

# Quarterly Policy Briefing: Environmental Sustainability

## June 2022

This document outlines the main policy changes seen in the last quarter that will impact Scottish institutions and related EAUC-Scotland activity as a result.

### Scottish Policy Updates

- In May, the Scottish Government published a [consultation](#) on the National Improvement Framework – enhanced data collection for improvement. The results of this consultation will inform the plans for a national discussion on the vision for Scottish education.
- Also in May, Lorna Slater MSP Minister for Green Skills, Circular Economy and Biodiversity launched a [consultation](#) on the draft Circular Economy Bill.

### UK Policy Updates

- In April, the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy and Prime Minister's Office, 10 Downing Street published the [British Energy Security Strategy](#), building on the Prime Minister's [Ten-point plan for a green industrial revolution](#), and the [Net Zero Strategy](#). This plan comes in light of rising global energy prices and will aim to improve energy security in the long-term by weaning Britain off "expensive fossil fuels".
- Also in April, the Department of Education published [Sustainability and climate change: a strategy for the education and children's services systems](#). This strategy sets out activity to respond to recommendations for education from the Committee for Climate Change, Dasgupta Review and Green Jobs Taskforce report, as well as supporting the delivery of the government's 25 Year Environment Plan and Net Zero Strategy.
- In June, the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy published [Greenhouse gas reporting: conversion factors 2022](#) for use by UK and international organisations to report on 2022 greenhouse gas emissions. SSN will shortly be producing the updated PBCCD reporting template to incorporate the latest conversion factors.
- In June, Advance HE launched a [sector-wide consultation on the updated Professional Standards Framework draft](#) to be launched in January 2023. For the first time education for sustainable development will be an explicit requirement of all higher education teaching staff.

## Other Updates

- In March, QAA launched [the first suite of revised Subject Benchmark Statements](#). These Statements are the first to incorporate consideration of wider social goals, including: equality, diversity and inclusivity, and education for sustainable development. Each of the Statements has been developed by a subject advisory group and supported by consultation with disciplinary communities in 2021 and 2022.
- In June, Environmental Standards Scotland launched [an investigation](#) into the systems in place to support local authorities in the delivery of climate change targets. This investigation follows recent increased focus on local authority responses to national climate change legislation and reporting duties during parliamentary First Minister's Questions (FMQs).
- Also in June, the Climate Change Committee published its [annual assessment of UK progress in reducing emissions](#). This statutory report provides a comprehensive overview of the UK Government's progress to date in reducing emissions. It is accompanied by a new Monitoring Framework which details the CCC's updated approach to tracking real-world progress through a host of new indicators. Key messages are as follows:
  - **The UK Government now has a solid Net Zero strategy in place**, but important policy gaps remain.
  - **Tangible progress is lagging the policy ambition**. With an emissions path set for the UK and the Net Zero Strategy published, greater emphasis and focus must be placed on delivery.
  - **Successful delivery of changes on the ground requires active management of delivery risks**. Not all policies will deliver as planned. Some may be more successful than expected, while others will fall behind.
  - **Action to address the rising cost of living should be aligned with Net Zero**. There remains an urgent need for equivalent action to reduce demand for fossil fuels to reduce emissions and limit energy bills.
  - **Slow progress on wider enablers**. The Net Zero Strategy contained warm words on many of the cross-cutting enablers of the transition, but there has been little concrete progress.
  - **The UK must build on a successful COP26**. The UK presidency of the UN COP26 climate summit in Glasgow last November successfully strengthened long-term global ambition and introduced new mechanisms to support delivery. It should prioritise making those new mechanisms work in practice and strengthening global 2030 ambition, while preparing for a focus on climate finance and adaptation at COP27 in 2022 and COP28 in 2023.