

FAIRER SCOTLAND DUTY - ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE

This Fairer Scotland Assessment Template should be used in conjunction with the [interim guidance published on the Scottish Government website](#). The guidance provides a glossary of key terms, web links to useful resources, and further advice.

Title of policy/ practice/ strategy/ legislation etc.	Public Engagement Strategy for Climate Change
Lead Minister	Michael Matheson
Lead official	Matt Grady
Directorate	Directorate for Energy and Climate Change
Division	Domestic Climate Change
Team	Public Engagement and Behaviour Change Unit

STAGE 1 – PLANNING

This first stage is an introductory one.

The initial question to ask is: **Is this a strategic programme / proposal / decision or not?**

- If it is not strategic, there is no formal requirement for a Fairer Scotland Assessment.
- If you think this decision not to conduct an assessment may be subject to challenge at some future point, you should complete the [Assessment Not Required template](#) and store it in your local eRDM folder.
- If the programme/proposal/decision is strategic, but has no implications for inequalities, you should complete the same template.
- In both cases, it will be important that the decision not to conduct an assessment is signed off by a Deputy Director or more senior colleague.
- If you're in doubt about whether an assessment should be carried out or not, we'd advise you to do so. It's good practice to think about socio-economic factors and reducing inequalities in all policy-making.

If you decide an assessment will be needed, please begin the assessment process by answering the questions below.

Please answer the questions below to help with your planning.

1. What is the aim of your policy/strategy/plan?

The purpose of the Public Engagement Strategy for Climate Change ('PES') is to support the achievement of Scotland's climate change targets of being a net zero greenhouse gas emitting nation by 2045, by engaging the public on climate change to communicate relevant policies and deepen understanding on climate change and encourage action and participation.

The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009¹ makes it a statutory requirement for the Scottish Government to prepare and publish a public engagement strategy setting out the steps they intend to take to inform people in Scotland about the climate change targets and encourage them to contribute to the achievement of those targets.

In April 2019, the First Minister declared that we are facing a global climate emergency. The Committee on Climate Change (CCC) published advice² in May 2019 recommending a new emissions target for Scotland of net-zero greenhouse gases. The CCC's report states that public engagement and support will be

¹ Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 (legislation.gov.uk)

² Net Zero - The UK's contribution to stopping global warming - Climate Change Committee (theccc.org.uk)

particularly vital for the switch to low-carbon living, and that “people should understand why and what changes are needed, to see a benefit from making low-carbon choices and to access the information and resources required to make the change happen”.

Who will it affect (particular groups/businesses/geographies etc)?

The PES will affect all people in Scotland. It sets out the Scottish Government’s approach to engaging the general public in Scotland on climate change, ensuring they understand the impacts of climate change and the actions that Scotland is taking to mitigate and adapt to these impacts.

The PES is specifically aimed at ‘trusted messengers’ – those who are trusted and within their spheres of influence. These trusted messengers include both place-based messengers such as community groups and non-place-based messengers such as cultural or heritage groups or those representing protected characteristics.

What main outcomes do you expect the policy/strategy/plan to deliver?

The main outcomes we expect from the PES are as follows.

The Scottish Government and Scotland’s key communicators deliver a consistent and impactful message about our climate change national endeavour.

People understand the causes and consequences of climate change and the need for ambitious mitigation and adaptation action.

There are many opportunities for people to have their views heard on Scotland’s response to climate change and to hear the perspectives of other people in Scotland.

The Scottish Government listens to, acknowledges, and responds to people participating in policy design.

People understand the actions that they are encouraged to take and how to take them.

Social norms are changed through increased local and community engagement and action on climate change.

2. What is your timeframe for completing the Fairer Scotland assessment?

The draft PES was published for consultation on 16th December 2020. We received 178 responses to the consultation from a wide range of stakeholder organisations and individuals. We have conducted internal and external analysis of these responses which has influenced this Fairer Scotland assessment and the Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA). One of the key themes that came through the consultation exercise was to provide more detail on how the strategic objectives

would be achieved and who the trusted messengers are and how they will be supported. The final PES will be published in September 2021 alongside this Fairer Scotland assessment and EQIA.

3. Who else in the organisation will be involved in the assessment and what roles will they be playing? We'd expect involvement from policy and analytical teams as a minimum. It is rarely appropriate for one person to conduct the assessment alone.

Public Engagement and Behaviour Change Unit – this unit is leading on the publication of the PES and is therefore also leading the work on the impact assessments, including the Fairer Scotland assessment.

Wider policy areas – other policy areas have provided input relevant to their own concerns regarding our approach to public engagement around climate change, including colleagues working in the just transition, biodiversity, transport, culture, and open government teams.

Analysts – we will also be asking for input from OCEA Social Research function and analysts working in the Heat Strategy Unit and the wider policy areas involved in the assessment.

External stakeholders – key stakeholder groups have also provided input and opinions on the impacts of the PES on them and the groups and people they represent. This was through the consultation exercise and a series of workshops/webinars with stakeholder groups. This includes engagement with the below stakeholders that we felt relevant to the issues covered by the Fairer Scotland Duty: Citizens Advice Scotland, Consumer Choice Centre, YouthLink Scotland, Scottish Rural Action, Scottish Community Alliance, Development Trusts Association Scotland, Scottish Federation of Housing Associations, Homes for Scotland, Energy Saving Trust, and Community Energy Scotland.

STAGE 2 - EVIDENCE

The second stage involves working closely with analysts, making full use of relevant data and commissioning other evidence to inform options for improvement. This stage is likely to involve a number of discussions between teams:

- To understand fully the inequalities of outcome associated with this programme/policy/decision.
- To begin to scope out how the programme/policy/decision could be strengthened to reduce these inequalities further, based on the evidence.
- Where necessary, to commission new data collection, for example from community consultation/participation, or new secondary analysis of existing data.

The Scottish Government has access to a wide range of relevant data, both quantitative and qualitative. This includes administrative data, data about local neighbourhoods (e.g. the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation), new experimental statistics on combined low income and material deprivation (now available at local level for the first time), and health, education and employment data. Analytical teams will be able to advise on which evidence is most useful.

Evidence can also be sought from communities and groups directly, particularly when there are evidence gaps – for example, where a significant new policy is being developed. Engagement processes should ideally reflect the principles of the [National Standards for Community Engagement](#).

Another source of help – particularly in terms of integrating equality and socio-economic considerations – is the Scottish Government [Equality Evidence Finder](#). This is an updated web resource providing equality evidence by subject area and protected characteristic. We intend to expand this over the next year to include socio-economic disadvantage as an additional category, also including child poverty considerations.

Please answer the questions below to help meet the duty's evidence requirements.

4. What does the evidence suggest about existing inequalities of outcome, caused by socio-economic disadvantage, in this specific policy area?

Research and stakeholder engagement

The team has drawn from evidence, research and stakeholder engagement on the existing socio-economic inequality in climate change public engagement and climate action.

McFall and Garrington (2011) found a positive association between environmentally-friendly behaviours and education level. They hypothesised that people with greater levels of knowledge and income were more likely to have environmentally-friendly behaviours, largely because of their greater ability to pay for these behaviours.

The most recent Scottish Household Survey (2019 data) shows a link between education and deprivation levels and concern for climate change³. It shows that the proportion of adults in Scotland viewing climate change as an immediate and urgent problem was highest amongst those with degree level qualifications (80%) and lower for those with no qualifications (49%). This is also higher amongst adults living in the least deprived areas (76%) when compared to those living in the most deprived areas (60%). This gap has been consistent since 2013.

The most recent Scottish Government climate change tracker (April 2021), which measures public opinion and levels of concern and knowledge on climate change, shows that AB socio-economic groups are much more likely to know 'a lot' or 'a fair amount' about climate change when compared to DE groups (66% vs 47%).

Similarly, the tracker found that AB groups are more likely than DE groups to already have in place measures to tackle climate change at home, including having their energy supplied by a green supplier, having water efficient appliances, insulation, double-glazing or an energy efficient boiler.

Stakeholder engagement has highlighted some issues that exist in climate change engagement and income level or socio-economic status. These include the following:

- Lower income groups are at greater risk from the impacts of climate change. Economic status is an important determinant of how well people can prepare for, respond to, and recover from events like flooding and heatwaves, they have a lower adaptive capacity because they lack both the resources to act and the power to make changes.⁴ They are more likely to have increased exposures to temperature extremes and to become displaced as a result of flooding. They are also less likely to engage in policy development, meaning they are less aware of the ways in which climate change will impact their lives and so are less aware of the actions they can take to mitigate or adapt to these impacts.
- Similarly, lower income groups could be unable to take forward climate actions, due to financial constraints, or access resources, due to an inability to complete forms because of literacy issues (given the link between lower education levels and lower income levels).

³ www.equalityevidence.scot

⁴ Benzie, M., Harvey, A., Burningham, K., Hildson, N., Siddiqui, A. (2011) *Vulnerability to heatwaves and drought: Case studies of adaptation to climate change in south-west England*. Joseph Rowntree Foundation, York.

- Lower income groups experience more barriers to engaging with climate change than higher income groups, and these need to be considered when communicating, encouraging action and designing participative methods of policy design.
- Access to participation and events can be more challenging for those from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds. Sometimes positive discrimination towards these groups is needed to take account of this.
- Communication and engagement with more remote and rural communities, such as the Highlands and Islands, can be challenging, and this needs to be taken into account to ensure our engagement reaches these communities, many of whom are/will experience climate change impacts sooner and more severely than more urban communities.
- Economically active people are less likely to be community-based due to time constraints and inflexible schedules, meaning that this can limit their opportunities to participate in community climate action.
- Tailored messaging is sometimes required for different socio-economic groups, income levels or areas of deprivation. This should reflect varying degrees of climate knowledge and ability to carry out actions.

5. What does the evidence suggest about any possible impacts of the policy/programme/decision, as currently planned, on those inequalities of outcome?

Research and stakeholder engagement

Based on the evidence provided above through existing research and stakeholder engagement, there are a number of possible impacts of the PES, as currently planned, on socio-economic inequality.

Most commonly, the evidence suggests that people in lower socio-economic groups, on lower incomes or living in deprived or remote/rural areas are less likely to have access to government climate change messaging and communication, be able to participate in the design of climate change policies that affect them, and take actions to mitigate and adapt to the changing climate.

However, if the PES is implemented successfully, with a focus on supporting trusted messengers to reach people within their communities and spheres of influence, then this should go some way to ensuring equality of opportunity to access climate change information.

6. Is there any evidence that suggests alternative approaches to the policy/programme/decision? E.g. Evidence from around the UK? International evidence?

The Scottish Government is very much leading the way in terms of engaging the public on climate change, and is one of the first countries in the world to develop a public engagement strategy for net zero emissions.

The UK Government is also currently developing their approach to public engagement on climate change for their Net Zero Strategy, and Scottish Government officials are in communication with them around the content of this. This will help to enable alignment between the two strategies in efforts to communicate and encourage action to support the Scottish Government's and the UK Government's climate ambitions, but also discussion on approaches, pathways and best practice.

Scottish Government officials also semi-regularly communicate with officials from other countries such as Wales, Northern Ireland and Canada, and keep track of the policies being introduced in these countries and others to help inform our own decision-making.

In addition, the Scottish Government draws on the experience of other countries to inform activities and initiatives that feed into achieving the PES's strategic objectives. For example, Scotland's Climate Assembly drew on best practice from other citizens assemblies around the world.

7. What key evidence gaps are there? Is it possible to collect new evidence quickly in areas where we don't currently have any? For example, through consultation meetings, focus groups or surveys?

There already exists sound evidence that shows the link between socio-economic groupings, income levels, education levels and deprivation and concern for, and understanding of, climate change.

One key evidence gap is understanding the current and forecast impact of climate change on population groups in Scotland, specifically. The majority of key evidence in this space is either at an international or UK level and does not account for key considerations in Scotland, however this is currently being addressed. The Scottish Government has recently commissioned research to further our understanding of the impact of climate change on different population groups in Scotland, including socio-economic groups. To complement this, further research has been commissioned to carry out a baseline study on the awareness of climate impacts and opportunities in Scotland, to ensure that our messaging is targeted to account for specific knowledge gaps in the population. This research is due to be published in early 2022 and will inform how we shape our engagement approach moving forward.

Working with affected communities to design and deliver our transition to net zero will ensure we tackle climate change in a way which is fair and which reflects circumstances and experiences.

8. How could you involve communities of interest (including those with lived experience of poverty and disadvantage) in this process? The voices of people and communities are likely to be important in identifying any potential improvements to the programme/policy/decision.

During both the development of the PES and the strategy's implementation, we will engage with communities of interest. This will be through direct engagement (e.g. workshops, meetings, email) and indirect engagement (e.g. through our Scottish Government messaging and through the use of 'trusted messengers').

One of the PES's three strategic objectives is to encourage participation in policy design. We intend to do this in a fair and just way, by including people from all backgrounds and walks of life (e.g. the Climate Assembly, which is a citizen's assembly bringing together a representative group of people to discuss the climate emergency and provide the government with policy recommendations) and ensuring that the people of Scotland have an equal say in the development of climate change policies that will affect their daily lives.

We are also considering how to include communities of interest throughout the five year implementation phase. This could include through regularly meeting with key stakeholder groups or inviting them to join a PES Steering Group to guide and advise on the strategy's implementation and hold us accountable. We will develop an internal implementation plan shortly after PES publication and this will clearly set out how we involve communities of interest throughout this phase.

STAGE 3 – ASSESSMENT AND IMPROVEMENT

Having considered the data and evidence you have gathered, the Assessment and Improvement Stage is where you look in more detail at potential improvements to the proposal, plan or decision.

It's essential that policy team leaders are involved at this stage to ensure that opportunities for developing a better proposal are able to be taken up; analysts should again be involved. This will be key for meeting the 'due regard' test.

The outcomes of the assessment and improvement phase, with any options emerging for consideration, should be clearly set out for consideration by the appropriate officer(s) in Stage 4.

The key questions to answer at this stage are:

9. What options could strengthen this programme/policy/decision in terms of its impacts on inequalities of outcome?

Findings from the stakeholder engagement align with the research and evidence that shows those living in poverty or areas with high levels of deprivation are less likely to be aware of and understand the impacts of climate change, and are more likely to be adversely affected by the impacts than other groups.

The PES therefore needs to acknowledge the varying levels of climate knowledge and understanding across Scotland's population groups and the varying access to opportunities to participate and engage in climate action. It needs to set out ways in which climate change public engagement will not just reach those 'least engaged' (e.g. through the use of 'trusted messengers') but will do so in a way that is clear and easy for people to understand, acknowledging low levels of climate literacy (e.g. through avoiding jargon and technical language).

The PES also needs to acknowledge that while some of the climate actions included in Scottish Government climate change messaging are unaffordable for some people (e.g. switching to electric or low emissions vehicles, replacing home heating systems etc) or are inaccessible for some communities (e.g. poor infrastructure for active travel, no available space to grow food etc).

10. What are the pros and cons of these options?

The pros of the above are that this outlines best practice for public engagement in general, and will benefit all of Scotland's population groups i.e. using trusted messengers and communicating in a way that is easy to understand benefits everyone, not just those with low levels of climate change knowledge and

understanding. It also avoids stigmatising those who are unable to make certain changes to their lifestyle for reasons of affordability or circumstance.

There are no clear cons of the above options.

11. How could the programme/policy/decision be adjusted to address inequalities associated with particular groups? Particular communities of interest or communities of place who are more at risk of inequalities of outcome?

We are of the opinion that the PES does not need to be adjusted at this time as it has been drafted in a way that outlines the need to include all people of Scotland in our climate change messaging, communication, policy design and action. The PES has been drafted with the intention of having a positive impact on people's understanding of the climate emergency and ability to participate and take climate action. The PES sets out seven 'guiding principles' for public engagement, which we believe, once successfully delivered, will have a positive and lasting impact on all population groups across Scotland. These principles include:

- **putting people first:** ensuring that we understand and respond to people's concerns and have an inclusive decision-making process.
- **inclusive:** reflecting diversity in our net zero transition and reach all sections of Scottish society, giving everyone an equal say in their future.
- **just:** understanding the communities and sectors most likely to be affected by our net zero transition and actively engaging with them.

STAGE 4 - DECISION

This decision stage allows Deputy Directors (or above) to consider the assessment process from Stages 2 and 3, agree any changes to the policy, proposal or decision and confirm that due regard to meeting the Fairer Scotland Duty has been given in this case.

Key questions to discuss at this summary stage are:

12. What changes, if any, will be made to the proposal as a result of the assessment? Why are these changes being made and what are the expected outcomes?

As a result of the assessment, no fundamental changes will be made to the PES. However, the strategy will be modified to place more emphasis on the existing inequality across Scotland's population in relation to climate change awareness, understanding and action. It will also be modified to strengthen the importance of a just and fair transition to net zero, where all people across Scotland are supported, particularly those who are disadvantaged by the transition. Finally, the PES will be modified to provide more detail on who the 'trusted messengers' are and how they will be supported to engage with their communities/groups.

13. If no changes are proposed, please explain why.

As above, no fundamental changes have been proposed given that the PES, being a public engagement strategy, is already centred in communicating to all people in Scotland so that they understand the impacts of climate change, encouraging and normalising action across all communities, and encouraging participation by all groups in the design of policies that will affect them. These pillars of the strategy are deemed sufficient to ensure equality of opportunity across Scotland's diverse population groups.

Once these questions have been discussed and written up, save this document in the relevant project file in eRDM. Your deputy director (or above) should sign and date in the box below.

Sign off of the Fairer Scotland Assessment template

[Delete after completing: This template should be signed off at DD level or above]

Name: Lisa Bird, 14/09/21

Job title: Deputy Director, Domestic Climate Change

The final stage is to complete the [Fairer Scotland Duty summary template](#) for publication on the Scottish Government website. This should be published on the Scottish Government's website - contact [Social Justice Strategy](#) for more details.