



tomorrow's
England

Climate Change Toolkit

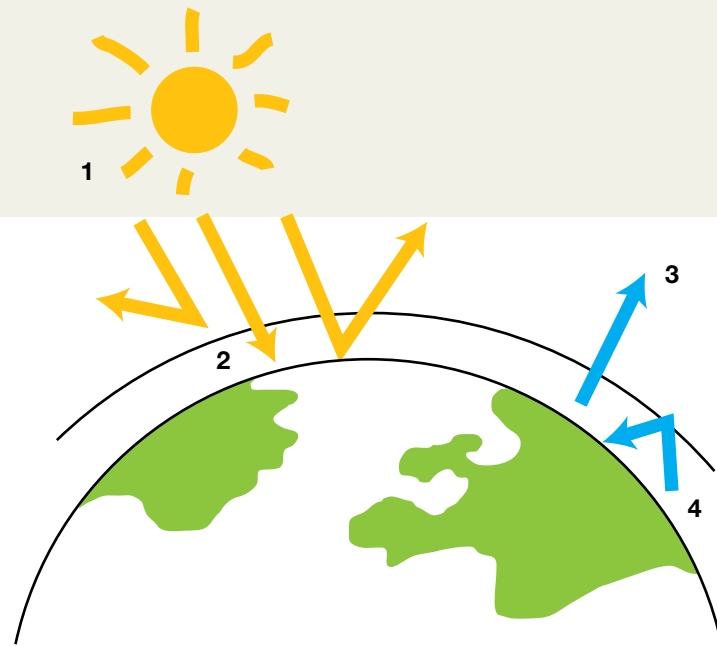
Our changing climate, our changing lives

TOMORROW'S CLIMATE
Today's Challenge

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What is climate change?



The greenhouse effect

1. Energy from the sun enters our atmosphere, passing through the blanket of gases that surround the Earth.
2. As it reaches the Earth's surface, much of the sun's energy is absorbed by our planet's land, water and biosphere.
3. Some of this energy is radiated back into space.
4. The rest of the energy is trapped in our atmosphere – and this is known as 'the greenhouse effect'.

The Earth lies in a delicate balance between the searing surface of the sun and the bitter cold expanse of deep space. Our planet is surrounded by a blanket of greenhouse gases that keep us snug and warm and sustain life as we know it. Over the past 100 years the concentrations of these gases have increased because of their release into the atmosphere through the use of fossil fuels such as coal and oil.

The most significant of these gases is carbon dioxide (CO₂). Carbon – in combination with other elements – is the basis for life on Earth. Unfortunately, through the burning of fossil fuels, too much CO₂ is entering the atmosphere. This is trapping the heat which would normally be released back into space and is causing our planet to heat up.

Our everyday energy use is adding to this build up of CO₂. Every time we use fossil fuels to heat our homes, to drive a car, watch TV or surf the internet we are releasing CO₂ into our atmosphere. Temperature increase is inevitable – but scientists agree we must keep the average global temperature rise to less than 2°C if we are to avoid the most dramatic and far-reaching impacts of climate change.

Where to go to know:

www.metoffice.gov.uk
www.climatechallenge.gov.uk/index.html
www.ipcc.ch

Introduction

– it's good to talk



Living in England today we all share a responsibility for climate change. The good news, however, is that if we take action now we can all do something to help reduce CO₂ emissions. We can all be climate heroes.

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But talking at people is not going to help to generate discussions or engage people in the solutions. How many times have you seen what was a good idea fall apart because your local council, or other organisation, has simply tried to impose it without engaging people in the process?

People will care about climate change if they know what to do, decide for themselves to do it and have access to the information they need. Perhaps the most important thing of all is they need to feel that their contribution will make a difference.

So this toolkit, with its simple 3-step approach, is designed to help you communicate climate change in ways that engage your community in the issues – and inspire them to take action.

Step 1: Who to engage

Step 2: How to engage

Step 3: What they can do

Step 1

Who to engage with



It helps to think a little about which groups you want – or need – to reach. Ask yourself the following questions:

- Which groups or networks am I going to feel most comfortable and confident working with?
- Should I start with my own networks and contacts?
- What are the main messages I want to get across?
- What actions do I want those people who hear my messages to take?
- What is going to be the best way to ensure my audience will be interested in and responsive to my messages?
- How can I ensure they become part of the solution?

That last question is key in thinking about what you say to your audience, how you say it, and how you engage them in such a way that by the end they will want to do something. See Step 2.

Groups might include:

- Your residents' association or parish council
- A local conservation or campaigning group
- Your church, synagogue, temple or mosque
- The local Chamber of Commerce
- Sports club
- A Sure Start group
- Or your online community

It is well worth talking to the leader or organiser of the group first. Find out how the group operates, who goes to their meetings or gatherings, what they are interested in, who has spoken to them in the past and what they enjoyed and what they did not. Check whether you will need to invite people formally – if so, don't forget to include the obvious: date, timings, venue, a map.

As I am sure you know, different groups need different forms of engagement – one size does not fit all. Once you have an idea about which groups you want to engage with, you will want to think about the next stage. How am I going to get my message across? How will these groups engage with my messages?

Where to go to know:

Your local council or local voluntary action centre should be able to help you identify many of the groups in your community.

Step 2

How to engage



There is a Lakota Indian saying: “Tell me and I’ll listen. Show me and I’ll understand. Involve me and I’ll learn”. You might find this useful when thinking about how you are going to organise your discussions. Try to ensure you are taking your message to your community and are not expecting your community to come to you. Try to interact with them in the way they are used to interacting with each other and in ways that are relevant to their lives.

Do not blind them with science, spout too much jargon or lecture them. All of these can be barriers to good communication. “What you should do is ...” rarely works. Try not to fall into the same trap. Work on the basis that people increasingly trust other people rather than, say, government, media or business.

It can often be powerful to describe the impacts of climate change in their own region of the country (see the regional impacts section). This will bring the issue much closer to home. Different groups will be made of different groups of people, often drawn from different walks of life – or socio-economic groups, as the experts like to say. What is important is that your communication is two-way.

Holding a meeting

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Once you have everyone in the room and settled down with a cup of tea or coffee, you might like to follow this outline for, say, a 45-minute meeting.

1.

Introduction

Start by asking your audience what they already know about climate change or what local impacts they might already have seen, why they care (or why they don’t) and what questions they might have. You should never assume that people are completely unaware of the issue and you can use their knowledge (or lack of it) as a way of gauging the tone and expectations of the rest of the session.

2.

Present the information

Do what is comfortable for you, but also what is comfortable for your audience. For example if they like to simply sit around with a cup of tea and chat then think about doing exactly that – get them to do the talking.

Think also about the range of communications tools you could use. (If you do want to show slides or photographs then make sure the venue is able to accommodate this.) This is a great opportunity to be really creative:

- Slide shows and PowerPoint presentations (keep these brief and packed full of images – the right picture truly is worth a thousand words)
- Games, art and music
- Pub quizzes
- Demonstrations
- Handouts (you could use the sample press release and letter from this toolkit along with the *What is climate change* and *What we can do* sections)

3.

It’s good to talk

Remember you don’t have to be the expert or have all the answers. You might like to use the ‘tricky questions’ section of the toolkit to help you, or better still someone in the group might know the answer. Equally you might like to get the participants to divide into small groups and chat about what they think and what they would like to know more about – that way, you will often find they begin to identify key questions, actions and solutions themselves. It also might be a good time to get another cup of tea!

Step 2

How to engage



4.

Get them to think of possible actions they can take.

This might include the list provided in this toolkit. Alternatively, it might involve them going away and finding out more information (see the 'Where to go to know' links provided throughout the toolkit) about the questions you weren't able to answer. Perhaps trigger a discussion about which ones are hard to do and which ones are easier. Ask the group if they would like to commit to something on leaving.

We'll meet again

If at all possible it's important for the group to reconvene another time to discuss what they found out, what they did as a result and to share tips on what they found hard, and what they found simple. This will help ensure commitment and peer support. Over half of the UK says they would do more if others did too.

Where to go to know:

www.climatechallenge.gov.uk

www.defra.gov.uk/environment/statistics/pubatt/index.htm

www.defra.gov.uk/evidence/social/behaviour/index.htm

www.britishcouncil.org/zerocarboncity-uwe-demonstration-activities.doc

www.campaignstrategy.org

Tricky questions

Because you will often be entering a dialogue with people who may not understand the nature of climate change – or indeed may question its very existence – here are a few examples of some typical 'down the pub' questions you might get. We are sure you will think of – or experience – others!

Q. Are we really sure climate change is happening. Isn't it just a natural cycle? The scientists don't seem to agree .

A. The overwhelming weight of evidence now points to a rapid acceleration in human-induced changes in the climate, with rapidly worsening consequences for people and wildlife. Every government (including China, India and the US) signed up to that consensus when they accepted the 2007 Assessment Report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, a UN body made up of the world's leading climate scientists.

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Q. Isn't the climate always changing?

A. That's true – there have always been natural changes in climate. But what's different now is that we are making the change happen quicker than ever before. In fact we've filled our atmosphere with bigger concentrations of the greenhouse gases carbon dioxide (CO₂) and methane (CH₄) than at any time in the past 650,000 years. So what's happening now is new.

Q. What kind of changes will I see?

A. We can expect to see a number of changes here in the UK. We are likely to see hotter drier summers and warmer wetter winters. But this won't all be good news. We will also face more droughts and water shortages. We could see very hot temperatures, like the heatwave that killed an estimated 35,000 people across Europe in 2003, year after year and staying for day after day. In winter we are going to see much more violent storms and short bursts of torrential rain causing flash flooding. Some changes are already happening. Spring is now coming earlier with daffodils blooming in January, bumble bees flying in the winter and birds nesting earlier.

Q. Will they build a pile of wind turbines nearby?

A. That all depends on where you live. There will be a need to switch the way we generate electricity. On-shore – and off-shore – wind turbines will be part of that but so will many other forms of renewable energy: solar power and small scale hydro for example. Improved energy efficiency will also be important, not only in our homes but also in the way we generate and distribute energy.

Q. It's too late to stop climate change and anyway there's nothing I can do.

A. I know how you feel but really it's not too late. The world will get warmer – but if we can keep the temperature increase to below 2°C we can avoid a global catastrophe. But that means acting now. If we were all to take action together it would make a major difference. And remember, there are other benefits. For example, if you walk instead of using the car then you will both save money and keep fit.

Step 2

How to engage



Q. Isn't it the government that should be doing things?

A. The UK has the opportunity to show real leadership in combating global climate change by delivering a strong Climate Change Bill in 2008, setting reductions in UK carbon emissions by 2050. You could take this opportunity to lobby your MP and ask them what they are doing to tackle climate change and ask them to support the Bill. There are many examples where concerned people lobbying their MP or political party have brought about major change – you can make a difference. But we all have to do something. And those small steps, such as using less energy in the home and buying locally produced food, all matter. It also means that next time a politician does want your vote, or a business wants to sell you something, you can say: "I'm doing something to help prevent climate change – what are you going to do?"

Q. Won't it mean fewer jobs if we try to tackle climate change?

A. There are many chances to develop new jobs and new industries in tackling climate change. In fact not tackling climate change could cost jobs in the future. A recent government report, called the Stern Report, calculated that the potential cost of climate change to our economy would be greater than the last two world wars put together. Gordon Brown outlined in 2007 that globally, the overall added value of the low carbon energy sector could be as high as \$3 trillion per year worldwide by 2050, and it could employ more than 25 million people. If Britain maintains its share of this growth there could be over a million people employed here in our environmental industries within the next two decades.

Q. Isn't climate change caused by the sun?

A. It's true the sun's energy changes and that affects weather here on Earth. But this does not explain the recent rise in the Earth's temperature at the speed it's been increasing. The world's scientific opinion is that climate change is happening, that it is a major threat and that it is caused by human activities such as the burning of fossil fuels, not changes in the sun's energy.

Q. Why should I worry about something that will happen in 50 years' time?

A. The bad news is that it is not just something that's going to happen in 50 years' time. It is happening now, today. From the thinning of the Arctic ice sheet, to glaciers disappearing in the Alps, to birds nesting up to 17 days earlier in the south of England, evidence of climate change is all around us. We can't wait 50 years, we have to act now. If we do we really can make a difference.

Where to go to know:

www.metoffice.com/research/hadleycentre
www.ukcip.org.uk
www.ipcc.ch

Social networking

Of course you may not want to approach the more traditional types of community groups at all. You might want to develop your communications online, by talking to groups through social networking sites such as Facebook or MySpace or specialist networks like www.greenvoice.com; www.footprintfriends.com or www.communities.idea.gov.uk

Online communities are becoming increasingly important elements of our local landscape. Through them you can often reach people who would not traditionally engage through more formal community structures. Remember to ask a question to get the group going. For example: Do you live in Kent? Have you heard there are plans to build a coal power station in Kingsnorth? Do you want to find out more?

This should generate discussions, encourage people to take action and provide a way to feed back on how those actions are going. You can also add advice and information. In Reading, for instance, the local bus company introduced a fare rise. Out of this came a local Facebook group to object to that fare rise. But it also became a place to discuss transport issues in the town. And the existence of this group attracted a lot of more in the way of traditional local media coverage.

Step 2

How to engage



Using the local media

An important vehicle for getting your message across and discussing the issue of climate change is your local and regional media. Using the local media is often overlooked as a good way to engage local communities. According to the Newspaper Society, “British people are among the most avid newspaper readers in the world. 83.9% of all British adults (41 million people) read a regional newspaper, compared with 65% who read national newspapers”; local and regional press are also trusted more.

It is always worth getting to know your local media. Who are the journalists? What sort of things do they like to cover? What ‘tone of voice’ do they tend to use? What sections of the newspaper or radio programmes would a climate change discussion best fit into? Why not go and have a cup of coffee with someone from your local newspaper or radio station and talk through your idea?

There are many ways you can engage your local media. If you feel your group meeting will be newsworthy then send them a press release. Always follow this up with a phone call to make sure they received your press release and to offer them more background information.

But it doesn't just have to be ‘news’ to get the local press interested. Your issues might be better communicated through the letters pages. Letters pages have a huge readership, second only to the front page. You also might want to communicate through an article (either in the first person or written by a journalist) or radio interview. You could also voice your opinions on local radio phone-in programmes. Most local media also now have websites. They not only give you the opportunity to provide more information they also provide an opportunity to engage in online discussions about the issues raised – and possible solutions.

Local solutions to climate change and what people can do would also fit very nicely into ‘lifestyle pieces’ for your local media. This might be a one-off article or a series of articles: “Over the next six weeks we are going to help climate change cynic Jenny and her family as they give up their car – let’s see how they get on.” These can often be useful ways of communicating your messages as they enable you to get information across in a positive and non ‘preachy’ way. As well as focusing on ‘Jenny’ you can include advice from experts, your local council, local bus and

train operators and others. Making sure Jenny is not an environmentalist will help make her experience relevant to the very people you’re trying to reach.

Where to go to know:

Information on how to write a press release and letter can be found at the end of this toolkit.

The regional impacts of climate change

It’s important to make your discussions and examples locally relevant. Climate change will affect people’s homes, work, health and leisure activities as well as the natural environment. For instance, a college belonging to the Women’s Institutes (WI) in Oxfordshire was flooded, so WI group leaders used this example to communicate the impact of climate change to local members. As it was very iconic and personal, the members then started engaging on the issue much more than before.

For too long climate change has appeared a distant, global problem that does not impact directly on our daily lives. We need to enable people to see how it is already affecting their daily lives. For example, in winter, the greater intensity of rainfall will increase the risk of flooding – especially in Wales, the Midlands and the South West. All across southern and eastern England, estuaries and low coastal land will be inundated unless sea defences are raised. Northern species will be squeezed into ever smaller fragments of the landscape as the natural climatic range of wildlife species moves northward by up to 50 to 80 kilometres a decade.

Tomorrow’s England is hoping to produce a series of booklets exploring the current and future impacts on England’s regions. The first of these, looking at the South East, has just been published and you can download this from www.climatechangeandme.net – it’s also worth checking out The Wildlife Trusts’ Living Landscape series.

But this may not give you all the information you need to know about regional impacts. There are many other resources from which you are able to draw information:

Where to go to know:

www.environment-agency.gov.uk
www.bbc.co.uk/sn/climateexperiment
www.climatechallenge.gov.uk
www.ukcip.org.uk

Step 3

What we can do



It's great if people feel able to do something almost immediately after your discussion. These will often be small things, but nonetheless important. People need to feel good about the changes they are committing to make. Help them to feel valued by celebrating those small commitments and the benefits of small changes.

There are many small changes to choose from and people can make a positive contribution to help prevent climate change by taking simple or more difficult actions. We've provided some examples of each but the best actions of all are those chosen by the participants themselves.

Simple steps

Hunt them down

Did you know that the average home has a dozen appliances on standby at any one time? Are your TV, radio, stereo and computer on standby and your mobile charger still plugged in? Hunt them down and turn them off – as well as cutting CO₂ it would mean an annual saving of £22.

Consumer power

When buying a car or household appliance, look for the most efficient, low-carbon option available, saving CO₂ and over the lifetime of the product, cutting bills.

Watch that dial

In the UK, 27% of our carbon emissions come from our homes. So, turn the central heating thermostat down by just 1°C. By doing this you'll cut your family's heating bills by 10%. Not to mention 250kg of carbon.

Pedal power

For journeys under three miles we save 2kg of carbon every time we leave the car at home. Why not choose to cycle instead and see how much carbon and money you can save? And feel fitter too!

Recharge your batteries

Rechargeable batteries are much better for your pocket – and the planet. Switching will save 10kg of CO₂ a year. But, perhaps even more importantly, it will reduce the toxic waste going into landfill.

Make the switch

If every household replaced just three old-style light bulbs with low-energy ones, the energy saved would supply all the street lighting in the UK.

Feel like a climate challenge?

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Lofty ambitions

British houses have the worst insulation in Europe. All that warmth escaping from your roof means you have to spend more money (over £100 per year) on keeping warm and emit one tonne of CO₂ per year.

Take the train

Aviation is responsible for 13% of the UK's climate damage. Try taking the train for your next business trip or holiday. Letting the train take the strain will cut CO₂ emissions and can even work out cheaper.

Seeing double

Installing double-glazing can cut heat loss through windows by half. As well as saving up to £100 a year on heating bills, double-glazing could also save about a tonne of CO₂ a year.

Don't heat the street

In the UK there are 11 million houses without cavity wall insulation and a third of the heat lost from an un-insulated house is through the walls. It is relatively cheap to carry out – about £200 – and could save you about £90 on energy bills each year.

Here comes the sun

More and more people are heating their hot water by solar panels on the roof. This is one of the most efficient forms of micro-generation for many houses.

Where to go to know:

www.carbontrust.co.uk
www.energysavingtrust.org.uk
<http://footprint.wwf.org.uk>
<http://actonco2.direct.gov.uk/index.html>
www.traveline.info/index.htm
www.icount.org.uk

Where to go to know – further information

This toolkit has only been able to touch briefly on the issues of climate change, possible solutions and how to communicate at a local level. You can find out much more on each of the Tomorrow's England partner organisation websites, which are listed on the following page.

Tomorrow's England partner organisations

- Beyond Green – www.beyondgreen.co.uk
- Campaign for Better Transport – www.bettertransport.org.uk/
- Campaign to Protect Rural England – www.cpre.org.uk
- Forum for the Future – www.forumforthefuture.org.uk
- Groundwork UK – www.groundwork.org.uk
- The National Trust – www.nationaltrust.org.uk
- RSPB – www.rspb.org.uk/
- The Wildlife Trusts – www.wildlifetrusts.org
- National Federation of Women's Institutes – www.thewi.org.uk
- Woodland Trust – www.woodland-trust.org.uk/campaigns/climate
- WWF-UK – www.wwf.org.uk

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Tomorrow's England is funded by Defra www.defra.gov.uk

This Toolkit was devised and written by 3-C consult create
communicate www.3-c.uk.net

The content of this Toolkit does not necessarily represent in every
particular the policies or views of the partner organisations.

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www.climatechangeandme.net



beyond green



Sample press release



Date

10

Local school rises to global challenge

A catchy title is always useful to attract the journalist's attention

St Local Primary School has hit upon a healthy way to tackle the problem of climate change. By introducing a 'walking bus' the children are hoping their parents will leave the car at home and reduce the children's impact on the environment. From next week the walking bus will allow children to gather safely and be escorted to school by teachers and volunteers.

The first paragraph must "sell" the story to the journalist. If it doesn't they may not read on. Try and remember to get "who, what, where why and when" into this first paragraph.

The idea was the brainchild of local parent Mrs Jones. Mrs Jones said, "My kids are always going on about climate change and I felt I wanted to do something. I've been an active member of the RSPB for years and came across the Tomorrow's England project which gives good advice about what we can all do locally. This is where I got the idea of cutting out the school car run by creating a walking bus."

Using a quote early helps to give the story human interest and brings it to life.

A walking bus works by collecting the children together near to their homes and escorting them on the walk to school. This is then repeated on the walk home in the evenings. So far 15 parents have signed up to the scheme, meaning 15 fewer car trips in the morning and evening.

This is a good point at which to provide a little more factual information.

Head teacher at St Local Primary School, Mrs Smith, said: "The children are very aware of climate change and care greatly about the environment. The walking bus is a great way of helping them to be part of the solution to the problems they learn about in the classroom and to get regular daily exercise as well. It also helps the school and increases road safety, as we do not have so many cars trying to drop children off in the mornings and pick them up in the evenings."

Anna, a seven-year-old pupil who is taking part in the walking bus scheme, said: "We learn a lot about climate change at school and on the TV. And it's great walking to school with my friends."

More quotes from different 'sources' – e.g. figures of authority, children – can help to give the story colour and are useful in providing further information. The person or the child's parents/guardian must approve them.

Ends

Try and keep your press release on one side of paper

For more information contact:

Fred Brown: 0123 456789; f.brown@home.com

Make sure you include full contact details. If the journalist cannot get hold of you easily they may lose interest.

Notes to the editor:

The walking bus will start on Monday at 08:45 in My Street.

Tomorrow's England is funded by Defra – more information can be found at www.climatechangeandme.net

This is a chance to put in further information such as if/where you are organising a photo call or where they can go for the information you have mentioned in the press release.

Sample letter to the editor



The best letters to the editor are short and to the point. Try and keep the language simple. The longer and more technical the letter the greater the chance it won't get printed or will be edited – possibly changing its meaning from the one you intended.

11

Walking to school – just like we used to do.

Dear Editor

I was delighted to read your article about St Local Primary School's walking bus (Anytown News 11 February 2008). What a great idea! Climate change is a serious issue and one that we all need to do something about. These children are showing us the way. By walking to school instead of being taken by car they are reducing their impact on the environment and helping to fight climate change.

We can all do something ourselves. I am sure most of us could cut out one or two trips in the car – walk or cycle instead – buy a low energy light bulb next time we need to replace one, or turn our heating down one degree. If we all did something then the total impact would be huge.

Climate change is happening. I've noticed the flowers in my garden opening earlier and earlier and the birds nesting sooner in the year. Surely we owe it to the next generation to do something about it. If my generation asked, "What did you do in the war Daddy?" then the children who are taking part in the walking bus would be right to ask, "What did you do about climate change Daddy?"

Yours faithfully

Mr T Brown
Earth Avenue