



Department  
for Education

# **Sustainability & Climate Change**

**A draft strategy for the education &  
children's services systems**

**November 2021**

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## **Scope & Purpose**

This strategy will apply to the Department for Education; its arms-length bodies; the education and children's services systems in England – namely, Early Years, Schools, Further Education, Higher Education and Children's Social Care. Its focus is on environmental sustainability.

The UK Government and the Devolved Governments (Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales) are committed to climate action. The targets and strategic aims set out herein relate to England.

It brings together short, medium and longer-term actions that will enable us to make progress towards achieving our four strategic aims and overarching vision. It is a strategy to 2030 and will be reviewed and updated to respond to scientific updates, evidence and data.

This draft will be used for engagement and will be under review from November 2021 until March 2022. A final strategy will be published in April 2022.



## Foreword

### Secretary of State for Education, The Rt Hon Nadhim Zahawi MP

In 2020 and 2021, the education sector faced its greatest challenge of recent years – education through a pandemic. The entire sector rose to the challenge and continued the delivery of education and care, selflessly prioritising our children and young people. While returning a sense of normality and helping our young people catch up remains our key immediate priority, as part of this recovery I am committed to Building Back Greener.

We are taking urgent action to co-ordinate activity to respond and adapt to the effects of climate change. In spring this year, the Department for Education established a Sustainability and Climate Change Unit to drive this co-ordination and, through engagement, research, data analysis and sustainability expertise, to identify where we can make the greatest impact.

Education is critical to fighting climate change. We have both the responsibility and privilege of educating and preparing young people for a changing world – ensuring they are equipped with the right knowledge, understanding and skills to meet their biggest challenge head on.

This whole-system approach provides opportunities for sharing best practice, evidence and resources. It reflects the diversity, excellence and ambition that prevails across each of the sectors (Early Years, Schools, Further Education, Higher Education, Children’s Social Care) as well as the Department for Education itself and its Arm’s Length Bodies.

Success depends on collaborative working and I would like to thank the sector representatives and young people who have already contributed to this draft strategy by sharing their views and information with the Department. Ahead of finalising the strategy in April, we will be engaging more widely through sector and audience representative groups to challenge and refine the actions set out in this draft.

I look forward to hearing the innovative and transformative ideas that I know you will come forward with. Thank you.

## Context

This strategy sets out ambitious activity to respond to recommendations for education from the Committee for Climate Change, the Dasgupta Review, Green Jobs Taskforce report and supports the delivery of the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan and Net Zero Strategy. It includes how we will work in the context of:

- The Paris Climate Agreement, which aims to hold the increase in global average temperature to well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, and to pursue efforts to limit it to 1.5 degrees Celsius and includes measures relating to climate change education<sup>1</sup>.
- UK Government legislation to meet net zero by 2050. To achieve this, the UK is the first country to set legally binding carbon budgets, placing a restriction on the total amount of greenhouse gases the UK can emit over a five-year period. In the latest, Carbon Budget 6, the UK legislated to reduce emissions by 78% by 2035 compared to 1990 levels.
- UNESCO's 'ESD for 2030' (Education for Sustainable Development) which sets out the key role of education in the successful achievement of the United Nation's 17 Sustainable Development Goals.
- The Environment Bill which will deliver the most ambitious environmental programme of any country and drive forward action to protect nature and improve biodiversity, including through a target for species abundance for 2030, aiming to halt the decline of nature.

The UK requires the education sector to play its role in positively responding to climate change and inspiring action on an international stage.

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<sup>1</sup> The full text of article 12 is: Parties shall cooperate in taking measures, as appropriate, to enhance climate change education, training, public awareness, public participation and public access to information, recognizing the importance of these steps with respect to enhancing actions under this Agreement

## The challenge and the opportunity

Young people are worried about climate change and want to know more about the impact it is having now and how it will impact their future lives. The Department for Education and the education sector have a joint responsibility for preparing these young people for the challenges and opportunities they will face – with the appropriate knowledge and skills.

### Education

Through education we have the privilege to be able to engage directly with young people who are passionate about the natural world, want to do their best to protect it and can influence their wider communities. Through their learned and lived experiences within education, we will provide opportunities to develop a broad understanding of the importance of sustainability and the causes and impact of climate change.

In the UK, there are more than 16 million children, young people and adults in education. The enthusiasm of youth presents huge opportunities for society at the start of this crucial decade for the planet.

### Green skills & jobs

The Green Jobs Taskforce report highlights a poll, in which most young people surveyed, have a desire to work in a sustainable role<sup>2</sup>. Our programmes will provide the opportunity for not only young people, but people of all ages to train, retrain or upskill to go into green careers. The UK Government's Net Zero Strategy will boost green skills in line with industry needs and support the transition to net zero, delivering a Green Industrial Revolution, which will support 190,000 jobs by the middle of the 2020s and up to 440,000 jobs in 2030.

### Learning from and connecting with nature

*The Economics of Biodiversity: The Dasgupta Review* states that 'connection with nature declines in childhood to an overall low in the mid-teens. Creating an environment from an early age where we are able to connect to nature is essential for self-enforcement in protecting and valuing nature'<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> [Good Energy survey finds high demand for jobs in green economy | The Engineer The Engineer](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Final Report - The Economics of Biodiversity: The Dasgupta Review - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

We will increase opportunities for all children and young people to spend time in nature but, learn more about it and become actively involved in the improvement of their local environment.

## Buildings

Climate adaptation and decarbonisation activity in nurseries, schools, colleges and universities can provide powerful learning opportunities. Young people can participate in the implementation of climate adaptation measures, attend settings built for net zero and find out more about the impact of energy and water use. The experiences children and young people will gain from seeing sustainability brought to life in the buildings around them will enhance and contextualise their learning.

Schools and universities represent 36% of total UK public sector building emissions<sup>4</sup>. Costs are also significant; schools alone spend around £630m per annum on energy. To achieve legal targets for carbon emissions we need urgently to get a better understanding of the scale of the problem and start resolving it.

Adapting existing, and designing new buildings, to respond to climate change and reduce emissions will undoubtedly be a significant challenge. According to the Government Climate Change Risk Assessment<sup>5</sup>, nearly half of schools (over 10,700) are at significant flood risk and this is expected to increase by a further 4,000 by 2050, based on anticipated climate change.

By developing and delivering evidence-based solutions for decarbonisation and climate resilience we will reduce energy demand, drive innovation in construction, act as a catalyst for green jobs and deliver savings. We will also drive a wide range of additional benefits to health, biodiversity, the environment, and learning and play opportunities that all contribute to a vibrant and resilient education community.

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<sup>4</sup> [BEIS Analysis of the Building Energy Efficiency Survey 2016. Schools - 25%, Higher Education - 14%](#) (of which 11% universities – non-residential, 3% universities – residential)

<sup>5</sup> [Future-Flooding-Main-Report-Sayers-1.pdf \(ukclimaterisk.org\)](#)

## Vision and aims

**Vision:** The United Kingdom is the world-leading education sector in sustainability and climate change by 2030.

### In England, we will achieve this through the following strategic aims:

- **Excellence in education and skills for a changing world:** *preparing all young people for a world impacted by climate change through learning and practical experience.*
- **Net zero:** *reducing direct and indirect emissions from education and care buildings, driving innovation to meet legislative targets and providing opportunities for children and young people to engage practically with the net zero concept.*
- **Resilient to climate change:** *adapting to mitigate against the worst impacts of climate change in our education and care buildings and infrastructure.*
- **A better environment for future generations:** *enhancing biodiversity and increasing access to nature in and around education and care settings.*

## Guiding principles

### Partnership and collaboration

Success depends on the Department for Education and stakeholders from across the sectors working together. We know there are many organisations working to improve sustainability and mitigate the effects of climate change, so we will seek opportunities to work with others who share our objectives, and to extend and amplify existing good practice and initiatives. We will also encourage partnership across the sectors to maximise the use of resources, expertise and ideas to achieve more effective outcomes.

### Evidence and insight

There are many opportunities to improve sustainability and impact climate change. We will monitor progress towards legislative targets, design evidence-led policies and target funding where it will have greatest impact. We will work with young people, experts, analysts, partners and across the sector to research, test and pilot, ensuring we learn before we leap.

### Leadership and support

Sector representatives have called on the Department to provide greater leadership in sustainability. We will intervene where we add value (for example through sector-wide data gathering, reporting, funding and guidance), but wherever possible will facilitate autonomy and encourage innovation.

DRAFT: NOT GOVERNMENT POLICY  
Draft Sustainability & Climate Change Strategy



# The route to achieving our vision: actions for a better future

To achieve our 2030 vision, we must start to address our strategic aims now. The actions we take will develop and evolve as we gather data and evidence.

By improving both the sustainability of the environment in and around education settings and the knowledge and understanding of children and young people, we can also positively impact, influence and inspire the communities around them.

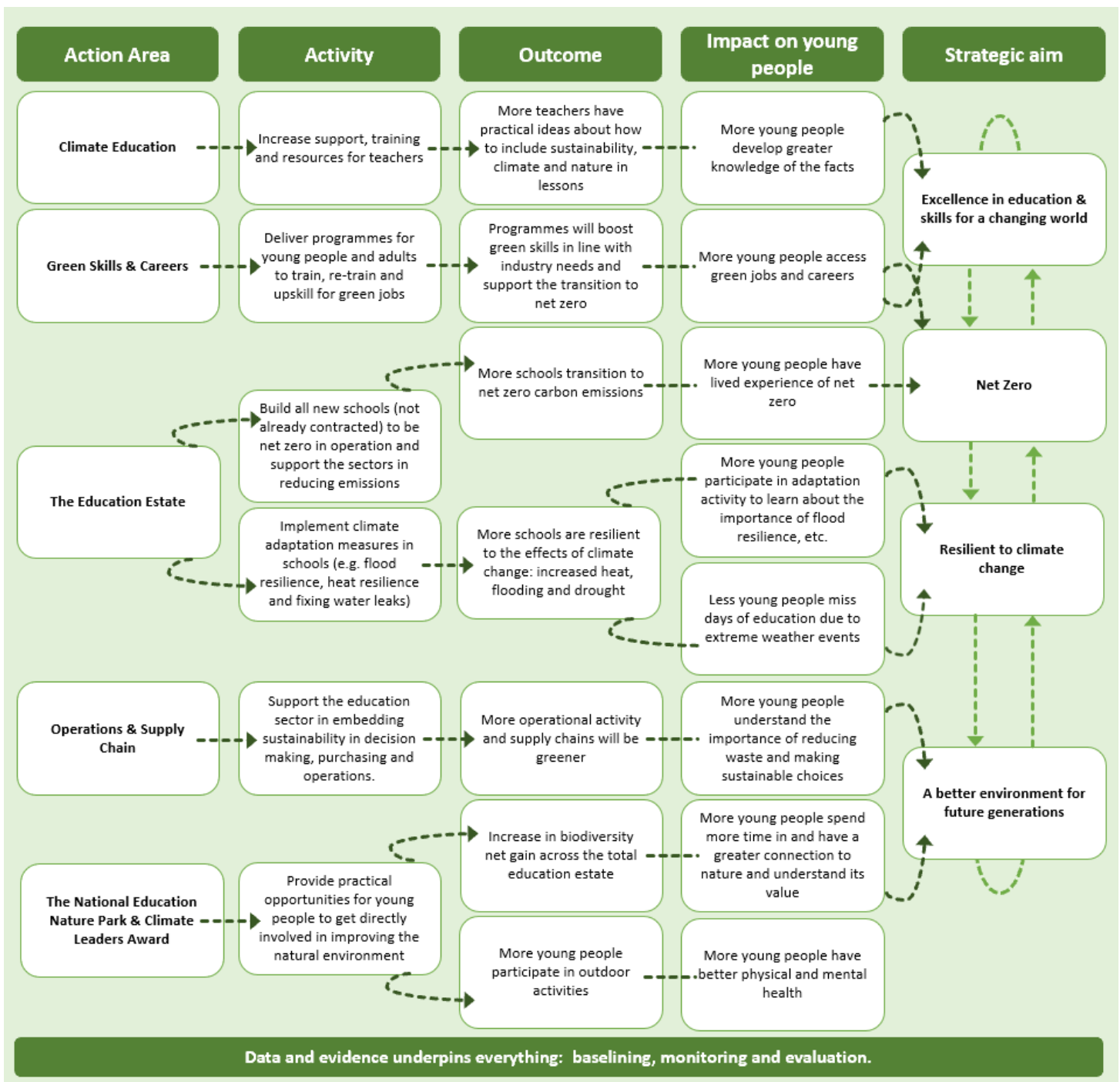


Figure 1: Actions, outcomes and aims

DRAFT: NOT GOVERNMENT POLICY  
Draft Sustainability & Climate Change Strategy

## Initiatives to drive the strategy

We have carried out early work with sector representatives and experts to develop two linked initiatives that bring together activity to drive the strategic aims - increasing opportunities for climate education and access to nature; driving opportunities to increase biodiversity and climate resilience. We will develop these concepts with young people, sector representatives and stakeholder organisations before they are launched in the academic year 22/23. The initiatives will be evaluated over the following years.

By considering the physical education estate as one large entity, a virtual **National Education Nature Park**, we have a unique opportunity to deliver improvements in biodiversity, play our part in halting nature's decline and drive greater climate resilience. The National Education Nature Park will engage young people with the natural world, directly involve them in increasing biodiversity in their nursery, school, college or university, helping reinforce their connection with nature. This will help connect and amplify the excellent work already happening in this area and being carried out by organisations such as The Woodland Trust, Eco Schools, The Natural History Museum and the many other national and local stakeholders and community groups.

As their work starts to have an impact, the young participants will upload their progress on the Park's digital mapping services. They will be able to see how the Park is 'growing' while increasing their knowledge of species and developing important skills, such as biodiversity mapping, data collection and analysis.

A **Climate Leaders Award**<sup>6</sup> will allow us to celebrate and recognise education providers, children and young people for developing their connection with nature and making a real contribution to establishing a sustainable future for us all.

The award will provide a structured route through existing awards in this area, such as the John Muir Award, Duke of Edinburgh's Award, Junior Forester Award, and others. Doing so will enable children and young people to acquire credits towards the prestigious Climate Leaders Award.

We know spending time in nature can positively impact wellbeing and that access to the outdoors declines as children get older. We want all young people to feel connected to their local environment and see improvements in biodiversity, whether they live in an urban area or rural one; with opportunities to feel empowered through practical positive action.

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<sup>6</sup> Throughout the development of this initiative, we will be asking young people what they think the award should be called.

Throughout the ongoing development of these initiatives, we will work closely with the Cabinet Office cross-government 'Access to the Outdoors' commission to ensure we join up and deliver against wider strategic outcomes including children and young people's physical and mental health.

## Action Area 1: Climate Education

We know that young people are anxious to create a greener, more sustainable world, and to tackle both the causes and impact of climate change.

Through a better understanding of the facts, a greater appreciation of nature, and practical opportunities to participate in activities to increase climate resilience and enhance biodiversity, we will empower all young people to be truly global citizens, able to take positive steps to improve their local communities, their country and the planet.

Within schools, the science, geography and citizenship programmes in the National Curriculum at both primary (KS1-2) and secondary (KS3-4) cover key content which supports knowledge and understanding of sustainability and climate change. We introduced an Environmental Science A Level in 2017.

We will support teachers to deliver high-quality teaching in these subjects by providing access to the very best training and support. This will ensure children and young people have the building blocks of knowledge needed to understand the importance of sustainability and the causes and impacts of climate change.

Schools play an important role in preparing pupils for life in modern Britain and to become active citizens, whilst remaining politically impartial. Legal duties in this area help to ensure that pupils are allowed to form their own independent opinions on political issues that may define their future, without being influenced by the personal views of those teaching them.

Teaching about climate change and the scientific facts and evidence behind this, does not constitute teaching about a political issue and schools do not need to present misinformation or unsubstantiated claims to provide balance. However, in climate education there may be relevant political issues and partisan political views, for example on social and economic reform, that should be handled in line with schools legal duties on political impartiality. Importantly, whilst schools should support pupil's interest in climate change and tackling both its causes and effects, it would not be appropriate to encourage pupils to join specific campaigning groups or engage in specific political activity, such as protests.

### **By 2022:**

- Every early-career teacher will have access to free, high-quality training and support. This will be underpinned by the Early Career Framework.
- All teachers and school leaders will have free access to a new National Professional Qualification (NPQ) to prepare them for the next stage of their career.

- Review subject-specific training and support for teachers of all levels, so they are equipped to deliver a knowledge-rich curriculum and improve climate education.
- Develop a Primary Science Model Curriculum, to include an emphasis on nature and the recognition of species – including species native to the United Kingdom – to ensure all children understand the world around them.
- Science CPD (continuing professional development) for school teachers will include climate change and sustainability.
- Explore with schools the best way to identify champions to provide leadership and co-ordination of climate change and sustainability activity.
- Share examples of effective, evidence-based climate education already taking place across nurseries, schools, colleges and universities so teachers and leaders can consider how best to adapt to their own settings.
- Supporting the transition to Net Zero through the skills system will require teachers in the further education sector to have a strong understanding of sustainability. From December 2021, all Further Education (FE) teachers trained via an apprenticeship will be required to integrate sustainability into their teaching, through modelling sustainable practices and promoting sustainable development principles in relation to their subject specialism. This requirement will be included in future training across all routes in FE Initial Teacher Education (ITE).
- Continue to work with the Higher Education sector to identify opportunities to work together to further enhance best practice in teacher training and the teaching of sustainability within university courses.

### **By 2023:**

- Give free access to high-quality curriculum resources, so that teachers in all phases and subjects can confidently choose those that will support the teaching of sustainability and climate change. We will deliver this through clearly signposted and approved platforms.
- Provide co-curricular opportunities for young people to experience and learn about nature. Through the roll out of the National Education Nature Park, drive a greater knowledge and understanding of the importance of biodiversity, the recognition of native species and develop data and analytical skills.
- Provide framework for young people to drive positive action through the Climate Leaders Award.

- Our capital and commercial programmes will be delivered with supporting and integrated educational activities so that leaders, teachers, children and young people will be engaged in opportunities to learn about energy efficiency and climate resilience.
- Encourage partnerships which support the knowledge and understanding of children and young people about the environment, for example universities linking with schools to share their green spaces and climate expertise.
- Identify appropriate opportunities to align climate education with the Education for Sustainable Development (ESD for 2030) framework.

#### **By 2025:**

- Review, refine and build on the activity within the National Education Nature Park and Climate Leaders Award.

#### **By 2030:**

- Sustainably designed, new-build net zero schools will provide learning opportunities, in terms of their structure and environment. They will foster environmental knowledge that can be applied outside of the school setting.
- England will have the best trained, best supported teachers in the world, teaching a broad and balanced, knowledge-rich curriculum to give all pupils the knowledge and skills needed to build a better and fairer world for future generations.

## Action Area 2: Green Skills and Careers

It is critical young people not only have the ability to think and live sustainably, but also have the green skills that allow them to build careers and participate as Britain leads the world into the Green Industrial Revolution. We will support the further and higher education sectors as they deliver programmes teaching the skills of the future, develop research and drive innovation to develop solutions to the climate crisis, and nurture future leaders.

We will continue working with industry, through programmes such as Tomorrow's Engineers Code, to showcase the diversity of roles and people that make up the STEM sector, encouraging more young people from different backgrounds to choose a career in the sector.

Through the Department for Education's skills programmes, as set out in the Skills for Jobs White Paper<sup>7</sup>, we will continue to ensure support is in place to help grow future talent pipelines and deliver the skilled individuals needed.

The Government's Net Zero Strategy sets out in detail how we are supporting green skills, including:

- The continuing development of new and revised apprenticeships to create and strengthen opportunities in new 'green' sectors of the labour market, and support workers to transition from carbon intensive roles into jobs aligned with the Government's net zero ambitions. The Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) has convened a Green Apprenticeships Advisory Panel (GAAP) working with employers to align apprenticeships to help meet the net zero objectives. Work is underway to map existing apprenticeship standards against green occupations and identify opportunities to create new standards which support green career pathways.
- The growing network of Institutes of Technology (IoTs) across England is delivering higher-level technical provision in STEM sectors, including areas such as green energy production and sustainable engineering.
- IfATE-approved Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs) at Levels 4 and 5 to be rolled out for teaching from September 2022, with different occupational routes - including qualifications in digital, construction and engineering – coming on stream

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<sup>7</sup> [Pioneering reforms to boost skills and jobs - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pioneering-reforms-to-boost-skills-and-jobs)

up to 2025. Future roll-out will continue supporting the development of skills for the transition to net zero as a key government priority.

- The expansion of Skills Bootcamps which are providing short courses to upskill adults, including in key green industries such as housing retrofit, solar, nuclear energy and vehicle electrification.
- Free Courses for Jobs, supporting adults that do not have a qualification at Level 3 or higher to access over 400 Level 3 courses for free. The offer currently includes qualifications linked to green sectors such as Agriculture, Building and Construction, Engineering, Environmental Conservation, Horticulture and Forestry, and Science.
- The roll-out of T Levels that support green careers, providing high quality technical qualifications as an alternative to A Levels; underpinned by the same employer-led approach as apprenticeships. The building services engineering for construction T Level, launched in September 2021, will cover housing retrofit and heat pump installation.
- A cross-cutting delivery group to include representatives from industry, the skills sector and other key stakeholders to support the development and delivery of the Government's plans for green jobs and skills.

#### **By 2025:**

- As part of the pathway towards the Lifelong Loan Entitlement, we will trial short course provision at Levels 4-6 to support in-work adults to upskill and/or retrain. This will enable learners to flexibly build towards a full qualification in subjects crucial for net zero including STEM and digital innovation.
- Through the delivery of our schools' commercial programmes on net zero, we will include career opportunity guidance to pupils with regards to the technologies being used, in delivering social value to the community.
- Work across government, the education sector and industry to regularly review training provision and ensure it offers young people and workers the opportunity to develop the skills needed to deliver the low-carbon transition.

#### **By 2030:**

- Significant numbers of young people will have graduated from the Climate Leaders Award with the skills needed to enter the green skills economy.



- Participation in the National Education Nature Park will increase the number of young people that become data scientists and biologists, which are needed for nature's recovery.
- Improve take-up of STEM subjects at all levels, ensuring that anyone, regardless of their background, has the opportunity to pursue a rewarding career in a STEM occupation.
- As one of the largest construction buyers in the nation, over the next decade, our schools, colleges and secure children homes rebuilding and retrofitting programmes will continue to drive the market and provide significant opportunities for green jobs and green skills development.

## Action Area 3: The Education Estate

A green, sustainable education estate that is resilient to the impacts of climate change will normalise and inspire young people to live sustainable lives, with impact felt widely in their families and communities.

We will deliver urgent and ambitious action to understand the risk to and adapt our education estates to cope with climate change. Investment will be made in measures to adapt to the three highest priority risk areas identified in the Climate Change Committee Independent Assessment of UK Climate Risk<sup>8</sup>: increased heat risk, flood risk and water scarcity.

We will support the sector in reducing carbon emissions and increasing biodiversity. We will contribute to carbon reduction through delivering new school buildings, improving the existing school estate and engaging users in the process of managing buildings for the greatest impact.

### By 2023:

- All new school buildings delivered by DfE (not already contracted) will be net zero in operation.
- Lead research across government, by developing an innovative solution to decarbonise heat in existing buildings via an ‘energy pod’. The Energy Pod Project which will be tested in schools, provides an opportunity to drive innovation in the retrofit market and replace the worst polluting heating systems, such as coal and oil burners.
- Continue to develop and test the GenZero prototype for the future new build of schools, designed to be ultra-low in construction carbon and net zero in operation.
- Prioritise working with members of the Risk Protection Arrangement (RPA) self-insurance product to identify schools with boilers that are approaching end of life. We will support the school through funding feasibility studies to identify opportunities for new low-carbon heating systems and in accessing funding from the BEIS decarbonisation fund to deliver them.

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<sup>8</sup> [Independent Assessment of UK Climate Risk - Climate Change Committee \(theccc.org.uk\)](https://theccc.org.uk)

- Begin the evaluation of the UK's first 'Biophilic' primary school, including long term research on the effects of green infrastructure on the health and wellbeing of young people.
- Support schools make the transition to low carbon technologies including infrastructure to support electric vehicles (EV).
- Support the Department for Transport in delivering initiatives to increase active and safe travel to school such as Bikeability, Walk to School Outreach and School Streets, to improve wellbeing, reduce carbon emissions from the school commute and improve air quality.
- Provide opportunities to enhance biodiversity and access to nature through the National Education Nature Park.
- Support schools and colleges to access the funds they need to reduce their emissions (for example, the BEIS Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme, which provides capital grants to reduce direct emissions from public sector buildings, and the associated BEIS Public Sector Low Carbon Skills Fund, which provides funding to enable public sector organisations to acquire expert skills in order to unlock decarbonisation projects).
- Continue to develop our partnership working with the Environment Agency, Water Companies and Local Authorities to reduce flood risk at schools.
- Improve learning and awareness of flood risk and resilience in schools by working in partnership with the Environment Agency and the Geographical Association to deliver locally-tailored presentations.
- Continue to identify partnerships with water companies to enhance nature and improve climate resilience, for example our partnership with Severn Trent in the delivery of their Tiny Forests initiative.<sup>9</sup>
- Work with BEIS to trial the delivery of smart meters in schools to reduce energy bills and emissions while provide learning opportunities for data analysis and understanding the impact of human behaviour. Evidence will be used from the pilots to inform future action.

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<sup>9</sup> [Severn Trent launch exciting opportunity for schools and community groups in the West Midlands to have their own Tiny Forest as part of Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games legacy | News Releases | News | Severn Trent Water \(stwater.co.uk\)](#)

- Further education colleges applying for capital funding from DfE will be required to consider environmental sustainability, carbon reduction and adaptation measures, and align with the Government's targets and objectives.

#### **By 2025:**

- In conjunction with BEIS, evaluate the best value for money approaches for retrofitting education buildings and develop standards for retrofit and repair to empower the education estate to make change.
- Work with education settings to put in place Climate Action Plans to increase sustainability literacy and inform government on the implementation of nature-based solutions to alleviate flood risk, provide solar energy and improve air quality.
- Encourage all education settings to sign up to available weather/flood warnings and have emergency plans in place.

#### **By 2030:**

- Minimising barriers to nature in school building design programmes and education building standards, increasing opportunities to connect their users to nature.
- Support education settings in the implementation of their Climate Action Plans.
- Through the National Education Nature Park and cross-government collaboration, we will have significantly increased the biodiversity on the education estate and identified and implemented 'Green Corridors' for access to education settings and reduce air pollution.

## Action Area 4: Operations and Supply Chains

The Department for Education operates out of 12 core office buildings across England. Together with the Government Property Agency, the Department will set its own estates strategy, which aligns with the Greening Government Commitments and our overall organisational strategy:

- We will embed sustainability across our organisation and within our business processes.
- We are committed to achieving our Net Zero target across all activities by 2050 in line with the Government Property Agency (GPA) and the UK Government commitments.
- We will take strong climate action, better the environment and provide a fair working environment grounded in social value.

DfE have embedded the priorities for public sector procurement in commercial practices, as set out in the National Procurement Policy Statement<sup>10</sup>. The Statement's Social Value Model includes tackling climate change and reducing waste.

As we work to make our operations and supply chains greener, we will also support the education sectors to do the same with theirs.

### By 2023:

- DfE will embed sustainability across the organisation and within its decision-making and business processes; build sustainable skills and across the Department; and, through our organisational strategy ensure that DfE Builds Back Greener with a sustainable delivery model.
- Gather data to understand how much food waste is being disposed of across the education sector and share best practice about how to improve sustainable waste prevention and management.
- Work with Defra and Waste Resources Action Programme (WRAP) to share examples of best practice alongside resources for schools and children that support food waste prevention.
- We will develop sustainability and climate change analytical capability in DfE to improve our understanding of the challenge ahead.

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<sup>10</sup> [National Procurement Policy Statement](#)

- DfE will continue to surpass overall emission reduction target of 56% by 2025 compared to 2017/18 emissions for the Greening Government Commitments (GGC). We will also surpass targets for greenhouse gas reduction, paper use, waste and recycling rates.
- Continue to work closely with DEFRA to consider the recommendations outlined in the National Food Strategy<sup>11</sup> (NFS), ahead of DEFRA's planned public response in early 2022.
- Consider how we can support schools to increase take up in sustainable school meals and reduce their waste even further, seeking opportunities to share best practice across sectors.
- Consider ways we could make our Period Products scheme even greener. We will continue to offer a range of sustainable products to learners in schools and colleges across England, monitor take-up and set minimum order values (based on the organisation's budget) to limit deliveries and reduce traffic emissions.

#### **By 2025:**

- DfE and its arms-length bodies will mandate that all suppliers bidding for contracts over £5m per year, commit to achieving Net Zero by 2050<sup>12</sup>. Additionally, they must publish a Carbon Reduction Plan, which will clearly show how they will meet this target.
- Review the school food standards to consider the impact of food emissions on the environment and whether even more flexibility can be offered for schools to support local sustainability and provide more plant based and meat free options.
- Engage with schools to embed sustainability in buying (including energy) and ensure 'green' frameworks are available to support sustainable purchasing.

#### **By 2030:**

- Through their participation in the Climate Leaders Award and National Education Nature Park we will encourage education settings to consider how they might implement biodynamic practices – to use food waste to produce compost that can then be used directly or in the local community.

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<sup>11</sup> [National food strategy for England - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/national-food-strategy-for-england)

<sup>12</sup> The £5m threshold is formulated from the Commercial Policy guidance PPN06/21 notice regarding net zero & carbon reduction

## Action Area 5: Data

Across the various education and care sectors there are different reporting mechanisms with regards to sustainability and climate change. DfE will empower sectors to report in the way most appropriate for them.

Whilst the Department for Education is not directly responsible for every asset in a devolved model system, our aim is to work with the sectors to establish the best value sustainable, long-term solutions. We will review existing reporting mechanisms and improve or introduce new systems where they are currently not working.

The Department for Education will implement effective data gathering mechanisms to achieve a collective view on how the education system is progressing towards net zero and environmental targets.

### Guiding data principles

- Continue to report against the achievement of the aims and legislative targets, using data to inform decisions and prioritise action.
- Continue to build the case for new trials and initiatives as science and industry continues to develop and our evidence base for what works grows.
- Carefully monitor the roll out of any pilots to ensure they deliver the expected benefits so as to inform remedial action where they fail to do so.

### By 2022:

- We will develop clear measurable objectives to allow us to baseline and track progress towards our strategic aims. We will publish our milestones and targets for 2025-2030 and beyond.
- Commission research and work with the sectors where additional evidence and data is needed.
- Engage with the sector to explore the expansion of targets and mandatory reporting for carbon emissions across higher education providers in England.

### By 2023:

- Work with each of the sectors to implement or improve systems and processes for ongoing measurement and monitoring at national, sector, regional and institution levels.

### By 2025:

- Regularly report to DfE against our strategic aims and legislative targets.

- Evaluate interventions, trials and pilots and appraise the ability to be embedded within our delivery programmes and business as usual.



## Next Steps

### Leadership

In recognition of the importance of this agenda to the Department for Education, the Secretary of State for Education will also be 'Climate Change Minister' for the Department for Education.

The Secretary of State for Education will also oversee the Climate Leaders Award.

The Secretary of State for Education will be supported in his role of Climate Change Minister for the Department by:

- Baroness Barran – Net zero of DfE-delivered buildings, procurement and supply chains. This also includes the biodiversity of the education estate.
- Minister Donelan and Minister Burghart – Green skills, green jobs, and net zero in Further Education and Higher Education.
- Minister Walker - Climate education

DfE will also identify a non-executive director for climate change. They will champion climate issues on departmental boards and provide further leadership and expertise to support the department with its unique climate mission.

### Engagement

From November to March, a user group of sector representatives and a group of young people, reflecting a diverse range of voices, backgrounds, and experiences, will bring together feedback on this strategy from those they represent. Youth representation will also be included in the sector group.

A representative of this user group will sit on DfE's Sustainability and Climate Change Board.

The Department for Education will work closely with these groups and with delivery partners across government to refine and build on the strategy ahead of publication of a final version in April 2022.

If you would like to find out more about our plans for further engagement over the next months, please contact us: [dfesustainability@education.gov.uk](mailto:dfesustainability@education.gov.uk)

**Vision:** The United Kingdom is the world-leading education sector in sustainability and climate change by 2030.

### Strategic Aims

- **Excellence in education and skills for a changing world**
- **Net zero**
- **Resilient to climate change**
- **A better environment for future generations**

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