

# Sustainable development action plan for Education and Skills



# Foreword



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SECRETARY OF STATE FOR  
EDUCATION AND SKILLS

I am proud to present this Action Plan for Sustainable Development in Education and Skills. It addresses many challenging aspects of learning that have a profound impact on the world we live in.

This action plan sits within the wider aspects of the UK Sustainable Development strategy with its main objectives to ensure effective management and sustainable growth in society, the environment, resources and the economy.

But why now? In this rapidly changing world of immediate demand and quick profit, we run the risk that we may lose sight of how our actions affect others – not just those we touch in our daily lives but also those further away. This to me is what sustainable development is all about.

- It is about ensuring a world-class economy for future generations.
- It is about giving this country skills with real shelf-life.

- It is about protecting the environment.
- It is about teaching and learning about all these things in the round.

We must be more aware of how our actions affect the people we interact with, the local and the global environment, and the legacy we leave for future generations long after we are gone. I particularly want to acknowledge here the work of the Sustainable Development Education Panel and its contribution to both the thinking and practice of sustainable development education. I want also to acknowledge the advice we have received from the Sustainable Development Commission. We shall continue to work with them in developing and renewing strategic priorities for the Department, and shall look to the Commission to assist us in securing buy-in and support from other key players involved in delivering the Action Plan.

In education, our job is not only to act on all this by helping education providers to operate in a more environmentally sustainable way, but to teach it as well. Making sure that children, young people and adult learners are aware that what they do in their day to day lives has huge implications for everyone in this country and in the world at large. Whether we realise it or not,

sustainable development has implications throughout education in this country – for all people – of all ages.

I believe that in England, the Department for Education and Skills has a duty to ensure that people engaged in learning are given the opportunities and inspiration to think about and really appreciate their role as world citizens. We are already heading there with the help of the Citizenship curriculum in schools – but these opportunities should be available in all schools, colleges and universities. Enabling local communities to improve our quality of life is a responsibility we all share. We need to look at sustainable development as a whole – how we use our resources without wasting them; how we teach and learn about sustainable development; how we generate the skills, knowledge and understanding to allow us to fulfil our duty as global citizens.

There is already a lot of exciting and successful work happening in our schools, colleges, universities, communities and with employers. But we need to build on this. This action plan is intended as a starting point for further discussion and development with schools, colleges and universities, together with national agencies like OFSTED, TTA, QCA, LSC, SSC's and HEFCE. We need to spread the good practice, build capacity within the Department, its agents and delivery organisations in order to inspire others to live and learn sustainability.

We have theorised about sustainable development in education for long enough. That is why this is not a *strategy* but a plan for action. We need to embrace sustainable development across the education system so that best practice becomes *common* practice. Not as a bureaucratic add-on but as an integral part of the skills development of this country and its economy.

This is a huge task. Some things we can achieve quite painlessly and quickly. Others will take longer. Often it will not require extra funding – we simply need to learn how to use our existing resources more wisely. What is clear is that the Department cannot do this alone. The Government can provide the lead and the vision. It can co-ordinate and monitor structures to make the task easier. But we rely on our many partners at the grassroots to help deliver this ambitious agenda. As we move to implementation and delivery, it is essential that we hear what our partners have to tell us, that we take time to learn what works and adjust our plans in the light of experience at the local level.

Our challenge is great: to enable all citizens to exercise informed and responsible choices. Together we can do it.



Charles Clarke

# Introduction

The work of the Department for Education and Skills is central to the Government's aim of an inclusive and prosperous society. We aim to create opportunities for everyone to develop their learning and release their potential to achieve excellence in standards of education and levels of skills.

Sustainable development (SD) is about achieving economic, social and environmental objectives at the same time. The 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development gave renewed impetus for action on sustainable development, both domestically and internationally. The Department has an important role to play in taking sustainable development action forward.

In the report of 2002 world summit on sustainable development, the United Nations recognised that *'poverty eradication, changing consumption and production patterns and protecting and managing the material resource base for economic and social objectives are overarching objectives of and essential requirements for sustainable development.'*

The Department has a significant impact on the social and economic aspects of sustainable development in England through its core business of raising educational standards and improving skills, including education for sustainable development. Educational buildings are responsible for more than 5% of CO<sup>2</sup> emissions from non-domestic buildings in the UK. Therefore resource and asset management in these buildings can make a significant contribution to economic and environmental aspects of SD. The purpose of this plan is to provide a coherent and integrated account of the actions we will take as a department and with our partners to achieve a step-change in awareness and behaviours.

## CONTEXT

In May 1999 the Government published 'A better quality of life: a strategy for sustainable development for the UK'. This strategy, which is currently being reviewed, set out a new approach to sustainable development in the UK, and key Government actions and commitments to help achieve it. The 'Framework for Sustainable Development on the

Government Estate' was launched in July 2002, and is the main vehicle for systematically assessing, managing, reporting and improving performance of the Government Estate.

Within Education, significant improvement has been made to the environmental impact of departmental buildings. A series of initiatives aimed at reducing energy consumption across the whole education sector have been launched. The school curriculum has been steadily incorporating new perspectives while the learning and skills sector has been addressing sustainability through new standards in occupational and leadership training. The higher education (HE) sector too, while not subject in the same way to departmental guidance, has provided some significant examples in both estate management and teaching.

'Learning to Last', the draft Sustainable Development Education Strategy (February 2003) presented to Government by the Sustainable Development Education Panel (SDEP) set out a challenging agenda that the Department is enthusiastically responding to. We are most indebted to the work of Sir Geoffrey Holland and the Panel for their insightful and constructive work. This plan contains many actions that reflect

the Panel's recommendations. A separate account of the Department's overall response may be found on its website at [www.dfes.gov.uk/sd](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/sd)

Charles Clarke, Secretary of State, has declared his personal commitment to the issue by retaining the lead role in this area across the department. It was his decision to bring both the environmental management and education for sustainable development (ESD) agendas together in one plan.

The plan sets out, concisely and comprehensively, a series of steps that the Department will take. Because the Department cannot achieve the necessary outcomes alone, the plan identifies partners in relation to most targets and completion dates. Whilst recognising the importance of planning for the medium to long term, the plan itself addresses action to be taken during the next one to two years. Implementing these commitments now will bring benefits of lasting value.

## PROPOSED ACTION PLAN

The plan is organised around four key objectives. These cover:

1. education for sustainable development;
2. the environmental impact of the Department and its partner bodies;
3. the environmental impact of the education estate; and
4. local and global partnership activity.

Under each, the plan identifies a number of issues that need to be addressed and then describes the specific actions to be taken. Although action is listed separately under each objective, it is our intention that work in any area will inform work in others. A typical example would be the opportunity for children, teachers and managers contributing to environmental programmes in their own school to learn about sustainable development at first hand.

The plan will sit on the sustainable development pages of the departmental website. This site contains more details about departmental policy, international and national context and will offer useful links to partners, advice on energy saving, building design and separate plans on issues such as school transport. Over time, the site will be developed to provide guidance and tools to help managers deliver on these commitments.

In creating the plan, we have been mindful that whilst clear central leadership is vital, the real value of this plan will be seen in the local activity it promotes. It is by creating new opportunities for learners of all ages to make a contribution, that the impact will be greatest. That is why the plan sets direction but emphasises the critical importance of partnership and new thinking at the local level.

# Objective 1

“All learners will develop the skills, knowledge and value base to be active citizens in creating a more sustainable society.”

**This section sets out what we will do to promote understanding of the issues and develop a commitment to education for sustainable development. This will require clear vision and strong leadership from the Department.**

## 1.1 LEADERSHIP IN EDUCATION AND SKILLS

- The Secretary of State has set out his vision in the introduction to this plan.
- Sustainable development will be promoted through an extensive communications exercise targeted at specific groups e.g. school governors and linked to specific initiatives.
- The Department’s Skills Strategy highlights sustainable development as a priority for the Sector Skills Councils and Sector Skills Development Agency, (to be addressed both in terms of the generic skills relevant to all sectors and the skills specific to each sector) in understanding, developing and implementing sustainable technologies and working practices.

**Action:** The Department

- The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to produce guidance on good practice and *disseminate advice on green and sustainable development issues to LSC supported FE and Adult Community Learning estates.*

**Action:** LSC

- The Department will work closely with the National College for School Leadership (NCSL) to ensure that school leaders at all levels, and those being trained and prepared for leadership roles, are able to integrate sustainable development into all aspects of their leadership and management of schools.

- Emphasise ESD in the training offered by NCSL. Review the bursar/business training programmes developed with the NCSL to take account of the various measures around sustainable development – particularly the Human Resource Management and Facilities Management modules of the ‘Certificate of School Business Management’ course.
- Continue to promote the employment and training of bursars / business managers in schools highlighting their important role in ensuring the efficient and effective management of all school resources.

**Action: NCSL**

- The Teacher Training Agency (TTA) will ensure ESD is incorporated into subject specific induction packs and programmes for new teacher trainers. Expected to have an impact from September 2003.

**Action: TTA, with initial teacher training-focused subject associations and associated organisations**

**1.2 LEADERSHIP IN INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

- The Secretary of State has set out a number of international objectives for the Department including:
  - To raise the level of international awareness in schools;
  - To increase the awareness of developing countries in schools.
- International development will be promoted through a communication / promotional exercise targeted initially at school leaders and teachers, including an annual ‘International Education Week’.
- Partnerships with education ministries, cities, regional and local education bodies and individual schools around the world will be promoted to support the Department’s international strategy.

**Action: The Department with DFID**

### 1.3 IMPROVING CONTENT AND ENGAGEMENT WITH SCHOOLS

- The Department will explore a ‘whole school’ approach to ESD, identify models of “good practice” and strengthen links with subjects such as Science, Design and Technology, Citizenship and Geography.

**Action:** The Department, Ofsted, QCA, subject associations, NGOs

- The Department will work with a range of partners to meet the needs of schools for curriculum resources to support international development education and help with the effective use of such material.
- Through a range of international programmes, which will be reviewed, the department will ensure optimum outcomes, to meet our international objectives.
- We will ensure that ESD builds on DFID’s ‘Enabling Effective Support Strategy’.

**Action:** The Department, DfID and relevant NGOS.

### 1.4 IMPROVING CONTENT AND ENGAGEMENT WITH LIFELONG LEARNING

- Sector Skills Development Agency (SSDA) will ensure the sustainable

development agenda is covered in all agreements with the Sector Skills Council (SSC) network and emerging SSCs to develop guidance and tools for sector development.

- SSCs will include the sustainable development agenda in all partnership agreements with key stakeholders.
- SSDA project with SSCs to consider the skills implications of sustainable development and how this might be incorporated in their work concerning apprenticeship, other learning frameworks and national occupational standards. Report to be produced and disseminated in December 2003.

**Action:** SSDA, SSCs

- HEFCE will signal to the university sector that ESD requires development. As noted this will feature in the grant settlement process.

**Action:** HEFCE

- ▣ Integrate sustainability competencies into the standards and various professional accreditation schemes.
- ▣ Encourage professional bodies to integrate the development of sustainability competencies for existing as well as new registrants through their Continuing Professional Development programmes.

**Action:** The Department, ODGs, Engineering Council, Forum for the Future, QCA, Trades Union Sustainable Development Advisory Committee (TUSDAC)

#### 1.5 SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE

- ▣ Identify effective mechanisms to enable the establishment of a sustainable development partnership support framework at local and regional levels.
- ▣ Continue to support development of content on the QCA, ESD website.
- ▣ Implement communications programme linked to specific SD events/themes.
- ▣ Discuss further with OFSTED how their work can contribute.

- ▣ Develop a new website to be named the 'Global Gateway for Schools', providing a 'one stop shop' for signposted access to comprehensive information and online help for the development of an international dimension in all areas of the curriculum.
- ▣ Identify sustainable development advisory and facilitative NGOs to consult promote good practice and disseminate information to appropriate sectors.

**Action:** The Department with QCA, LSC, HEFCE, Government Offices, Regional Development Agencies (RDAs), DFID, ODPM, OFSTED, relevant NGOs

# Objective 2

“We will pursue the highest standards of environmental management across all properties owned and managed by the Department and its associated bodies.”

**This section will address the need to adopt best practice in environmental management within the Department and the need to make clear its expectations of partner bodies.**

## 2.1 ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS (EMS)

- The Envoy EMS to the ISO 14001 standard will be implemented across the main head office sites in Darlington, London, Runcorn and Sheffield.
- Internal auditors to approve systems by March 2004.

**Action:** The Department

## 2.2 REDUCE WATER CONSUMPTION

- Raise awareness through publicity on internal intranet system and news centre, posters and displays advertising the latest figures. Also presentations and seminars on environmental issues and new content for induction for new staff.

- Participate in the Watermark Project to measure and manage consumption across the Department, and make appropriate improvements to our facilities. Actions are ongoing and will be reviewed quarterly.

**Action:** The Department

## 2.3 REDUCE ENERGY CONSUMPTION AND INCREASE USE OF RENEWABLE ENERGY

- Raise awareness through publicity on internal intranet and news centre, posters and displays advertising the latest figures. Presentations and seminars as above.
- Collaboration with, for example, Office for Government Commerce (OGC) on renewable issues. Evaluation in November 2003.

**Action:** The Department

## 2.4 RECYCLING

- Contracts in place with specialist recycling companies to increase recycling of materials like all obsolete computing and electrical goods, toner cartridges, fluorescent tubes, mobile telephones, batteries, aluminium foil, cans and glass across all departmental sites.
- Ongoing negotiation with specialist waste handlers and contractors to recycle more office waste.
- Consolidation of online facilities to reduce hard copy.
- Signed up to a recently launched 're-think rubbish' campaign. Promote emerging ideas widely and use information and contacts to develop local partnership to improve waste management.
- Incorporate emerging good practice in sustainable procurement and promote best use of resources such as timber products.
- Ongoing actions – data will be collected quarterly.

**Action:** The Department

## 2.5 TRAVEL: REDUCTION OF PETROL

### CONSUMPTION, POLLUTION AND CAR MILEAGE.

- Internal travel and fleet policy guidance for staff is available on the Department's intranet site – includes advice about environmental considerations in relation to travel and promotes fuel efficient driving, cycling, car sharing and public transport.
- Staff can take out interest free loans to purchase bicycles and safety equipment. All departmental buildings have bicycle spaces, showers and lockers.
- Currently 5% of the Department's fleet of official cars and vans are dual fuel vehicles. Any future purchase of vehicles will be dual fuel unless there is significant operational reason not to.
- Car parking policy is reviewed annually. Options for survey of commuting patterns to be investigated by end of 2003.
- Data will be collected quarterly and reviewed annually.

**Action:** The Department

## 2.6 FOOD: PROMOTION OF FAIRLY TRADED GOODS AND LOCAL PROVISION

- ▣ Review contract strategies for staff catering units to identify the scope for increasing the provision, where possible, of organic and fairly traded food and beverages, as well as locally sourced products.
- ▣ Procedures will be established to ensure that performance in staff canteens at all four sites is monitored and reported.

**Action:** The Department

## 2.7 ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT – LSC

- ▣ Meet targets set by the Department, and match departmental policies and programmes.

**Action:** LSC with the Department

## 2.8 ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT – HEFCE

- ▣ A review of the Environmental Action Group (EAG) and environmental policy will be carried out by December 2003 to consider how HEFCE can move towards the ISO 14001 standard.
- ▣ Build on EAG work by extending green electricity and re-cycling to the London offices by March 2004.

- ▣ Measure and benchmark performance of CO2 emissions, business mileage and energy consumption. These performance measures will be published by March 2004.
- ▣ Benchmarking with other organisations to identify means of improvement.

**Action:** HEFCE

# Objective 3

“We will encourage and support all publicly-funded educational establishments to help them operate to the highest environmental standards.”

**This section describes how we will work with the different sectors we fund to achieve best practice**

## 3.1 ASSESSMENTS FOR SUSTAINABILITY

- Develop a web-based sustainability self assessment support tool for schools. First stage, an environment assessment tool, The Schools Environmental Assessment Method (SEAM) to be commissioned for completion by September 2004.
- Explore the contribution to be made by OFSTED inspections and include sustainable development in LEA Asset Management Plans.
- Identify mechanisms to apply a Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) assessment to the Building Schools for the Future programme and review levers to influence direct schools capital funding by 2004.
- Apply the concepts of ‘Building Schools for the Future’ exemplar designs across all proposed new school builds from April 2004.

**Action:** The Department with BRE, Carbon Trust, and Exemplar schools focus group members

- LSC to fund a study on design standards in the further education (FE) sector by March 2004 to consider the impact on the learner experience, the proper balance between design standards and costs, the sustainability and green requirements for briefing and designing new builds, and the impact on building and running costs (and the Council’s cost standards) on addressing these issues in line with Government policy.

- Develop a sustainability strategy for the HE sector with Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). This will be specifically raised in the Department's grant settlement letter.
- Develop the new Leadership College role in driving sustainable development agendas forward.
- Develop the role of the NCSL and its affiliated centres in driving sustainable development agendas forward.

**Action:** LSC and the Department with HEFCE, DEFRA, Forum for the Future, Royal Institute of British Architects, HTI, NCSL

### 3.2 WATER, ENERGY, WASTE AND RECYCLING

- Use the Energy and Water Web Portal, Energy Efficiency Certification Scheme, EU Directive on energy efficiency of public buildings, and the sustainable development network to co-ordinate activities by LEAs, school and non-governmental organisations (NGOs).
- Establish Energy Efficiency Certification awards scheme for good energy management in schools.

**Action:** The Department with DEFRA, Department of Health (DoH), Devolved Administrations, OFGEM, Research Councils (EPSRC and ESRC), Schools Energy Saving Action Group, Carbon Saving Trust, Action Energy, ENCAMS, CREATE and other local/regional NGOs

- Commission a Further Education Estate Management Statistical study that will allow tracking of running costs including energy costs across the further education sector year on year, and benchmark performance and identify good practice and exemplars. This will apply to one third of colleges by summer 2004, and complete by 2006.

**Action:** LSC

### 3.3 SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL AND TRANSPORT.

- The Department and Department for Transport (DfT) to promote walking, cycling and use of public transport to schools where safe to do so.
- Best practice guide to be distributed to local authorities and a school travel action plan will be available to all schools. Promotional flyer to be sent to all schools.
- Seminars to be held in each Government Office (GO) region for head teachers and local authority transport and education officials on making school travel plans work, focusing on practical measures that can be taken to increase the number of journeys undertaken by foot, bicycle or bus and reducing the number of journeys undertaken by car.
- The Department to provide enhanced devolved formula capital grant to schools with travel plans.

- Targets for increasing the proportion of children travelling to school by sustainable means will be introduced in all travel plans (targets set at a local level). School Travel Plan advisers will support and monitor the implementation of school travel plans and report to a central project board. Joint departmental/DfT funded expansion of School Travel Plan adviser network to cover all local authorities.
- Encourage LEAs to adopt a more joined-up approach in the contracting of local transport services within the further education sector, and the pooling of resources. Guidance to be issued January 2004, evaluation November 2004.
- Promote the use of independent travel training for students with disabilities and learning difficulties, to enable those students who can, to make effective use of public transport. Good practice from Transport Development Pathfinders to be disseminated October 2004.

**Action:** The Department and LSC, with DfT, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM), Local Authorities and School Travel Plan coordinators, LEAs, colleges, Parent Teacher Associations, Connexions Services, Social Services; LSC, DEFRA.

- Embed the implications of plans for school travel into the school curriculum.

**Action:** The Department & DfT

#### 1.4 SCHOOLS FOOD

- Implement Schools Food Procurement Action Plan from September 2003
- Integrate duty to implant sustainable procurement, concentrating initially on food, into the work of the Department Pupil Well-Being and Transport Team in Pupil Support and Independent Schools Division.
- Publish additional purchasing guidance for schools and links with DEFRA contract guidance on relevant websites.
- Promote good practice identified from the Soil Association's 'Food for Life' initiative by putting case studies and information on relevant departmental websites.
- Disseminate good practice from case studies of other schools and local education authorities by publishing them on relevant websites and posting articles on available publications.
- Invite feedback from school managers, governors and parents about website information and report to Food Implementation Group.

**Action:** The Department and DEFRA.

# Objective 4

“We will make effective links between education and sustainable development to build capacity within local communities.”

This section describes how we will create an environment that helps managers and practitioners identify how education can add value to local programmes and activity.

**4.1 IDENTIFY MECHANISMS THAT LINK EDUCATION WITH OTHER LOCAL FORA AND IN PARTICULAR USE THE OPPORTUNITIES CREATED BY LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS AND LOCAL AGENDA 21 TO JOIN UP LEARNING AND LOCAL NETWORKS.**

- With the support of GOs – LEAs, schools, colleges and other related units will be encouraged to build on existing SD activity and play an active part in their local communities.

**Action:** The Department, GOs, RDAs, LSC, relevant NGOs

**4.2 CREATE NEW MECHANISM FOR DEVELOPING ESD AT LOCAL LEVEL**

- We will explore new ways of promoting and integrating ESD with local partners via an ESD Associate Group.

**Action:** The Department with Improvement and Development Agency (IdeA)

**4.3 IDENTIFY PARTNERS TO DEVELOP MECHANISMS FOR INCREASING PARTICIPATION BY YOUNG PEOPLE.**

- Encourage creation of opportunities for young people to participate in, and influence policies within their institution and locally.
- Encourage and support all schools to raise young people’s awareness and understanding of development issues.
- Guidance on participation – Working Together: Giving Children and Young People a say - issued to schools and LEAs should reflect the opportunities for the involvement of children and young people (Eco-Schools, Healthy Schools, Citizenship etc).
- Actively involve children and young people in developing and delivering the sustainable development agenda.

- Link up with Defra programme to engage young people in sustainable development and work with Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) to create a range of informal learning opportunities.
- Develop effective partnerships between UK schools and schools from across the world to participate in: joint curriculum projects, professional development, collaborative opportunities and language learning through a partner linking facility.

**Action:** The Department (Children and Young People's Unit) with DEFRA, DCMS, LAs, NGOs

#### 4.4 IDENTIFY THE CONTRIBUTION THAT CAN BE MADE THROUGH YOUTH WORK

- We will explore with the Council of Environmental Education, the National Youth Agency and the Development Education Association how youth work and training provided to youth workers can support young people's understanding of Sustainable Development and assist them to participate.

**Action:** The Department, CEE, NYA ,DEA and National Council for Voluntary Youth Services (NCVYS)

