024-25 this initiative offered RCM students the opportunity to study one of ten different online courses delivered by world-class conservatoires in Copenhagen, Vienna, Amsterdam or New York, without leaving London.

During this year, we delivered a new course that explores environmental issues: *Music, Sound, and Environment*. This elective module, which was delivered for the first time in spring 2025, explores themes of sound and environment in music, and guides students to engage with and reflect on aesthetics, site-specific artwork, ecological thinking and field-recordings, as well as the experience of sound in different environments.

We have also invested in new equipment to provide students with better access to teaching and masterclass talent without the need to travel – avoiding the associated carbon emissions. We replaced our legacy Lola system with a new MVTP low-latency system, which allows realtime interaction between musicians in different locations with imperceptible delay, which is critical for musical ensemble performance. This new system was demonstrated in March with subsequent connections with the Manhattan School of Music in New York and Conservatorium van Amsterdam in the Netherlands.

Our low-latency performance space was shortlisted for the Digital Futures category at the 2025 Green Gown awards.



Sustainability education training for staff

With sustainability forming an important part of our learning and teaching values, we ensure that academic staff are provided with all the tools, knowledge and skills needed to provide engaging ESD opportunities for our students.

To provide all staff with the appropriate skills and knowledge to incorporate ESD into their teaching, we include an introduction to ESD and the RCM's ESD plan in all staff inductions, and provide training on how to identify and include relevant ESD factors in the way courses are designed and assessed, and the methodology of the assessment.

Lecturer in Music Education, Dr Kirsty Devaney completed a Carbon Literacy training course with Music Mark.

Sustainable student travel and commuting

Student travel and commuting, including travel at the start and end of term makes up an important component of our carbon footprint.

We are committed to supporting more sustainable travel options for students and support carbon reduction through our carbon management plan, which promotes active travelling options (running, walking, cycling) as well as public transport.

We operate a cycle to work salary sacrifice scheme, which helps staff to buy a bike and cycling equipment through a payroll scheme. The programme reduces the costs by up to 39% as it reduces the income tax and national insurance paid.

During the year, we updated our historic data for travel and commuting, applying an expanded and updated methodology to previous years to improve the quality of our carbon disclosures.

Find out more about our carbon management plan on page 39.



Progress on our targets

	Target	Progress
01	By the end of year 2025/26, embed sustainability in programme reviews.	On track Sustainability is now a core criterion in all periodic programme reviews, which included the BMus Review 2025-26. Sustainability is also a strategic priority for Global Conservatoire course development from 2025-26 onwards.
02	Deliver at least one Creative Careers event every year with a focus on sustainability.	On track A creative careers event was undertaken on the 28 th May 2025.
03	Provide regular opportunities for student-led projects that engage creatively with sustainability issues.	On track New creative partnerships, such as those with the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, and the Natural History Museum, have provided professional, public-facing opportunities for students to engage with sustainability.
04	Provide teaching staff with training on Education for Sustainable Development.	On track Membership of Music Mark has opened up new training opportunities to RCM staff, including access to accredited Carbon Literacy training. We continue to engage with best practice through our networks including Conservatoires UK and the European Association of Conservatoires (AEC).

SUPPORT MUSIC, CULTURE AND DIVERSITY

The long-term success of the RCM's mission is underpinned by our ability to continually foster talent, ensure equitable access to opportunity, and inspire sustained enthusiasm for classical music. We support talent regardless of a musician's background, support cultural contributions at the local, national and global level, and expand access to classical music.



We are committed to supporting musical talent regardless of an individual's background or circumstance. Through our comprehensive access and participation strategy, we aim to increase participation of young people in music and remove barriers for talented students for studying, including through implementing best practice in admissions and recruitment, as well as providing scholarships and financial aid.

We advocate for classical music, supporting initiatives that support music making for young people, and that contribute to our culture at the local, national and global levels. In particular, we are working to deliver initiatives for specific instruments which have a shortage of players, such as the bassoon.

KEY AREAS

- Foster leadership and skills for inclusivity,
- Support music making for young people,
- Support musical talent, regardless of background or circumstances,
- Fairness and equity in recruitment and admissions,
- Provide scholarships and financial aid,
- Cultural contributions and collaborations across local, national and global scales.

VISION

By 2028 we will:

- Deliver our programme to provide young people with access to clear progression routes in music, with a view to improving the diversity of our student recruitment to better reflect wider society.
- Build our bursary and scholarship capacity to ensure that financial circumstances are not a barrier for students from underrepresented groups.

KEY SUPPORTING STRATEGIES

[Royal College of Music Access and Participation Plan \(2020-21 to 2024-25\)](#)

[Royal College of Music Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy \(2021\)](#)

[Royal College of Music Artistic Strategy \(with update June 2021\)](#)

Supporting music making for young people, supporting diversity and increasing access

We support a wide range of opportunities for young people to make music and offer a structured pathway for development. A key part of our ethos is to make music accessible and meaningful to everyone, and deliver an ambitious programme through our equality, diversity and inclusion strategy.

PRE-TERTIARY PROGRAMMES

The access trajectory for music conservatoire students begins at a very young age, typically starting between the ages of four and nine. Credible applicants for the BMus will have had access to, and been engaged with, music making throughout their school lives and will usually have reached a high level of attainment by the time they are in their mid-teens. Access to good quality music education for children is not equally distributed, with underserved groups linked to family income, cultural/ethnic background, and disabilities.

Supporting music education and opportunities for young people is therefore a vital component of supporting diversity in our student body and addressing in some part the general decline of music education in schools.

We support music making for young people through a number of key initiatives:

- RCM Sparks and Sparks Juniors
- RCM Junior Department
- Community programmes including Family Create, Ignite, Explorers and Springboard
- School outreach programme with collaborative partners, included targeted pipeline initiatives such as the Young Bassoons Programme which started this year

We also offer bursaries and financial support to minimise the barriers to participation in our programmes.

These schemes are designed to support young people from underrepresented backgrounds, and provide structured, high-quality music and instrumental tuition with a progression pathway from age 0 through to 18.

The RCM has set a long-term target of 50% of children in the final year of the Sparks Juniors programme (age 4–8) progressing to a fully auditioned place at RCMJD (age 8+) by 2024–25, which in turn provides a pathway to higher music education. This target takes into account the likelihood that a proportion of Sparks Juniors may wish to continue their musical education elsewhere (at another conservatoire's junior department or through the Tri-borough Music Hub) or decide that they wish to pursue other interests.

TERTIARY PROGRAMMES

We are committed to operating a fair and transparent admissions process. The use of contextual data to inform our admissions decisions is widely acknowledged¹ as good practice and is an important step towards increasing equality of opportunity.

We offer an admissions fee waiver scheme for applicants from families with low household income. We also provide a comprehensive disability support programme both during the application process and across a student's time at the College.

A key element of our More Music development project was to make our historic buildings more welcoming and accessible to applicants, students and the wider community.

FIND OUT MORE

www.rcm.ac.uk./sparks

¹: Bull, A. L., Bhachu, D., & Blier-Carruthers, A. (2022). *Slow Train Coming? Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in UK Higher Education*.

Progress update

During 2024-25 the College has continued to make progress on our Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion objectives. We updated our Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging (EDIB) policy during the year, taking onboard feedback from key stakeholders, updating language, and reflect the College's level of maturity in this area.

Our work is focused on five key areas that span all areas of the College's work: access and participation; staff training and recruitment; the artistic programme and curriculum; awareness raising; and governance.

ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION

The RCM maintains an Access and Participation Plan, which sets out our targets and activities to address inequality of access to higher education.

Our priorities for 2024-25 were to:

- Implement new APP interventions and evaluation mechanisms as part of the 2025 recruitment cycle,
- Maintain and develop widening participation partnerships through RCMJD and Sparks.

Our access and participation plan has four priority areas (risks) for intervention:

1. Developing the required musical knowledge and skills for conservatoire study,
2. Perceptions of conservatoire education,
3. Cost of living pressures for current students, and
4. Mental health.

During 2024-25 the College substantially exceeded its target of increasing the percentage of UK-domiciled undergraduate new entrants who identify as coming from a Black, Asian or ethnically diverse background from 10% to 14% (three-year rolling average) by 2024-25, achieving 20.77%. The spend on new scholarships for Black, Asian or ethnically diverse students has again exceeded the target of £27,750 at £78,625 for 2024/25, and is expected to be at a similar level for 2025-26.

The College also had a target to increase the percentage of UK-domiciled undergraduate new entrants from areas of low participation in Higher Education, defined as the "POLAR4 quintile 1", from 4.68% to 9% by 2024-25 (three-year rolling average). The final figure of 8.4% was slightly below target, but still represents significant progress in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic years and recent economic climate. £27,750 of new tuition fee bursaries for POLAR4 quintile 1 students were awarded in 2024/25, exceeding the target of £18,500.





*Sparks percussion course
October 2024.*

We are pleased that the OfS has approved the RCM's new Access and Participation Plan (APP) for 2025–29, and work towards the new targets is already underway. As part of this from 2025/26 the RCM will no longer be tracking POLAR data as a target, but instead using eligibility for means-tested Free School Meals, which is recognised as a better means of identifying economic disadvantage for individual students. This change of target will be reflected in our reporting from 2025-26 onwards.

More broadly, 2024–25 has seen an increased focus on advocating for music education in the UK, including an event at 11 Downing Street on 3 June celebrating the success of RCM partnerships in promoting access and progression in music. We continue to strengthen our collaborations with local music education organisations that exemplify inclusive excellence, including the London West Music Hub, Nucleo, London Music Fund, and Music Masters. These relationships remain particularly strong with the RCM Junior Department and have expanded further in 2024–25 through the first cohort of MMusEd students undertaking placements with many of these partners.

During 2024–25, we continued to strengthen our 'pipeline' initiatives, focusing on priority areas that support progression into undergraduate study. Projects included the expansion of our highly successful Young Bassoon Programme, which this year evolved into the Young Double Reed Programme. A total of 41 young bassoonists and oboists participated over four weeks, with 29% of the participants from underrepresented groups.

The second iteration of our Youth Brass Course took place in April, and throughout the year, pipeline activities were integrated into faculty festivals, including the annual Percussion and Strings Festivals. We welcomed London Music Fund Senior Scholars to the College, where they experienced a tour of the RCM Museum and a workshop in the RCM Performance Simulator. In October, the College once again co-delivered a weekend course for young female and non-binary brass players and percussionists. We were pleased to strengthen this partnership further by collaborating to deliver workshops for young double bassists as part of the RCM Strings Festival in June 2025.

Once again RCM Sparks partnered with the Tri-Borough Music Hub and ABRSM to deliver Musical Senses, a project working with young people who have a hearing, sight or a multi-sensory impairment. The programme delivered a weekend creative music workshop and concert series for 26 young people to participate in, many supported by bursaries, on 31st May and 1st June 2025 at the College. The project also supported workforce development with training materials created by specialist practitioners and this year hosted its first Round Table event, hosting 40 delegates from across the country at the Elgar Room in the Royal Albert Hall.

RCM SPARKS

The Royal College of Music's learning and participation programme, RCM Sparks, provides inspiring opportunities for families, schools and young people to engage with music education. This specialist programme is carefully designed to ensure those who engage gain the most from their experience.

RCM Sparks run a series of public events and activities for schools both at the Royal College of Music and online, as well as a special programme in our local area, partnering with other organisations to provide the benefits of music education where they are most needed in the community. All our work is based around clear learning pathways, which cater for children's changing needs as they develop, so we can continue to foster musicianship and learning skills year-on-year throughout their educational journey.

The programme is designed by experienced RCM staff and led by outstanding leaders who are experts in their fields. The leaders are supported by teams of RCM students who are trained and supported in the area of learning and participation work in turn developing a vibrant new generation of educators with relevant and meaningful practical experience.

RCM SPARKS OBJECTIVES

Access and participation

To deliver and meet the targets set out by the RCM's access and participation plan.

Learning pathway for all

To provide a pathway of learning from early years through to postgraduate study for all young people particularly focussing on those from underrepresented groups in Higher Education.

Support access to music

To provide first access to music via a varied and engaging programme of activities offering a high-quality musical experience linking to the objectives in the current RCM Strategic plan, developing and supporting the continuing pipeline of young musicians from the UK.

Practical experience for current RCM students

To offer training and firsthand practical experience for RCM students in the field of learning and participation in order to enrich students' music education portfolio, enhance employability and create a workforce of inclusive music leaders.



Wendell Park Primary, School Concert Workshop (Spring 2025).

SCHOOLS PARTNER PROGRAMME

Our partnerships with schools focus on creating inspirational learning opportunities through practical engagement. We work with schools with limited music provision and in areas of higher-than-average deprivation. Strategic partnerships in the Primary and Secondary sector are the bedrock of the work creating a meaningful progression between feeder schools in three local Boroughs.

Primary Schools

This year's primary schools partner programme has seen a continued engagement with Wendell Park Primary and Oxford Gardens Primary and St Mary's Bryanston Square Primary.

In the 2024-25 academic year we have delivered a project exploring three key musical elements - Beat, Rhythm and Pitch. We used Schubert's *March Militaire* as a focus point to explore rhythm exercises, creative composition, and improvisation. Katie Teage and RCM Musicians ran practical in-school workshops and provided ongoing support to pupils.

The programme culminated in a celebratory event and concert at the Royal College of Music, bringing more than 150 students together to play a brand-new piece of music.

Secondary Schools

During 2024/25, we engaged with Pimlico Academy, Kensington Aldridge Academy and Hammersmith Academy. RCM musicians and composers attended assemblies and music classes for year 7 pupils, sharing their journeys into higher education and giving inspirational performances. RCM composers also met with pupils to support their composition work as part of year-long programmes with schools.

These initiatives have laid the foundations for Knowledge Exchange projects focused on composition planned for 2025/26. Kirsty Devaney, lecturer in Music Education at RCM, will create a new resource toolkit for schools and RCM musicians and composers will run workshops themed around 'A Music Rebellion' which will culminate in a performance at the Royal Albert Hall.

LUNCHTIME CONCERTS

We run lunchtime concerts to widen access to music for school-age pupils and their teachers and parents. Each concert is preceded with a workshop to explore the piece in more detail.

In the Autumn term, we drew on jazz influences from around the world for the schools Jazz Concert.

The Spring concert explored the orchestral masterpiece 'Symphonie Fantastique', by Berlioz. Over 300 children attended the performance in the Amaryllis Fleming Concert Hall.

In the Summer Term, Presenter and composer Lucy Hollins led us through the story of Prokofiev's 'Peter and the Wolf'. Over 300 children heard the story, accompanied by the RCM Chamber Orchestra, as well as participating in two short songs to accompany the story.

During the year more than 1,200 students attended lunchtime concerts and nearly 400 students took part in per-concert workshops.



DEVELOPING UK TALENT PIPELINE

We have developed programmes to support players of underrepresented instruments, including lower brass, woodwind (bassoon and oboe), strings (double bass) and percussion. Our work includes partnerships with external school partners and the RCM junior department, as well as initiatives on campus to support talented players.



Image: Students from the Young double reed programme 2025.

Young double reed programme

From January – March, we welcomed over 40 young bassoonists and oboists for 4 exciting days at the College. Led by a whole host of fantastic double reed professors and leaders, participants worked in small sectionals as well as a full ensemble. They took part in Q&As and technique classes too. The course was musically beneficial for students but also socially important, with many students referencing this in their final thoughts and feedback.

Woodwind performance day

In March, we hosted 48 young musicians to take part in an ensemble day for schools. We welcomed passionate musicians from Chesham Grammar School, Cheltenham Ladies' College, Mill Hill County High School and Eltham College.

We also involved students currently studying at the RCM Junior Department. Whilst the day was focused on ensemble playing and a final concert, there were also opportunities for collaboration, discussion and socialising with other talented musicians.

Young Brass Course

In April, Head of Brass, Amos Miller, led a weekend of all things brass ensemble. We welcomed 17 advanced brass players to form an ensemble, playing a variety of exciting new repertoire and arrangements. The course concluded with a sharing concert, as part of the RCM Brass Prize concert on the following Monday evening.

Visits

We hosted two external visits to the College this year, Kingston Music Hub and London Music Fund. Kingston Music Hub visited several of the performance spaces and learnt a little more about life at College from some existing students.

London Music Fund brought their Senior Scholars to explore the innovative Performance Simulator. Following an informative talk from Dr George Waddell, students were able to perform and discuss their own thoughts and feelings around performance anxiety.

MUSICAL SENSES

RCM Sparks and the Triborough Music Hub (TBMH) is committed to positive change and in supporting children and young people from all backgrounds to better access musical activity. Working in partnership with other organisations – Royal College of Music (RCM), ABRSM, Audiovisability – have developed a programme called Musical Senses to support music making for young people with hearing and/or sight impairment.

In 2024–25, the programme provided bursaries for 6 pupils throughout the academic year (TBMH). We also delivered a weekend creative music workshop and concert series for 26 young people on 31st May and 1st June 2025 at the Royal College of Music.

We supported workforce development with training materials created by specialist practitioners and held the first Roundtable event on 19th May for 40 delegates from across the country at the Elgar Room in the Royal Albert Hall.



We welcomed young musicians with hearing and/or sight impairment to the RCM.



Image Credit: Zac Emerson.



2nd year Junior Sparks Students receiving their Grade 1 ABRSM certificates.

SPARKS JUNIOR PROGRAMME

Sparks Juniors is a collaboration between RCM Sparks and the RCM Junior Department.

Each year, the initiative offers primary aged pupils a free programme of high-level tuition led by staff and RCM student mentors.

This exciting, funded pathway is designed to help children from local primary schools, achieve their musical potential, addressing the lack of inclusion and diversity in classical music by specifically working with those whose backgrounds are underrepresented in the sector.

Currently, 100% of young people on the Sparks Juniors programme are from underrepresented backgrounds.

The programme operates on 5-year model, funding 5 children per year. In year 1, a foundation year, children participate in Dalcroze and Musicianship classes. In year 2 onwards, the children begin learning a brass instrument (30 minute 1:1 lesson) and join the Sparks Brass Ensemble.

In the summer term, the children took their grade 1 ABRSM exams and all passed with merit.

COMMUNITY PROGRAMME

Our community programme provides an accessible pathway for musical learning to engage families and children from early years to age 18, with a focus on engaging participants from underrepresented backgrounds in higher education.

The programme includes a wide array of events and initiatives, including Mini-sparks (for babies and toddlers), courses at children's centres, and stay & play sessions run by the Rugby Portobello Trust.

We also offer programmes for older children including family orchestral concerts, the RCM festival of percussion, Explorers (for ages 7-12), Launch Pad (for ages 6 - 9 & 10 - 13) and Springboard Young Composers Programme (for ages 14-15)



Get, Set, Play is a free weekly event that offers a chance for families to engage in music making together.



RCM STUDENT PATHWAY

RCM students are encouraged to take part in the work of RCM Sparks to gain invaluable experience of working with families, young people, and other groups to gain practical and theoretical training within a non-assessed environment. This encourages students to take risks and gain confidence exploring areas they would not normally access themselves, and equips them with the tools to take on diverse roles in their future professional lives.

SPARKS IN THE CURRICULUM

Throughout the course of the 2024-25 academic year 120 student placements and observations took place across 19 music education settings.

L5 Music Leadership – 101 students carried out observations at Tri-Borough Music Hub ensembles and Sparks Juniors.

L5 Education Teaching Placement – 6 students completed a 20–40-hour placement supporting musical activities within educational settings, including schools and a nursery.

L6 Instrumental and Vocal Teaching – 13 students visited primary schools in the local area and Sparks Juniors, observing one to one and small group instrumental and vocal tuition.



RCM students are an invaluable part of our programmes. They gain valuable professional skills and experience and share their infectious love of music making with participants.

ARTISTIC PROGRAMME AND CURRICULUM

Our Artistic Programme and Curriculum priorities for 2024-25 were to:

- Continue to deliver an artistic programme that celebrates and promotes diversity amongst performers and performances,
- Work closely with professional organisations (including orchestras, ABO, MU, and BliM) to learn from industry and promote change, and Investigate HEI membership of BliM,
- 'Continue the conversation' through termly updates at College and Faculty meetings,
- Evaluate new modules with EDI focus,
- Review and enhance staff training to support disabled students.

EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION VISITING ARTIST FUND

Through the continued generous support of Lady Victoria Robey CBE HonRCM, the Robey Visiting Artists Fund continued to facilitate visits by outstanding international artists (including performers, conductors and composers) from underrepresented backgrounds.

This initiative enables exceptional musicians, teachers, and leaders from underrepresented backgrounds to work with RCM students.

DIVERSITY IN ARTISTIC PROGRAMME

Almost all concerts in the Events Guide now include at least one work by an underrepresented composer and the Robey Visiting Artists Fund has supported even more visits by diverse visiting artists.

Among many highlights during 2024-25, the funding has enabled artistic visits from George Lewis as composer-in-residence, Magda Mayas (experimental pianist and practice researcher), violinist Nathan Amaral, and masterclasses by Armand Djikoloum (oboe), Velvet Brown (tuba) and Gregory Hutchinson (drums). Repertoire highlights included the Symphony Orchestra's performance of Daniel Kidane's violin concerto at the Aldeburgh Festival, a Symphony Orchestra Concert conducted by Raphael Payare, a celebratory concert by the RCMJD marking the 150th anniversary of the birth of Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, and a Vocal and Opera Song Recital at the Wigmore Hall which celebrated the life and songs of composer Mel Bonis.

IMPROVED REPERTOIRE DIVERSITY DATA

The Performance and Programming team, led by Flo Ambrose, has introduced a more robust system for collecting data to monitor the diversity of project repertoire, visiting artists, and faculty class delivery. In 2024-25, significant progress has been made in improving the completeness of equal opportunity data for visiting artists and professors. While some gaps remain, the monitoring of faculty class delivery has highlighted areas where more targeted intervention can enhance representation.

FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF THE WORKS BY AVRIL AND SAMUEL COLERIDGE-TAYLOR

In July 2025, the RCM Librarian, Peter Linnitt, was an invited guest on BBC Radio 3's 'The Hiawatha Phenomenon?', discussing alumnus Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, his works, and his legacy. The RCM Library is continuing to collaborate with the family of Avril Coleridge-Taylor to create sets of parts for her music and make these available for performance. The College received another significant part of the archive during 2024-25, comprising almost 50 manuscripts. As a result, the majority of Avril Coleridge-Taylor's archive is now held by the College, making the RCM a significant centre for study of her work. Current PhD student Tom Edney is especially active as a researcher and editor of the collection. His edition of Avril Coleridge-Taylor's Comet Prelude was conducted in March 2025 by RCM conductor Sam Scheer in a youth music event in Croydon following collaboration between Croydon Music & Arts and RCM researcher Dr Sarah Whitfield.

AWARENESS RAISING

Our Awareness Raising priorities for 2023-24 were to:

- Collect and analyse data on engagement with online and in-person training (e.g. student consent training, Learning and Development training),
- Invite guest speakers to EDI Committee meetings to promote reflection and innovation,
- Explore ways of promoting the diversity of participants and activities in College life, for instance through images displayed across the campus and, where appropriate, in externally facing materials.

TRAINING AND WORKSHOPS

All new students are required to complete the 'Consent Matters: Boundaries, Respect, and Positive Intervention' online training course, which has been developed specifically for students in higher education. The course was updated in 2025 to include additional detail on digital media and online activity, and to feel more relevant to international students. We have published extensive new guidance and resources on our website, including a new personal relationships policy, updated physical contact in teaching policy, and advice on reporting concerns. The Report + Support platform continues to be an important tool to support this work.

The training was introduced to all new students during Induction Week through a presentation on 'Respect at the RCM', which was co-delivered by staff and the Students' Union. The Students' Union also participated in bespoke EDI training delivered by Tonic, a specialist provider of EDI training for arts organisations and the organisation Black Lives in Music was represented at the Freshers' Fair.

The EBID Committee are also developing a new 'Terms of Engagement' document for all casual workers and visiting artists/speakers. The document sets out the RCM's values and provides key information about working with students, including the EBID policy, our approaches to working with disabled students and our policy on physical contact in teaching.

EDI PROGRAMME THROUGH THE STUDENTS' UNION

Throughout 2024-25 the Students' Union, led by SU President Leila Hooton, organised and promoted a range of EDI-related activities, including:

- Supporting the Museum's 'Queering the Museum' event in celebration of Pride month,
- Instagram Reels to promote International Women's Day and Mental Health Awareness Day,
- Contributions to joint Conservatoires UK Student Network (CUKSN) social media campaigns, including Black History Month and LGBTQ+ Celebration,
- Join initiatives to promote Sexual Health Awareness Week and Anti-bullying Week,
- Portuguese Culture Night and Chinese New Year Celebrations,
- Launch of the RCM Student Diversity Network (SDN).



Student Union: Dumpling making workshop for Chinese New Year.

GOVERNANCE OF EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION

Our Governance priorities for 2024-25 were to:

- Continue to act on opportunities to further diversify Council and Council committee membership.
- Report on EDIB progress to Council each term.

The RCM Council continues to demonstrate its full commitment to the area of EDIB through Council representation on the EDIB Committee and termly review of progress with the College's EDIB action plan at all Council meetings.

Members of Council are invited to participate in HR training if they wish. The full training schedule is circulated to members of Council early each academic year to assist with diary planning. We have been pleased to see such positive engagement with training by members of Council.

We are very grateful to Deputy Chair of Council, Catherine Clarke, for her support and feedback as Council representative on the EDIB Committee.

CULTURAL CONTRIBUTION

The College will continue to make an extensive cultural contribution through its performance programme, events and festivals, as well as its museum and library collections.

We are in the process of developing a new strategy for the College as we approach our 150th anniversary in 2032. The College's role in contributing to culture at the local, national and international level will be a key consideration. This includes advocacy and access to music and music education.



Ravel – *L'heure espagnole*, featuring Francis Melville, Peng Tian, Anastasia Koorn, Georgia Melville, Daniel Barret and Ross Fettes.

Progress on our targets

Target

Progress

05

Continue to support music making for young people

On track

RCM Sparks deliver an engaging programme for children in schools and the local community, giving more than 2,700 children and young people a live music experience during the past year.

06

Increase the percentage of students who identify as coming from non-white backgrounds from 10% to 14% by 2024-25

On track

The College's three-year rolling average for recruitment of UK-domiciled Black, Asian and ethnically diverse students is now 20.77%, significantly above the APP target of 14%. A new target will be set as part of the new Access and Participation Plan 2025/26 to 2028/29.

07

By 2024-25, reduce the gap in participation between the most and least represented socio-economic groups (POLAR4 quintiles 5 and 1) by a third (ratio of 8:1) and double the new entrants from POLAR 1 backgrounds compared to our 2017-18 baseline

Below target

Performance against this target has been challenging, however the College is only 0.6% below target, with a 3-year rolling average of 8.4% against a target of 9%. With the introduction of a new Access and Participation Plan from 2025/26, the College will be discontinuing POLAR data as a metric for target-setting, using eligibility for means-tested Free School Meals which is a better indicator for economic disadvantage.



SUSTAINABLE OPERATIONS, EVENTS AND PERFORMANCES

Sustainability is embedded in our operations,
events and performances.

We have a direct impact on the environment through our campus operations, events and performances and are committed to embedding best practice in the way we operate. Taking action to tackle the climate crisis and mitigate climate risks are a key focus, alongside campus waste, water and energy use. Through our ISO 14001 environmental management system, we continue to embed good practice environmental management across all campus activities.

KEY AREAS

- Carbon emissions and climate change,
- Energy, water, and waste,
- Construction and refurbishment,
- Resource use (incl. paper),
- Digital,
- Catering,
- Facilities management,
- Green urban campus,
- Business travel & commuting,
- Sustainable events,
- Sustainable performances (tickets, programmes, lighting, catering, travel, suppliers).

VISION

By 2028 we will:

- Make progress towards our net zero carbon, achieving a 33% reduction from our 2018/19 baseline across scopes 1, 2 and 3,
- Reduce total waste and increase recycling rates,
- Develop our sustainable events offer,
- Improve the sustainability credentials of performances.

KEY SUPPORTING STRATEGIES

[Environmental policies](#)

[Royal College of Music Carbon Management Plan](#)

[Sustainable food policy](#)

[RCM Estates Strategy](#)

[South Kensington ZEN+](#)



Piano Masterclass with Edith Fischer, March 2025.

Estates and campus operations

The Royal College of Music sits in the heart of the cultural quarter of South Kensington. Our vibrant and diverse campus includes both old and new, from the magnificent grade II listed Blomfield building which dates from 1883 to the modern courtyard development, completed in 2021. Combined with our site at RCM Jay Mews and purpose-built student accommodation, Prince Consort Village, our estates and on-site operations both affect and are affected by the environment.

Carbon emission and climate change are our major priority and we have set the ambitious objectives to be net zero by 2040. We have also set objectives to reduce our energy and water use, as well as reduce our total waste whilst improving recycling rates.

We recognise the environmental impact from food choices and we have set our clear objectives to deliver more sustainable catering. Administrative impacts including paper use are also an area of focus for us.

Construction and major refurbishment projects have both a large direct impact and offer an important opportunity to make decisions to improve our environmental performance in the long-term.

We also have a range of indirect impacts, including our offsite and cloud-base IT infrastructure, business travel and employee commuting. All of which form a pivotal part of our efforts to make our operations more sustainable.



Environmental Management System

The Royal College of Music operates an Environmental Management System (EMS) certified to ISO 14001:2015.

An EMS is a structured framework to identify and manage an organisation's significant environmental impacts, risks, opportunities and obligations, and the ISO14001 standard is widely recognised as the leader certification standard.

Policy and leadership

Our approach is governed by our environmental policy and overseen by our Estates Director.

Context and stakeholder expectations

When designing our environmental programmes, we have considered our stakeholders and the relevance of environmental factors across the entire lifecycle of the College's operations.

Planning

We have mapped our significant areas of environmental impact and identified the key risks and opportunities. We maintain a register of all the applicable legal, contractual and voluntary environmental obligations and taken these into account when setting our objectives, targets, environmental action plan and processes.

Resources, skills and awareness

We allocate appropriate resources to manage environmental issues, and ensure that all staff, students, contractors and suppliers have the right knowledge, skills and technical competencies. We run awareness campaigns and report on our environmental practices and performance both internally and externally.

Managing our operations and emergencies

We have developed a wide range of policies and procedures to ensure we manage environmental issues effectively.

Monitoring performance

We monitor our environmental performance closely and have set KPIs for our key areas of impact. We also conduct internal audits of our system and undertake compliance reviews, and report to the leadership team through our sustainability committees. Our management system is externally audited by a UKAS accredited certification body, who issue our ISO 14001 certificate.

Improvement

Through our EMS, we aim to deliver continual improve in our environmental management and performance.

We have a robust procedure in place to identify and manage corrective and preventative actions. This might be in relation to audit findings or any opportunities for improvements that may be identified.

Energy and carbon emissions

Taking action to drive energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions is a key priority for the RCM, and is managed through our [Carbon Management Plan](#).

Our initial targets were to reduce carbon emissions from gas and electricity use by 34% by 2020, from a 2004/05 baseline. We significantly exceeded this, reducing our emissions by 60% even while our estate grew.

During this year, we updated our carbon management plan and targets, as well as recalculating some historic emissions to reflect improvements in data. Our revised target are:

	Short-term 2029/30	Long-term 2039/40
Scope 1 and 2	We will reduce scope 1 and 2 emissions ¹ by 76% by 2029/30 from a 2019/20 baseline	We will reduce scope 1 and 2 emissions ¹ by 90% by 2039/40 from a 2019/20 baseline
Scope 3	We will reduce scope 3 emissions by 46% by 2029/30 from a 2019/20 baseline	We will reduce scope 3 emissions by 90% by 2039/40 from a 2019/20 baseline

The updated carbon management plan includes a suite of initiatives, which range from lighting upgrades, improved energy controls, and a phased replacement of gas heating with heat pumps. The programme also includes efforts to further improve the quality of our scope 3 data and engage key suppliers to deliver reductions in our supply chain.

We are ahead of the target, having reduced carbon emissions by 76% in 2024/25 from our 2004/05 baseline, primarily due to switching to a zero-carbon electricity tariff.

During 2024/25 we have continued our work to improve energy efficiency and decarbonise the estate, including undertaking a detailed energy audit.

ENERGY AUDIT AND UPDATED CARBON MANAGEMENT PLAN

In 2025 we appointed sustainability consultants, Brite Green Ltd, to undertake a detailed energy audit and help us to recalibrate our carbon reduction plan.

The energy audit identified a range of further reduction opportunities, including improvements in monitoring and controls, lighting, heating and thermal performance of our buildings.

We published an updated carbon management plan in 2025 which incorporates the additional reduction opportunities identified and better aligns with our updated carbon targets and estates strategy.

The carbon reduction plan aims to reduce the use of natural gas on campus, improve energy efficiency on campus and ensure 100% of electricity purchased in from low and zero carbon sources.

We have highlighted a suite of opportunities to remove gas from the College, including replacing boilers with heat pumps and point of use hot water systems. We will also transition our commercial kitchens to electricity. There are also a range of lighting improvement opportunities, including LED stage lighting. Improved energy monitoring and controls offer further opportunities, including adding additional equipment to the Building Management System (BMS) and improving the controls.

We have also identified a suite of actions to reduce our scope 3 emissions. This includes more active engagement with suppliers to obtain carbon data and encourage carbon reduction, as well as including energy and carbon considerations in our investment management approach.

¹ Market based



AMARYLLIS FLEMING CONCERT HALL CHANDELIER REFURBISHMENT

The Amaryllis Fleming Concert Hall is the RCM's premier venue, with a maximum capacity of 416 seats. Originally built in 1901 as part of the Prince Consort Road campus, this is our largest venue and is used for symphony orchestra concerts, including live streams and the large orchestra and choral concerts.

Following a capital project in 2023 to upgrade the stage rack lighting, we have now upgraded the chandelier lighting with dimmable LED bulbs. The upgrades in the concert hall lighting have reduced electricity consumption by 80%.

POINT OF USE HOT WATER

We continued the roll-out of our point-of-use hot water project, which replaces hot water supply from a centralised gas-fired hot water system with local electrical heaters. This removes heat losses from the long pipe runs and swaps the heating source to low-carbon electricity from nonrenewable gas.

BUILDING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM UPGRADES

Following the energy audit, we have commenced upgrades to our building management system (BMS).

In addition to improving controls, we have also commenced the process to add a number of air-conditioning units to the BMS which will give us greater control and improve energy efficiency.



VOLTAGE OPTIMISATION

Over the summer break we installed voltage optimisation equipment, aiming to reduce energy consumption across the campus and protect electrical systems.

To install the equipment, we had to shut down all power to our Grade II listed Blomfield Building, a first for the RCM. To ensure all systems were restored following the shutdown, the project team led by Interim Head of Projects Annette Ollerearnshaw, worked closely with teams from across the College, our neighbours Imperial College London, and specialist contractors.

The successful installation will reduce the incoming voltage on site and protect sensitive equipment from power surges.

'For the first time in RCM's history, we powered down our grade ii listed Blomfield building to install voltage optimisation kit that will protect vital equipment whilst reducing our incoming voltage and carbon footprint. In addition, we were able to carry out crucial life safety and disaster recovery exercises to ensure we protect our students, staff and visitors.'

Anette Ollerearnshaw, Interim Head of Projects

Energy use

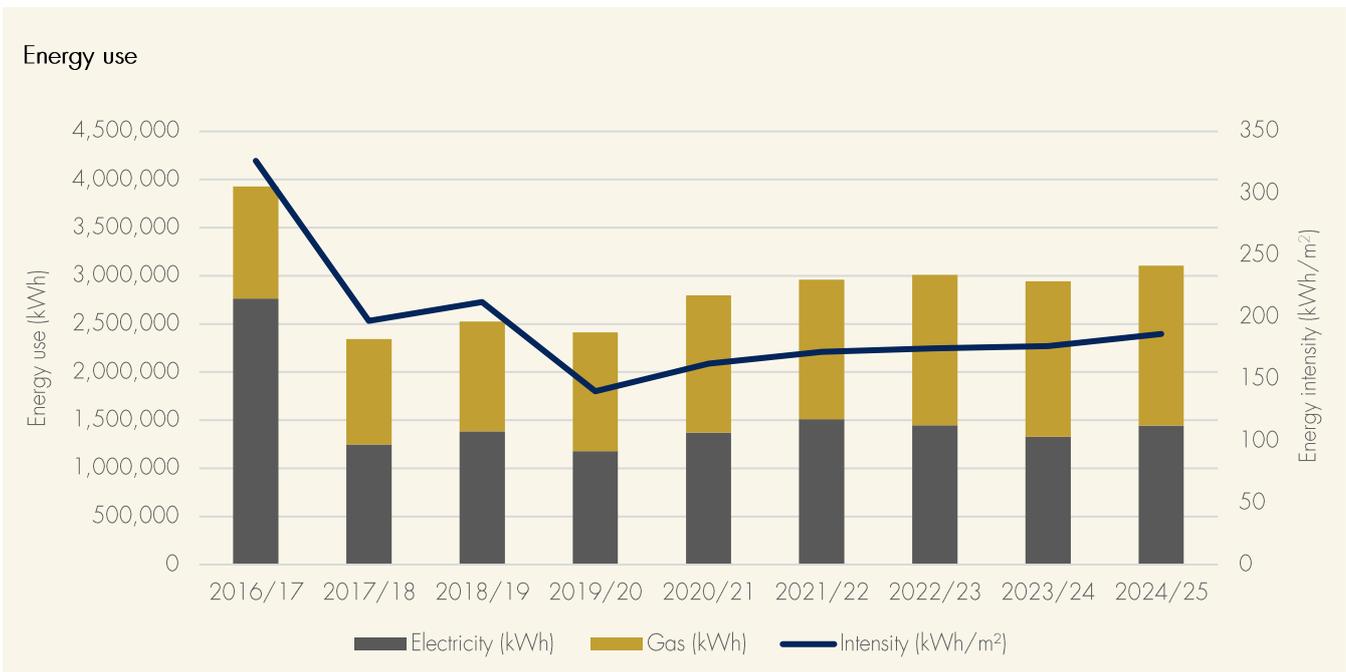
ENERGY USE

We manage energy use through our carbon management plan. Our approach has focussed on taking practical steps to reduce and avoid energy use where possible, and using efficient fittings and equipment. The Estates & Technical Services Manager is responsible for energy management.

Since 2019/20 there has been an upward trend in energy usage. Initially this was due to new spaces being opened and the College returning to normal operations following COVID restrictions.

Energy use has remained relatively flat over the last 4 years, despite the College campus being busier. In 2024/25, energy use increased by around 6% overall, with gas use up 9% year on year and electricity increasing 3%.

We completed a degree-day analysis to explore the link between external temperatures and gas use. The analysis shows that for some parts of the campus there is a strong link, however in others the relationship is less clear as heating and hot water are delivered with a mix of gas and electricity and there are other functions, such as the kitchens, which use gas.



Energy use		2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Electricity (kWh)		2,763,394	1,247,390	1,383,515	1,177,605	1,370,390	1,509,977	1,447,352	1,326,289	1,444,266
Gas (kWh)		1,163,837	1,097,193	1,142,423	1,235,463	1,427,706	1,449,744	1,562,591	1,606,306	1,662,005
Total (kWh)		3,927,231	2,344,583	2,525,938	2,413,068	2,798,096	2,959,721	3,009,943	2,932,586	3,106,271
Energy Intensity (kWh/m²)		326	197	212	140	165	174	177	170	186

Carbon Emissions

SCOPE 1 AND 2

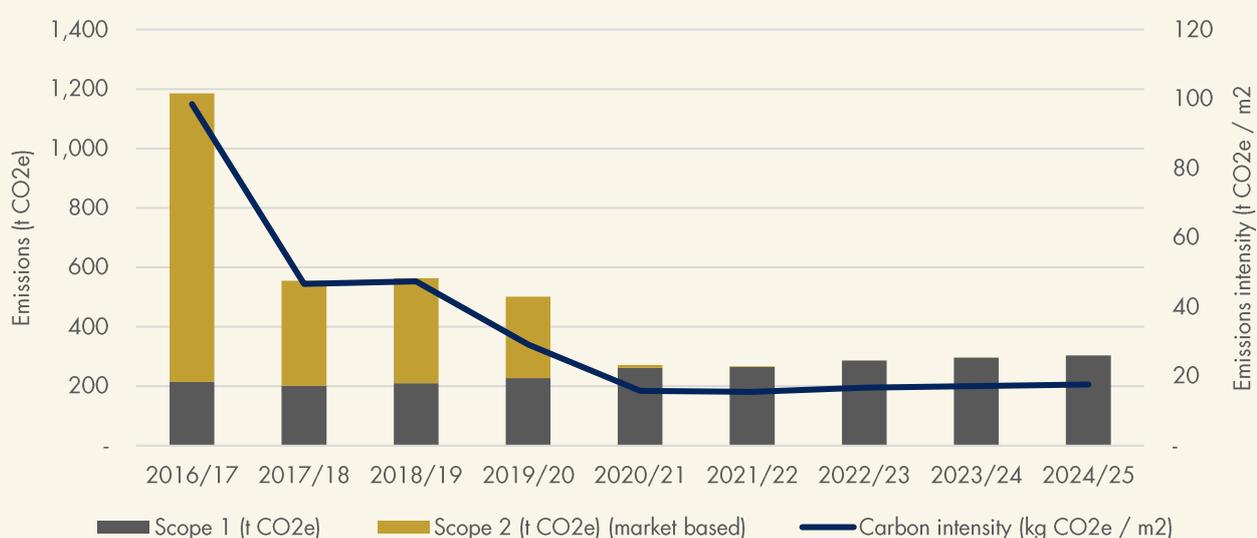
Since 2016/17 we have reduced our scope 1 and 2 emissions by 76%, from 1,185.84 kg CO₂e per m² to 286.49 kg CO₂e per m². These reductions are calculated using market-based emissions which include our zero-carbon electricity tariffs.

SCOPE 3

We report on our scope 3 of the Greenhouse Gas Protocol. Overall, more than 95% of our emissions occur in scope 3.

The vast majority of emissions continue to occur in our supply chain and we will continue to uphold high environmental standards in our supplier selection and work with existing suppliers to encourage them to reduce their environmental impacts.

Carbon emissions: Scopes 1 and 2



Carbon emissions by year: Scopes 1 and 2

(t CO ₂ e)	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Scope 1	214.3	201.8	210.0	227.2	261.5	264.6	285.8	295.6	304.1
Scope 2 (location based)	971.5	353.1	353.6	274.5	291.0	292.0	299.7	275.0	255.6
Scope 2 (market based)	971.5	353.6	353.6	274.6	10.0	2.6	1.9	0.4	0.0
Total (market based)	1,185.8	555.5	563.7	501.7	271.5	267.2	287.7	295.9	304.1
Carbon intensity (kg CO ₂ e/m ²)	98.5	46.7	47.4	29.1	15.8	15.5	16.7	17.2	17.6

SCOPE 3 EMISSIONS

Overall, more than 95% of our emissions occur in scope 3. The vast majority of emissions continue to occur in our supply chain and we will continue to uphold high environmental standards in our supplier selection and work with existing suppliers to encourage them to reduce their environmental impacts.

During 2024/25 we have expanded and improved our carbon reporting methodology, in particular, reporting more scope 3 emissions sources and standardising the approach for student travel at the start and end of term.

We have recalculated our historic emissions in line with the expanded methodology to ensure the disclosures are as comprehensive as possible and to ensure emissions are comparable over time. Our updated historic emissions are set out below, with totals reported using the location-based approach.

Revised carbon emissions 2019/20 – 2024/25

Emissions (kg CO ₂ e)		2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	
Scope 1	Natural gas	227.2	261.5	264.6	285.8	295.6	304.1	
Scope 2	Purchased electricity - location	274.5	291.0	292.0	299.7	275.0	255.6	
	Purchased electricity - market	274.5	-	-	-	-	-	
	Purchased goods and services	2,713.9	2,110.3	2,503.4	3,571.4	3,846.4	2,968.5	
	Capital goods	3,162.4	267.5	100.8	174.3	195.3	55.0	
	Fuel and energy related activities	119.7	137.2	145.8	141.0	139.4	149.0	
	Transport and distribution	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	Waste generated in operations	0.3	1.7	2.3	1.7	1.7	1.8	
	Scope 3	Business Travel	152.0	4.4	10.3	172.7	127.7	550.3
	Staff commuting	100.3	102.6	135.5	66.7	52.2	59.4	
Student term-time travel	39.9	40.5	53.7	62.0	63.1	69.8		
Student travel (start and end of year)	1,171.0	1,133.0	1,214.2	1,177.6	1,352.7	1,313.2		
Leased assets	29.4	29.4	35.2	35.0	44.0	39.7		
Investments	2,866.0	2,866.0	2,866.0	1,734.0	1,272.0	773.0		
Total	Scope 1	227.2	261.5	264.6	285.8	295.6	304.0	
	Scope 2 (location-based)	274.5	291.0	292.0	299.7	275.0	255.6	
	Scope 3	10,353.0	6,692.6	7,067.1	7,087.5	7,434.0	5,979.7	
	Total	10,854.7	7,245.0	7,623.8	7,673.1	8,004.6	6,539.3	

Note: We have reported on all of our material emission sources. We have used the GHG Protocol Corporate Accounting and Reporting Standard (revised edition), energy and activity data, and location-based emission factors from the UK Government's GHG Conversion Factors for Company Reporting.

Scope 3 emissions from air travel were calculated from data provided by travel agents and airlines on distance flown, and those for water, wastewater and waste were calculated using DEFRA conversion factors. Student and staff commuting was calculated based on responses to a travel survey completed in 2024. Student accommodation was calculated based on the proportion of the equity held in the operating company by the RCM in 2024-25.

Procurement emissions were estimated using spend data and emissions factors provided by HEPA and from data provided through the NETpositive futures framework – a specialist carbon reporting scheme for higher education.

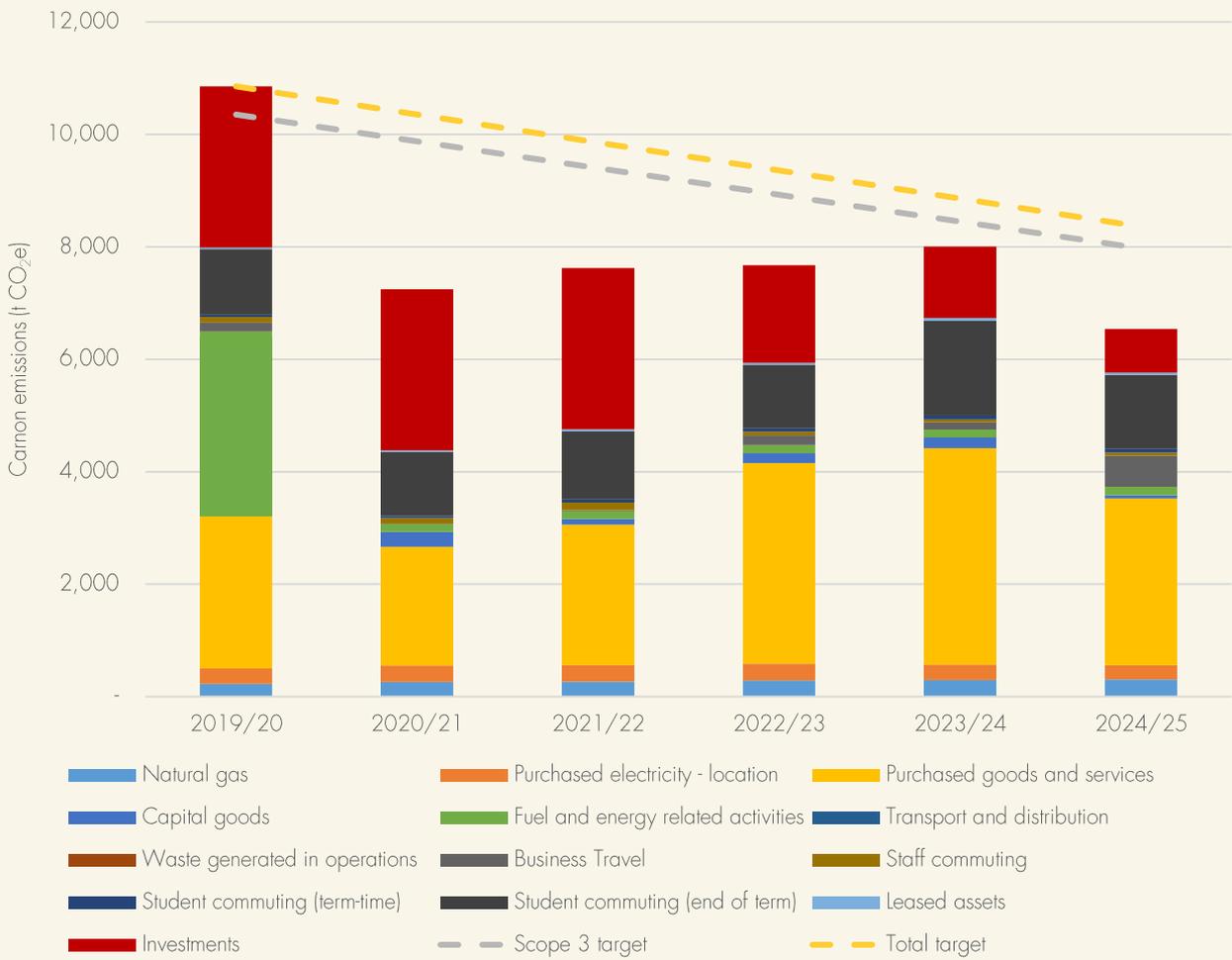
TOTAL EMISSIONS TRENDS

Our total scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions dropped by 18% in 2024/25. This reduction was primarily driven by a reduction in emissions from purchased goods and services, which reduced by 23% and investments (which reduced by 39%). The reduction from goods and services was in part a result of a reduction in total spend, but we also now have supplier carbon data for suppliers that represent around 10% of our total spend – the company specific data was lower than the HEPA average data we have used previously.

We did see a number of areas where emissions increased year on year. Notably, our reported emissions from business travel rose by more than 4x due to a range of factors. We conducted an international engagement campaign which included a tour of Singapore, Hong Kong and Sydney in January 2025, and sent a delegation to Shanghai. In addition, travel for doctoral students was also managed through our travel agent, improving the completeness of the travel data.

Overall, we remain ahead of our carbon reduction targets but continue to monitor our progress carefully.

Historic emissions trends and performance against target



South Ken ZEN+

The RCM works with the 22 other members of the Exhibition Road Cultural Group (ERCG) through South Ken ZEN+: a partnership of world-leading science and arts institutions in South Kensington committed to tackling the greatest challenge of our age. South Ken ZEN+ is our collective response to the climate and biodiversity crisis.

With the joint aims of becoming a zero emissions (ZE) and nature-positive (N+) neighbourhood, we have joined with our neighbours to deploy our world-leading creativity and expertise in science and the arts to take collective approach to meet our net-zero, nature positive goals for South Kensington.

COLLABORATING TO SHARE BEST PRACTICE

We are working closely with the South Ken Zen+ partnership to share good practice and explore decarbonisation opportunities together.

During the year, we contributed to a baseline assessment project, where energy and carbon data from all members has been compiled within a software tool, allowing members to compare performance year on year and between institutions. We also participated in workshops to explore the decarbonisation opportunities and climate risk management.

In July a tender was published to appoint a technical consultancy to progress the heat network and energy efficiency programme. This will include establishing a heat and energy demand baseline for the neighbourhood and defining funding opportunities.



CARBON LITERACY TRAINING

South Ken ZEN+ launched Carbon Literacy and Climate Fresk training. These training programmes help staff to understand how carbon emissions and climate change relate to our lives at home and work, and support practical action to reduce emissions.

STEERING GROUP

RCM Director James Williams and Director of Estates, Aida Berhamovic, sit on the working groups for climate change and circular economy to share best practice and collaborate on delivering net zero carbon and nature positive projects.

The steering group meets four times a year and is comprised of Director-level ERCG members who maintain strategic oversight of the SKZ+ programme and helps set the priorities for activity.

Other members of the group include Julia Knights, Deputy Director, Science Museum, Joe Smith, Director, Royal Geographical Society and Alex Burch, Director of Public Engagement, Natural History Museum. The Group is currently steered by two 1851 Commissioners, Professor Chris Wise and Dame Alison Nimmo.

Water

WATER USE

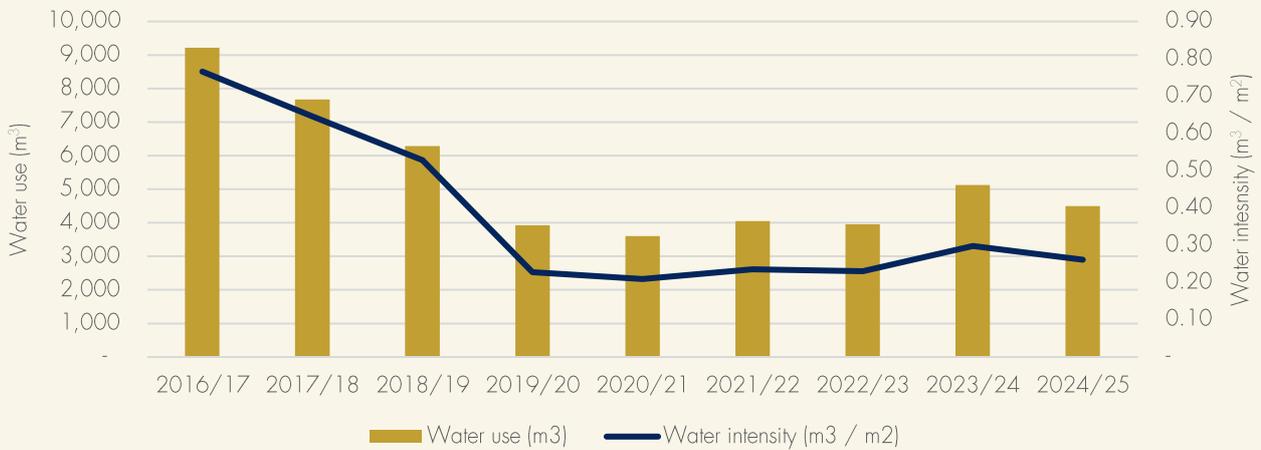
The RCM has very limited water use on site, restricted to toilets and some catering facilities.

Since 2016/17, we have reduced our water use by 51% and our water use per m² by 66%. In 2024/25 we reduced water consumption by 12% year on year, reversing an upward trend in consumption during the previous 4 years.

Increasing visitor numbers and extended opening hours has been a factor in the historic increases.

About three fifths of the RCM's water is consumed at Prince Consort Road, with two fifths used at Jay Mews offices. We reduced water consumption at Prince Consort Road by 25% from 2023/24, from 3,427 m³ to 2,566 m³. Consumption at Jay Mews increased by 22%, to 1,928 m³.

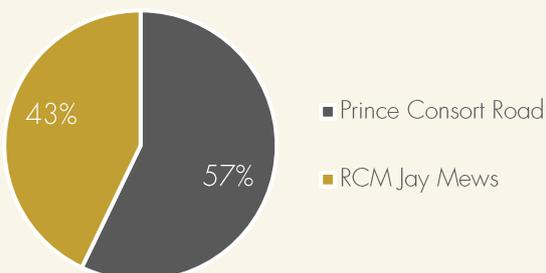
Water use



Water use

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Water use (m ³)	9,216	7,681	6,291	3,926	3,603	4,046	3,959	5,127	4,494
Water intensity (m ³ /m ²)	0.77	0.65	0.53	0.23	0.21	0.24	0.23	0.30	0.26

Water use by site



'RCM Jay Mews' includes 41-43 Jay Mews and 39 Jay Mews.

Waste

WASTE MANAGEMENT

The College's main waste streams are from offices and catering functions. We have some limited hazardous waste streams from electronics and light fittings, and very small volumes of solvents used in musical instrument conservation and restoration.

In 2022 we introduced a new waste contract. We appointed Westminster Council who provide waste services through Veolia.

The contract will help us to improve our recycling rate and will also reduce carbon emissions and air quality impacts from waste collections, as the contractor also serves a number of our neighbouring institutions and has adopted electric vehicles.

We continue to segregate waste on site, including a successful crisp packet recycling scheme in the café, and continue to participate in the Circular economy and sustainable procurement group.



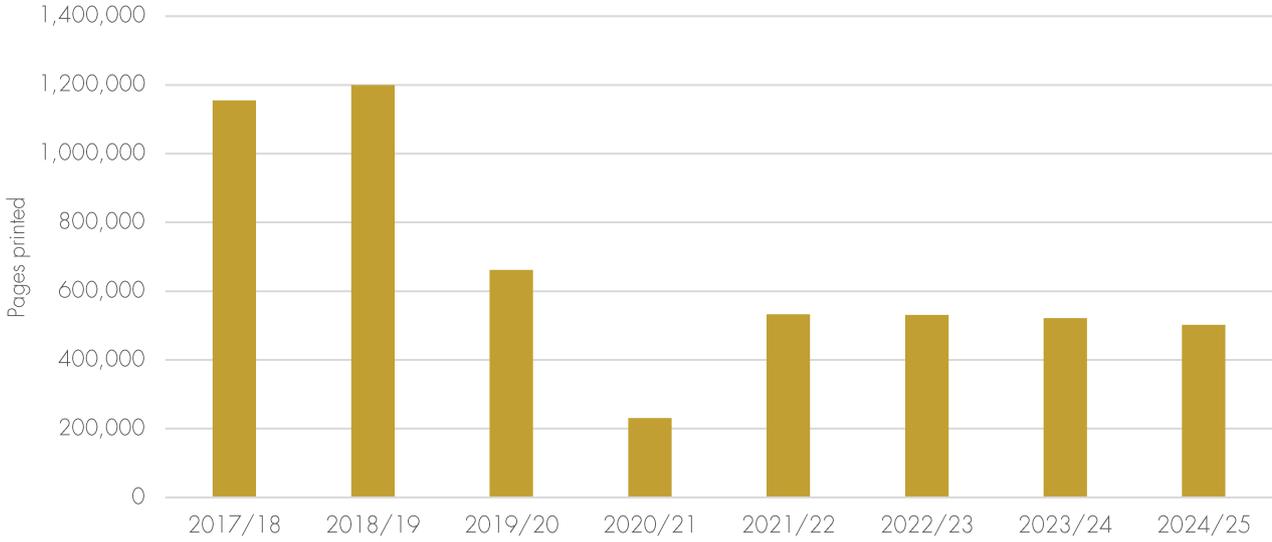
Waste arising

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Waste arising (tonnes)	72	31	26	16	12	34	23	38	55
Waste per m ² (kg/m ²)	5.98	2.62	2.17	0.92	0.70	2.06	1.36	2.22	3.21



Paper

In 2024/25 we used just over half a million pages of paper, the lowest level since the pandemic and 58% lower than pre-pandemic usage. The continued progress towards paperless processes including online meetings and increased use of digital music scores have continued to reduce printing requirements.



	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Sheets printed	1,155,353	1,199,971	662,353	230,558	532,963	530,892	521,434	502,164



Business Travel

The below table shows kilometres travelled by different modes of transport.

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Taxi	-	-	-	1763	131	869	50	975	532
Personal Car (Expenses)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Domestic Air	13,399	9,359	8,928	6,213	-	442	-	573	574
Short-Haul Air	95,330	122,920	215,699	105,390	-	31,216	129,668	75,829	249,288
Long-Haul Air	423,129	449,801	458,363	572,321	22,156	-	454,443	116,794	2,131,810
International Air	66,647	67,969	186,619	131,493	-	26,104	164,353	333,830	-
International Rail	18,696	1,730	-	3,325	-	14,895	1,968	-	16,182
Domestic Rail	-	12,213	29,333	15,857	2,006	8,726	26,430	11,851	111,927
Total	617,201	663,992	898,942	836,362	24,293	82,252	776,912	539,852	2,510,313

We have seen a considerable increase in business travel during 2024/25. This has been driven by a focus on global collaboration, talent development and recruitment and musical innovation. In January 2025, we conducted a tour across Singapore, Hong Kong, and Sydney.



Sustainable catering

Embedding sustainable practices into our catering is a priority for us. Our sustainable food policy sets out our aims for all on site catering and we work closely with our catering contractor to improve our performance.

The Sustainable Food Policy and Framework is owned by RCM and outlines the aims, objectives and principles through which sustainability is imbedded in all aspects of catering operations. The policy applies to all outlets and food served at the RCM, forming the basis of relationships with partners and third-party providers including Imperial College London our current catering provider.

ADVOCACY

We aim to raise awareness of how customers can support the Sustainable Food Policy. We provide staff with training and run customers campaigns to highlight key themes. During 2024/25 we ran a customer communication campaign focussed on recyclable packaging, waste and using re-usable containers. We changed our disposable containers to Notpla – the EU’s first and only plastic free packaging, founded by an Imperial College Alumnus.

NET ZERO

We aim to measure and minimise the carbon emissions associated with food, both from on-site operations and across the value chain.

FOOD

Our aim is for the food served on site to be healthy and reflect the dietary preferences of the 60+ nationalities that make up our student and staff body. We aim to champion the most sustainable options and work towards accreditations such as Food for Life and Menus for change.

We are working with our catering partners at Imperial College to reduce the environmental impact of menu items. We have expanded the range of plant-based options available, and have introduced plantworks stickers and sustainable choices logos to engage customers. We also offer non-dairy milks at no extra charge at all outlets, and have removed all beef from the menu, replacing it with wild culled venison which has a lower carbon footprint.

PROCUREMENT

We are committed to working with suppliers who share our high ambitions on environmental and social practices, and aim to source seasonal produce and where applicable, purchase products with appropriate certifications, such as Fairtrade, Rainforest Alliance, and the Soil Association. During this year, our catering contractor have requested the sustainability credentials of all of our key catering suppliers.

All coffee and bananas are fair trade.

WASTE

We aim to minimise waste and phase out all single-use plastics where possible. Our strategy also seeks to minimise waste overall and support the waste hierarchy (avoid, reduce, re-use, recycle/compost, recovery).

We have introduced a range of recycled napkins and new dispensers which has reduced napkin waste and their overall environmental impact.

We also filter our cooking oil, which extends the length of time it can be used, helping us to reduce food waste.

We offer YOYO reward points for customers who purchase food and drinks in re-useable containers and ceramic and metal crockery/cutlery is given by default to customers 'eating in'.

FIND OUT MORE
[Sustainable food policy](#)

Construction and refurbishment

We have comprehensive processes in place to management sustainability issues at all stages of construction and refurbishment projects.

We have developed an in-house project management tool that can be used for any project run by the College. Sustainability criteria are embedded at every stage.

DESIGN

Sustainability is a key design criterion and we carefully consider the environmental impacts of both the construction or fitout process as well as the ongoing operational implications and the supply chain impacts.

Wherever possible, we seek to minimise environmental impacts and risks where we can at the design stage.

PROCUREMENT

We are committed to working with suppliers who share our high ambitions on environmental and social practices. We assess a potential supplier's sustainability management practices and their ability to support us in delivering on our sustainability goals.

MANAGING IMPACTS DURING PROJECTS

Our projects team manage sustainability issues closely during the delivery stage. We assign dedicated managers for key projects and liaise with contractors regular on their environmental management and performance, seeking to building trust and a collaborative relationship.

MONITORING

We monitor the environmental impacts of projects closely and monitor them through the project board. This may include site walks, acoustic monitoring, monitoring waste and energy use, or storage of materials to avoid damage and waste.

POST OCCUPANCY ASSESSMENTS

Once a project is complete, we typically undertake an appropriate post-occupancy assessment. This process helps to ensure that all systems and technologies are working properly and are optimised for efficiency. We also review where we can improve our decision making and processes.



RCM WINS 2025 RIBA LONDON AWARD



In May 2025, the Royal College of Music was awarded a 2025 Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) London Award, celebrating the College's landmark redevelopment by John Simpson Architects.

The prestigious RIBA London Awards honour architectural excellence across the capital with John Nahar, RIBA's Regional Director of London, praising the winning projects for reflecting a 'breathtaking display of variety, creativity, and purpose'.

The £40 million More Music transformation revitalised the Royal College of Music's historic campus, creating dynamic new spaces and facilities, fostering an inspirational environment for our global community of students to create, research and perform music. Highlights of the works included a full renovation of the ground floor including a new cafe, the Carolean, development of the Cotes-Burgan Atrium at the heart of the College, a Performance Hall and Performance Studio, and a new home for the Royal College of Music Museum.

'Our More Music estate has been truly transformative for the college's community of students, staff and audiences. Alongside two new state-of-the-art venues, John Simpson Architects' vision for the space to widen public access to the College has enabled us to welcome thousands of new visitors to the College. It is an honour to have this development recognised in the 2025 Royal Institute of British Architects Award.'

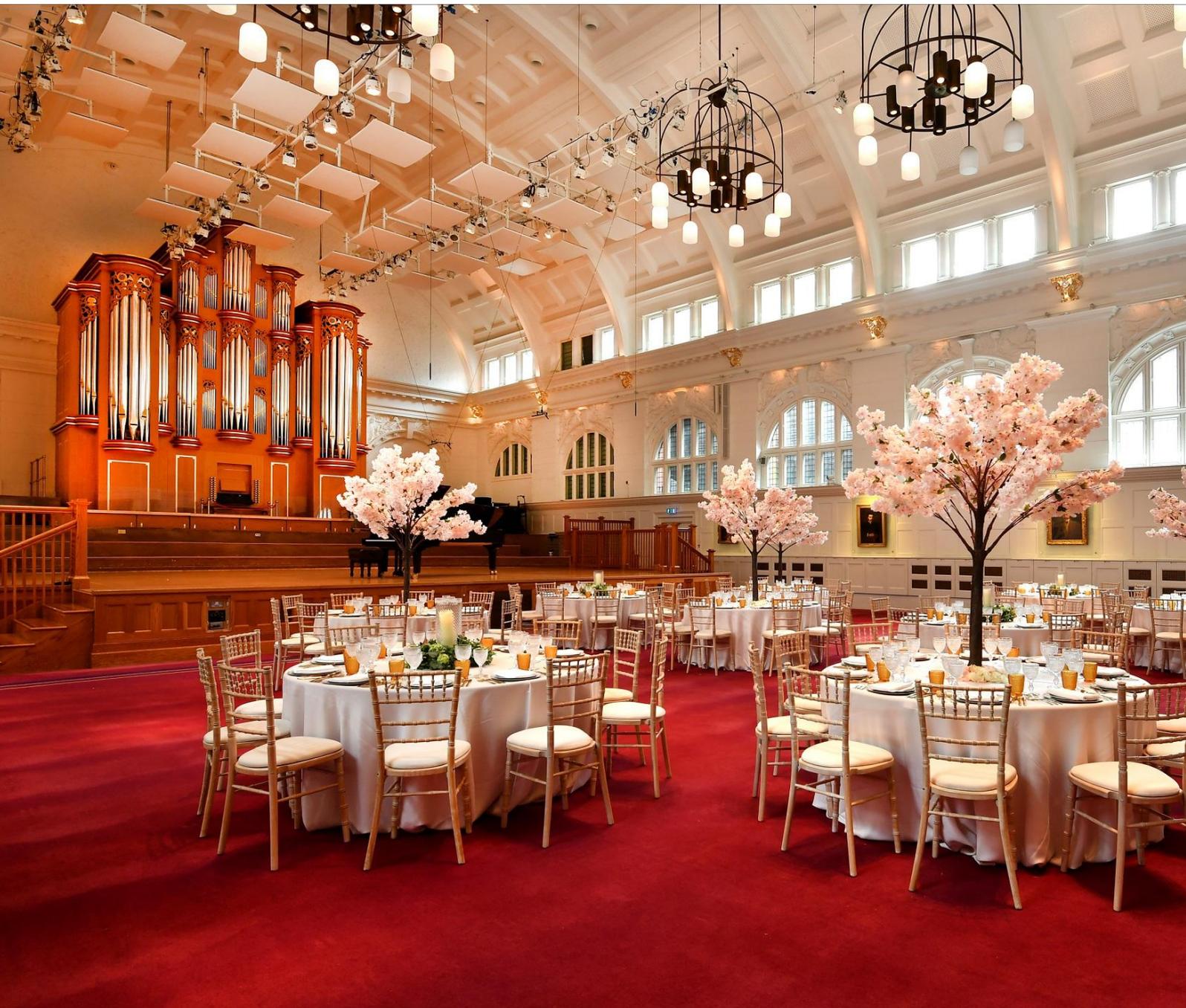
James Williams, Director of the Royal College of Music

Sustainable events

The College offers a unique and inspiring events venue and we are committed to ensuring our events are sustainable.

We work closely with our events customers to embed sustainability into the planning process, and started to develop a sustainability scorecard to measure and incentivise good environmental practice in events planning. This will help to address key issues such as single-use plastics, energy use and event carbon emissions.

We will extend our sustainability commitment to our event suppliers, and we will select partners who demonstrate excellent sustainability management and performance, as well as offer innovative and sustainable goods and services.





Sustainable performances

We aim to minimise the impact of performances and measure our impacts better. Performances in the College range from large orchestra concerts or opera performance to less formal chamber music concerts. Our performances also include national and international tours.

We have implemented a range of practical changes to reduce paper use for parts and programmes, such as the adoption of digital scores and performance notes. We have trialled some new technology solutions that have given us better data.

We also aim to reduce single-use plastic by encouraging performers to use refillable water bottles and liaison with catering providers for audience refreshments.

DIGITAL TICKETING AND ENHANCED DATA

We use a digital ticketing system which allows us not only to offer paperless ticketing but also improves our data on attendees. This helps to ensure we only print the number of programmes needed and also allows us to improve our emissions calculations for performances.

80% ENERGY SAVING FROM NEW LIGHTING

The new lighting installed in the concert hall has reduced electricity consumption during rehearsals and performances by 80%.

RECYCLING STAGE SETS

We use the principles set out in the Theatre Green Book sustainable production guide in our set design process. This has helped to reduce the materials used and the amount of waste generated.

We also work with a specialist contractor to help re-use and recycle sets.

Biodiversity

The Royal College of Music's hall of residence, Prince Consort Village, provides high-quality accommodation for more than 400 students. The building, which is run by a third-party operating company, opened in spring 2016 and comprises studio apartments, en-suite rooms and standard rooms.

GREEN WALL AND ALLOTMENTS AT PCV

As part of Prince Consort Village's sustainability programme, a green wall has been installed along with student allotments.

BIODIVERSITY ON- AND OFF-CAMPUS

Whilst our South Kensington campus has a number of constraints which limit the scope for biodiversity projects, we are exploring how we can contribute both on- and off-campus.



Progress on our targets

	Target	Progress
08	Achieve carbon net zero by 2040	On track The College is firmly committed to this ambitious target and we are making good progress in reducing our carbon footprint across scopes 1, 2 and 3.
09	Reduce carbon emissions from scopes 1 and 2 by 76% by 2029/30 from a 2005 baseline	Ahead of target Scope 1 and 2 emissions have been reduced by 76% since 2005.
10	Reduce scope 3 carbon emissions by 46% by 2026/27 from a 2019/20 baseline	On track Scope 3 carbon emissions have so far been reduced by 40% from a 2019/20 baseline.
11	Maintain total waste arising from campus under 25 tonnes per year	Behind target We have seen a significant increase in our waste data. This is due to weight estimates made by our waste contractor – we are exploring how to improve the data we receive.
12	Achieve recycling rate of more than 75% for the year ending 2026/27	Behind target Our recycling rate in 2024/25 was 41%. Limitations with our waste data are likely skewing our reported recycling rate.
13	Reduce the environmental impact from performances	On track We have invested in more efficient digital and lighting equipment and have introduced paperless ticketing. Costumes and stage sets for the College's opera productions are recycled and reused where possible.



PARTNERSHIPS FOR SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT

We will use the power of music to drive awareness in sustainability. We will collaborate with suppliers, other institutions and investment managers to embed sustainability practices where we have influence.

The College is able to support and influence the sustainability performance of a number of key stakeholder groups, supporting collaboration and shared purpose. This includes our suppliers, investment managers, neighbouring and peer institutions, and staff. We are also able to support awareness of key sustainability themes through performance and alumni engagement.

KEY AREAS

- Sustainable procurement,
- Sustainable investment,
- Engagement with partner institutions,
- Supporting wider awareness of environmental themes through performance and alumni engagement,
- Supporting sustainable practices for staff and students at home.

VISION

By 2025 we will:

- Embed sustainability into procurement decisions
- For priority suppliers, review sustainability credentials and engage on an ongoing basis

By 2028 we will:

- Engage with all suppliers on sustainability issues based on size and significance, and request key performance metrics

KEY SUPPORTING STRATEGIES

[Sustainable procurement policy](#)

[Policy for responsible investment](#)

[HR benefits](#)

'We are working hard to engage our suppliers, investment managers and partners to help deliver our sustainability ambitions.'

Rachel Harris, Director of Finance



Sustainable procurement

The RCM purchases a wide range of goods and services and we are committed to embedding the highest standards of environmental and social practice across our supply chain. Our sustainable procurement policy sets out our approach and objectives.

Many procurement decisions are made by individuals within the functions and departments across the College, and we manage more significant procurement decisions with our purchasing partners, Ensemble Purchasing – a procurement partnership with other conservatoires. We are a member of the London Universities Purchasing Consortium.

POLICY AND ENGAGEMENT

Our sustainable procurement policy sets out our approach to including environmental and social considerations in our decision making.

Over the 5 year strategy period, we will engage with suppliers on sustainability issues, initially focussing on reviewing the sustainability performance of key suppliers, especially those with a significant on-campus presence, and establishing ongoing engagement.

Within the 5 year period we aim to engage with suppliers regularly to understand their sustainability approach and performance, as well as explore opportunities to collaborate to improve sustainability outcomes. We want all our buyers to consider relevant sustainability factors in all procurement decisions and to have embedded sustainability principles so clearly in our key supply chain partnerships that suppliers proactively engage with us to implement improvements.

SUPPLIER PERFORMANCE DATA

In 2024/25 we commenced a process to collect supplier GHG data, working with NETpositive Futures – a carbon platform specialising in higher education.

We have historically calculated our supply chain emissions using industry emissions factors and spend data, however the data collected through the NETpositive platform has allows us to use actual data for some suppliers in 2024/25.

We aim to increase the supplier specific performance data used, and we will seek to collect further sustainability performance data related to the goods and services provided to the RCM, including the circular economy, working conditions and the London living wage.



Sustainable investment

The Royal College of Music holds investments in two permanent endowment funds and a general purpose fund. These funds are managed on our behalf by independent investment managers in line with our policy for responsible investment.

POLICY

Our responsible investment policy sets out our approach to responsible investment. It requires all investment managers to consider Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) considerations when making investments.

GOVERNANCE

Our Finance and General Purposes Committee (F&GPC) is responsible for the oversight of our investment arrangements. The F&GPC has appointed an Investment Committee with responsibility to recommend RCM's Investment Strategy and Policy for Responsible Investment. The Investment Committee monitors the performance of RCM's investment portfolios and the investment managers provide ESG updates at least twice a year.

RCM has appointed two investment managers:

- The Scholarship and Awards fund is split into two separate portfolios, with Sarasin & Partners managing one of these portfolios and Cazenove Capital the other,
- The General Fund is managed in a Money Market Fund by Cazenove Capital Cash Administration Service, and
- Sarasin & Partners manage both the Junior Department Fund and Junior Department Expendable Fund.

ENGAGEMENT WITH INVESTEE COMPANIES AND VOTING

Given the size of RCM's funds and the fact that all of our investments are held in pooled vehicles, it is not practical for RCM to engage directly with individual companies on ESG related issues. Instead, we expect our investment managers to engage and vote on RCM's behalf.

RCM expects its investment managers to demonstrate how they consider ESG as part of the investment process. The College also expects them to engage with companies where ESG issues are a concern, provide proxy voting on ESG issues and report to the College on their engagement activities.

REPORTING AND DISCLOSURE

Each of RCM's investment managers is required to report once a year on

- How ESG factors are incorporated into the investment manager's investment process,
- Engagement activity and results,
- Voting activity,
- The investment manager's approach to mitigating climate change,
- The carbon footprint (scope 1 and 2) of the investment portfolio, and
- The portfolio's exposure to areas that could be of concern such as fossil fuels, as well as sustainable and impact investments.

RCM sets out in its Annual Review and Financial Statements its approach to ethical investments.

Working with peers and neighbouring institutions

A key component of our sustainability strategy is to work with our peers and neighbours to deliver improvement together.



CONTRIBUTION TO SECTOR PROGRAMMES

Since 2023, Aida Berhamovic has served on the board of the Environmental Association of Universities and Colleges (EAUC), a leading environmental member-based charity with the mission to embed sustainability at the heart of post-16 education institutions.

The EAUC develops guidance and convenes working groups, training and conferences to share best practice in environmental management for colleges and universities.

RCM AND PRINCE CONSORT VILLAGE

The RCM has purpose-built student accommodation at Prince Consort Village, which is run by a third-party operator, Campus Living Villages (CLV).

We are working closely with CLV on sustainability initiatives. Solar PV has been installed and a green wall added. Further solar panels are scheduled to be installed in 2026/27.

SOUTH KEN ZEN+

RCM is a member of the South Ken ZEN+ group a partnership of world-leading science and arts institutions in South Kensington committed to tackling the greatest challenge of our age. South Ken ZEN+ is our collective response to the climate and biodiversity crisis.

We are working closely with Imperial College and other group members to explore the options of a low-carbon district heat network.

Read more on page 45.

'RCM is a member of the South Ken ZEN+ group – a partnership of world-leading science and arts institutions in south Kensington committed to tackling the greatest challenge of our age.'



Supporting sustainability at home for staff and students

We aim to support staff and students to embed sustainable practices at home.

HR BENEFITS

We provide a range of benefits to support sustainable travel. This includes interest-free season ticket loans and the bike to work salary sacrifice scheme.

We offer a cycle to work scheme, allowing staff to support staff to purchase a bicycle to commute to and from the RCM.

Staff are also entitled to a range of health and wellbeing benefits which include flexible working, eye and hearing tests, employee assistance programme and event tickets.

rcm.ac.uk/about

Progress on our targets

Target

Progress

14

40% of supplier spend to be accounted for using actual emissions data provided to the RCM by suppliers (as opposed to estimates calculated by the RCM) by 2024/25

Behind target

We have commenced collecting emissions data from our partners and suppliers but have not yet met the 40% objectives we set.

15

Implement the Sustainable Procurement Policy and Supplier Code of Conduct across all departments

Complete

The policy has been implemented and is in use across the College.

16

Engage with suppliers to understand and encourage efforts to improve their sustainability credentials

On track

Sustainability is a key consideration as part of contract reviews and all RCM partners are required to regularly report on their progress on sustainability.





HEALTHY, INCLUSIVE AND SUPPORTIVE WORKPLACE

We foster a healthy, inclusive and supportive environment for
staff and students

We are committed to making the RCM a great place to work and providing the highest standard of support to all members of staff. This means that we attract and retain talent representative of our entire community, safeguard the health, safety and wellbeing of staff, and provide them with structured support to develop their professional and transferable skills.

KEY AREAS

- Diversity and social inclusion,
- Staff health, safety and wellbeing,
- Professional development.

VISION

By 2028 we will:

- Increase the completeness of our diversity data,
- Increase diversity of applicants for academic and professional staff,
- Provide enhanced training for staff involved in recruitment.



'The RCM's greatest value is in our people. We strive to make the College an inclusive and supportive place to work, investing in the skills and knowledge of our wonderful team.'

Jennifer Allison, Head of Human Resources.

KEY SUPPORTING STRATEGIES

[Health and safety policy](#)

[Health and Wellbeing Programme](#)

Health, safety and wellbeing

We are committed to keeping everyone who works for or with the RCM healthy, safe and supported.

We provide a wide range of health, safety and wellbeing programmes across the RCM.

POLICY

Our comprehensive [health and safety policy](#) provides a robust framework and process to identify and manage health and safety risks. In addition, RCM has a wellbeing policy.

GOVERNANCE

The Council is ultimately responsible for managing health and safety and RCM, and day to day management is delegated to the Estates Director, supported by a health and safety manager and the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee.

All members of staff have responsibilities for health and safety, and roles and responsibilities are defined in the health and safety policy.

MENTAL HEALTH

We have trained 8 new Mental Health Champions during the year and now have 20 mental health first aiders who provide a first point of contact for any member of staff or student.

HEALTH AND SAFETY CONTROLS

Whilst in general the health and safety risk profile for the College is low, we operate a comprehensive suite of controls to manage health and safety risks effectively. This includes risk assessments and method statement for key risks which include fire; slips, trips and falls; hazardous materials; noise; musculoskeletal; lone working; electricity, plant and vehicles; and food safety.

Given the nature of our operations as a conservatoire, our priority areas include manual handling and noise exposure. Risk assessments are completed for individual rooms, which dictate what type of activities can be undertaken. A programme of noise monitoring is undertaken, and noise assessment equipment was recalibrated during the year.

Appropriate training is provided to staff, risk assessments must be completed, and appropriate records maintained.

We are currently developing an online induction for all hourly paid staff to ensure that consistent training is available to everyone.

INVESTING IN HEALTH AND SAFETY SKILLS

During 2024/25, Leigh Jones, our Health and Safety Manager undertook a suite of courses to expand our in-house safety capabilities.

Leigh completed the FAA Level 3 award in education and training, allowing her to now complete certified health and safety training for our team, including manual handling (L2), fire (L2) and health and safety (L3).

We are now able to issue NVQ level 1,2 and 3 certificates in health and safety management, and Leigh will be conducting training for our facilities team over the next year.

RIGHT: Leigh Jones, RCM Health and Safety Manager



WELLBEING RESOURCES

There is a suite of wellbeing resources available to RCM staff, including:

- Free employee assistance service via email, phone or live chat,
- Training on a range of subjects including mental health, menopause, stress, resilience, suicide and autism,
- Mental health first aiders: We have 21 trained mental health first aiders who provide a first point of contact for any member of staff or student,
- Mental health champions, with training specifically tailored for higher education institutions,
- Weekly meditation and yoga sessions,
- Chaplaincy multi-faith centre (Imperial College),
- Ethos gym (Imperial College),
- Electronic resources on Muse (RCM intranet) including resources specifically related to supporting students.

TRAINING

We provided staff with a range of health, safety and wellbeing training in 2024/25. This included mental health, professional skills, inclusivity and neurodiversity.

‘Following a call for new mental health first aiders, the number of trained MHFAs increased from 19 to 27’

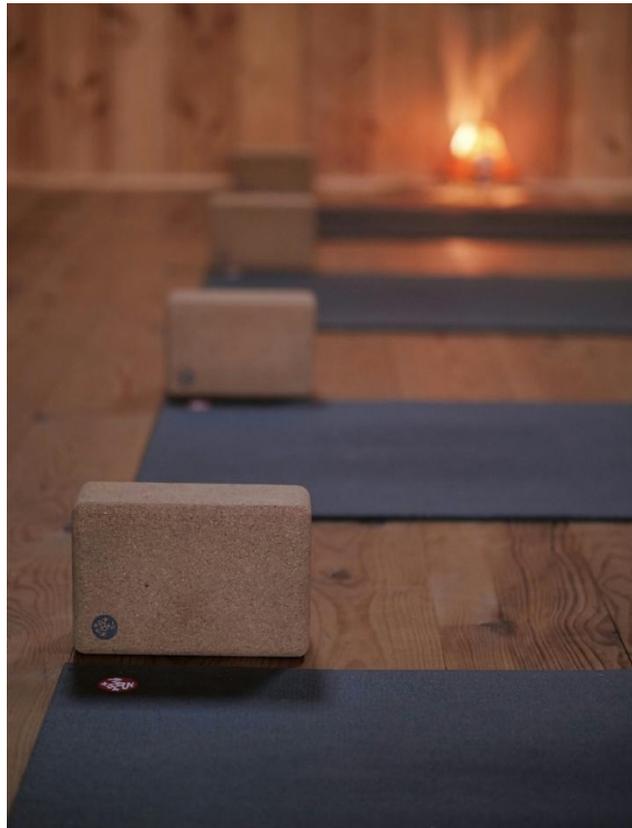
Philippa Style, HR Manager

NEW WELLNESS CENTRE OPENED

In 2025, we opened a new wellness centre for students and staff.

The space provides a quiet sanctuary from the pressures of daily life, and can be used for yoga, meditation or quiet reflection.

The space has been soundproofed, providing an opportunity to step away from the College soundscape which is filled with fragments of music from practice rooms and the hum of a busy campus.



Staff diversity and inclusion

The Royal College of Music is committed to creating a safe, fair and supportive environment for all. Described at its foundation as an institution whose doors were to be 'thrown open to the whole world', the RCM is an international and diverse community, which aims to ensure that each individual is treated with respect and dignity, and that no student, member of staff or visitor is subjected to direct or indirect unlawful discrimination.

STAFF TRAINING AND RECRUITMENT

Our priorities for 2024-25 were to:

- Continue to compile data on staff ethnicity,
- Implement systems to monitor the diversity of visiting faculty, teachers and artists,
- Establish annual monitoring to the EDI committee,
- Seek feedback on existing EDI training and explore new areas, especially disability and neurodiversity awareness for professors. Monitor engagement with training,
- Embed at least one EDI focused session in all staff development days,
- Explore new initiatives for attracting a more diverse pool of applicants for vacancies, especially in areas where there are known issues of representation.

The College's EDI training initiatives continue to grow and are reaching a wider range of staff. In addition to compulsory EDI training for all new staff, during 2024-25 all staff were offered access to training in Unconscious Bias, Being an Active Bystander, Mental Health Awareness, Mental Health in the Workplace for Managers, and Inclusive Cultures.

Our online 'Supporting our Students' Staff Hub on Learn now provides comprehensive information for staff on inclusive teaching practices and support for disabled students.

The Student Services Manager has also shared guidance for professors on supporting students with mental health difficulties and supporting neurodiverse learners.

Following the introduction of remuneration for hourly professors to attend training, we have seen an increase in participation in learning and development training activities.

We continue to monitor closely the diversity of our staff and recognise that this remains a priority. All RCM vacancies are now advertised widely. We now advertise all RCM vacancies on the Diversity Job Network, this includes neurodiversityjobs.co.uk, disabilityjob.co.uk, bmejjobs.co.uk/, and lgbtjobs.co.uk.

All JD competitions requiring two or more adjudicators included at least one panel member from an under-represented group and new adjudicators from under-represented backgrounds were added to the roster of regular JD adjudicators, including Ilmar Gavilan, Linton Stevens and Nicola Hicks.

FIND OUT MORE
rcm.ac.uk/about/

Staff development

We invest in the skills and knowledge for our team necessary to deliver a world-class education.

STAFF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

The RCM offers a range of learning and development opportunities for staff.

Eligible members of staff can also apply for professional development funding to support individual learning activity. We received 30 professional development applications in the 2024/25.

In the 2024/25 academic year we ran 14 training sessions for staff, many of which Graduate Teaching Assistants were also invited to. We also distributed information on webinars ran by our employee assistance provider CiC to all staff.

These training sessions covered mental health awareness for individuals and a session specifically targeted at Managers.



We also expanded our professional skills training to include Presentation Skills and Advanced Excel.

We also ran sessions such as Active Bystander, understanding autism in the workplace and Unconscious Bias which have been well received in previous years as well as a new session on Inclusive Cultures.

We had 69 different people attended training in this academic year, this number is made up of academic and administrative staff, GTAs and members of RCM council. Many staff attended up to 4 sessions.

Progress on our targets

Target

Progress

17

Adapt the existing Health and Safety governance structure to include Health and Wellbeing by the end of 2022/23 (including revised terms of reference).

Achieved

The terms of reference for the Health and Safety Committee were amended to include Wellbeing.

18

Develop a coordinated RCM Health and Wellbeing Programme by the end of 2023/24.

Achieved

We launched our Health and Wellbeing Programme in April 2024.



ACCOUNTABLE AND TRANSPARENT

We will ensure effective governance practices are in place for our sustainability strategy and will monitor and report on our progress.

Given the importance of environmental and social issues, it is important that we establish robust governance structures to set our direction and ambition and oversee our progress. We must also ensure that we communicate our practices and policies in a clear and consistent way, taking into consideration the needs and expectations of our key stakeholders.

KEY AREAS

- Sustainability governance,
- Stakeholder engagement,
- Partnerships and collaborations,
- Trust and transparency,
- Performance monitoring,
- Proactive communication,
- Public sustainability reporting.

VISION

By 2028 we will:

- Reach and maintain high standards of sustainability governance, communication and stakeholder engagement

KEY SUPPORTING STRATEGIES

[Health and safety policy](#)

[Health and Wellbeing Programme](#)



SUSTAINABILITY GOVERNANCE

Our sustainability progress is managed by effective governance practices. Our sustainability committee is responsible for overseeing our targets, management practices and performance and will report to Council on a regular basis. Sustainability management is also considered across a number of sub-committees, including Estates Committee, Finance and General Purposes Committee and Audit Committees.

Overall responsibility for environmental management sits with the RCM's Director of Estates, Aida Berhamovic.

Responsibility and accountability is assigned for all initiatives and tasks, and we will run a range of stakeholder engagement practices to ensure they are comprehensive and effective.

There are two committees with direct responsibility for managing environmental issues:

- The Environmental Management Committee. The committee provides strategic oversight and comprises senior managers from across the RCM,
- The Environment Steering Group. The committee oversees the implementation of projects and day to day management of environmental issues and comprises key managers from across the RCM.

RCM's Council are the body responsible for setting the College's Estates Strategy and Environmental Sustainability Policy. Council meets termly to review and monitor performance to ensure the College is doing all that it can to retain its ISO 14001 accreditation and to meet our carbon emissions reduction targets.

Central to these targets are the RCM's Carbon Management Plan and Sustainability Strategy, both of which outline in detail the steps being taken to reduce the RCM's carbon footprint and continually improve upon our sustainability performance.

The Estates and Project teams play a large role in this effort through developing the buildings and making systems more energy efficient, however, the onus to provide more sustainable solutions pervades all aspects of the RCM's work right through from procurement to HR policy. Environmental issues are also discussed regularly at the termly meetings with members of the UNISON union.

External auditors visit annually to evaluate our progress on all sides and we strive to implement the advice and recommendations of their reports.

All policies, plans and reports are available on the College's website in the Environmental Policy section.

Communications, reporting and engagement

COMMUNICATIONS

We will measure and report on our sustainability practices and performance for internal and external stakeholders. Such reports will be robust and transparent, providing the data and information that is responsive to the needs and expectations of our key stakeholders.

Specifically, we will provide estates data to HESA through the EMR, actively engage with the people and planet green league, and make our policies and procedures available on our website. We will also produce an annual sustainability report which examines our progress towards our targets and communicates changes to practices and our response to emerging management requirements.

WIDER STAFF AND STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Staff and students can act as sustainability champions by joining the Environmental Steering Group. There is currently representation in this group from a range of different College departments.

This year the group have worked collectively to deliver a number of student and staff engagement initiatives such as the paper saving campaign and travel survey and promote these within their individual teams.

All new staff receive a sustainability induction when they start at the College and are invited to join the steering group as part of this induction.

The RCM sustainability strategy is supported by a budget and in 2024/25 this will be spent on a range of decarbonisation and other sustainability projects.

Our sustainability team

Aida Berhamovic **Director of Estates**

Aida is a member of the College's senior leadership team and environmental sustainability features within her portfolio of responsibilities. The Director of Estates reports regularly to the Council on environmental sustainability matters and initiatives.

Aida can be contacted through her assistant Andrea Chang Jones: andrea.changjones@rcm.ac.uk

Daniel Miller **Estates Projects and Environmental Coordinator**

Daniel leads the sustainability programme at the RCM and advises on the College's sustainability strategy and policies. He is responsible for managing the ISO14001:2015 accredited environmental management system and ensures compliance with environmental legislation, RCM sustainability policies and ISO14001. He also delivers a range of sustainability-related projects across carbon management, student and staff engagement and data collection.

Contact: daniel.miller@rcm.ac.uk

Sarah Hanratty **Head of Projects, Facilities and Operations**

Sarah is responsible for managing the facilities and waste contracts. She is responsible for waste management and recycling, including monitoring performance.

Contact: sarah.hanratty@rcm.ac.uk

Jeff Smerdon **Estates and Technical Services Manager**

Jeff leads on the delivery of the carbon management plan through a range of projects designed to improve building insulation and implement more sustainable heating, hot water and electrical infrastructure. He is also responsible for managing energy and water.

Contact: jeff.smerdon@rcm.ac.uk

Leigh Jones **Health and Safety Manager**

Leigh leads the RCM's drive towards achieving the highest possible standards of environmental excellence and sustainability. In her role as Health and Safety manager she actively engages with staff and students to help meet the targets set in the College's environmental policies and promote sustainability in all aspects of the RCM experience. This includes building upon the RCM's ISO 14001 and BREEAM accreditations, the highest standards of environmental excellence in the industry/available to institutions.

Contact: leigh.jones@rcm.ac.uk

Leila Hooton **President of the RCM Students' Union**

As a member of the RCM Council, the President of the Students' Union plays an essential role in driving RCM's environmental agenda and promoting its policies among the student body. Leila sits at all regular meetings of Council and the boards of major projects to advise on sustainable practise and provide input from the student perspective. This guarantees sustained student input in all environmental matters affecting the College and is a key aspect of our Community Involvement Policy and engagement strategy.

Contact: su.president@rcm.ac.uk

Gethin Lewis **Projects and Operations Manager**

Gethin supports and leads on a wide range of projects, including carbon management and other sustainability related projects. He also supports the implementation and management of Estates and FM policies, procedures and functions, particularly related to RCM events

Contact: gethin.lewis@rcm.ac.uk

Roles and Responsibilities

Executive Lead	Aida Berhamovic, Director of Estates
Environmental Manager	Daniel Miller, Estates Projects and Environmental Coordinator
Environmental Consultant	Darren Chadwick, Managing Partner (Brite Green Ltd.)
Energy and Carbon	Jeff Smerdon, Estates & Technical Services Manager
Waste and Resource Use	Sarah Hanratty, Head of Projects, Facilities and Operations
Projects and Operations Construction and Refurbishment	Sarah Hanratty, Head of Projects, Facilities and Operations Gethin Lewis, Projects and Operations Manager
Events and Performance	Flo Ambrose, Performance, Head of Performance, Programming and Facilities Vicky Moran, Head of Events and Corporate Partnerships
Teaching and Research	Diana Salazar, Director of Programmes Ingrid Pearson, Senior Academic Tutor (Area Leader MMus in Performance and BSc Programme Leader)
Student Union	Leila Hooton, SU President
Finance	Rachel Harris, Director of Finance
Digital	Richard Bland, Head of Creative Technologies
Human Resources	Jennifer Allison, Head of Human Resources.
Marketing and Communications	Katherine Smith, Head of Marketing

PHOTOGRAPHY CREDITS

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CAUTIONARY STATEMENT

This report may contain forward-looking statements which are made in good faith and are based on current expectations or beliefs, as well as assumptions about future events. The College undertakes no obligation to update any forward looking statements contained in this Report, whether as a result of new information, future events or otherwise.



ROYAL

COLLEGE

OF MUSIC

London

Prince Consort Road
London SW7 2BS
United Kingdom

+44(0)20 7591 4300

info@rcm.ac.uk

www.rcm.ac.uk

Facebook
[/royalcollegeofmusic](https://www.facebook.com/royalcollegeofmusic)

X (Twitter), Youtube and Instagram
[@RCMLondon](https://www.instagram.com/RCMLondon)

Patron
His Majesty King Charles III

Chairman
Lord Black of Brentwood

Director
James Williams LVO FRCM

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