



# Measuring up

How the UK is performing on the  
UN Sustainable Development Goals





The UK Stakeholders for Sustainable Development (UKSSD) is a network of organisations who work together to drive action on sustainable development and the Sustainable Development Goals in the UK.

Our mission is to inspire, influence and inform people, communities and organisations to transform the UK into a sustainable society.

### **We inform**

We share knowledge and expertise so we can all learn

### **We influence**

We use our collective voice to influence people, communities and organisations

### **We inspire**

We work together to drive change and use our actions to inspire others by sharing stories of success

Researching and writing this report has been a collaboration between organisations working in discrete and specialist areas in the UK. Here they have pooled their expertise to consider how the UK is performing against the Sustainable Development Goals in the belief that with this understanding we can work together to achieve them.

**[www.ukssd.co.uk](http://www.ukssd.co.uk)**

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# Measuring up

How the UK is performing on the  
UN Sustainable Development Goals



**This report has two parts.**

**The first section** is dedicated to a summary of the UK's performance against each of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their 169 targets. Here you can see a summary of the research and analysis we have undertaken for each Goal, presented as a separate chapter.

Supporting these chapters are technical documents which contain the detailed research findings and the contributions stakeholders made to them.

Each of the Goal chapters and their supporting technical documents can be accessed individually online.

**The second section** outlines the procedural aspects of delivering the Goals in the UK. This briefly considers the governance arrangements that may be needed for the successful implementation of the SDGs. This section also explores the role of different stakeholders.

This report has two audiences. It is written for Government, in the hope that our research and recommendations will be useful for the development of its own plans. And it is written for our network stakeholders from all sectors who want to understand what is needed so they can work together on the SDGs in the UK.

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# A letter from the Steering Group

Our network exists to drive action on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the UK. Our organisations and the Partners of the network believe that these ambitious Goals provide the UK with a unique opportunity; delivering the SDGs sets us on a trajectory to end poverty and inequality, improve health and wellbeing, end the devastating decline of biodiversity and ecosystems, and reduce the impacts of climate change. They offer us a route to a better, more sustainable and just, future.

The SDGs apply to all countries, which means that the UK must achieve them domestically. To make the most of this opportunity we need to establish how and where the Government, and other stakeholders, should focus efforts. Until now we have not had a comprehensive understanding of how the UK is performing on the SDGs. UKSSD decided to draw on its expert network to help because we all have a responsibility to do what we can to support the Goals.

We wanted to make a modest but useful contribution with this report. It captures an initial review of the UK's performance against the 17 SDGs and their associated targets. Our report is based on a comprehensive set of public statistics and includes an analysis of the policy context, the likelihood of achievement based on existing action, and recommendations for Government and other stakeholders. It is not perfect, but we believe that we must start somewhere and that we can build and expand on this work in future.

There is an enormous amount to celebrate in the UK's progress towards the Goals and some might argue that we have been overly critical with our assessment of this country's performance. But we are striving for the best. Particularly when the issues we have identified relate to people in our country being denied a decent standard of living, where discrimination still exists, when there are wide disparities between and within communities, where we face new and emerging challenges to do with work, health, trade and productivity, and when our way of life is damaging our natural environment and dangerously changing the earth's climate system.

We believe this report provides a solid platform for the UK Voluntary National Review to the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development at the United Nations in 2019. We hope it makes a valuable contribution and a starting point to the UK Government's official approach to implementing the SDGs.

We also hope that the findings help the UK Government, our network and other stakeholders to understand where the opportunities and the challenges lie in the achievement of this ambitious framework and to consider what role they may play. Equipped with this knowledge, we can work together to focus our efforts and drive action in an effective and coordinated way.

We would like to thank the organisations that have led the research and summary of findings for each of the Goals and the other sections of this report for their effort and enthusiasm. We could not have delivered this project without the backing of our sponsors and financial supporters: WWF UK, Pearson, ICAEW, Sodexo, PwC, Thai Union, the Stakeholder Forum and DNV GL. Special mention must be made to Dr Graham Long and his colleagues at the Institute of Sustainability at Newcastle University for their early work to collate the data<sup>1</sup> that provided the foundation for this project and to the Office of National Statistics for its help in checking we had the latest data available.

And finally, we thank all the organisations that have taken part, either contributing their expertise, or lending their voice in support. We look forward to an exciting programme of activities to build on this project as we continue to work together to drive action on the SDGs in the UK.

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## Executive summary

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide the UK with a unique opportunity to eradicate poverty, reduce inequalities, combat catastrophic climate change and protect our natural environment by 2030.

The SDGs are underpinned by the principle of universality. This means that all nations, and all people, are responsible for their achievement. It also means that all governments must work to implement them in their own nations.

To date the UK Government has committed to embedding the Goals in Single Departmental Plans (SDPs). While a practical way of delegating responsibility for programmes, by allocating goals and targets this way, there is a risk that the connected and interdependent nature of the framework will be lost. As the Government prepares to report to the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) in 2019, our research provides them with a foundation to build this from, and an opportunity to engage with stakeholders across the UK as they do so.

## What is happening in the UK

With the evidence from *Measuring up* we can understand how the UK is performing against the SDG Targets, the wider policy context and the historical trends that will affect us achieving them. It is now possible to understand in one place, for the first time, what is happening in the lives of people of the UK, in our natural environment, in our economy and to our governance systems. The SDGs are the most comprehensive tool to date to assess the 'state of the nation'.

While there is an enormous amount to celebrate, the most vulnerable places and people in our society are increasingly being left behind. Our assessment of the UK's performance against the SDGs used public data to understand progress against the global indicators, existing public policy and historical or future trends that may impact on progress.

**Out of 143 targets we considered relevant to the domestic delivery of the Goals, UKSSD found that the UK is performing well on 24% of them. There are gaps in policy or inadequate performance for 57% of them, and 15% where there is little to no policy in place to address the target, or where performance is poor.**

The value of the 17 SDGs and their 169 Targets lies in their connectedness. The evidence here allows us to see how we can take collaborative action, including through partnership with the Government. The links between targets are identifiable in every goal. It is clear that the SDGs cannot be achieved by individual organisations or Government working alone or in siloes; the links between targets mean collaboration is critical. This is evident in a number of chapters in this report:

*Example from Goals 2, 3, 8, 10. We have a food system that struggles to provide healthy, sustainable, diverse diets for everyone in the UK. We have high and growing levels of obesity, and the highest levels of household food insecurity in Europe. Calories from healthy food consistently cost more than calories from unhealthy foods. And the wealthier you are, the higher portion of household income is assigned to consuming vegetables. This has a direct*

*impact on health and wellbeing, with obesity and poor diet linked to key health issues including heart disease, diabetes and cancer.*

*Tackling obesity and poor diets would improve both mental and physical health and reduce the strain on our health system. It would also enable people to live full and productive lives, which will benefit our economy.*

We are also now beginning to understand the UK's impact on the rest of the world. Not just through our commitment to 0.7% Overseas Development Assistance, but the inward and outward flow of resources, goods and services, and pollution. This is emerging in this report but needs more investigation.

Our rating on some of the SDG Targets, such as water quality, is more positive than actual performance because of existing EU Directives. If these are not retained after the UK leaves the EU this will significantly impact on the likelihood of achieving them. It is particularly important when it comes to our environment and trade to have greater clarity over the process and terms of the UK's withdrawal from the EU if we are to understand the impact of this on our likelihood of achieving the Goals.

The spending environment in the UK will impact on our prospects of achieving some of the public services required to deliver the Goals, but there is an opportunity for greater collaboration between investors and government to address this. It is likely that we can use the SDGs to make better, or different, spending decisions.

## What needs to happen

Based on the findings of this report, UKSSD believes that the following actions are needed to achieve the SDGs in the UK by 2030:

1. To ensure that the cross-departmental action necessary to achieve the SDGs is implemented, and to ensure policy coherence across Whitehall, top level political leadership is needed. Responsibility for the Goals should ideally be in the Prime Minister's Office, or with a senior minister with a significant domestic policymaking remit.
2. The Voluntary National Review process is an opportunity to engage stakeholders in producing a comprehensive and integrated plan to implement the SDGs. Given its coordinating role, it would be appropriate for the Cabinet Office to lead an inclusive and transparent process to produce a whole-of-government response.

As well as government, business has a critical role in the implementation of the SDGs. Some UK businesses have already positively responded to the SDG agenda, recognising the economic opportunities as well as the environmental urgency. Businesses of all sizes are encouraged to review how they can help the delivery of the SDGs in the UK based on the analysis in this report, and to collaborate with others to address them.


The findings in this report provide all stakeholders with a means of identifying their role and the opportunities open to them. We can use this report as a starting point for our future activities, together.

## How the UK is performing on the Sustainable Development Goals




Target	SDG 1	SDG 2	SDG 3	SDG 4	SDG 5	SDG 6	SDG 7	SDG 8
1	Amber	Amber	Green	Amber	Amber	Green	Green	Red
2	Red	Red	Green	Amber	Amber	Green	Amber	Red
3	Green	Amber	Amber	Amber	Amber	Amber	Red	Amber
4	Amber	Amber	Red	Red	Red	Amber		Amber
5	Amber	Amber	Amber	Amber	Amber	Amber		Amber
6			Amber	Green	Amber	Amber		Amber
7			Amber	Amber				Amber
8			Green					Amber
9			Red					White
10								Green
11								
12								
13								
14								
15								
16								
17								
18								
19								
a	Grey	Grey	Green	Green	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey
b	Grey	Grey	Green	Green	Grey	Amber	Grey	Red
c		Grey	Green	Green	Amber			
d			Green					


### Key to RAG ratings

- Green**  The UK is performing well and has appropriate policy in place to address the target

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- Amber**  There are some gaps in policy coverage, the UK is not performing well enough or performance is deteriorating

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- Red**  There is little or no policy in place that adequately addresses the target, performance is poor





## Introduction

There are many complex and systemic challenges facing the UK. To address these challenges, we must recognise the interdependencies and connections that exist and break down traditional siloed ways of working. The SDGs recognise these interdependencies and provide us with an ambitious but achievable focus for action.

The Goals are a universally applicable framework, they were created with all nations in mind. It is important for the UK to take responsibility on a global stage, but we cannot neglect the challenges we face domestically, or ignore the reliance and impact our way of life has on the rest of the world.

As you will see in the findings of this report, poverty and inequality continue to rise in the UK yet we are consuming far beyond our fair share of the planet's natural resources and doing so in a way that adds further environmental pressure.

Our actions have an impact on other parts of the world and may help or hinder the achievement of the SDGs internationally. Supply chains that source products in poorer parts of the world can support sustainable economic development or have negative social or environmental impacts. Balancing the need to provide current generations with the quality of life we should expect from a high-income nation like the UK, while ensuring we do not hinder the quality of life for future generations, is a tension we need to negotiate. Likewise, providing immediate alleviation for those in circumstances we deem unacceptable, such as children living in poverty, while preventing this in future, needs a balanced mix of interventions. There are many examples of these complex and conflicting challenges scattered through this report. The SDGs can offer us a greater understanding of the dynamic relationships within the domestic context and our relationship with the rest of the world. The nature of these systems requires a collective, cross-sector and cross-industry effort.

The UK's standing in the world, its international relationships and future economic competitiveness, are all being affected by the results of the EU referendum. But just as importantly, the result of the referendum highlighted the divisions that exist in our society. As the UK prepares for Brexit, the SDGs offer us a valuable tool for building bridges and ensuring long-term prosperity. They provide an opportunity to galvanise support for a positive vision of a UK with a future very few could argue with.

To establish this vision – and the collective action that is needed – we need a comprehensive plan. We are attempting to build the foundations of such a plan in our report.

## The Sustainable Development Goals and the UK

Following the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) in 2012, the UK Government prioritised the development of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 2030 Agenda. The then Prime Minister, David Cameron, was a co-chair of the United Nations' Secretary General's High-Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, set up to advise on the creation of a global development framework to follow the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

After one of the most open and consultative approaches in United Nations' history, the 193 UN member states committed to Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda For Sustainable Development<sup>2</sup> in September 2015, which contains the 17 SDGs. In response to Paragraph 60<sup>3</sup> of this agenda, member states are expected to prepare strategies for how they are going to implement and achieve the Goals.

Unlike the MDGs before them, Agenda 2030 is underpinned by the principle of universality – that the Goals are shared by all people and countries in the world. This means that these national strategies should focus on the domestic achievement of the Goals and reflect the local context. Universality also recognises that all stakeholders and people should take responsibility for the Goals.

In December 2017, the UK Government published a report on its approach to Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals<sup>4</sup> which lists “some of the ways that the Government is supporting the delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals” but does not cover the entire framework. The Government has confirmed that Single Departmental Plans will incorporate SDG targets, from May 2018 many plans have aligned their objectives to the SDGs. However, this does not yet amount to a specific delivery plan for the SDGs and there is no review of policy coherence issues or gaps analysis. The connection to SDG targets is also missing so it is not yet detailed enough to assess if the UK is on track or not.

The UKSSD has previously encouraged the Government to develop a cross-departmental plan for the SDGs. Ideally this should be led by the Prime Minister with the Cabinet Office responsible for coordination and oversight. However, responsibility for implementing the plan must be delegated to departments. This approach would ensure coherence across Government and sufficient leadership to drive the level of action needed.

The UK Government has committed to reporting on progress at the UN High Level Political Forum for Sustainable Development for 2019. The process of developing this report, known as a Voluntary National Review (VNR), gives the Government an opportunity to develop a suitably ambitious and comprehensive plan. This should include stakeholder input, such as the evidence and recommendations we have gathered here.

In the second section of the report you will find more detailed reference to the context in the Devolved Administrations. While this report covers the UK's performance as a whole, it is worth noting that there has been more progress on the SDGs in Scotland and Wales where efforts have been made to consider the implications of, and incorporate, the SDGs into policy and practice, particularly through cross-sector dialogue and new legislation.

## A connected framework

The value of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and their 169 targets lies in their connectedness. The links that exist between the targets are identifiable in every Goal, but understanding the complexity of the systems they reflect requires more investigation; this is what analysis of the available data helps us to do. For example, with disaggregated data we can start to see health inequalities across different segments of society or geographies of the UK – this in turn helps us understand other connected issues, or systems, like poverty, access to adequate housing, food and nutrition, and

energy efficiency.

By considering the Goals and the links between them we can start to address the causes and consequences of problems in a way that reduces the risk of detrimental side effects from that action. And we can identify, as individual stakeholders, the role that we might play. It helps us see where we fit within all of the complexity and what we might be able to do. Examining the relationships or links between targets helps us to identify the other stakeholders involved, forging the sorts of partnerships required to create solutions.

It is important to consider the framework in full and not to neglect the relationships within and between the Goals and targets. But that doesn't mean that we can all do something about every Goal or target. As individual stakeholders we can only do so much, but by working together we can amplify our impact.

Within this report we have considered the UK's performance on each of the Goals individually. We have, however, tried to recognise the relationships that exist across Goals and targets. The organisations that led the production of the chapters have identified where critical relationships exist, though further work to understand these systems is needed.

There are taxonomies and studies that exist at a global level on the interlinkages between the SDGs and we do not want to replicate this work. In future it may be beneficial to consider the application of these to our findings on the UK's performance against the Goals, particularly before we begin to take practical steps to support action.



#### Graphic

The links that exist between the targets are identifiable across the framework

## Approach and methodology

The SDGs are an inclusive agenda, everyone has a role in achieving them and they provide us with a shared purpose and way to use our collective assets for the common good. This has been the basis for the methodology adopted in this project. We have drawn on the collective expertise of our network and the project has been open to any stakeholder who would like to take part.

The 17 organisations that led the Goal chapters were selected from a longer list of volunteers because they had a range of expertise and the ability to bring together stakeholders as part of the review process.

We have directly engaged organisations to contribute to the research where we have a gap in our existing membership. That said, gaps remain, and despite our best efforts we could not encourage some organisations we hoped would fill these to engage with the project. Although this may show a weakness, it also illustrates the concerning trend we have witnessed of low awareness of, and engagement with the SDGs in the UK.

We hope that our process and efforts to engage stakeholders can be replicated and improved upon when the Government produces its own plan.

## Methodology

To produce this research and the final report we had four phases of activity.

### Phase 1 – Initial research

We provided our chapter lead organisations with a proforma to complete. This was populated with the information produced in 2016 by Newcastle University<sup>5</sup> of publicly available data concerning UK performance on each of the 169 SDG targets. This included the data sets the Office of National Statistics (ONS) will use to report on progress and alternative sources of public data to provide a more complete picture. The chapter leads were guided to expand on this data based on several criteria including, applicable public policy, local to international dimensions, and the UK's current performance against the indicators.

The data was updated with the latest information available by the ONS during the research.

We asked the chapter leads to rate the UK's performance on the targets on a Red, Amber, Green (RAG) ranking based on the available data and the coverage of UK policy and legislation. You can see a key for these in the introduction to the chapters on page 13.

When a global target was ambiguous, such as containing the words 'substantially reduce' or where it was not fully applicable to the UK context, some of the chapter leads reference an alternative national target based on existing Government targets or industry recommendations. They have RAG rated the target based, not just on the performance against the global SDG indicators, but on the national context.

If a target is not applicable to the UK's domestic delivery of the SDGs, such as many of the Means of Implementation (MoI) targets, we have discounted it from the review and offer no RAG rating. We also do not RAG rate the small number of targets where we could not identify data or sufficient evidence to assess the performance.

## Phase 2 – Stakeholder review

Once the initial research was complete we invited other stakeholders to review and assess it for robustness. They were asked to validate or comment on specific gaps or areas needing more expertise, to contribute their own views on the analysis and to say when they disagreed or had different perspectives to share. During this phase chapter leads and UKSSD tried to ensure we had good coverage of the framework and a mixture of stakeholders taking part. Unfortunately, although we received over 160 individual registrations for this process a smaller proportion contributed during this phase than we hoped, though just over 100 organisations were involved in the research in total.

## Phase 3 – Drafting and finalising the report

At the end of the review period, the chapter leads received the research and comments. Based on a chapter brief, they summarised the research into the chapters presented here. During this stage they also invited a further group of stakeholders to review the final summary to check it accurately reflected the research. UKSSD team members have also done this to ensure consistency throughout the report.

Once this process was complete UKSSD received the final documents, edited and collated the report.

Part two of the report was produced in a similar fashion but with UKSSD drafting most of the content for stakeholders to comment on.

# Part 1:






## Sustainable Development Goals

Each of the following chapters is a summary of a much bigger research document. This is available as an appendix online. Contained in each chapter you will find a summary of the UK's performance against the SDG targets.

When reviewing the chapters, it is worth noting that if an SDG-relevant subject has not been covered in full it does not mean it has been excluded from the research. Our chapter leads and the stakeholders who reviewed the information have focused on capturing the critical issues in the chapter based on their knowledge and expertise of the subject.

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### Key to RAG ratings

<b>Green</b>		The UK is performing well and has appropriate policy in place to address the target
<b>Amber</b>		There are some gaps in policy coverage, the UK is not performing well enough or performance is deteriorating
<b>Red</b>		There is little or no policy in place that adequately addresses the target, performance is poor
<b>Grey</b>		The target is not considered relevant to the UK context or scope of this project
<b>Grey outline</b>		There is a data gap

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# No poverty

End poverty in all its forms everywhere

Prepared by



University for the Common Good

In 1999, the UK Government proclaimed its intention to eradicate child poverty within a generation, formalising this aspiration with the passing of the Child Poverty Act 2010. A framework to gauge progress was proposed, at the heart of which was the benchmark of determining poverty in the UK as living in a household whose equivalised income was below 60% of UK median household income. Equivalent nationally focused poverty benchmarks are widely used across Europe. Progress in reducing poverty in the UK was made in the first decade of the 21st century, notably for children, more markedly for pensioners, but not for adults of working age.

A more challenging economic climate, a change of government and a reorientation of political and spending priorities, led to the repeal of the 2010 Act in 2016. While the UK Government continues to offer social protection, and aspires to tackle some of the drivers of poverty, there is now less explicit primary concern to tackle it directly. Independent projections suggest that poverty will increase significantly over the next few years and then more slowly toward 2030. Against this context, the Scottish Government has introduced the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 to eradicate child poverty in this part of the UK by 2030.



## Performance rating

Sustainable Development Goal Target	Rating
<b>1.1</b> By 2030, eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere, currently measured as people living on less than \$1.25 a day	●
<b>1.2</b> By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions	●
<b>1.3</b> Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable	●
<b>1.4</b> By 2030, ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including microfinance	●
<b>1.5</b> By 2030, build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters	●
<b>1.a</b> Ensure significant mobilization of resources from a variety of sources, including through enhanced development cooperation, in order to provide adequate and predictable means for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, to implement programmes and policies to end poverty in all its dimensions	●
<b>1.b</b> Create sound policy frameworks at the national, regional and international levels, based on pro-poor and gender-sensitive development strategies, to support accelerated investment in poverty eradication actions	●





## Key findings

3. The UK is among the most economically developed nations, with its citizens experiencing a relatively high material standard of living and established systems of national and local social protection
4. The national indicator of relative income poverty that is widely accepted and used across Europe suggests that progress was made in reducing child and pensioner poverty in the first decade of the 21st century
5. Social protections for people experiencing poverty in the UK have been reduced in recent years
6. Independent analysis of poverty projections suggests that – according to the national indicator of relative income poverty – poverty in the UK will increase sharply in the next few years and will continue to increase more slowly toward 2030
7. Scotland has legislated to eradicate child poverty by 2030

## Performance and Progress

The way in which we conceive ‘ending poverty’ in the UK very much determines the conclusion we reach on performance and progress with SDG1.

If our global frame of reference is the World Bank’s measure of extreme poverty (living on less than US\$1.90/day) then the SDG1 challenge for the UK is supporting the minority who are not availing themselves of existing social protection mechanisms as, in theory, all citizens in the UK should have access to resources that are in excess of this threshold (Target 1.1). The UK’s status as a ‘poverty-free’ nation is shared by other economically advanced nations; it does not cast the UK in a uniquely positive light.

There is a degree of public support for the view that poverty is something that only exists in other places (or at times past in the UK), but few serious commentators would argue against the position that poverty is an experience that should be judged against prevailing circumstances in particular places. There is almost universal support among experts for the view that poverty in the UK reflects the situation when a household is, as a result of inadequate income, unable to access what might reasonably be expected of the typical household in the UK. Although a framework of indicators is required to adequately appraise the national position, the poverty threshold that is typically used is when a household’s equivalised income is below 60% of UK median household income in a particular year. These data are published annually, with time series analysis being available to track trends through time. Others have argued that this approaches underestimates the incidence of poverty and that a minimum income standard is a more robust approach; however, there is majority support for the use of this indicator of relative income poverty.

Considerable progress was made in reducing poverty in the UK in the first decade of the 21st century, notably for children, more markedly for pensioners, but not for adults of working age. Progress has stalled in recent years with rates of poverty fluctuating and no overall discernible trend. Significantly, there has been a rise in in-work poverty; work



### SDG 5

Until gender equalities are addressed, it is unlikely that there will be progress tackling the high incidence of women pensioner poverty

is no longer a sure-fast route out of poverty in the UK, although protections such as the National Minimum Wage and National Living Wage have increased financial returns from work completed for the low paid. More worryingly, independent analysis of poverty projections suggests that – according to the national indicator of relative income poverty – poverty in the UK will increase sharply in the next few years and will continue increase thereafter, but more slowly toward 2030 (Target 1.2). For example, without corrective action, independent analysis for the Scottish Government suggests that one in three children in Scotland will be living in poverty by 2030.<sup>6</sup>

It would be misleading to suggest that the UK Government is not concerned to tackle poverty in the UK. After all, the UK continues to provide a fairly wide-ranging system of social security and has articulated aspirations to improve children's life chances and promote social mobility (Target 1.3). Furthermore, the wide-ranging ways in which civil society provides resources and support to bolster the quality of life of those experiencing poverty must also be acknowledged, eg food banks, free/reduced cost leisure participation and advice/support services. These actions serve to ameliorate the worst excesses of the social exclusion that poverty causes. On the other hand, there has been significant weakening of explicit commitment to tackle poverty in recent years. For example, the Child Poverty Act 2010 was repealed in 2016 with the introduction of a Welfare Reform and Work Act in 2016, which meant there was no longer a legal obligation on the UK Government to eradicate child poverty by 2030. The 2016 Act has also reduced the levels of social security entitlement, with the direct consequence of increasing the intensity and overall levels of poverty for particular groups (notably families with more than two children). Furthermore, the provision to establish a Child Poverty Commission within the 2010 Act was first amended to become the Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission in 2012, before being further reconfigured as a Social Mobility Commission in 2016. Thus, while the UK Government continues to offer social protection and aspires to tackle some of the drivers of poverty, there is now less explicit primary concern to tackle it. The direction of travel for the UK Government seems to be against that which might be pursued to achieve the SDG1 goal of 'ending poverty'.

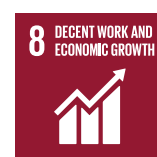
In summary, there should be no doubt that the UK Government is concerned with the welfare of its most vulnerable citizens. The UK continues to deliver social security to protect its most vulnerable from the worst excesses of poverty at present and is concerned to promote social mobility to ensure that poverty does not persist across generations. However, concerns must be raised about the UK Government's 'direction of travel' and its understanding of what constitutes poverty. Social security has been weakened in recent years, with significant reductions in the level of resource that is at the disposal of some of the UK's most financially challenged citizens. The manner in which new provisions have been introduced (eg back-payment cycles for Universal Credit creating short-term vulnerabilities) has shown a disregard for the realities of life for those with least resource. Foodbanks are becoming a necessary part of the landscape of social support. Demand on crisis funds and welfare advice are increasing.

Unless the UK takes a different tack, everyday life for its most financially challenged will continue to become more stressed and the prospect of achieving SDG1 – if conceived as a national indicator of income poverty – is a remote possibility.



### SDG 10

The UK continues to provide a fairly wide-ranging system of social security and has articulated aspirations to improve children's life chances and promote social mobility



### SDG 8

Work is no longer a sure-fast route out of poverty in the UK

## Synergies and coherence

For the UK, SDG1 is inextricably linked to many other SDGs. The links are most evident for the SDGs that are primarily social or economic in orientation (SDGs 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 16 and 17). For example, until gender equalities (SDG5) are addressed, it is unlikely that there will be progress tackling the higher incidence of women pensioner poverty. Similarly, analysis of the ‘cost of the school day’ highlights the difficulties for children in financially challenged families to avail themselves of all the opportunities that our apparently ‘free education’ system provides. Nevertheless, the more environmentally-oriented SDGs (6, 7, 13, 14 and 15) are pertinent too, as Target 1.5 evidences.

## Local to international dimensions

It is important to note that the UK is a part-devolved administration and that there is variable capacity across sub-national units in the UK to formulate a localised approach toward ‘ending poverty’. It is of note that the Scottish Government – with cross-party support – legislated through the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 to eradicate child poverty in Scotland by 2030. National and local programmes of action are envisaged with the first delivery plan from 2018-2022. The targets set are slightly more ambitious variants of those that comprised the 2010 Act for the UK as a whole. The work programme targets three drivers of poverty (work and earnings; social security; reducing household expenditure) in addition to supporting interventions that bolster the quality of life as lived. It can be seen as part of a strategy to eradicate poverty in the longer term.



## Recommended actions

1. Articulate what the UK Government understands to be implied by the SDG Goal of ‘ending poverty in the UK’
2. Specify how existing work on ‘improving life chances and promoting social mobility’ contributes to SDG1 and ‘ending poverty in the UK’
3. Commit to a programme of government action to ‘end poverty in the UK’
4. Commit to annual monitoring of progress toward ‘ending poverty in the UK’
5. Present a differentiated anti-poverty strategy, which acknowledges that what is required to reduce poverty among adults of working age, differs from what is required to tackle child poverty and, in turn, pensioner poverty

## Case study



### The Cost of the School Day, Child Poverty Action Group, Scotland

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#### **SDG TARGETS: 1.2, 4.1**

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The Scottish Government's commitment to eradicating child poverty by 2030 has led to them support, along with other donors, the Cost of the School Day project. The project recognises that school costs such as clothing, travel, school trips and extracurricular activities put an additional burden on low-income families.

They can result in children being excluded from opportunities and can single them out as being different. The Cost of the School Day brings together children and young people, parents/carers and school staff, so they can work together to identify financial barriers and put in place actions to remove them.

#### **This includes:**

- Ensuring equal access to opportunities at school, and removing barriers to learning and participation for children and young people from low income households
- Reducing risk of stigma associated with financial circumstances and exclusion amongst children and young people
- Reducing the pressures school costs place on low family incomes and supporting families to access

[www.cpag.org.uk/cost-school-day](http://www.cpag.org.uk/cost-school-day)

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## Zero hunger

End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

Prepared by



Supported by



The food supply in the UK is relatively secure and stable. Food is produced and imported to sufficient levels, and the percentage of income spent on food has remained steady. However, the 'average' situation in the UK hides large variations according to socioeconomic status, and two juxtaposed challenges: high and growing levels of obesity and diet related disease, and among the highest levels of household food insecurity in Europe. These challenges are underpinned by a food system which is struggling to provide healthy, sustainable, diverse diets for everyone in the UK.



## Performance rating

Sustainable Development Goal Target	Rating
<b>2.1</b> By 2030, end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round	●
<b>2.2</b> By 2030, end all forms of malnutrition, including achieving, by 2025, the internationally agreed targets on stunting and wasting in children under 5 years of age, and address the nutritional needs of adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women and older persons	●
<b>2.3</b> By 2030, double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, pastoralists and fishers, including through secure and equal access to land, other productive resources and inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets and opportunities for value addition and non-farm employment	●
<b>2.4</b> By 2030, ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production, that help maintain ecosystems, that strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding and other disasters and that progressively improve land and soil quality	●
<b>2.5</b> By 2020, maintain the genetic diversity of seeds, cultivated plants and farmed and domesticated animals and their related wild species, including through soundly managed and diversified seed and plant banks at the national, regional and international levels, and promote access to and fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge, as internationally agreed	●
<b>2.a</b> Increase investment, including through enhanced international cooperation, in rural infrastructure, agricultural research and extension services, technology development and plant and livestock gene banks in order to enhance agricultural productive capacity in developing countries, in particular least developed countries	●
<b>2.b</b> Correct and prevent trade restrictions and distortions in world agricultural markets, including through the parallel elimination of all forms of agricultural export subsidies and all export measures with equivalent effect, in accordance with the mandate of the Doha Development Round	●
<b>2.c</b> Adopt measures to ensure the proper functioning of food commodity markets and their derivatives and facilitate timely access to market information, including on food reserves, in order to help limit extreme food price volatility	●



## Key findings

1. The UK is struggling to address malnutrition in all forms, with food insecurity and obesity rising
2. The food system in the UK is relatively stable but reliant on large farms and close to half of all food is currently imported
3. Performance on the biodiversity and sustainability targets has been mixed
4. Policy changes as a result of leaving the European Union will be closely linked to the UK's ability to achieve SDG2

## Performance and progress

Despite having a relatively secure food system with stable food prices, the UK rates amber or red on the nutrition related targets under SDG2. This is because when interpreting Goal 2 in the UK context, the challenges of food insecurity, poor nutrition and obesity need to be considered under the heading of 'malnutrition in all its forms' (Targets 2.1, Target 2.2).

Though the prevalence of people who are underweight is relatively low, in a country such as the UK with a developed health and social care system and consistent food supply, it should be feasible to achieve nearly undetectable levels of undernourishment. The prevalence of child and adult obesity is high and though childhood obesity seems to have stabilised in recent years, it is not declining.

The level of adult food insecurity in the UK is among the worst in Europe, and for children it is one of the worst, if not the worst, performing nations.<sup>7</sup> The continuing rise in food bank use suggests it is increasing.<sup>8</sup> The Food and Agriculture Organisation of the UN (FAO) defines food insecurity as: "A situation that exists when people lack secure access to sufficient amounts of safe and nutritious food for normal growth and development and an active and healthy life."<sup>9</sup> It can range from mild to severe, indicating worrying about where your next meal will come from, skipping meals or going without food. Typically measured at the level of the household, there are existing validated survey measures for food insecurity that are used globally, including the FAO's Food Insecurity Experience Scale and the United States Department of Agriculture Food Insecurity Module. Food insecurity is not currently being measured for the UK as a whole, however in a one-off 2016 survey by the Food Standards Agency, 26% of those surveyed reported experiencing food insecurity.<sup>10</sup>

The food system in the UK is one in which calories from healthy foods consistently cost more than those from less healthy foods.<sup>11</sup> Households and individuals with insecure income or access to resources are therefore more reliant on those less healthy foods. Thus, while seemingly juxtaposed, the challenges of obesity and food insecurity are often co-located in the UK,<sup>12</sup> indicating the interrelation between socioeconomic inequalities and nutrition status in the UK.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, there are large social inequalities evident in obesity in the UK – childhood obesity is twice as prevalent in the poorest areas of England compared to the richest.<sup>14</sup>



### SDG 1

Households and individuals with insecure income or access to resources, are more reliant on less healthy foods

The status of the UK's food production system tells a story of reliance on large farms, agricultural subsidies and food imports (Target 2.3). The total volume of UK food production has risen steadily since 1973 and land use for agriculture has remained consistent over time. However, the UK imports close to half of its food.<sup>15</sup> The ability of agricultural producers to provide for their own livelihoods is also challenging. The data in DEFRA's farm business survey indicates that farm income in the UK is heavily influenced by agricultural support payments – without these payments many producers and growers would not make a positive farm income.<sup>16</sup> SDG2 places an emphasis on small-scale farms and food producers for their positive contribution to family incomes and economic development. However, in a developed and industrialised food and agricultural system like the UK's, large farms produce the majority of food; compared to other European countries the UK is more reliant on them.<sup>17</sup> Even in the UK, however, small farms have an important role to play in that they typically promote shorter food supply chains in which citizens are more closely linked to where their food comes from, and a host of other benefits. These include a smaller agro-ecological footprint, reductions in refrigeration and packaging and a stronger connection and trust between people and the produce they are eating. There is also some evidence that crop yields from small farms can compete with larger farms, particularly where more intricate or delicate production and harvesting methods are required.<sup>18</sup>

The UK's progress on biodiversity and sustainable agricultural production is mixed (Target 2.4, Target 2.5), with a number of measures improving but a number of them deteriorating as well. Agriculture is the largest contributor to biodiversity loss in the UK. Though “direct pressures” on biodiversity and sustainability are improving, there have been long-term declines in many species of wild plants and animals associated with farmland. To give just one example, farmland bird species have declined 56% since 1970.<sup>19</sup> However, plant genetic resource collections in the UK have increased significantly since the 1960s.<sup>20</sup>

Many of the SDG2 targets related to agriculture and biodiversity are currently incorporated into UK policy through EU policy, including the Common Agriculture Policy. As the UK prepares to leave the EU many of these policies will need to be renegotiated in the UK. This presents both significant challenges and opportunities related to SDG2. Agriculture policy affects agricultural productivity, producer livelihoods, sustainability and biodiversity (Targets 2.3, 2.4, and 2.5) and impacts on food production and therefore on nutrition outcomes (Targets 2.1 and 2.2). Given the challenges facing the UK in terms of obesity, food insecurity, and sustainable food production, urgent action is needed to create a coherent agriculture policy if the UK Government is to meet the Targets under SDG2.

## Synergies and coherence

Poverty and inequalities are major underlying factors in the nutrition targets of SDG2 (Targets 2.1 and 2.2); achieving a reduction in poverty (SDG1) would also help in achieving the targets on malnutrition in all its forms. Addressing the food supply chain to make diverse, healthier food more accessible and affordable will be necessary to reduce malnutrition in all its forms, and this can potentially be a result of action taken to improve biodiversity (Target 2.5). The obesity issue also links closely to non-communicable diseases (NCDs) covered by SDG3; addressing the nutritional risk factors for becoming overweight will also help to alleviate the burden of diet-related NCDs.



### SDG 3

Addressing nutritional risk factors for people who are overweight will also help to alleviate the burden of diet-related non-communicable diseases



### SDG 15

Agriculture is the largest contributor to biodiversity loss in the UK



Increasing the productivity of British farms (Target 2.3) could potentially impact on the UK's performance on conserving and improving water resources (SDG6), on climate action (SDG13) and on biodiversity and habitat conservation (SDG15) if productivity gains are achieved through environmentally unsustainable methods. Achieving an increase in average farm income and increasing the amount of viable small farms (Target 2.3) could help in reducing poverty (SDG1). Local food production from small scale farms can provide an opportunity to link with local communities experiencing food insecurity (Targets 2.2 and 2.1) – for example through a voucher or prescription scheme – and thus could help in reducing malnutrition in all forms (Target 2.2).

## Local to international dimension

The UK policies and programmes that affect SDG2 are largely devolved matters, including the measurement of key indicators. Though this poses challenges, particularly in terms of data comparability and policy coherence, it also presents opportunities for the UK nations to tailor their approaches. Internationally, the productivity of UK farms could have potential impacts on the global food and commodity market if increased UK production meant fewer imports. However, currently only 49% of the food consumed in the UK is produced in the UK, and total agricultural outputs fell 5% between 2015 and 2016. Fruits and vegetables are the food group with the largest proportion of imports, and this could be affected by trade deals post-EU exit.<sup>21</sup> Any resulting tariffs and changes in the value of the pound could affect the affordability of fruit and vegetables in the UK, thereby threatening progress on the malnutrition targets.<sup>22</sup>



## Recommended actions

1. Establish a coherent agricultural policy that addresses and seeks to improve the multiple impacts of agricultural production (environmental sustainability, livelihoods and nutrition/health outcomes) and drives up consumption of safe, high quality, sustainable and healthy food particularly among low-income populations
2. Institute robust and long-term measurement of food insecurity to the level of an official National Statistic
3. Assess the causes of rising food insecurity in the UK, including the potential impact of recent benefit changes
4. Strengthen policy responses to childhood obesity and ensure they are accompanied by robust monitoring and enforcement
5. Support small and medium enterprise food producers, particularly new entrant farmers, to be productive, sustainable and financially viable
6. Establish an agreed plan to enhance and build UK agricultural diversity, including the means of food production and the types of food produced
7. Invest and support research on UK food systems in order to develop a baseline against which to define sustainable nutrition policies for the UK

## Case study



### Neighbourly's surplus food scheme

**SDG TARGETS: 2.1, 2.2, 12.3**

Neighbourly's surplus food scheme connects local charities that can distribute surplus supermarket food to local stores, including the branches of two major food retailers, M&S and Lidl. Since it was set up, Neighbourly's scheme has provided over 2.7 million meals and has been so successful that they've now extended to other products that households may require, such as toiletries or cleaning products.

#### **Local charities using the scheme include:**

- The community café at the Central Community Centre in Scunthorpe, which offers decent and nutritious meals at a low cost to residents in the local area.
- Middle Part Community Centre in Eltham, London, which caters for over 60 children every school day, providing them with a nutritious breakfast to start their day and help them learn. The centre also provides meals for elderly residents in the local area four days a week.

[www.neighbourly.com/aboutsurplus](http://www.neighbourly.com/aboutsurplus)

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# Good health and wellbeing

Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

Prepared by



People living in the UK benefit from universal access to health care which plays an important role in the UK's good performance against many of the targets under SDG3. However, the UK is at risk of not meeting targets relating to air pollution and preventable mortality. Even where performance against a target is good, UK performance can be disappointing compared with other high-income countries. It is also important to consider the distribution of outcomes across different communities because socio-economic status is associated with health status.<sup>23</sup>

Meeting these targets will require efforts beyond the healthcare system, which is only one of many factors contributing to health and wellbeing.<sup>24</sup> Others include access to education, working conditions and living conditions.<sup>25</sup> Socio-economic factors have multi-directional, dynamic relationships with health. Action on several other goals will contribute to progress against the targets within SDG3 and vice versa.



## Performance rating

Sustainable Development Goal Target	Rating
<b>3.1</b> By 2030, reduce the global maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 per 100,000 live births.	●
<b>3.2</b> By 2030, end preventable deaths of newborns and children under 5 years of age, with all countries aiming to reduce neonatal mortality to at least as low as 12 per 1,000 live births and under-5 mortality to at least as low as 25 per 1,000 live births	●
<b>3.3</b> By 2030, end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases and combat hepatitis, water-borne diseases and other communicable diseases	●
<b>3.4</b> By 2030, reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being	●
<b>3.5</b> Strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol	●
<b>3.6</b> By 2020, halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents	●
<b>3.7</b> By 2030, ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including for family planning, information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes	●
<b>3.8</b> Achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all	●
<b>3.9</b> By 2030, substantially reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil pollution and contamination	●
<b>3.a</b> Strengthen the implementation of the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control in all countries, as appropriate	●
<b>3.b</b> Support the research and development of vaccines and medicines for the communicable and non-communicable diseases that primarily affect developing countries, provide access to affordable essential medicines and vaccines, in accordance with the Doha Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health, which affirms the right of developing countries to use to the full the provisions in the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights regarding flexibilities to protect public health, and, in particular, provide access to medicines for all	●
<b>3.c</b> Substantially increase health financing and the recruitment, development, training and retention of the health workforce in developing countries, especially in least developed countries and small island developing States	●
<b>3.d</b> Strengthen the capacity of all countries, in particular developing countries, for early warning, risk reduction and management of national and global health risks	●



## Key findings

1. With access to universal health care and a welfare state, the UK does well on many SDG3 targets
2. Reducing premature mortality by one third by 2030 is a major challenge requiring multi-sector action
3. There are an estimated 40,000 premature deaths attributable to outdoor air pollution each year<sup>26</sup>
4. Life expectancy gains at birth are slowing in the UK.<sup>27</sup> In England, there is a widening gap in life expectancy at birth between the most and least deprived<sup>28</sup>
5. Public services necessary to meeting these targets are under considerable financial pressure with public health budgets under particular strain<sup>29</sup>

## Performance and progress

Many public services with a bearing on SDG3 targets are devolved including health care, economic development, education and housing policy. Each nation provides universal access to health care (Target 3.8) but the structure, priorities and benefits provided can differ – access to abortion and the approach to charging for adult social care provide examples of this.

The UK does well against many SDG3 targets but cannot be complacent; for example, it is at risk of not meeting Targets 3.4 and 3.9. While the UK comfortably meets some targets such as 3.1, performance can be disappointing compared with other high-income countries.

Target 3.9 aims to substantially reduce deaths and illnesses from pollution. An estimated 40,000 premature deaths a year in the UK are attributed to air pollution.<sup>30</sup> The European Commission is set to take legal action against the UK Government for nitrogen dioxide concentrations being persistently above legal limits since 2010<sup>31</sup> and the High Court has ruled that the Government's current policy on air pollution is unlawful.<sup>32</sup> Progress and cross-sector coordination across SDGs 7, 9, 11 and 12 are required to meet this target.

Target 3.4 aims to reduce premature mortality from non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as cancer or cardiovascular disease by one third by 2030, as well as promoting mental health and wellbeing. Preventable risk factors are associated with most NCDs including tobacco use, physical inactivity, unhealthy diet and alcohol abuse - factors which can lead to raised blood pressure, obesity, raised blood glucose and cholesterol.<sup>33</sup> Air pollution also plays a significant role in the development of NCDs.<sup>34</sup>

Progress on Target 3.4 is linked to Target 3.5 aiming to tackle narcotic drug and harmful alcohol use. Alcohol is a major risk factor for ill health in the UK, particularly in Scotland where almost a fifth more alcohol is sold per adult than in England and Wales.<sup>35</sup> In England, alcohol and drug use is now the leading risk factor for premature death for those aged 15–49.<sup>36</sup> From May 2018 a minimum price per unit on the sale of alcohol (MUP) came into force in Scotland.<sup>37</sup> A MUP bill has also been introduced by the Welsh Government<sup>38</sup> but the policy remains under review in England.<sup>39</sup>



### SDG 11

An estimated 40,000 premature deaths a year in the UK are attributed to air pollution



System factors need to be addressed to reduce exposure to risk factors.<sup>40</sup> For example, underlying causes of obesity can include advertising of unhealthy food and drink, inactive workplaces, a lack of green space and difficulty in accessing affordable, healthy food.<sup>41</sup> People living in more deprived urban areas are more likely to be exposed to poor air quality, high-levels of crime and are at greater risk of road traffic accidents.<sup>42</sup> The introduction of the Soft Drinks Industry Levy<sup>43</sup> is an example of multi-sector action to tackle NCDs. The Levy aims to reduce childhood obesity rates by encouraging drink manufacturers to reformulate their products with less sugar.<sup>44</sup> This links to SDG17 targets on policy coherence and domestic tax mobilisation.

Target 3.4 is also linked to the number of suicides per 100,000 population.<sup>45</sup> In the UK, this has decreased between 2000 and 2015 but in Wales and Northern Ireland suicide rates increased between 2000-2015.<sup>46</sup> For example, people in contact with the criminal justice system are a high-risk group for suicide.<sup>47</sup> Mental health and suicide prevention requires an integrated approach. Healthy relationships, secure homes, meaningful work and financial security are all affect mental health and wellbeing and vice-versa.<sup>48</sup>

More broadly, emerging trends in life expectancy data and the variance between communities require attention. Across the UK in 2014 to 2016, the gap in healthy life expectancy (HLE) at birth between local areas with highest and lowest average HLE was 18.4 years for females and 15.6 years for males.<sup>49</sup> Life expectancy gains are slowing<sup>50</sup> and ONS analysis has demonstrated that (in England and Wales) the least deprived populations have experienced larger gains in longevity.<sup>51</sup>

Evidence suggests that progress on Target 3.4 would have a role in determining the outcome of at least nine SDGs. For example, reducing the mortality and morbidity from NCDs could lead to a rise in productivity and household incomes, helping to achieve progress against SDGs 8 and 10,<sup>52</sup> but progress on target 3.4 could be constrained by cuts to public health budgets.<sup>53</sup> In England, local authorities are having to cut a wide range of services including smoking cessation, substance misuse and sexual health services<sup>54</sup> – a false economy putting people's health at risk.

The threat of communicable diseases cannot be ignored (Target 3.3). England has relatively high rates of TB compared to other countries in Western Europe.<sup>55</sup>

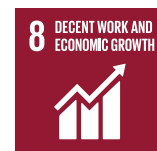
## Synergies and coherence

Achieving SDG3 will only be possible by making progress against all the SDGs as our health is influenced by factors such as good work (SDG8), our surroundings (SDG11) and access to money and resources (SDGs 1 and 10). In turn progress against SDG3 will contribute to achieving other goals. Good health is an individual and a societal asset required to generate social and economic value. When seen as such, health takes a position as an important aspect of social infrastructure. In 2011, the UK signed up to the Rio Political Declaration on Social Determinants of Health, which confirmed a 'determination to achieve social and health equity through action on social determinants of health and wellbeing by a comprehensive intersectoral approach.'<sup>56</sup> Such an approach should ensure that all sectors systematically consider the health implications of decisions, seek synergies and avoid harmful health impacts.



### SDG 10

People living in more deprived urban areas are more likely to be exposed to poor air quality, high-levels of crime and are at greater risk of road traffic accidents



### SDG 8

Reducing the mortality and morbidity from NCDs could lead to a rise in productivity

## Local to international dimensions

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 requires public bodies in Wales to carry out sustainable development and help achieve the seven well-being goals, including “A healthier Wales” and “A more equal Wales”. Welsh Ministers are required to set national indicators and milestones and must publish an annual report on progress.<sup>57</sup>

The Public Health (Wales) Act 2017<sup>58</sup> introduces statutory health impact assessments and Public Health Wales has been designated a WHO Collaborating Centre on investment for health and wellbeing.<sup>59</sup>

The Alcohol (Minimum Pricing) (Scotland) Act 2012 allows Scottish Ministers to set a minimum price for alcohol in Scotland. This was eventually set at 50p per unit of alcohol and came into force on 1 May 2018. It is hoped this policy will help reduce health inequalities and alcohol related deaths by around 120 per year after 20 years.



### Recommended actions

1. Develop a comprehensive cross-sector plan to tackle air pollution and its harmful impacts in the UK
2. Develop a comprehensive plan to assess, monitor and achieve progress in reducing premature mortality by one third by 2030
3. Ensure health is seen as contributing to the core infrastructure of a prosperous and sustainable society by adopting a process for systematically assessing the health impacts of major policies across all four UK countries
4. Promote cross-government and cross-sector action and policy coherence on the wider determinants of health. The Welsh Future Generations Act, praised as ‘pioneering’ by the UN, could be used as the basis of a UK-wide model. Reducing health inequalities between and within the countries of the UK is important

## Case study

### Soft Drinks Industry Levy

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**SDG TARGETS: 2.2, 3.4**

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The introduction of the Soft Drinks Industry Levy, also known as the ‘sugar tax’, is an example of multi-sector action to tackle the underlying causes of non-communicable diseases. The Levy aims to reduce childhood obesity rates, by taxing the production and importation of drinks with high sugar content.

The Government announced its intentions in March 2016 and over 50% of soft drink manufacturers have reformulated their products or reduced the portion size to lower the sugar content. Those that do not reformulate will pay the levy which is expected to raise £240 million a year. This money will contribute to the Primary Sports Premium (funding that primary schools receive per pupil for PE), the creation of a Healthy Pupils Capital Fund to help schools upgrade their sports facilities, and improve children's access to PE equipment. The levy will also provide additional funding for healthy school breakfast clubs.

[www.gov.uk/](http://www.gov.uk/)

[government/publications/soft-drinks-industry-levy/soft-drinks-industry-levy](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/soft-drinks-industry-levy/soft-drinks-industry-levy)

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### UK Government in the international fight against Malaria

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**TARGET 3.3, 3.B, 3.D**

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The UK Government is the second largest donor in the global fight against malaria – a disease that still kills one in ten children in Africa every year.

In April 2018 International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt announced a further £100 million fund which will be matched by the private sector. This fund will go to specific countries and provide them with mosquito nets, indoor sprays and capacity building support for their health systems. This comes on top of the UK's work in tackling malaria through investment in treatment, prevention and research and the risk of drug resistance.

**Through the Department for International Development, the UK Government has:**

- Distributed 49.7 million long-lasting, insecticide-treated bed nets - saving up to 808,000 lives.
- Pledged £1.1 billion to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria between 2016 and 2019.
- Funded research to support the development of child-friendly malaria drugs which have been used for more than 350 million treatments in malaria-endemic countries.
- Pledged to spend £500 million a year tackling malaria between March 2016 and March 2021.

[www.gov.uk/](http://www.gov.uk/)

[government/news/the-uk-announces-further-support-in-the-fight-against-malaria](http://www.gov.uk/government/news/the-uk-announces-further-support-in-the-fight-against-malaria)

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## Quality education

Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

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There has been good progress in achieving this goal although it has been uneven across the country. This is partly due to the lack of policy coherence between early years learning and the national curriculum in England, and the number of under-achieving pupils (disproportionately male) in parts of the UK school system. It is also reflected in the relatively low policy priority and status given to further education and vocational training by successive governments and employers, along with a failure to prioritise training for careers linked to the green economy.

The proportion of young people without credible work remains stubbornly high at 12%, in some cases reflecting poor educational outcomes.<sup>60</sup> Nevertheless, there has been a progressive increase in the percentage of pupils achieving early learning goals, the UK does comparatively well in international tests and UK universities perform well in world rankings. Educational policy priorities in Wales and Scotland have supported the implementation of education for sustainable development. Educational facilities are generally very good in the UK, availability of higher education scholarships for trainees from developing countries is high, and most UK teachers are well qualified. The challenge of implementing SDG4 lies in UK willingness to contribute to a cross-sector UK-wide, social learning process.



## Performance rating

Sustainable Development Goal Target	Rating
4.1 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes	●
4.2 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education	●
4.3 By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university	●
4.4 By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship	●
4.5 By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations	●
4.6 By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy	●
4.7 By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development.	●
4.a Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all	●
4.b By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and African countries, for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes, in developed countries and other developing countries	●
4.c By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing states	●



## Key findings

1. The majority of school-age children in the UK are offered an appropriate quality education
2. The UK is a relatively good place to go to school if you are female or from a minority community
3. Progress on technical and vocational training has been limited due mainly to the lack of political priority given to it by successive governments and the absence of significant investment by the employment sector
4. UK universities are among the best in the world and consistently perform well in world rankings
5. Education for sustainable development has benefited from the policy priority given to it in Wales and Scotland but lacks a mandate in England
6. DFID is recognised as a world leader in the promotion and support of education in low-income countries

## Performance and progress

The vast majority of school-age children in the UK are offered an appropriate quality education (Target 4.1). In 2016/17, 90% of primary and 79% of secondary schools in England were judged to be good or outstanding by OFSTED, the official school inspector.<sup>61</sup> However, the existence across the UK of a small but persistent number of underperforming schools remains a concern. In England there are hundreds of schools that have never achieved adequate OFSTED inspection reports.

The UK was ranked 15th out of 70 nations overall in the 2015 PISA tests of science, maths and reading with relatively high levels of low achievers (disproportionately boys) across all three areas.<sup>62</sup> In the 2016 PIRLS assessment of reading comprehension, Northern Ireland was 6th and England 8th out of 41 countries.<sup>63</sup> Raising the quality of early years provision (Target 4.2) is a priority across the UK and there are consistently good participation rates (~95% from 2012 – 2017) across the UK as a result of policy emphases.<sup>64</sup> Scotland's attainment challenge has a focus on early years literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing in specific areas of deprivation.<sup>65</sup> In Wales, 84% of boys and 91% of girls achieved outcome five or above in the Welsh Foundations Phase Indicator for early years covering personal, social, cultural, language, communication, and maths attainment.<sup>66</sup> In England 94% of early years education providers are judged to be good or outstanding<sup>67</sup> but there is a lack of policy coherence between early years' goals and the national curriculum, and a need for more emphasis on numeracy, reading, and writing in reception classes, with more priority given to listening to imaginative and stimulating stories.<sup>68</sup>

The percentage of 16 to 24-year olds in education, employment, or training across the UK was 88% in 2016, much as it was in 2004 before falling to a low of 84% in 2011 (Target 4.3).<sup>69</sup> Applications for further study from those in educationally disadvantaged areas remain low (24% in Northern Ireland, 23% in England, 20% in Wales, 17% in Scotland).<sup>70</sup>



### SDG 5

Women are more likely to apply to higher education than men

Women are more likely to apply to higher education (HE) than men (England 36%, Northern Ireland 40%, Wales 48%, Scotland 56%). The social group that is least likely to participate in HE (and who also do relatively poorly at school) remains white boys from low-income households.<sup>71</sup>

The Further Education (FE) or skills sector provides education, training and apprenticeships for large number of learners over 16 (around 3.3 million in England) (Target 4.4), but progress on technical and vocational training has been limited by successive governments across the UK giving this insufficient political priority and by the absence of significant employer investment. An underlying skills deficit remains, especially for the green economy. Technical and vocational training has long suffered from low status despite many attempts to reform its qualifications and make it more attractive to parents and students. However, data on educational attainment matched to employment needs was 69% in late 2015 (a roughly consistent figure since 2002).<sup>72</sup> By contrast, 15% were under-educated, and 16% over-educated. Those born abroad are more likely to be over-qualified for the jobs they do. Gender differences are small. More than 460,000 people began an apprenticeship in 2016/17 but initial inspection reports showed that over 50% of provision required improvement. Meanwhile, UK Universities consistently perform well in world rankings (four in the top ten of the QS rankings in 2018).<sup>73</sup>

Although there remain many unresolved disparity issues of gender, disability and ethnicity in terms of participation, access and outcomes (Target 4.5), the UK is a relatively good place to go to school if you are female or from a minority community. A 2016 report on educational inequalities in England and Wales showed clear regional variation at GCSE and the performance gap between the richest and the poorest has remained persistently large since the mid-1980s.<sup>74</sup> Females outnumber males in most of the HE provision in the UK with the largest gender disparity being in the non-science disciplines. Part-time numbers of HE students are currently falling because, some say, of raised tuition fees for mature students.

A 2013 OECD survey of adult skills found that England was the only country in the developed world where those aged 55 to 65 performed better than 16 to 24 year olds in functional levels of literacy and numeracy (Target 4.6) with adults in full-time employment most likely to have the highest levels.<sup>75</sup> The current approach to lifelong learning in the UK is failing to address a number of key issues, namely, that young adults in the UK have lower levels of numeracy and literacy than in other advanced countries and people are less likely to participate in learning as they age. These and a range of contextual issues tend to constrain or even distort the undoubted benefits of lifelong learning, especially in improving wellbeing and its positive contribution to socially positive attitudes and behaviours.

Significant policy priority has been given in Scotland and Wales to providing the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development (Target 4.7).<sup>76</sup> In Scotland, all learners are legally entitled to learning for sustainability and every practitioner, school and education leader has to demonstrate learning for sustainability in their practice within a whole school approach.<sup>77</sup> In Wales the aim is to prepare students in schools to be 21st century global citizens, with seven themes that link closely to multiple SDGs at each key stage of education: wealth and poverty; identity and culture; choices and decisions; climate change; consumption and waste; natural environment and health. Across the UK the picture is variable with a range of good practice in some schools, for example through the Global Learning (DfID) and Connecting Classrooms (British Council / DfID) programmes, and in parts of FE and HE. In the absence of



### SDG 13

Activities focusing on the human impact of climate change are linked to a number of curricular areas including science, English and geography



### SDG 10

Regional variations at GCSE and the performance gap between the richest and the poorest has remained persistently large since the mid-1980s

any UK-wide evaluation it is difficult to establish the scale and range of progress and impossible to assess the impact on behaviour, attitudes and competences in civil society and workplaces.

Good progress has been made in all three Means of Implementation Targets (Targets 4a, 4b and 4c) but ensuring a continuing supply of well-motivated, appropriately remunerated and well and appropriately qualified teachers remains a fundamental condition for guaranteeing a quality education at all levels. There is evidence that teachers are open to change but they need space and time to take more initiative in a supportive policy environment.

## Synergies and coherence

SDG4 has a crucial role in promoting the achievement of the full spectrum of SDGs, enabling UK learners of all ages to take informed decisions and responsible actions and create sustainable societies now and for the future. The UK-wide Global Learning Programme has a focus on SDGs 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6, and the Connecting Classrooms programme has a focus on the skills required throughout the SDGs. On energy (SDG7), a broad range of UK schools have adopted technologies to reduce consumption and increase efficiency. Equality and inclusion (SDG10) has long been a feature of UK schools – for example, through Curriculum for Excellence in Scotland. SDG4 promotes an education that emphasises a circular economy that eliminates the concept of waste (SDG12). Activities focusing on the human impact of climate change (SDG13) are linked to a number of curricular areas including science, English and geography in both the curriculum for younger years and in examination syllabuses. Securing a peaceful and just society (SDG16) for the well-being of current and future generations is embedded in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act and reflected in curricula across the UK.

## Local to international dimension

International cooperation is crucial to the global implementation of SDG4 where 263 million children and young people remain out of school with a further 330 million estimated to be in school but not learning the basics. The UK Department for International Development (DFID) is recognised as a world leader on the promotion of education in developing countries and uses part of the UK's 0.7% of GNI spent on overseas aid to fund overseas educational initiatives. This, coupled with the growing dissemination work of the UK National Commission for UNESCO and the British Council, is furthering the international reputation of the UK.

The professional development focus of the UK-wide Global Learning Programme helps teachers to help young people in school understand their role in a globally interdependent world by exploring strategies by which it might become more just and sustainable. It familiarises students with the concepts of interdependence, development, globalisation and sustainability through a strong focus on the SDGs, using these to stimulate critical thinking about global issues and examine alternative models of development and sustainability.



## Recommended actions

1. Identify, disseminate, and support existing effective policy and practice in SDG-related teaching and learning across the UK
2. Support all educational institutions and providers (pre-school to post-graduate provision) to further develop effective curricula and schemes of work that integrate SDG-related issues into students' experiences, including ecological imagination, critical thinking and a greater awareness of the interdependence of all life
3. Revise, using proven strategic planning processes for sustainable development, all technical and vocational provision to make it fit for the 21st century
4. Ensure that the SDGs feature prominently and coherently within all teacher education provision, with a focus on integration within subject, appropriate pedagogy, and assessment and evaluation. Establish a commission to oversee UK-wide strategies to support this programme of teacher education
5. Continue to give attention in all schools to the issue of underachievement of boys, through participatory learning strategies, clear, realistic and positive goal-setting for all those less motivated to learn, and imaginative interaction with extended families



## Case study



### Connecting Classrooms – Learning for Sustainability Scotland

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#### SDG TARGETS: 4.4, 4.7

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Scotland is unique internationally in requiring that all learners are entitled to Learning for Sustainability (LfS) and that all teachers and education professionals address it in their practice.

To help educators address these requirements, the British Council, the University of Edinburgh and Learning for Sustainability Scotland has developed a professional learning initiative for teachers; Learning for Sustainability: Connecting Classrooms.

More than 350 teachers have participated in the 10-week long programme funded by the Department for International Development since 2015.

Connecting Classrooms provides an opportunity for teachers to grapple with what Learning for Sustainability means, what teaching methods and practice is required to develop critical thinking, problem solving and citizenship skills, and how this can be embedded into their school to ensure it has a positive impact on their learners. This successful programme has been developed drawing on the British Council's 'Core Skills' materials and was created to support Connecting Classrooms across the UK and approximately 35 other countries. Scotland's teachers have the opportunity to engage with and develop these 'Core Skills' over a 10-week blended learning course. A further 10 months is allocated for self-directed continued professional development and online collaboration, leading to a teacher achieving 'GTCS Professional Recognition'.

The success of the project has led to the development of a facilitated online version of the programme.

[www.ed.ac.uk/  
education/professional-learning/connecting-classrooms-learning-and-sustainability](http://www.ed.ac.uk/education/professional-learning/connecting-classrooms-learning-and-sustainability)

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## Case study



### National Numeracy Challenge

**SDG TARGETS: 4.6, 8.5**

In May 2018 the UK celebrated National Numeracy Day for the first time; a day to raise awareness of the need for basic numeracy skills. Numeracy skills are essential life skills, allowing people to undertake simple calculations such as household budgeting and purchasing, or in the workplace. Research from University College London and the University of Cambridge in 2018 found that one in three adults in England and Northern Ireland cannot work out the correct change from a shopping trip, with one in four unable to calculate a product discount while on that shopping trip.<sup>78</sup>

The National Numeracy Challenge is an online and mobile phone learning application that is trying to rectify this by allowing people to quickly assess their numeracy skill level, understand their needs and set a learning target. It then helps them develop their numeracy skills and work towards that target. Since its inception, the National Numeracy Challenge has had over 150,000 learners, and developed more than 800 learner resources

[www.nnchallenge.org.uk/home/index.html](http://www.nnchallenge.org.uk/home/index.html)

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## Gender equality

Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Prepared by



The UK has achieved solid gains on the road to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. The introduction of mandatory gender pay and bonus reporting for large employers, access to shared parental leave and return to work funding is helping to level the playing field.<sup>79</sup> There is, however, much more to be done.

Progress against targets has been slow and in some areas is at risk of stagnation. Women and girls are diverse and innovative agents of change and SDG5 is central to the achievement of all SDGs. Progress should be monitored in a way that reflects the overlapping or multiple forms of discrimination experienced by women on the grounds of sex, race, religion, age or other characteristic (known as intersectionality), to ensure that the law works for everyone. Violence against women and girls (VAWG) remains an ongoing issue, with domestic violence hugely underreported, as are hate crimes towards the LGBTQ community. Action is urgently needed to address the gender imbalance in non-paid work, and a renewed commitment to ensure women are afforded fair and equal progression to top positions in boards, business, and government is required.



## Performance rating

Sustainable Development Goal Target	Rating
5.1 End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere	●
5.2 Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation	●
5.3 Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation	●
5.4 Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate	●
5.5 Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life	●
5.6 Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences	●
5.a Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws	●
5.b Access to enabling technology, including smart phones, information and communications technology and training to promote empowerment of women and girls	●
5.c Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels	●



## Key findings

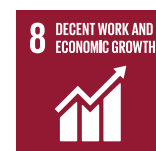
1. Slow progress in advancing women's fair access to the labour market and inequality in controlling economic resources poses a risk to the achievement of SDG5 in the UK. Renewed focus and sustained effort is required to meet Targets 5.5 and 5.4 so women's talent and resources are recognised as an equal contributor to the labour market. Slow progress to close the gender gap in time spent engaged in unpaid work is undermining progress in this area
2. Research capturing views of young women and girls in the UK reveals that discrimination and sexual harassment is a major concern
3. Organisations of all kinds should be encouraged to 'gender mainstream' – to incorporate a gender perspective in the design, implementation and monitoring of policies, regulatory mechanisms and spending plans. Budgets should also be analysed for their impact on inequality
4. There is a need to ensure that the multiple forms of discrimination experienced by women and girls is reflected in gender discourse, budgeting, policy and planning, and that the needs of older women are captured to address inequality levels across their lifetimes. This reinforces the need for improved UK-wide disaggregated data-collection to address gaps in the data required for robust monitoring and evaluation

## Performance and progress

In addition to joining key international agreements such as the Beijing Platform for Action, the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women, and the Istanbul Convention, the UK has several legislative and policy protections to prevent and eradicate discrimination based on gender (Target 5.1), notably The Equality Act 2010. The inclusion under the Act of mandatory reporting on gender pay and bonus gaps for large employers in England, Scotland and Wales has been welcomed for the signal it has sent to employers at home and the example it sets abroad (Target 5.c).<sup>80</sup> Gender pay gap reporting has, however, confirmed the persistence of discriminatory practices against women and girls in the workplace. According to the ONS the gap between what UK male and female workers earn, based on median hourly earnings for all workers in 2017, stood at 18.4% – up from 18.2% a year earlier.<sup>81</sup>

The introduction of shared parental leave, free childcare allowances for working families with 3 and 4 year olds, and the right for all employees to request flexible working have helped narrow this gap and support women and girls' participation in the workplace. Yet data from the World Bank, OECD and ONS show that inequality for women and girls in the UK increases throughout their lifetime.<sup>82</sup> Consideration of the needs of older women should be central in policy and legislative design given the value they bring to the UK economy through paid and unpaid work.

Women and girls may face multiple and additional forms of discrimination in relation to their age, disability, race, religion/belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment or other characteristics. To capture the diversity of these experiences and ensure the law works for everyone, where possible measurement of progress of legislative and policy safeguards against discrimination should be viewed through the lens of this intersectionality.



### SDG 8

Gender pay gap reporting has confirmed the persistence of discriminatory practices against women and girls in the workplace



Action is urgently needed to tackle gender stereotypes and prejudice that continue to underpin discrimination.<sup>83</sup> The UK has secured progress against Target 5.2 on elimination of violence against all women and girls (VAWG) with ONS reporting declining levels of physical, sexual or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months in England and Wales. But further progress is needed to support victims and UK-wide data is needed to gain a full picture of the scope of VAWG. Statistics from other sources indicate the prevalence of VAWG in Northern Ireland and Scotland,<sup>84</sup> including rising domestic abuse cases in Northern Ireland – 2017 saw the highest level recorded since 2004/05.<sup>85</sup> Domestic abuse remains underreported and has more repeat victims than any other crime.<sup>86</sup> Women's Aid estimates it affects 1 in 4 women in their lifetime and on average two women in England and Wales are killed every week by a current or former male partner. In the past five years, police have recorded more than 11,000 cases of 'honour'-based violence cases across the UK, including abductions, beatings and murders.<sup>87</sup> The Crime Survey for England and Wales based on interviews with a population sample during the year ending March 2015<sup>88</sup> found that 79% of victims of partner abuse did not report it to the police. It is important that funding schemes, grants, and programmes are well resourced and that legislative and regulatory frameworks at national and local level work to support those at risk or affected by abuse throughout life, to encourage reporting and successful prosecution.

Many young women and girls in the UK continue to face a number of unacceptable pressures and do not feel safe in their everyday lives; 64% aged 13 to 21 reported some form of sexual harassment at school or college in the past year.<sup>89</sup> Changing attitudes of boys and men is central to tackling this issue. Through health services, access to education, safeguarding and sexual and reproductive rights the UK is considered to have a mechanism in place to meet Target 5.6 but further work is needed to achieve this target. Research shows that many young women and girls in the UK believe that education on sex and relationships is out of touch with the realities they face today; further training on healthy relationships needed in schools.<sup>90</sup> Continued progress against harmful practices (Target 5.3) is essential to shifting negative gender stereotypes and empowering women and girls as change agents, although continued reported decreases in the rate of underage marriage are welcome. There has also been an overall decrease in female genital mutilation (FGM) cases between 2015 and 2016. Despite these gains, many women and girls in the UK are at risk of being married whilst underage or against their will and NSPCC estimates that 137,000 women and girls are affected by FGM in England and Wales.<sup>91</sup>

Slow progress in closing the gender gap in time spent on unpaid work (Target 5.4) and in ensuring women's participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels in political, economic and public life (Target 5.5) is concerning. It risks undermining achievement of SDG5 in the UK. While there has been a slight reduction in unpaid work for both sexes, the gap between women and men is not narrowing fast enough. The amount of unpaid work undertaken by women fell from 19.8% of their total work in 2000 to 16.7% in 2015; for men it was 11.8% in 2015. This has a wide-reaching impact on women's access to the labour market and their control over economic resources.<sup>92</sup>

The World Economic Forum Global Gender Gap Report (2017) indicates lagging UK progress on SDG5 for women's economic empowerment. The proportion of elected women in parliament was at 31.9% in 2017 and the proportion of females on boards of publicly traded companies was only 27%.<sup>93</sup> While the number of women on boards of FTSE 100 and 250 companies has doubled since 2011, too few have been appointed to senior board roles.<sup>94</sup> ONS data shows that the percentage of women in managerial positions stagnated between 2011 and 2015 at around 30% followed by a small increase



### SDG 10

Women and girls may face multiple and additional forms of discrimination in relation to their age, disability, race, religion/belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment or other characteristics



### SDG 16

The UK has secured progress on the elimination of violence against all women and girls but domestic abuse remains underreported and has more repeat victims than any other crime

to 33% in 2017. But progress has been uneven and concerted, sustained efforts are needed to prevent further stagnation.

## Synergies and coherence

The empowerment of women and girls is fundamental to achievement of all SDGs and can act as a catalyst in driving forward progress. As such, SGD5 is closely interlinked with, and dependent on, almost all the other SDGs. SDG5 can assist realisation of SDG3 for healthy lives and wellbeing and access to sexual and reproductive health-care services. In closing the gap on inequality and unequal access to education and employment it can also support SDGs 4, 8, 10 and 16.

## Local to international dimension

Upholding established regional and international norms and agreements in gender equality are crucial to SDG5 delivery. Brexit could undermine SDG5 if aspects of the Equality Act which are derived from EU agreements and directives including those on working time, parental leave and pregnant workers<sup>95</sup> are undone. This includes protections against discrimination on the grounds of gender reassignment; protection against discrimination in employment on grounds of sexual orientation (and extended provisions against discrimination on grounds of race, disability and age under Further Employment Equality Directives); and legislation providing equal pay for work of equal value.<sup>96</sup> VAWG research and services benefiting from EU membership and funds under the Lisbon Treaty may be impacted along with victims' rights if police cooperation on trafficking, VAGW and child maintenance is reduced.



## Recommended actions

1. A comprehensive UK strategy to support achievement of SDG5 including improved UK-wide data collection across all target areas; data should be disaggregated to take into account multiple discriminations and accuracy of data collection on domestic abuse must be improved
2. Gender mainstreaming should be built into policy, legislation, programme design and spending and analysis of the impact of spending on gender inequality conducted. This should also take into account intersectionality and trends in inequality across lifetimes
3. The Istanbul Convention should be ratified and implemented
4. Measures to empower women to be part of decision-making processes, including mandatory reporting on women in business and politics with targets and action plans where necessary
5. Shared responsibility for care and unpaid work, supported by affordable childcare, flexible working arrangements and job design
6. Sustained and adequate resourcing and an improved legislative framework to ensure services and organisation safeguard and treat women and girls at risk of VAWG or harmful practices
7. Provision of fit-for-purpose, high quality sexual and relationship education in schools with procedures to safeguard against and address sexual harassment and hate crimes
8. Concerted focus in curriculums to remedy gender imbalances and stereotyping, encouragement of women and girls into underrepresented areas such as STEM



## Case Study



### The #freeperiods campaign

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#### **SDG TARGETS: 5.1, 4.1**

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In 2017 the Pink Protest and teenager Amika George joined forces to launch the #freeperiods campaign, which asked the Government to end period poverty in the UK. Amika initiated the campaign after she saw on a BBC news report that 1 in 10 girls in the UK struggle to afford menstrual products. The BBC's coverage included interviews with girls that were regularly missing school or using alternatives such as tissue or, in one case, socks.

The #freeperiods campaign organised a protest outside 10 Downing Street to raise awareness of the issue and ask the Government to end period poverty. In March 2018 the Government committed £1.5 million of the Tampon Tax Fund to address the issue.<sup>97</sup> As well as girls, women on low incomes are also struggling to pay for sanitary items. The Scottish Government has been piloting a trial in Aberdeen providing free sanitary items to women from low income households, and in May 2018 they announced their intention to roll out the programme across the nation

[www.pinkprotest.org/freeperiods](http://www.pinkprotest.org/freeperiods)

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## Case Study



### Gender Pay Gap Reporting

**SDG TARGETS: 5.1, 5.5, 5.A, 8.2, 10.2, 10.4**

As part of The Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017, mandatory Gender Pay Gap Reporting for organisations with 250 or more employees was introduced. This requires these employers to report publicly on the difference between the hourly rates women and men are paid within their organisation, and several other factors such as differences between bonus payments.

Gender Pay Gap reporting does not identify the differences between what men and women are paid for the same roles, or equal pay. It is the gap in average earnings across the whole workforce. This means if the majority of women are employed in lower grades within the organisation the Gender Pay Gap will be greater.

The first set of published results in April 2018 showed that men were paid approximately 65% more per hour than women.<sup>98</sup> Although this is not a perfect way of monitoring gender equality within an organisation, the publication of the results and wide media coverage has raised awareness of the inequalities that still exist between men and women in the workforce. In particular, reasons behind certain sectors, industries or professions having such substantial pay gaps has been questioned, and actions being taken to remedy this are being requested.

[www.gender-pay-gap.service.gov.uk](http://www.gender-pay-gap.service.gov.uk)



## Clean water and sanitation

Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

Prepared by

**CIWEM** Chartered Institution of  
Water and Environmental  
Management

The UK has been a leader in providing safe, clean water and sanitation since the mid 19th century when events such as London's 'Great Stink' of 1858 brought the public health implications of untreated human and industrial effluent to Parliament's door. This galvanised action to deliver extensive engineered water and sanitation infrastructure. Public health problems related to water supply and sanitation are now a rare event. Almost everyone, bar the homeless, has access to tap water that is safe to drink, and human waste and effluent are removed and treated before returning to the environment. Water resources are extensively planned and managed to minimise drought impacts.

Overall, the UK's freshwater environment is in better health than during the 19th and early to mid-20th Centuries when heavy industry polluted many urban UK rivers to the point of becoming virtually devoid of life. But diffuse pollution and over-abstraction still pose serious problems. Only 14% of English rivers are classified 'good or better' for ecological status under the EU Water Framework Directive.<sup>99</sup> Ageing drainage and sewerage infrastructure results in frequent overflows of sewage into rivers during heavy rainfall. Some of our most fragile water habitats, such as chalk streams, still run dry too frequently.



## Performance rating

Sustainable Development Goal Target	Rating
<b>6.1</b> By 2030, achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all.	●
<b>6.2</b> By 2030, achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations.	●
<b>6.3</b> By 2030, improve water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and minimizing release of hazardous chemicals and materials, halving the proportion of untreated wastewater and substantially increasing recycling and safe reuse globally.	●
<b>6.4</b> By 2030, substantially increase water-use efficiency across all sectors and ensure sustainable withdrawals and supply of freshwater to address water scarcity and substantially reduce the number of people suffering from water scarcity	●
<b>6.5</b> By 2030, implement integrated water resources management at all levels, including through transboundary cooperation as appropriate	●
<b>6.6</b> By 2020, protect and restore water-related ecosystems, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes	●
<b>6.a</b> By 2030, expand international cooperation and capacity-building support to developing countries in water – and sanitation-related activities and programmes, including water harvesting, desalination, water efficiency, wastewater treatment, recycling and reuse technologies	●
<b>6.b</b> Support and strengthen the participation of local communities in improving water and sanitation management	●





## Key findings

1. Water supplies are provided for customers to a safe and consistent standard, largely affordably, with 99.8% of supplies meeting the required standards,<sup>100</sup> and 99% of the population have access to adequate sanitation<sup>101</sup>
2. The UK treats wastewater to a high standard before it is returned to the environment but during storm events combined sewer overflows can still discharge untreated effluent into watercourses
3. Diffuse pollution from hard surfaces and agricultural land remains a complex problem to solve and is at the root of much of the limited progress to achieve EU Water Framework Directive targets
4. Progress on water efficiency and metering is gradual and leakage from water company supply infrastructure is still high in places. Water companies are being challenged to improve their performance in the current round of business planning
5. Water-related ecosystems are not widely considered to be in a 'good' status of health under the Water Framework Directive and significant further work is required to balance the needs of the environment with those of population, development and agriculture

## Performance and progress

Targets relating to SDG6 can be split into two broad areas: Those that focus on the supply of water services for public health (Targets 6.1 and 6.2) and those that address the overall management of water impacting on the health of the natural environment (Targets 6.3 to 6.6). Two rather different degrees of progress towards meeting the requirements of this goal are seen within these two broad delineations.

For the first area, progress is good with over 99% of water customers having access to clean, affordable drinking water supplies as well as adequate sanitation. Because water is essential to life, UK law prevents water companies from being able to cut off customers' supplies. However, the 99% statistic masks the existence of genuine challenges in access and affordability experienced by limited sections of society because of poverty (see SDG1). All water companies must manage customer debt and ability to pay issues, to some extent.

As with clean water, access to adequate sanitation is good with the UK historically a pioneer of water sanitation technology. But again, poverty can preclude safe access in cases of poorly maintained or over-occupied housing, or for homeless people. Such challenges are beyond the scope of water companies to remedy.

The UK's progress in meeting SDG6 targets relating to the management of water to ensure the health of the natural environment is less advanced. Rivers and lakes have been cleaned up significantly since pollution from heavy industry reduced many in urban areas to lifeless environments, leading to the return of some notable species such as salmon and otters to several major British rivers. However, pollution incidents still occur at a high frequency from a range of different sources.



### SDG 1

Although there is near universal access to water and sanitation, this masks an existence of genuine challenges in access and affordability experienced by limited sections of society because of poverty

Over recent years the number of pollution incidents caused by water and sewerage companies has fallen but the most recent data<sup>102</sup> shows an increase in both the number of the most serious incidents and total number of recorded incidents. The most frequent cause of failure to achieve target status under the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) is diffuse pollution from agriculture. This diffuse pollution (from agriculture as well as other sources such as surface water runoff from roads and highways) is more complex to solve as it must typically be remedied at source. There may be many sources, spread across wide geographical areas and involving a range of different parties amongst whom remedial action must be coordinated.

Collaborative working at the river catchment scale is beginning to demonstrate real improvements in tackling diffuse pollution and improving water quality.<sup>103</sup> As a result, this way of working is being extended to other challenges such as managing water abstraction (Target 6.4) and working with natural processes to deliver flood risk management.

A high proportion of pollutants released into the environment end up in water bodies. Action is being taken on several fronts to tackle many of the most common pollutants but modern industries are manufacturing an ever-expanding range of chemicals for different purposes which are being found in our water. From flame retardants to pharmaceutical products and microplastics, the extent of pollution of our water environment by emerging contaminants is not fully understood, nor is the toxicity for both humans or biodiversity. This must be a focus for greater research, policy and regulatory attention in future.

While the UK is commonly considered to be a wet nation, some areas suffer significant levels of water stress which put the health of the freshwater environment at risk; climate change is likely to exacerbate this. There has been an increasing focus on reforming the licensing regime for water abstraction in recent years. Government is implementing an Abstraction Plan<sup>104</sup> to put withdrawals onto a more sustainable level, adopting a more catchment-focused approach which should facilitate improved trading and sharing of water resources whilst reducing pressure on the most fragile habitats. But this is likely to take a decade to deliver extensive results. Meanwhile, Government plans to build at least 275,000 new homes per year will add to demand for water in many parts of the country.

Currently, water customers consume on average 141 litres per person each day<sup>105</sup> while an average of 121 litres of water per property served leaks from water company supply pipes.<sup>106</sup> Reductions in both will be necessary to place the UK's water consumption on a more sustainable footing, as part of a 'twin-track' approach to managing water resources involving developing new resources where appropriate.

While water resources are planned comprehensively in the UK, historically there has been less onus on water companies to strategically plan their wastewater infrastructure. The Government is now challenging water companies to improve this planning. A new long-term planning methodology<sup>107</sup> is being developed to improve the resilience of services to customers and provide for better consideration of uncertainties such as the impacts of climate change.

Stakeholder and community engagement is being promoted in the context of managing water (Target 6b). When planning their investment programmes, water companies are increasingly required to engage their customer base, via challenge groups, to understand their priorities. Communities and voluntary organisations are also now being engaged in



### SDG 15

Pollution incidents still occur at a high frequency from a range of different sources



### SDG 11

Government plans to build at least 275,000 new homes per year will add to demand for water in many parts of the country

the planning and practical delivery of environmental outcomes. The Catchment Based Approach is an example of where a very integrated approach to local community engagement is delivering cost-effective improvements to the water environment.

## Synergies and coherence

Water is a medium that touches on each and every one of the SDGs. It is central to so many areas, from basic life support and wellbeing to culture and economy. When its quality or supply is disrupted, or people are deprived of access to it to such an extent that these fundamental components of life are disrupted significantly, then conflict can result. Priority action on SDG6 should help to alleviate challenges faced in relation to hunger and nutrition (SDG2), health and wellbeing (SDG3), cities (SDG11), sustainable consumption and production (SDG12), climate action (SDG13), life below water (SDG14), and life on land (SDG15) in a significant way. In a more social context, progress on SDG6 will also contribute to improvements in relation to poverty (SDG1), education (SDG4), gender equality (SDG5), industry and infrastructure (SDG9), and peace, justice and strong institutions (SDG16).

## Local to international dimension

Access to clean water and sanitation is something that most people in the UK take for granted. Barring emergency conditions (such as severe drought, flooding or a catastrophic failure of infrastructure), disruption to these services is infrequent at worst. This is due to the pioneering development of water and sanitation technology and engineering in the UK in centuries past, allied to robust planning for the future. Now the UK works to develop water and sanitation provision in parts of the world where citizens do not share the same privileged circumstances. The UK sends 0.7% of gross national income abroad in foreign aid, with a portion of this funding activity on water, sanitation and health (WASH). In addition, UK charities such as Water Aid and others also operate an extensive range of WASH programmes, drawing on much UK expertise and volunteers to deliver them. Globally, 1 in 9 people still do not have access to an improved water supply and more than 3 out of 10 don't have access to basic sanitation.<sup>108</sup> UK support can help to achieve similar improvements in public health to those it achieved here in the 1800s through delivering safe access to water and sanitation.





## Recommended actions

1. Government agencies to increase work with land managers to reduce diffuse pollution and increase compliance with EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) targets. WFD targets and measures in River Basin Management Plans to be maintained as a minimum following EU exit
2. Continuing regulatory pressure to reduce water pollution incidents
3. Monitoring of the effectiveness of the Abstraction Plan's voluntary approach to modifying licenses – introduce legislation if required to enable quicker progress
4. Water companies to work with their customers, NGOs and the water fittings supply chain to improve water efficiency through advice, awareness raising and improved product labelling
5. Promote more widespread water metering outside water-stressed areas. Develop variable tariffs providing for affordable essential consumption whilst disincentivising profligate use
6. Government to maintain and preferably increase existing wildlife conservation protections allied to using the natural capital accounting framework for assessing and managing the impacts of development and land use, to deliver targets in the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan
7. Tackling challenges of UK poverty and homelessness to ensure universal access to safe water and sanitation for all
8. Water industry regulatory standards maintained and, where necessary, strengthened to ensure high levels of customer service and environmental protection

## Case study



### Water companies and land managers working together to improve water quality

**SDG TARGETS: 2.4, 6.3, 12.4, 14.1**

To improve water quality, UK water companies are working with farmers and other landowners to manage the way agricultural chemicals are applied to land. South East Water, which daily abstracts and treats over 565 million litres for 2.1 million customers in England's South East, has been developing ways of tackling water quality problems at source, not just at downstream treatment works. It works with stakeholders to identify what could be causing the deterioration of water quality and addresses this with partnership solutions.

By monitoring water quality data, the company is able to map areas and waterbodies that need attention – known as water catchments. The company's Catchment Officers then set up discussion groups with land managers and growers in the areas impacted. The team offers a range of services to help find alternatives to pesticides, and provide free training to ensure that farm operators know how to apply and store pesticides and have industry certification. This helps prevent pollution from water runoff and ensures more efficient pesticide use for farmers. South East Water has completed six water catchment management investigations for surface water issues, eight for groundwater and six surface water catchment management pilot projects have been started to address the issues.

[www.corporate.southeastwater.co.uk/about-us/our-environment/catchment-management](http://www.corporate.southeastwater.co.uk/about-us/our-environment/catchment-management)

## Case study



### Providing clean drinking water to the homeless

**SDG TARGETS: 1.2, 6.1, 6.2**

Access to clean water and sanitation is recognised as a basic human right in the UK through Article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The UK Government has legislated to protect household water supplies so that even when issues of affordability arise, households will not have their water supplies cut off. However, access to clean water and sanitation for the UK's homeless is dependent on there being adequate public provision, such as water fountains and public toilets.

A reduction in public facilities, and increased demand on day centres and shelters has created a shortfall in the provision of clean water, toilets, and opportunities for washing for the UK's homeless.

Recognising the shortfall in provision, Action Hunger launched its first vending machine for the homeless in Nottingham's Broadmarsh Shopping Centre in December 2017. Coupled with support from local homelessness services, rough sleepers are provided with a card that allows them to access three items per day from the vending machines. As well as bottled water and food, the items available include hygiene products, socks and sanitary items for women. Their vending machines help to address some of the urgent needs of their users and alleviate the strain on local homelessness charities and services.

[www.actionhunger.org](http://www.actionhunger.org)

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## Affordable and clean energy

Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

Prepared by





Many existing forms of energy used for electricity, heating and transport are high emitters of carbon, contributing to climate change. Building an affordable and sustainable future energy system is a complex and multifaceted challenge. At its heart sits the balance between investment needed today with the growing cost of inaction tomorrow.<sup>109</sup>

The solutions to decarbonise electricity are already working and cost-effective. Renewables are fast becoming the cheapest source of electricity.<sup>110</sup> The UK has reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 42% since 1990, half way to its 80% reduction target by 2050.<sup>111</sup> Renewables now provide 30% of UK's electricity; including nuclear, low-carbon sources provide over half of our electricity. However, progress in decarbonisation of heat and transport has been slow and more renewable generation is needed in all future decarbonisation pathways.

The best way to reduce both energy costs and carbon is for people to use energy efficiently and flexibly. Batteries and smart technology can help people use more when it is plentiful and less when it is not. Though technology is important, engaging people to use information to take control of their energy needs will be key. The prize is a smarter, more affordable low-carbon energy system.



## Performance rating

Sustainable Development Goal Target	Rating
<b>7.1</b> By 2030, ensure universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services	<span style="color: green;">●</span>
<b>7.2</b> By 2030, increase substantially the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix	<span style="color: orange;">●</span>
<b>7.3</b> By 2030, double the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency	<span style="color: red;">●</span>
<b>7.a</b> By 2030, enhance international cooperation to facilitate access to clean energy research and technology, including renewable energy, energy efficiency and advanced and cleaner fossil-fuel technology, and promote investment in energy infrastructure and clean energy technology	<span style="color: gray;">●</span>
<b>7.b</b> By 2030, expand infrastructure and upgrade technology for supplying modern and sustainable energy services for all in developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States, and land-locked developing countries, in accordance with their respective programmes of support	<span style="color: gray;">●</span>



## Key findings

1. The UK has made significant progress in decarbonisation of electricity, backed by a strong policy framework in the Climate Change Act. However, progress in heat and transport remains elusive
2. Fuel poverty has reduced but more needs to be done to achieve a goal of all fuel poor homes having an energy rating of C or above by 2030
3. New government commitments in the Clean Growth Strategy could reboot progress on energy efficiency but will need to be translated into effective policies
4. At least<sup>112</sup> 50-70 TWh per annum of new renewable and low carbon electricity generation will be needed in the next decade to fill the capacity gap identified by the Committee on Climate Change<sup>113</sup>
5. 25-30 GW of flexibility capacity from batteries and demand response is needed to run a more efficient network, manage renewable generation and handle new demand technologies such as electric vehicles<sup>114</sup>

## Performance and progress

With 100% of the UK population having access to electricity and clean fuels, affordability and fuel poverty is the key element of Target 7.1. The number of UK households in fuel poverty has been falling<sup>115</sup> but the proportions of households in fuel poverty are still high, particularly in Wales and Scotland. The Government estimate that in England 11%<sup>116</sup> of households (2.5m) are fuel poor, rising to 23% in Wales and 31% in Scotland.<sup>117</sup>

Energy efficiency (Target 7.3) is the most cost-effective way to tackle fuel poverty and to manage long-term affordability in heating and powering homes. The UK Government has an existing target to upgrade fuel-poor homes, where practical, to Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) Band C or above by 2030. The 2017 report by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) Committee on Fuel Poverty stated that currently only 11% of fuel poor homes reach this target and £14bn of further funding would be needed.<sup>118</sup> The Committee recommends steadily increasing the minimum energy efficiency requirements for let properties, moving minimum EPC from level E to level C by 2030. Improving energy efficiency requirements for properties was recognised as a target in the Government's Clean Growth strategy but it lacked a plan for how to achieve this, the Committee's recommendations outline how to reach this target.

Target 7.1 also covers reliability and 'modern energy services'. The Government's approach is outlined in the Smart Systems and Flexibility plan published in July 2017<sup>119</sup> and action relies on the successful roll out of smart metering by 2020 as well as increasing flexibility capacity on the network. The smart-meter roll-out remains broadly on track with less than three years to go.<sup>120</sup> However, a modern energy system also needs effective engagement and energy products and services to help people manage energy use through smart technologies. As well as changing behaviour, the system needs to avoid leaving behind those who are unable or unwilling to engage – an issue Ofgem has explored but has yet to solve.<sup>121</sup>



### SDG 1

Energy efficiency is the most cost-effective way to tackle fuel poverty and to manage long-term affordability in heating and powering homes

The indicator for Target 7.3 is energy intensity of primary energy and GDP. Indexed to 100 in 1990, the UK's ratio of primary energy consumption to GDP fell to 52.5 in 2016<sup>122</sup> with the reduction attributed to fewer UK energy-intensive industries and more efficient generation (gas rather than coal) as well as energy efficiency. However, with 'easy wins' already achieved, continuing this level of improvement will be challenging and needs a new policy focus. A recent report by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government shows that improvements in energy efficiency of homes have stalled since 2015.<sup>123</sup> Commitments made in the 2017 Clean Growth Strategy could reboot progress, but still need to be translated into effective policies. Energy use of electrical products in use and on standby also remains an important part of energy efficiency and reducing consumer bills. The significant progress made through EU Product Directives<sup>124</sup> needs to be continued post-Brexit.

Target 7.2 is about substantially increasing the share of renewables in final energy consumption. Key to this is the Climate Change Act 2008 and the associated policy framework including the carbon budgets set by the Committee on Climate Change. The UK also has shorter term targets for renewable generation by 2020 through the EU Renewable Energy Directive. In 2016, 8.9% of total UK energy consumption came from renewable sources<sup>125</sup> against a target of 15% of all energy. Renewables provide 24.5% of electricity but a much lower proportion of the energy required for heat (6.2%) and transport (4.5%). The UK plan for the EU Directive also has 2020 'illustrative' sub-targets of 30% for electricity and 12% heat<sup>126</sup> and EU target of 10% for transport. The Government expects to exceed the electricity target, hitting 35% in 2021 and in 2017 it increased the Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation to hit 9.75% by 2020.<sup>127</sup> Renewable heat remains challenging, however, and the UK is likely to be below the 12% renewable contribution level in 2020. The 2017 Clean Growth Strategy<sup>128</sup> contains strong statements on low-carbon heat and the subsequent call for evidence on heat solutions is starting the process of policy development, though the impacts of any new policies are still some years away.<sup>129</sup>

The Committee on Climate Change (CCC) has warned that the UK is currently off-target to deliver the carbon savings required for the fourth and fifth five year carbon budgets up to 2032, despite a strong commitment to phase out coal generation by 2025.<sup>130</sup> A key shortfall concerns new capacity of renewable and low-carbon generation. The CCC recommends further support through new Contract for Difference (CfD) auctions.<sup>131</sup> However, least cost delivery of new renewable capacity is challenging because both solar and onshore wind (the cheapest form of renewable energy) are currently ineligible for CfDs and deployment of onshore wind has ceased in England due to planning restrictions. Recent large subsidy cuts for small-scale renewables have also halted most small and community energy renewable energy developments.

Transport is now the largest carbon emitter in the UK with 26% of emissions.<sup>132</sup> Road transport has existing targets in place through the Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation. The Government has also made a commitment to phase out new diesel and petrol cars by 2040.<sup>133</sup> There has been policy and industry support for electric vehicles and the Government is now being asked to bring this deadline forward to 2030, to reflect more ambitious targets elsewhere including in Scotland where it is set at 2032.<sup>134</sup>

However, the programme of rail electrification replacing diesel trains has been abandoned due to cost overruns<sup>135</sup> and the proposed Heathrow Airport expansion is also likely to increase carbon emissions in the sector overall.



### SDG 12

The UK Government still supports oil and gas exploration and production onshore in the UK and on its continental shelf mainly through tax relief



### SDG 13

The UK is currently off-target to deliver the carbon savings required for the fourth and fifth five year carbon budgets up to 2032



## Synergies and coherence

The UK Government still supports oil and gas exploration and production onshore in the UK and on its continental shelf mainly through tax relief. The annual average of national subsidies given to fossil fuels between 2014 and 2016 was £13.26 billion according to one estimate.<sup>136</sup>

There are important synergies across the 17 SDGs including Climate Action (SDG13) and particularly SDG3 on Good Health and Well-being related to the high levels of UK urban air pollution and associated premature deaths. Energy affordability also has a clear link to SDG1 and halving poverty in all its dimensions by 2030.

## Local to international dimension

The UK is part of a global trade in carbon, with large quantities of emissions embodied in the goods and services that are exported and imported. Carbon Brief has calculated that more than half of the reduction in carbon emissions in the UK since 1990 have been imported back through products manufactured elsewhere and consumed in the UK.<sup>137</sup> UK companies need to recognise and reduce the carbon impacts of their supply chains using frameworks such as the Carbon Disclosure Project (SDG12).<sup>138</sup> Overseas Development Assistance and private sector investment overseas should support renewable energy deployment, helping poorer countries develop sustainable energy systems and provide energy access to all.<sup>139</sup>



## Recommended actions

1. Increase ambition for action on climate change in line with the Paris Agreement. Facilitate contracting at least an additional 50-70 TWh per annum of low-carbon electricity generation and 25-30 GW of flexibility capacity to be installed during the 2020s:<sup>140</sup>
  - i. Bring forward a new CfD auction open to solar and onshore wind
  - ii. Reform the Capacity Market to allow all technologies to compete
  - iii. Amend the planning regime to allow further development of onshore wind in England
  - iv. New route to market for small scale and community renewables replacing Feed-in Tariffs
2. Develop a combined strategy for energy efficiency and low-carbon heat, building on the commitments in the Clean Growth Strategy and focusing on the fuel poor, to include:
  - i. A zero-carbon new homes standard
  - ii. An increase in EPC requirements for landlords up to band C by 2030
  - iii. A new Green Deal with low cost borrowing to unlock energy efficiency investment
  - iv. Exempting rooftop solar and batteries from business rate calculations
  - v. Continue to improve and accelerate energy efficiency of product standards post Brexit
  - vi. A comprehensive engagement programme around people and smart energy
3. Increase ambition in decarbonising transport:
  - i. Bring forward ban on new diesel and petrol vehicles to 2030
  - ii. Re-evaluation of electrification of rail investments

## Case study



### Repowering London

**SDG TARGETS: 1.2, 7.1, 7.2**

Repowering London is a not-for-profit organisation that helps communities to develop community-owned renewable energy projects, particularly using photovoltaic (PV) panels. According to Community Energy England, the UK is home to 222 community energy organisations, with over 30,000 members. Repowering London is helping to set up and support community energy groups within the capital.

Projects include the successful Brixton Energy Solar, which resulted in the first inner-city cooperatively owned energy project on a social housing estate, and Repowering Lambeth Schools, an education programme for local school children. A new project, Energy Garden, is creating spaces for community members to come together to grow food, green their local areas and generate energy. This includes using solar energy to power notice boards, lights and water pumps.

Repowering London's activities aim to reduce carbon emissions, tackle fuel poverty and encourage local leadership through cooperative business models. Their approach includes connecting groups with local and national investors so they can raise the finance needed for their projects as well as providing them with the technical and practical support they need to get their schemes off the ground.

[www.repowering.org.uk](http://www.repowering.org.uk)

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## Case study



### Scotland's Onshore Wind Record

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#### **SDG TARGETS: 7.1, 7.2**

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In the first quarter of 2018, electricity in Scotland generated by onshore wind turbines was up by 44%,<sup>141</sup> breaking its previous record from the same period in 2017. Between January and March 2018, wind turbines generated enough electricity to power around five million homes.

Scotland's 2009 Climate Change Act is recognised as world leading in ambition, and in 2018 the Scottish Government reported it would achieve its existing emissions reductions target by 2032,<sup>142</sup> 18 years earlier than its 2050 target. This has led to further ambition through the Climate Change Bill which sets an emission reduction target of 90% by 2050.<sup>143</sup>

The surge in onshore wind power is helped by the Climate Change Act and its 2020 Routemap for Renewable Energy 2011. The Routemap lays out actions to achieve Scotland's target of meeting an equivalent of 100% demand for electricity from renewable energy by 2020, for instance by providing a supportive planning system.<sup>144</sup> For onshore wind in particular, this includes identifying the best locations for turbines so they are in balance with the natural environment and landscape.<sup>145</sup>



## Decent work and economic growth

Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

Prepared by

**TUC**

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The UK economy is struggling to provide sustainable growth that would ensure decent employment for everyone by 2030. The rate of economic growth since the financial crisis has been approximately half its pre-2008 average. Unemployment rates are low by historical standards and in comparison with peers while employment has hit record levels. But wages have remained depressed and productivity growth has been poor by historical standards and compared to similar OECD countries. The Government has recognised the importance of raising productivity and has made this central to its Industrial Strategy<sup>146</sup> launched in 2017.

There has also been a rapid increase in insecure work over the last decade although the UK informal economy remains similar in size to OECD comparators. In response to these changes in the labour market, the Government commissioned the Taylor Review of Modern Working Practices and is consulting on its recommendations. With regards to the environmental sustainability of current growth patterns, the UK economy has become less resource intensive and domestic material consumption has fallen. There is evidence that this is partly the result of off-shoring the production of many resource intensive products, and in any case progress has plateaued in recent years.



## Performance rating

Sustainable Development Goal Target	Rating
<b>8.1</b> Sustain per capita economic growth in accordance with national circumstances and, in particular, at least 7% gross domestic product growth per annum in the least developed countries	●
<b>8.2</b> Achieve higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation, including through a focus on high-value added and labour-intensive sectors	●
<b>8.3</b> Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services	●
<b>8.4</b> Improve progressively, through 2030, global resource efficiency in consumption and production and endeavour to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation, in accordance with the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production, with developed countries taking the lead	●
<b>8.5</b> By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value	●
<b>8.6</b> By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training	●
<b>8.7</b> Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms	●
<b>8.8</b> Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment	●
<b>8.9</b> By 2030, devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products	○
<b>8.10</b> Strengthen the capacity of domestic financial institutions to encourage and expand access to banking, insurance and financial services for all	●
<b>8.a</b> Increase Aid for Trade support for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, including through the Enhanced Integrated Framework for Trade-Related Technical Assistance to Least Developed Countries	●
<b>8.b</b> By 2020, develop and operationalize a global strategy for youth employment and implement the Global Jobs Pact of the International Labour Organization	●





## Key findings

1. UK GDP growth per capita and productivity growth per employee have slowed markedly over the last decade.<sup>147</sup> The Government has recognised the importance of addressing low productivity and has published an Industrial Strategy<sup>148</sup> aimed at boosting productivity
2. The number of people in insecure work has grown sharply over the same period as the number of people on zero-hours contracts, in low-paid self-employment or employed by agencies has risen to more than 3 million. The Government is consulting on recommendations made in the Taylor Review of Modern Working Practices<sup>149</sup> to improve the rights of these workers
3. Although the unemployment rate for young people has fallen, it remains twice as high as for the general population. Similarly, the percentage not in education, employment or training (NEETs) has declined but, at 11.8%, is still above the OECD average. We have yet to see the impact of the Apprenticeship Levy introduced in 2016 on these numbers
4. Across most measures resource consumption appears to be falling and resource productivity increasing. There is evidence however, that this is in largely due to the production of many resource intensive goods moving overseas

## Performance and progress

The headline measures of progress on Targets 8.1 and 8.2 both suggest the UK is off-target. Since 2008, gross domestic product (GDP) per head has grown by half the average rate achieved before the financial crisis, and the ONS' first estimate for Q1 2018 shows GDP per head shrunk by 0.1%.<sup>150</sup> The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) forecasts UK growth to be lower than all member states bar Japan next year. It should be noted there are large regional variations in economic output, with gross value added (GVA) per head in London 70% higher than the national average.<sup>151</sup> The only other region with above average GVA per head is the South East of England. There is also uncertainty over the impact of Brexit on economic output, with the majority of economic forecasts predicting it will slow growth further.<sup>152</sup> The slowdown in economic growth is the result of persistently weak productivity improvements since the financial crisis, with GDP per hour worked virtually flat since 2007. The Government has recognised the importance of raising productivity and made this the central aim of its Industrial Strategy.<sup>153</sup> This proposes 'sector deals' under which government would collaborate with the private sector in the areas of artificial intelligence, automotive, construction and life sciences. It has also established a £31bn National Productivity Investment Fund<sup>154</sup> with a five-year remit to support housing, transport, research and development, and digital communications.

For growth to be considered 'sustainable', a broader measure of economic performance than GDP should be used. Options include Net National Product<sup>155</sup> which takes account of assets and depreciation, or Adjusted Net Savings<sup>156</sup> which takes into account human capital, depletion of natural resources and damage caused by pollution. Using GDP per capita as the sole measure of economic growth would risk coming into conflict with other goals such as SDG12 on Sustainable Consumption and Production and SDG13 on Climate Action. Within SDG8, Target 8.4 addresses the need to improve resource



### SDG 9

The Government has recognised the importance of raising productivity and made this the central aim of its Industrial Strategy

efficiency. The UK has made some progress against headline measures of raw material consumption (RMC) and domestic material consumption (DMC), although this has stalled since 2009.<sup>157</sup> But there are concerns that the fall in DMC is in part the result of resource-intensive production moving overseas; this measure does not fully account for the inputs in imported products – something the Government has committed to monitoring and addressing under its 25 Year Environment Plan.<sup>158</sup>

While unemployment has remained low and employment levels high, the number of people in insecure work has increased rapidly since 2010, resulting in an amber rating for Target 8.3. This includes people on zero-hours contracts – the measure preferred by the ONS – which increased from 168,000 in 2010 to 901,000 last year.<sup>159</sup> Taking into account workers on temporary contracts and the low paid self-employed, one in 10 UK workers is in insecure work.<sup>160</sup> These measures do not capture the size of the informal economy, however, which is estimated to be worth over 11% of GDP,<sup>161</sup> broadly in line with other advanced economies.

The UK is also struggling to eradicate inequalities in the labour market (Target 8.5) despite decades of legislation designed to do just that, including the 1970 Equal Pay Act, 2010 Equality Act, and the requirement, introduced this year, for large employers to report on their gender pay gap. Although the UK female employment rate is considerably above the EU average,<sup>162</sup> the gender gap in median pay for full-time workers has declined only marginally over the last decade and still stands at 9.1%. Unemployment rates for disabled and young people also remain significantly higher than for the population as a whole. The percentage of people aged 16-24 not in education, employment or training (NEETs) has fallen from its 2011 peak but remains high at 11.8% (Target 8.6). The Apprenticeship Levy, which requires larger companies to set aside money for apprentice schemes, is intended to reduce this number (and partly increase productivity by improving workplace skills).

There is little data on children engaged in child labour (Target 8.7). Referrals of suspected victims to the National Referral Mechanism for human trafficking or forced labour have increased sharply over the last two years, albeit from a low base. The Home Office estimates there were between 10,000 and 13,000 victims of modern slavery in the UK in 2013, before the introduction of the 2015 Modern Slavery Act.

On the protection of labour rights and promotion of safe working environments (Target 8.8), there has been a decline in the number of fatal and non-fatal workplace injuries since 2000. The UK has also seen a continued fall in levels of trade union representation among the national workforce. While this trade union density is not a perfect proxy for compliance with labour rights such as freedom of association, it is arguably indicative of a weakening of the ability of workers to assert rights such as collective bargaining. The introduction of employment tribunal fees in 2013 was overturned by the Supreme Court in 2017 on the basis that they priced workers out of accessing justice.



#### SDG 12

The UK has made some progress against headline measures of raw material consumption and domestic material consumption, although this has stalled since 2009



#### SDG 4

The percentage of people aged 16-24 not in education, employment or training (NEETs) has fallen from its 2011 peak but remains high at 11.8%

## Synergies and coherence.

SDG8 is closely linked to SDGs 1, 5, 9, 10, 12, and 13.

Productivity and the economic performance of the UK are closely connected to the prevalence of poverty (SDG1) and household living standards. In recent years income levels have not tracked increased living costs; this is connected to poverty levels, health outcomes (SDG3), nutrition (SDG2) and access to decent housing (SDG11).

Sustainable economic growth requires real increases in household incomes to be decoupled from ever-increasing consumption of critical natural resources leading to environmental degradation (SDG12 on sustainable consumption and production). Radical improvements in resource productivity are required, alongside increases in human productivity.

## Local to international dimension

A significant proportion of the UK workforce consists of foreign labour, particularly in key sectors such as hospitality, farming, construction and the NHS.<sup>163</sup> In light of the uncertainty surrounding the outcome of the UK's withdrawal from the EU, many industry and business leaders have expressed concern about staff shortages and the availability of skilled labour specifically in the health and construction industries.

Reductions across the country in the proportion of unemployed young people or NEETs masks regional disparities in these figures and a sharp North-South divide, with 17.9% in the North East<sup>164</sup> compared to 10.9% in the South East.<sup>165</sup>



## Recommended actions

1. Increase public and private sector investment starting with a target to reach the OECD average of public investment of 3.5% of GDP. Targeting this investment at clean/low carbon sectors of the economy would help increase productivity and, resource efficiency and reduce climate-related emissions as well as stimulating growth
2. Improve UK workers' productivity by increasing the amount and quality of in-work training and pilot new sectoral bodies bringing together business, workers and government to drive up pay, working conditions and productivity
3. Build on the Taylor Review to ensure UK workers have the same basic rights regardless of employment status and abolish insecure forms of work such as zero-hours contracts
4. Deliver on the commitment to develop measures of the UK's international material footprint and a strategy to reduce this
5. Strengthen the Modern Slavery Act to make it compulsory for companies to identify and tackle risks of modern slavery in their supply chains, extending it to the public sector and penalising organisations that do not report. Resources for UK labour inspectorates should also be increased – the ILO has a target of one inspector for every 10,000 workers

## Case study



### Modern Slavery Act

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#### **SDG TARGETS: 8.7, 16.2**

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Following high profile accounts of slavery in supply chains, such as in Thailand's prawn fishing industry, the UK Government passed the Modern Slavery Act in 2015.<sup>166</sup> As well as combatting modern slavery in the UK by providing law enforcement with greater powers and tools, the Act seeks to eradicate slavery in the supply chains of goods imported. It requires businesses to report on actions they are taking on an annual basis.

Although there is evidence to suggest that enforcement of the Act is inconsistent and that investigations into modern slavery and human trafficking remain a challenge, the Act has been credited for raising awareness of modern slavery with the public and practitioners. An independent review in 2016 noted a 40% increase in the number of potential victims identified and referred for additional support.<sup>167</sup> Business responses to the Act have been mixed, with some praised for their leadership and others showing a more 'lacklustre' response.<sup>168</sup>





## Industry, innovation and infrastructure

Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

Prepared by



There is great scope for improving the UK's performance on SDG9. This was the world's first nation to industrialise, starting some 250 years ago. Another economic transformation is now required, to maintain the UK's prosperity and wellbeing whilst rapidly reducing its greenhouse gas emissions and other damaging impacts on the global environment. Ageing infrastructure must be restored or replaced, additional greener infrastructure is required and the ways in which we produce and consume goods and services must change in order to move towards a circular and zero waste economy. This, in turn, requires continual innovation from public and private-sector funded research and development.



## Performance rating

Sustainable Development Goal Target	Rating
<b>9.1</b> Develop quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, including regional and transborder infrastructure, to support economic development and human well-being, with a focus on affordable and equitable access for all	●
<b>9.2</b> Promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and, by 2030, significantly raise industry's share of employment and gross domestic product, in line with national circumstances, and double its share in least developed countries	●
<b>9.3</b> Increase the access of small-scale industrial and other enterprises, in particular in developing countries, to financial services, including affordable credit, and their integration into value chains and markets	●
<b>9.4</b> By 2030, upgrade infrastructure and retrofit industries to make them sustainable, with increased resource-use efficiency and greater adoption of clean and environmentally sound technologies and industrial processes, with all countries taking action in accordance with their respective capabilities	●
<b>9.5</b> Enhance scientific research, upgrade the technological capabilities of industrial sectors in all countries, in particular developing countries, including, by 2030, encouraging innovation and substantially increasing the number of research and development workers per 1 million people and public and private research and development spending	●
<b>9.a</b> Facilitate sustainable and resilient infrastructure development in developing countries through enhanced financial, technological and technical support to African countries, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States	●
<b>9.b</b> Support domestic technology development, research and innovation in developing countries, including by ensuring a conducive policy environment for, inter alia, industrial diversification and value addition to commodities	●
<b>9.c</b> Significantly increase access to information and communications technology and strive to provide universal and affordable access to the Internet in least developed countries by 2020	●





## Key findings

1. The UK's infrastructure must be transformed if it is to meet the great challenges posed by SDGs and climate change
2. Large scale, sustained investment in replacing ageing infrastructure and creating additional resilient and low carbon infrastructure of all kinds is required. Even in a sector like electricity generation, where a good start has already been made, there is still far to go
3. Similarly, an industrial transformation is required to make the UK economy more circular with much higher levels of reuse, repair, recycling and energy recovery and major improvements in resource productivity
4. Small and medium sized enterprises can play an important role in this transformation, and should be supported to do so
5. Digital technologies are, and will continue to, make an important contribution

## Performance and progress

As a wealthy, long industrialised nation, the UK is rich in infrastructure (Target 9.1). Achieving sustainability and radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions requires this to be renewed or replaced and additional infrastructure created using public and private-sector investment. This transformation is well under way for electricity generation, but decarbonising the grid requires much further progress in developing renewable energy generators, energy storage and flexible, decentralised systems (SDG7).

The UK's water supply network is an ageing infrastructure requiring both renewal and new functions. This includes increased interconnectivity, efficiency and behaviour change, and recycling. In addition to an average of 121 litres per property served leaks from supply pipes,<sup>169</sup> drainage and flood defences require extensive maintenance and additional investment to cope with changing rainfall patterns and rising sea levels in light of climate change (SDG13). The Environment Agency's £2.3bn 2015-2021 flood defence programme for England is based on a partnership funding model which encourages private investment.

Waste management and transport infrastructure also need transforming – and large-scale investment – to make their due contribution towards sustainable development. Infrastructure investment should be integrated; for example, the growing number of electrically powered vehicles could provide electricity storage in flexible local grids, helping accommodate high levels of intermittent generation from renewable power.<sup>170</sup>

At the same time, public infrastructure of all kinds – such as new or refurbished hospitals and schools – has to become more energy, water and raw materials efficient in construction, maintenance and day-to-day use (Target 9.4). The Low Carbon Routemap<sup>171</sup> for the Built Environment is a tool helping the construction sector understand the policies, actions and key decision points to achieve an 80% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions between 1990 and 2050, the UK's legal target. Although reduction specific to the built environment is quite new, driven by the Construction 2025 strategy,<sup>172</sup> the



### SDG 6

The UK's leaky water supply network is one example of ageing infrastructure requiring renewal

global green and sustainable building industry was recently forecast to grow at 22.8% per annum. With the increase comes a need for greater low-carbon regulatory requirements and greater social demand for greener products.

The concept of green infrastructure is increasingly recognised in the UK – areas covered by vegetation and habitat contributing to water storage and flood defence while reducing air pollution levels and high temperature extremes.<sup>173</sup> Green infrastructure contributes to human wellbeing and prosperity and can also help maintain and increase biodiversity.

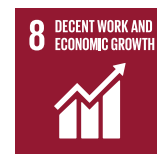
Regarding Target 9.2 on ‘inclusive and sustainable industrialisation’, the challenge facing one of the most industrialised and wealthy nations is for its economy to become socially and environmentally sustainable from a global perspective while maintaining high living standards. The UK economy has to become more circular, with much higher levels of reuse, repair, recycling and energy recovery, for products of all kinds along their supply chains. That implies large improvements in resource productivity, with production of goods and services requiring less energy, water and raw materials. The ideal is a zero-waste economy. Several studies have claimed there is great growth and export potential for green and low carbon products and services.<sup>174</sup> The ONS’s latest estimates for the UK’s low carbon and renewable energy sector (covering most of this green economy) puts its turnover in 2016 at £42.6 billion, with 208,000 employees, 84,500 businesses, and exports worth £3.7bn (but imports of £6bn).<sup>175</sup>

Two recently published Government strategies, The Clean Growth Strategy<sup>176</sup> and the 25 Year Environment Plan,<sup>177</sup> support this vision of an economic transformation (Target 9.2). But this journey has only just begun, illustrated by the UK’s late start and slow progress in dealing with plastic waste and the fact that the low carbon and renewable sector was equivalent to 2.2% of UK GDP in 2016. Much further policy support and public and private sector investment is required. A government resources and waste strategy promised for later this year is an opportunity to step up the pace.

Small and medium sized businesses (SMEs) have an important part to play (Target 9.5) as innovators of new products and services which can then be scaled up. There are over 5.7 million SMEs in the UK, representing 99% of all businesses.<sup>178</sup> The ONS analysis of the UK’s low carbon and renewable sector found the average business within it employed fewer than three people.

The UK Government has targeted increasing total research and development expenditure (Target 9.5) from a low base of 1.67% of GDP in 2015 to 2.47% by 2027, with £2.5 billion of public sector investment in low carbon innovation in 2015-2021.<sup>179</sup> However the nature of SMEs makes monitoring the outcomes of policy on this part of the UK economy difficult. An increase in support to Catapult Centres to promote much stronger involvement of SMEs, including university spin-outs, in their centres would be beneficial.

Manufacturing played the major historical role in the development of the UK’s economy but its share of economic output declined to a low of 10% in 2017. Despite this representing a real term increase in output since the 1990s, the sector has declined significantly since the 1970s – particularly compared to the steady increase in the service industries.<sup>180</sup> Regionally there are significant differences in employment levels in manufacturing, accounting for 12% of jobs in the East Midlands compared to 2% in London.<sup>181</sup> Innovation can play an important part in realising more added value for manufactured products while increasing the future economic, social and environmental



### SDG 8

The global green and sustainable building industry was recently forecast to grow at 22.8% per annum



### SDG 17

The UK Government has targeted increasing total research and development expenditure to 2.47% of GDP by 2027

importance of UK manufacturing. Current digital technological changes (internet penetration, artificial Intelligence, data analytics), closer long-term relationships with consumers and increasing resource constraints could provide many new opportunities for manufacturing and industrial innovation. Examples are: coupling of services with products; data analytics based on embedded sensors and open data; and ‘collaborative consumption’ with no one customer owning a product outright.

## Synergies and coherence

Sustainable industrialisation is the backbone for achieving a range of other SDGs in the UK, particularly SDG12 for sustainable consumption and production, and SDG13 for climate change. Links can be drawn between SDG9 and all 16 of the other goals but some of the strongest and closest of these are with SDG7 on energy, SDG8 on decent work and economic growth, SDG10 on reduced inequalities and SDG11 on sustainable cities and communities. Sustainable industrialisation and infrastructure are also key to protecting habitats and biodiversity (SDGs 14 and 15), not just in the UK and its surrounding seas but across the globe.

## Local to international dimension

Approximately \$3.3tn needs to be invested in infrastructure globally by 2030, equivalent to the size of the existing global infrastructure stock.<sup>182</sup> Most of this will be in low-income or emerging economies where capacity to ensure that this is done in a safe and sustainable way is lacking. This risks locking these nations in to high-carbon or unsustainable lifestyles in the future. The UK has world-class design and construction expertise and could have a valuable impact on the development of infrastructure across the world.<sup>183</sup> This is both an economic opportunity for these organisations and the UK economy, and could also make a valuable contribution to social and environmental development globally.



## Recommended actions

1. Renew existing infrastructure, and create new infrastructure, in ways that make a full contribution to rapidly decarbonising the UK economy. Public and private investments in infrastructure should aim to achieve large gains in energy, water and raw materials efficiency
2. Encourage the development of alternative low-carbon fuels such as hydrogen, increased energy efficiency, and carbon capture, usage and storage, and the application of all these to greenhouse gas intensive industries
3. Ensure that the current R&D target (2.47% of GDP by 2027) is maintained and met throughout all sectors of UK manufacturing and construction
4. Implement policies that encourage innovation by SMEs specifically, taking account of the fragmented nature of this sector and the high-proportion of non-employed firms. These policies should include, but not be limited to, increased support for Catapult Centres to work with SMEs and university spin-outs
5. Increase investment in STEM education to address the shortage of skills in engineering, maths and science

## Case study

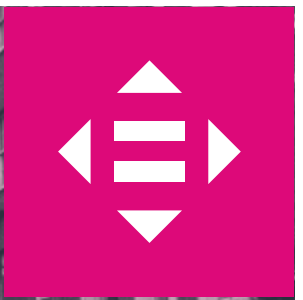
### Manufacture 2030

**SDG TARGETS: 6.4, 7.3, 9.4, 12.2**

Manufacture 2030 is a digital platform with a global reach. It is on a mission to halve the resources used in global manufacturing by 2030, bringing retailers, brands and their manufacturing suppliers together to cut costs, risks and environmental impacts. To make this happen, it believes resource efficiency needs to be made easier and simpler, because using less resources is good for business, and for our planet too. This centres around the innovative M2030 bee tool, a unique, cloud-based service that makes it simpler for manufacturers to improve the resource efficiency of their operations. The M2030 bee is packed with hundreds of efficiency gains, tips, advice and case studies, all validated by industry experts, so operational teams can act quickly, and with greater confidence. Because it sits in the cloud, there's no need for integration with enterprise systems and it's been co-designed with engineers... which means more impact, with less fuss.

The platform also hosts an online community that brings manufacturing practitioners together in a non-competitive space to explore the latest trends in resource efficient manufacturing. Partners include Interface, Mars, Johnson & Johnson, Coop, House of Fraser, US Department of Energy and University of Cambridge. The Manufacture 2030 platform and its tools are powered by 2degrees, a technology company specialising in resource efficiency software solutions, with a mission is to make sustainable business happen at scale.

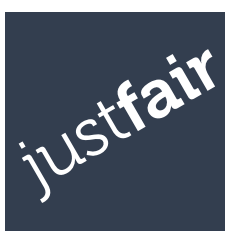
[www.manufacture2030.com](http://www.manufacture2030.com)



# Reduced inequalities

Reduce inequality within and among countries

Prepared by





Inequality is projected to rise in the coming years. A historically low unemployment rate means that more households are earning a living from the labour market. At the same time, tax changes and social security cuts introduced since 2012 have had a particularly severe effect on people on lower incomes. Black and ethnic minority households, families with at least one disabled member and lone parents (who are overwhelmingly women) have suffered disproportionately. The UK is well known for its strong legislation on equalities. The Equality Act 2010 was a significant contribution in this regard. However, eight years since its adoption, the Act has not yet been implemented in full. Successive governments have failed to bring into effect the socio-economic duty, which requires public authorities to have due regard to the desirability of reducing material inequality. A significant change of course is required to meet SDG10 and internationally recognised socio-economic rights and to turn the UK into a fair society that does not leave anyone behind.



## Performance rating

Sustainable Development Goal Target	Rating
<b>10.1</b> By 2030, progressively achieve and sustain income growth of the bottom 60% of the population at a rate higher than the national average*	●
<b>10.2</b> By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status	●
<b>10.3</b> Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard	●
<b>10.4</b> Adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality	●
<b>10.5</b> Improve the regulation and monitoring of global financial markets and institutions and strengthen the implementation of such regulations	●
<b>10.6</b> Ensure enhanced representation and voice for developing countries in decision-making in global international economic and financial institutions in order to deliver more effective, credible, accountable and legitimate institutions	●
<b>10.7</b> Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies	○
<b>10.a</b> Implement the principle of special and differential treatment for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, in accordance with World Trade Organization agreements	●
<b>10.b</b> Encourage official development assistance and financial flows, including foreign direct investment, to States where the need is greatest, in particular least developed countries, African countries, small island developing States and landlocked developing countries, in accordance with their national plans and programmes	●
<b>10.c</b> By 2030, reduce to less than 3% the transaction costs of migrant remittances and eliminate remittance corridors with costs higher than 5%	○

\* amended to reflect European measure of 60%





## Key findings

1. Income inequality has not diminished since 2010 and it is projected to rise in the coming years
2. UK authorities gather and provide useful disaggregated data based on groupings of people with the protected characteristics set out Equality Act 2010 (for example disability, sexual orientation, age, religion)
3. The UK has adopted tax and social security measures since 2012 which have had a particularly severe effect on people on lower incomes and disadvantaged groups
4. Successive governments have failed to commence the socio-economic duty in the Equality Act 2010. However, the duty has been in force in Scotland since April 2018, Wales has the power to follow suit, some councils are voluntarily implementing it and 78 MPs from five different parties are calling on the Government to bring the duty into effect

## Performance and progress

The assessment of Britain's material inequalities is a contentious issue; it depends on the way it is measured and therefore on the measurer.<sup>184</sup> According to the Households Below Average Income (HBAI) measure, the standard used by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), income inequality both before and after housing costs has remained approximately stable since 2010.<sup>185</sup> The percentage of individuals on low incomes, measured as 60% of the median, has barely changed (Target 10.1). Absolute low income, based on an annual update of the income threshold of 2010/11, fell slightly as a result of the low inflation levels during austerity years.

Between 2015 and 2017 incomes of those in the top half of the distribution experienced a more modest growth than those in the bottom half. However, inequality is projected to rise in the next four years.<sup>186</sup> According to the Resolution Foundation, "unlike the rise in inequality of the 1980s, when incomes at the top moved away from those in the middle and the middle moved away from the bottom, the coming period is set to be characterised by sluggish growth across much of the distribution and a 'leaving behind' of those at the bottom".<sup>187</sup>

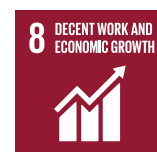
Inequality is even more marked in the distribution of wealth. Together, the UK's richest 1,000 people are wealthier than the poorest 40% of households. Collectively, this wealthiest 1,000 saw their worth grow by £2,615 for every second of 2016.<sup>188</sup> Wealth inequality contracted in the decade prior to the financial crisis but is now rising as a result of the decreasing accessibility of home ownership and the decoupling of land value and economic growth.<sup>189</sup>

The percentage of people in households at risk of poverty (below 50% of median UK household income) increased from 9 to 9.9% between 2013 and 2016 (latest available data), with half a point higher risk for women and with an increase in all age brackets (Target 10.2).<sup>190</sup>



### SDG 2

Lower income households assign a greater share of their food budget to basic groceries while higher income households have relatively more money available for vegetables



### SDG 8

The UK currently enjoys a very low unemployment rate at 4.3% and ONS reports a steady labour share of GDP at around 50% since 2000

The Equality Act 2010 provides protection against direct and indirect discrimination in public services and harassment in the private sphere (such as workplace) under nine protected characteristics: Age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. UK authorities gather and report useful disaggregated data based on these protected characteristics. It is concerning that the number of hate crimes reported to the police increased by 29% (80,393 offences) in England and Wales between 2015/16 and 2016/17, the largest increase since the series began in 2011/12.<sup>191</sup> On the other hand, this increase may partly respond to an improved identification of hate crime by the police, greater empowerment of victims to come forward and an overall improvement of recording of crime, all of which would be good news (Target 10.3).

The UK currently enjoys a very low unemployment rate at 4.3%.<sup>192</sup> ONS reports a steady labour share of GDP at around 50% since 2000.<sup>193</sup> However, the tax and welfare changes since 2012 have had an effect on social protection (Target 10.4). There has also been an increase in inequality among retired households in recent years due to the growing gap between households covered by a private pension and those without it.<sup>194</sup> The top 10% paid a little bit extra through indirect taxes and the introduction of the National Living Wage had a positive impact across the board, more so for the bottom half of society. However, according to the cumulative impact assessment of the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), the largest cash gains from changes to income tax and National Insurance contributions were enjoyed by the 30% with the highest incomes.<sup>195</sup> As a result of benefit and tax credit changes and the introduction of universal credit, households in the second and third lowest income decile have lost more than twice as much as those in the top 20%. Given these changes, it has also been projected that four years from now 1.5 million more children will live in poverty, the child poverty rate for lone parent households (85% of whom are women) will increase from 37 to 62%, and households with at least one disabled adult and a disabled child will lose 13% of their income.



### SDG 16

The number of hate crimes reported to the police increased by 29% in England and Wales between 2015/16 and 2016/17, the largest increase since the series began in 2011/12

## Synergies and coherence

The ONS Living Costs and Food Survey shows that lower income households assign a greater share of their food budget to basic groceries while higher income households have relatively more money available for vegetables; similarly, the lowest income group spends approximately three times as much of their income on electricity, gas and other fuels than those with highest income.<sup>196</sup> This confirms that SDG10 is crucial for achieving other goals and targets. Relative poverty (SDG1) and food insecurity (SDG2) depend on the distribution of income and wealth. The enjoyment of the right to health and the goal of ensuring healthy lives (SDG3) are also determined by unequal access to public services, for example children growing up in deprived areas are more likely to face disadvantage in educational attainment, which impacts on mental health and wellbeing.<sup>197</sup>

According to EHRC research, lone parents, mostly women, will lose almost one fifth of their annual income, which confirms that tax and social services changes hamper the fulfilment of greater gender equality (SDG5).

## Local to international dimension

The Social Security (Scotland) Bill 2017 states the principle that social security is a human right and a precondition for the enjoyment of other human rights. In the parliamentary process for this legislation mechanisms were considered to have due regard to Article 9 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which recognises the human right to social security.

Since 2014 ministers of the Welsh Government must have due regard to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child when exercising their ministerial functions.



### Recommended actions

1. The Welfare Reform Act 2012 and the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016 should be reviewed and the link between social security entitlements and living costs restored
2. The Government should design and implement a comprehensive child poverty strategy reinstating the targets and reporting duties on child poverty
3. The review of the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 should ensure that people on low incomes do not have to choose between access to justice and an adequate standard of living
4. HM Treasury should extend the analysis of the distributional impact of tax and public spending to look at the aggregate impact in light of the protected characteristics as well as income and wealth disparities
5. The Government should bring into force all the outstanding clauses of the Equality Act 2010, in particular the socio-economic duty (Part I). Wales should do so as envisioned in the Wales Act 2017. English and Welsh councils should consider incorporating socio-economic status in their integrated equality impact assessments, budgets and other strategic decisions
6. All public authorities should have due regard to the 2016 Concluding Observations of the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR)<sup>198</sup>

## Case study



### The socio-economic duty brought to life in Scotland

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**SDG TARGETS: 5.1, 5.5, 8.5, 10.2, 10.3, 10.4**

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The socio-economic duty was one of the most significant measures in the Equality Act 2010. The duty requires public authorities to ‘have due regard to the desirability... to reduce the inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage’ in its decision making.<sup>199</sup> This means that public authorities must consciously consider equality, and its duty in ensuring this outcome when making both day-to-day and strategic decisions. Despite the inclusion in the Act, the socio-economic duty has not been implemented.

In 2017, the Scottish Government launched a public consultation on the implementation of the socio-economic duty in Scotland. The consultation sought to identify which public bodies should be included in the implementation of the socio-economic duty.<sup>200</sup> Following the consultation, in April 2018 the Scottish Government agreed to implement the socio-economic duty.

The duty is being considered in Wales, and some Local Authorities have voluntarily implemented it in their equality impact assessments, budgets and other strategic decision-making processes. There has also been support for the Early Day Motion 591, which calls on the Government to bring the socio-economic duty into effect, from 78 Members of Parliament.

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# Sustainable cities and communities

Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

Prepared by



The UK was one of the first nations in the world to mass urbanise, with the majority of its population living in towns and cities for more than a century. Cities continue to play a fundamental role in our society as focal points for working and living, developing our economy and technologies, education, research and culture. The SDGs can help the UK to develop its cities in ways that support prosperity and wellbeing while reducing the pressures placed on natural resources and the environment – not only within urban areas where problems such as air pollution persist, but across the globe.

The UK's 69 cities are working with varying success towards fulfilment of the SDGs. The devolved nature of UK Government has led to the different nations, regional and local authorities operating different policies relevant to SDG11 targets. The nature of cities means that many of these targets are not only closely linked to one another but also have strong synergies to all the other Goals. The UK is at a threshold where its performance on the majority of SDG11 targets can be lifted to a level representing sustainability. For this to be achieved, a collaborative, cross-UK approach is required.



## Performance rating

Sustainable Development Goal Target	Rating
<b>11.1</b> By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums	●
<b>11.2</b> By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons	●
<b>11.3</b> By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries	●
<b>11.4</b> Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage	●
<b>11.5</b> By 2030, significantly reduce the number of deaths and the number of people affected and substantially decrease the direct economic losses relative to global gross domestic product caused by disasters, including water-related disasters, with a focus on protecting the poor and people in vulnerable situations	●
<b>11.6</b> By 2030, reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, including by paying special attention to air quality and municipal and other waste management	●
<b>11.7</b> By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities	●
<b>11.a</b> Support positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas by strengthening national and regional development planning	●
<b>11.b</b> By 2020, substantially increase the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters, and develop and implement, in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, holistic disaster risk management at all levels	●
<b>11.c</b> Support least developed countries, including through financial and technical assistance, in building sustainable and resilient buildings utilizing local materials	●





## Key findings

1. Housing remains a key issue for UK cities – with many homes still falling short of criteria for providing “adequate” living conditions
2. Socially vulnerable people face disproportionate risk from a variety of factors, including natural disaster. Two thirds (67%) of the population living in flood risk areas are classed as “socially vulnerable” raising the issue of protection for those at increased risk of environmental disaster
3. Access to public green space is under threat, with 59% of councils likely to lose parks and green spaces or transfer their management to others
4. Although particulate matter emissions have decreased over time, evidence shows that current levels of particulate air pollution still have a considerable impact on public health, with disadvantaged groups in urban areas being disproportionately affected

## Performance and progress

The UK is among the world’s most urbanised nations, with 83% of the population housed in towns and cities.<sup>201</sup> The availability and quality of housing (Target 11.1) are increasingly prevalent issues. A fifth of homes in England (20%) fail to meet the Government’s Decent Homes Standard covering state of repair, basic facilities, warmth and health and safety.<sup>202</sup> Concerns about the rising unaffordability of private sector homes for purchase and rent have long run high, leading to demands for much greater output of new homes in both the private and subsidised, social sector.<sup>203</sup> Sustainability requirements – eg measures for new homes to be zero carbon –are still not mandatory. Brexit poses a further challenge for the construction sector, with the impact this is likely to have on its supply of labour and construction costs. Tackling these housing challenges can create economic activity while raising the quality of cities and urban living.

As a developed nation, the UK has relatively advanced transport systems, including urban public transport (Target 11.2). There is large-scale ongoing investment in transport infrastructure which is required to meet rising demand and renew or replace ageing assets, but there are also complaints that London gets far more than its fair share of this investment.<sup>204</sup> UK citizens make a greater proportion of their journeys by car and a correspondingly smaller proportion by public transport compared to the EU average.<sup>205</sup> And rail and metro journeys are also more expensive in the UK than in most other European nations, both for longer distances and travel within cities.<sup>206</sup> Much more can be done to encourage cycling and walking, helping to tackle obesity and improve wellbeing and the urban environment.

The UK was a pioneer in land use and urban planning (Target 11.3) with concepts such as green belts, garden cities and new towns having global influence. Its devolved planning system has become highly complex, straddling local and central governments and struggling to reconcile conflicts such as stopping sprawl, regenerating cities and facilitating new, land-hungry types of development. Arguably the UK’s most participatory form of land use planning is neighbourhood planning in England, introduced by the coalition government in the Localism Act 2011. However, by 2016 neighbourhood planning had been used primarily by rural and less-deprived communities.<sup>207</sup>



### SDG 10

Two thirds of those exposed to frequent floods live in the most socially vulnerable neighbourhoods which are predominantly urban

Regarding Target 11.4, the UK is failing to adequately protect some of its designated World Heritage Sites; UNESCO has placed Liverpool on its list of World Heritage Sites in danger because of inappropriate development in this historic maritime city. The UK is experiencing serious, ongoing biodiversity loss (see chapters on SDGs 14 and 15) and there are concerns about the impacts of almost a decade of public spending constraint, especially for local government, on the UK's museums, libraries and support for the arts.<sup>208</sup>

On Target 11.5 (reducing vulnerability to disaster), UK deaths from exposure to natural forces varied between 0.6-1.6 per 1,000,000 population from 2013-2016, mostly due to deaths from exposure to cold.<sup>209</sup> The total economic impact from natural disasters in the UK is not calculated year on year, but the Environment Agency estimated the severe 2015-16 winter floods in England cost £1.6 billion.<sup>210</sup> The agency projects that flooding will worsen as extreme weather events become more frequent and sea level rises, requiring continued investment in the full range of flood defences – both soft and hard. Two thirds (67%) of those exposed to frequent floods live in the most socially vulnerable neighbourhoods which are predominantly urban; the proportion of socially vulnerable households exposed to frequent floods is considerably higher in Northern Ireland than the other UK nations.<sup>211</sup>

Target 11.6 indicates that improved waste management and tackling air pollution are fundamental for sustainable cities. In the UK, 44 cities are in breach<sup>212</sup> of World Health Organisation guidelines on PM2.5 particulate matter levels and ten of them are in breach for PM10.<sup>213</sup> The UK also regularly breaches EU limit values for nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>); The Government estimates NO<sub>2</sub> pollution contributes to 23,500 deaths annually.<sup>214</sup> However, the recent introduction of the T-Charge policy in central London – an emissions surcharge for older diesel vehicles – demonstrates positive action that could be replicated in other cities. In May 2018 the Government published a long-awaited draft air quality strategy for England and began consulting on it.<sup>215</sup> As for municipal waste management, the percentage of UK household waste which is recycled rose rapidly after 2000 but has remained at around 44% since 2012 – some way short of the EU's 2020 target for 50% to be recycled.<sup>216</sup>

The Government made a commitment in its 25-Year Environment Plan to increase access to greenspace (Target 11.7). The Heritage Lottery Fund's 2016 State of the Parks report found that 92% of park managers had seen a decline in their budget over the previous three years; approximately a third of parks had seen cuts of over 20%.<sup>217</sup>

## Synergies and coherence

Given that the great majority of UK citizens live in towns and cities, and that most economic activity takes place in them, there are strong links between SDG11 and all the other SDGs. UK cities are areas where poverty and inequalities are prevalent, with areas of great wealth next to concentrations of deprivation. Both SDG1 on eliminating poverty and SDG10 on reduced inequalities are important considerations for those implementing policies that affect the more vulnerable in the UK's cities.



### SDG3

Much more can be done to encourage cycling and walking, helping to tackle obesity and improve wellbeing



### SDG 15

92% of park managers have seen a decline in their budget and approximately a third of parks had seen cuts of over 20%

## Local to international dimension

With 2.5 million flights to or from UK airports every year, and forecasts that this figure will rise to 3.1 million by 2020, the impact on city transport infrastructure is overwhelming. Not only does this concern the nation's airports but also public transport and associated environmental impacts – such as air pollution. International business, tourism and trade continues to drive up the demand for aviation which is of great importance to SDG11 and the future of UK cities.



### Recommended actions

1. The commitment to accessible green space outlined in the 25-Year Environment Plan should also be reinforced with appropriate support to councils to provide and maintain parks and other green urban areas. This funding should maintain and improve access to green spaces in and around cities for citizens in less prosperous areas
2. The UK's drive to increase the output of new, affordable homes built must not harm people's access to green and public spaces in and around cities – and these new homes should meet high sustainability standards
3. Commitments to adequate and safe housing should also include provision to reduce the number of deaths from cold weather in the UK
4. Government and local councils must work together to ensure that the number of cities in breach of World Health Organisation targets on air pollution is drastically reduced, using an appropriate mixture of regulations and incentives
5. More holistic support is required for vulnerable communities in the UK, who suffer from disproportionate risk of harm from climate-related hazards and weather events such as flooding and from the health impact of poor air quality

## Case study

### 2003 UK Heatwave

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**SDG TARGETS: 1.5, 11.5, 13.1**

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Europe's summer heatwave in 2003 is estimated to have been responsible for some 70,000 excess deaths, around 2,000 of which were in the UK. It saw the UK's highest recorded temperature at 38.5°C. Water shortages led to the introduction of a hosepipe ban by some water companies. Dry grasses and scrubland posed an increased fire risk, and transport infrastructure was put under strain. Notably the rail system had to impose speed restrictions due to the risk of tracks buckling in the heat.

The heatwave forced a marked change in response from authorities, who introduced several measures that have been continually improved upon since 2003, representing best practice in environmental disaster response for sustainable cities and communities. The UK Department of Health produced a heat wave advice document, since amended annually. The UK Met Office also issued its first Fire Hazard Forecast, delivered to this day to the nation's fire services, and rail speed restrictions are now common during hot weather.

[www.metoffice.gov.uk](http://www.metoffice.gov.uk)

[/learning/learn-about-the-weather/weather-phenomena/case-studies/heatwave](http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/learning/learn-about-the-weather/weather-phenomena/case-studies/heatwave)

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### GENeco Bio-Bus

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**TARGET 3.9, 11.2, 11.6, 12.2, 12.3, 12.4**

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In 2014 Bristol became the home of the UK's first public bus powered by biomethane gas. The Bio-Bus, otherwise known as 'the number two' was developed by Wessex Water's renewable energy company GENeco, and used gas produced from food, human sewage and commercial liquid waste. The bus ran a trial service between Bath and Bristol Airport, a 300km route powered by the equivalent of the annual food and sewage waste of five passengers.

The bus fuel uses anaerobic digestion, a natural process that produces methane-rich biogas, to power its engine. The use of biomethane creates a low-emissions vehicle to help reduce our global fossil fuel consumption and greenhouse gas emissions in vehicular transport.

In addition, the Bio-Bus and a shift to gas-powered vehicles in urban centres could lead to a 97% reduction in air pollution, and reduce the health issues and premature deaths it can cause.

Although GENeco has been unsuccessful in securing funding to roll out the service more widely in Bristol, a number of other cities have received funding from the Office for Low Emission Vehicles for biomethane buses, including Nottingham and Reading

[www.geneco.uk.com/Case\\_study\\_bio\\_bus](http://www.geneco.uk.com/Case_study_bio_bus)

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# Sustainable consumption and production

Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

Prepared by



Supported by





Sustainable consumption and production (SCP) might be expected to be a significant part of the UK's national conversation. It has the world's fifth largest economy, relatively high levels of per capita income and wealth, a heavy reliance on international trade and a unique status as the founder of the industrial revolution – all of which have left a large mark on the planet. Yet the UK Government, the devolved administrations and business very rarely refer to SCP, nor have they engaged with the UN's 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production patterns.

There have, however, been large shifts in the past quarter century, particularly on greenhouse gas emissions, which have begun to move the UK towards more sustainable consumption and production patterns. This is despite economic and population growth which tend to drive up overall consumption. These changes now need to be sustained, accelerated and broadened to bring the UK's consumption of natural resources to sustainable levels by 2030.



## Performance rating

Sustainable Development Goal Target	Rating
<b>12.1</b> Implement the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns, all countries taking action, with developed countries taking the lead, taking into account the development and capabilities of developing countries	●
<b>12.2</b> By 2030, achieve the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources	●
<b>12.3</b> By 2030, halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses	●
<b>12.4</b> By 2020, achieve the environmentally sound management of chemicals and all wastes throughout their life cycle, in accordance with agreed international frameworks, and significantly reduce their release to air, water and soil in order to minimize their adverse impacts on human health and the environment	●
<b>12.5</b> By 2030, substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse	●
<b>12.6</b> Encourage companies, especially large and transnational companies, to adopt sustainable practices and to integrate sustainability information into their reporting cycle	●
<b>12.7</b> Promote public procurement practices that are sustainable, in accordance with national policies and priorities	●
<b>12.8</b> By 2030, ensure that people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature	●
<b>12.a</b> Support developing countries to strengthen their scientific and technological capacity to move towards more sustainable patterns of consumption and production	●
<b>12.b</b> Develop and implement tools to monitor sustainable development impacts for sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products	●
<b>12.c</b> Rationalize inefficient fossil-fuel subsidies that encourage wasteful consumption by removing market distortions, in accordance with national circumstances, including by restructuring taxation and phasing out those harmful subsidies, where they exist, to reflect their environmental impacts, taking fully into account the specific needs and conditions of developing countries and minimizing the possible adverse impacts on their development in a manner that protects the poor and the affected communities	●





## Key Findings

1. UK demand for natural resources has fallen significantly. But given the state of the environment within the UK (particularly biodiversity loss) plus the global impacts of UK consumption, demand is not yet at sustainable levels
2. The Government's commitment to double resource productivity by 2050 is a step in the right direction, giving broad support to SCP, but it only implies modest declines in natural resource consumption
3. Positives include large increases in recycling rates for municipal waste and big reductions in quantities of hazardous waste, releases of toxic metals and landfilling biodegradable municipal waste. These declines need to continue – in some cases they have paused
4. Transitioning to SCP requires more action on public procurement and for companies to consistently report about their sustainability performance.
5. Growing consumer awareness of sustainability issues has not yet delivered the required changes in behaviour
6. UK action on greenhouse gas emissions is an exemplar for SCP

## Performance and progress

The UK Government, devolved administrations and business rarely refer to SCP, nor have they engaged with the UN's 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production patterns (Target 12.1). But while the UK largely ignores the term 'SCP', there are positive signs. There is growing awareness of the need for waste reduction (especially landfilled waste), efficient resource use, increased recycling and energy recovery and moving towards closed-loop production and a circular economy. Companies with international supply chains are increasingly concerned about the sustainability of key natural resources and labour conditions.

As a densely populated, highly industrialised and urbanised nation, the UK has long had to deal with pollution and over-exploitation of natural resources within its borders. Key legislation and policy areas have been agriculture and fisheries, energy and climate change, forestry, nature conservation, waste and pollution controls, regulation of the water and energy industries and land use planning.

There has been progress. Natural resource demand has been falling while the economy and population have grown. The UK's material footprint – the total quantity of raw materials extracted globally to support UK consumption – fell from a peak of 890m tonnes in 2001 (15.1 tonnes per person) to 659m tonnes (10.3 tonnes pp) in 2013 – a 31% reduction in per capita consumption (Target 12.2).<sup>218</sup> Within the UK, the annual total quantity of biomass extracted (mainly by farming, forestry and fisheries) has been stable while minerals extraction fell by 27% between 2005-2014.<sup>219</sup> Water abstractions in England reduced by 28% from 2000-2016.<sup>220</sup> Yet the UK still has serious problems of pollution and ongoing biodiversity loss.<sup>221</sup>



### SDG 2

Total UK food waste (post-farm gate) is estimated to have fallen by 12% between 2007 and 2012

Our emissions and global raw material demand does further environmental damage worldwide. The progress achieved has not reached the level of ambition needed to achieve SCP.

UK action on greenhouse gas emissions is an exemplar for national engagement with SCP and there are significant SCP-related commitments in other policy areas. The UK Government has an overarching ambition for the current generation "to be the first...to leave the environment in a better state than we found it."<sup>222</sup> This implies the sustainable management of natural resources. But it has not yet articulated how this "better state" will be measured nor the date for its achievement.

Government recently published two SCP-relevant strategies, A Green Future: Our 25-year plan to improve the environment<sup>223</sup> and The Clean Growth Strategy.<sup>224</sup> These include a commitment to double resource productivity by 2050, in line with existing trends. If GDP growth averages 2% a year then achieving this would imply an 8% reduction in total resource consumption from current levels. If annual GDP growth averages 1.5%, then by 2050 total resource consumption would be 21% lower than in 2018. The Government has not explained how reductions on this scale represent sustainable levels of natural resource consumption. Nor has it set out how this commitment will be met, and how progress will be measured.

These two documents set out, or restate, other SCP-related national targets. For food and drink consumed within the UK, there are voluntary industry-government agreements to reduce by 20%, between 2015 and 2025:

- The total quantity of resources required
- Per capita levels of food waste
- The greenhouse gas intensity of food and drink

While welcome, this falls short of Target 12.3 to halve per capita global retail and consumer food waste by 2030. The Government is 'working towards' no food waste going into landfill by 2030. Total UK food waste (post farm gate) is estimated to have fallen by 12% between 2007 and 2012<sup>225</sup>; a more rapid decline is needed over the coming decade to achieve Target 12.3.

The Government now aims for the UK to produce zero avoidable waste of all kinds by 2050 and zero avoidable plastic waste in 2042.<sup>226</sup> There is wide scope for debate around what constitutes 'avoidable', much of it economic. In the near term, there is an EU target for 50% of household waste to be recycled by 2020. Household recycling rates have remained at around 44% since 2012 after climbing during the 2000s.<sup>227</sup> (Target 12.5).

Total tonnages of waste generated in the UK have been rising – by 4.6% between 2012-2014.<sup>228</sup> Total wastes generated by households have been stable while waste from commerce and industry has fallen slightly. Rising waste from construction, demolition and mineral excavation lies behind the overall increase, although there are high recycling rates of around 90% for construction and demolition waste.

There are positives. UK annual hazardous waste arisings fell by 28% between 2004-2014<sup>229</sup> and emissions of toxic heavy metal have plummeted since 1990 (Target 12.4).<sup>230</sup> The amount of biodegradable municipal waste (BMW) disposed in landfill (largely waste food, paper and cardboard which rot to produce methane) also fell by almost 80% between 1995-2015 but there was a small increase in landfilled BMW the following year.<sup>231</sup>



### SDG 15

The UK still has serious problems of pollution and ongoing biodiversity loss, our emissions and global raw material demand does further environmental damage worldwide.



### SDG 3

UK annual hazardous waste arisings fell by 28% between 2004-2014 and emissions of toxic heavy metal have plummeted since 1990

The Government's commitment to producing a new Resources and Waste Strategy in 2018 is an important opportunity to go beyond broad ambitions and flesh out the policies required to respond to SDG12.

On company reporting (Target 12.6), regulatory requirements for major UK businesses to report regularly and in depth on their wider sustainability performance are weak. However, pressure is growing from investors and other stakeholders for better voluntary reporting.

Some policy and legislation in the UK and the devolved administrations aims to encourage public procurement of sustainable products and services (Target 12.7). With government spending accounting for some 40% of GDP, this matters for SCP. Yet here too, what is in place falls short of ensuring public procurement is a driving force for shifting to SCP.

As for ensuring citizens have the awareness required for sustainable lifestyles (Target 12.8), there are no government campaigns nor any focussed SCP content in national school curricula. There is a wide awareness of sustainability issues resulting mainly from school education, media coverage and campaigning by civil society groups, but this has not yet led to the required changes in consumption. There are also concerns about people, especially children, becoming increasingly disconnected from nature as they spend more and more time indoors looking at screens. An experience-based appreciation of nature can help underpin engagement with SCP.

## Synergies and coherence issues

SDG12 has linkages to all the others, particularly SDGs 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14 and 15.

Government, business and society prioritise economic growth (SDG8), measured by GDP, and this (plus a growing UK population) implies ever-increasing production and consumption. Decoupling this from rising environmental damage is challenging. Production and consumption growth have contributed enormously to human wellbeing and progress – but not everywhere, in every way and for everyone (SDG 10). The UK's obesity epidemic is an example of this; high levels of inequality in income, wealth, health and life chances are another.

## Local to international dimensions

The UK relies on a global supply chain to meet its demand for goods and services. This has negative impacts internationally including carbon emissions from transportation, deforestation and mineral extraction, but it can also have positive impacts including technology transfer, capacity building and improved working conditions. Shifting business practices and growing consumer awareness are helping reduce the negative impacts of international supply chains. UK businesses operating at a global scale also have a significant role to play in supporting UK SMEs to switch to more sustainable practices as they engage them as suppliers, or consumers. However the need to reduce consumption levels overall requires more concerted effort from government, business and consumers alike.



## Recommended actions

1. Stakeholders and the Government should work to establish what SCP means for the UK in the context of SDG12 and set out a position by the end of 2020
2. This position on SCP should state what is regarded as sustainable levels of consumption for critical natural resources such as freshwater, land, fisheries, timber and fibre in the UK and global contexts. The forthcoming Resources and Waste Strategy should be a step towards this. Within this, the Government should explain how it will achieve and measure progress on its goal to double resource productivity by 2050, with scope to raise ambitions in line with SDG12
3. To move towards SCP, stronger government support is required for a shift towards a circular economy which reduces waste generation and reuses, recycles and recovers. This requires further regulation on some issues (eg single use plastics), better measurement of material flows, more incentives, research and development and sustainable public procurement
4. All large companies should be required to report comprehensively on their sustainability impacts in line with the SDGs
5. Public awareness of the global impacts of consumption should be raised, with retailers and producers taking a lead. Connecting people, especially schoolchildren, to nature should underpin this

## Case study

### Climate Change Act 2008

#### SDG TARGETS: 12.2, 13.2

UK policy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions is an example of broad, effective action to enable a shift to sustainable consumption and production. It aims to address the climate change challenge through deep reductions in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The UK has a legislation-backed target (the Climate Change Act 2008) for an 80% emissions reduction between 1990 and 2050. Successive five-year carbon budgets set out the trajectory of decline. Reductions of this speed and scale are required if the UK is to contribute its fair share to reducing global climate change risks, in line with the Paris Agreement.

This legislation, and the associated policy and infrastructure investment, shape a very wide range of consumption and production activities and give some confidence to producers and consumers that there is a long-term commitment to action. It is often praised for the cross-party nature of the Act and the fact that it is not challenged by five-year electoral cycles. It encourages an increase of the efficiency with which energy and resources of all kinds are used.

The UK does not yet have all the policies and programmes in place required to achieve its emissions reduction target, but at least it has a robust mechanism to identify and monitor the shortfall (the Climate Change Committee).

[www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/27/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/27/contents)



# Climate action

Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

Prepared by



Supported by





The UK takes its responsibilities on climate action seriously. It is a key party within the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change delivering both its own obligations and supporting others to fulfil theirs. The UK's Climate Change Act (2008) underpins the nation's efforts, including the devolved administrations, to reduce carbon dioxide emissions and other greenhouse gases. There is a legally binding target of net carbon reduction by 80% on 1990 levels by 2050 (34% by 2020). The Act also requires the UK to strengthen resilience against climate risks.

Disaster risk reduction seems to be non-politicised and well accounted for using the Hyogo Framework for Action. However, there are differing opinions on how to tackle food production resilience, with projects planned to evaluate the current UK food system risks and opportunities. There are also strong disagreements on how to educate future generations about the science and actions required around climate change. Scotland and Wales are leading the way in programmes that place sustainable development and education at the heart of their policies.

Internationally, the UK is vocal and visible in supporting the Green Climate Fund and enabling developing nations to build their capacity and resilience.



## Performance rating

Sustainable Development Goal Target	Rating
<b>13.1</b> Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries	●
<b>13.2</b> Integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning	●
<b>13.3</b> Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning	●
<b>13.a</b> Implement the commitment undertaken by developed-country parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to a goal of mobilising jointly \$100 billion annually by 2020 from all sources to address the needs of developing countries in the context of meaningful mitigation actions and transparency on implementation and fully operationalize the Green Climate Fund through its capitalization as soon as possible	●
<b>13.b</b> Promote mechanisms for raising capacity for effective climate change-related planning and management in least developed countries and small island developing States, including focusing on women, youth and local and marginalized communities	●





## Key findings

1. The UK reached 'substantial' or 'comprehensive' achievement for disaster risk reduction using the Hyogo Framework for Action. This framework was replaced by the Sendai Framework in 2015, which has not been adopted and so this is not currently measured
2. Heat-related deaths and flooding are projected to increase and pose the highest direct climate change-related risks to the UK population and infrastructure, with the poorest being most vulnerable to these impacts
3. Conflicting views exist on the potential impacts of food production risks and the resilience of UK food supply chains. The UK Food Security Assessment is urgently due for renewal
4. The topic of climate change exists within the UK education system but it is not followed by all and is stronger in some subject areas than others
5. The UK is mobilising developed countries to jointly contribute \$100bn a year in climate finance for developing countries. The UK is leading and involved in initiatives with developing countries that build capacity for climate-related planning and management within developing countries

## Performance and progress

The Climate Change Act 2008 is the basis for the UK's approach to tackling and responding to climate change. The Act stipulates that emissions of greenhouse gases are reduced and risks are mitigated, and establishes the framework to deliver on these. Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have additional policies.<sup>232</sup> The Act requires the UK Government to produce a UK Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA)<sup>233</sup> to assess current and future climate change risks and opportunities. It also requires the Government to produce a National Adaptation Programme (NAP)<sup>234</sup> whose purpose is to make the country resilient to a changing climate. The NAP covers England, while the devolved administrations produce their own programmes and policies.

The UK has a legal target of greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction by 80% on 1990 levels by 2050 (34% by 2020), in 2016 the reduction was 41%.<sup>235</sup> While Wales has stipulated at least 80% by 2050, in June 2017 Scotland announced new reduction targets of 56% by 2020 and 90% by 2050. Northern Ireland aims to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by at least 35% (compared with 1990 levels) by 2025.<sup>236</sup> However, while there has been good progress to date, the UK Government urgently needs to publish plans setting out how it intends to deliver the fourth and fifth carbon budgets as without new policy, UK emissions will not continue to decrease.<sup>237</sup> It also needs to review the 80% target in light of the Paris Agreement.

Certain climate-related hazards and natural disasters are relatively infrequent and less hostile in the UK compared to other parts of the world. However, the country will experience a number of significant consequences of climate change connected to ocean temperature rises, ocean acidification and ocean deoxygenation. In addition, flooding will increase in both frequency and severity while both average and extreme temperatures are expected to rise. In the UK, an estimated 1.8 million people live in



### SDG 11

In the UK, an estimated 1.8 million people live in areas with an annual risk of flooding higher than one in every 75 years

areas with an annual risk of flooding higher than one in every 75 years. This is projected to rise to between 2.6 – 3.3 million people by the 2050s. The UK Government needs to plan for long-term flood risks and avoid exacerbating this issue through inappropriate new development (SDG11).<sup>238</sup>

Higher average and extreme temperatures are also predicted to impact the UK population. Heat-related deaths are projected to increase by 250% by 2050, from about 2,000 a year, due to climate change and the ageing population.<sup>239</sup> There is no policy in place at present to reduce the risk of overheating in buildings, although the proposed revision of England's National Planning Policy Framework covers this issue.<sup>240</sup> Indeed, since 2010, some policies designed to improve climate resilience of new homes, eg Code for Sustainable Homes, have been abolished (SDG11) and sometimes technical solutions (eg air conditioning) are put in place which create more emissions.

The UK has a recent history of prioritising resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters. Until 2015, disaster risk reduction was managed and measured using the Hyogo Framework for Action, with the UK reaching 'substantial' or 'comprehensive' achievement for each.<sup>241</sup> Its successor, the Sendai Framework<sup>242</sup>, was established in 2015 and, whilst it is voluntary and there are questions around measurements, implementing this would ensure ongoing UK commitment. Some progress has been made with a review published by Public Health England (PHE) considering the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, which "identified a number of successes but also some opportunities in the work that PHE carries out".<sup>243</sup>

One increasingly considered impact of climate-related hazards is the mental health of those affected. Experiencing extreme weather events is associated with higher incidence of depression, post-traumatic stress disorder and anxiety, particularly when there is little advance warning.<sup>244</sup> Such events expose people to circumstances that aggravate mental health risk factors and can also disrupt the treatment of existing conditions (SDG3).<sup>245</sup>

Food supply (SDG2) is one of 13 UK Critical National Infrastructure sectors, which are designated as critical for the continued delivery of essential services by the Government. The CCRA 2017 Evidence Report concludes a need for new policy to manage the potential impacts of food production risks. However, the Government disagrees and asserts that the food supply chain is resilient and performs well under stress.<sup>246</sup> But risks such as soil health and water supply are a concern given the UK's heavy reliance on fertilisers, which eventually find their way into water courses, increasing the risks of eutrophication-induced hypoxia. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs is undertaking a project on global food modelling to compare existing models aimed at integrating environmental impacts with global agricultural production and international food security over the longer term.<sup>247</sup>

The UK education system includes some climate change learning, particularly within geography and science, however, there is a sense within teaching and political spheres that climate change is not sufficiently covered. There is particular concern that "omissions would undermine the core knowledge base of pupils who will experience first-hand those impacts of climate change that are now unavoidable".<sup>248</sup> These disagreements tend to focus on the lack of teaching about mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning elements, rather than the science of climate change. Given



### SDG 3

Experiencing extreme weather events is associated with higher incidence of depression, post-traumatic stress disorder and anxiety, particularly when there is little advance warning



### SDG 4

The UK education system includes some climate change learning, particularly within geography and science, however, there is a sense within teaching and political spheres that climate change is not sufficiently covered.

that the consequences of climate change will affect us all and for generations, there should be climate change education for all (SDG4). In Scotland there is a programme placing sustainability (including climate change) at its heart – Vision 2030+<sup>249</sup> and in Wales, the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 has an objective to develop a skilled and well-educated population and operate a within low carbon society.

The UK is helping to deliver the collective goal of mobilising US\$100 billion per year in finance for developing countries by 2020<sup>250</sup> under the Green Climate Fund. By 2020, the UK pledges £5.8bn and is promoting mechanisms for raising capacity for effective climate change-related planning and management in the least developed countries, as are Scotland in its own right (SDG17).<sup>251</sup> To contextualise this, the UK Oil and Gas Authority forecasts investment of £98.5bn in unsustainable UK oil and gas production between 2015 and 2020,<sup>252</sup> so a significant financial shift must be enabled to address these issues.

## Synergies and coherence

The climate is interdependent with every SDG because it impacts food, shelter, water, business, cities and the natural world. The strongest links include generating increased energy from renewables and greater efficiency in the production of affordable and clean energy (SDG7) which reduces emissions, in addition to careful action on sustainable consumption and production (SDG12). Slowing the temperature rise would protect ecosystems and build resilience for agricultural productivity (SDGs 3, 14 and 15) and minimise climate-related incidences and deaths (SDGs 1 and 11). Quality education helps future generations to tackle climate change (SDG4).

## Local to international dimension

Focusing on policy and systems on home soil is extremely important for the UK to meet its moral and legal obligations to tackle climate change. The UK is also well placed to support other countries to build capacity, bolster resilience and lower climate-related threats through finance and skill sharing. This is being delivered through the Green Climate Fund and the Government's Department for International Development, which commits to embedding resilience-building into its work on climate change in all country programmes.<sup>253</sup>

The risk of climate-related international displacement of people needs a sharper focus, as noted in the recent UK Climate Change Risk Assessment. The World Bank has recently warned that lack of increased action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and of far-sighted development planning will result in mass movement of 140 million people inside countries and across borders.<sup>254</sup>



## Recommended actions

1. Re-establish a high-level dedicated body to drive progress on reducing UK emissions – this is a prerequisite for any government serious about meeting its obligations
2. Publish plans setting out how the UK Government intends to deliver the fourth and fifth carbon budgets
3. Reassess the UK Food Security Assessment which is significantly out of date.
4. Ensure that the three tiers of the education system go beyond the science of climate change to educate on mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning, weaving it through every subject
5. Establish a common methodology for stress testing acute and chronic climate risks to health services and critical infrastructure. This should enable benchmarking
6. Invest in food production research to support small scale farmers in the UK and in developing countries to support sustainable systems and implement practices that allow for adaptation to climate change
7. Adopt and implement a national disaster risk reduction strategy in line with the Sendai Framework, with all local governments adopting and implementing local disaster risk reduction plans in line with this

## Case Study

### Climate Just – mapping climate disadvantage in the UK

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#### **SDG TARGETS: 1.5, 11.5, 13.1**

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Climate Just is a web-based platform designed to help public services to identify who is vulnerable to climate change and fuel poverty, and why. Climate Just was created in partnership by Climate UK, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, the Environment Agency and the University of Manchester. The tool maps data about the likely exposure of neighbourhoods to climate related natural events, such as flooding or drought, against social vulnerability. This includes data such as economic status, age and health.

By using the tool, public service providers can identify the households most at risk of climate change, or those living in 'climate disadvantage'. They can also identify households likely to be in, or at risk of, fuel poverty. With this information public service providers can make socially just interventions; they are better able to understand that some of those most likely to be affected by climate change in the UK may be the least able to cope with those affects.

Evidence from Climate Just also suggests that those most likely to feel the impacts of climate change are those that currently emit the least greenhouse gases. The tool demonstrates the deep connections between socio-economic inequalities and the impact of climate change.

[www.climatejust.org.uk](http://www.climatejust.org.uk)

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## Life below water

Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

Prepared by



Supported by





The UK is a proud island nation, built on maritime trade and shared natural resources. It holds globally important marine wildlife and precious habitats, from coldwater corals to humpback whales, from seagrass beds to seabirds that act as indicators of a healthy ecosystem. Yet our seas have been intensively used for centuries and are now busier than ever, with recent pressures such as plastic waste and noise adding to established impacts on biodiversity. Globally, our oceans are also on the front line against climate change, absorbing a third of global carbon dioxide<sup>255</sup> and over 90% of the heat produced by humans<sup>256</sup> since the Industrial Revolution, becoming 30% more acidic<sup>257</sup> with consequences right up the food chain. In the face of such threats, action is needed urgently if the UK is to even get close to meeting its obligations under SDG14.



## Performance rating

Sustainable Development Goal Target	Rating
<b>14.1</b> By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, particularly from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution	●
<b>14.2</b> By 2020, sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience, and take action for their restoration in order to achieve healthy and productive oceans	●
<b>14.3</b> Minimize and address the impacts of ocean acidification, including through enhanced scientific cooperation at all levels	●
<b>14.4</b> By 2020, effectively regulate harvesting, and end overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and destructive fishing practices and implement science-based management plans, in order to restore fish stocks in the shortest time feasible, at least to levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield as determined by their biological characteristics	●
<b>14.5</b> By 2020, conserve at least 10% of coastal and marine areas, consistent with national and international law and based on best available scientific information	●
<b>14.6</b> By 2020, prohibit certain forms of fisheries subsidies which contribute to overcapacity and overfishing, and eliminate subsidies that contribute to IUU fishing, and refrain from introducing new such subsidies, recognizing that appropriate and effective special and differential treatment for developing and least developed countries should be an integral part of the WTO fisheries subsidies negotiation	●
<b>14.7</b> By 2030, increase the economic benefits to SIDS and LDCs from the sustainable use of marine resources, including through sustainable management of fisheries, aquaculture and tourism	●
<b>14.a</b> Increase scientific knowledge, develop research capacity and transfer marine technology taking into account the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission Criteria and Guidelines on the Transfer of Marine Technology, in order to improve ocean health and to enhance the contribution of marine biodiversity to the development of developing countries, in particular SIDS and LDCs	●
<b>14.b</b> Provide access of small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets	●
<b>14.c</b> Enhance the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources by implementing international law, as reflected in UNCLOS, which provides the legal framework for the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources, as recalled in paragraph 158 of “The future we want”	●





## Key findings

1. Plastics and noise are ever more pervasive and increasing, counteracting improvements in water quality
2. The UK has designated 23% of its coasts and seas as marine protected areas but management is lacking for most sites
3. Fish stocks are recovering from historic lows and the UK has a good record on fisheries subsidies but much will depend on securing a new fisheries system that has healthy ecosystems at its heart
4. Marine spatial planning in the UK is currently lacklustre and will not cover all UK waters before 2020. A new and more ambitious UK marine strategy is vital to meet these targets

## Performance and progress

Recent trends on these issues make it extremely unlikely that Target 14.1 can be met by 2025 without urgent action. Thanks to better sewage treatment, bathing water quality at our coasts has improved (Target 14.1)<sup>258</sup> although only 65% of UK waters are rated ‘excellent’ compared to a European average of 85%.<sup>259</sup> Input of hazardous metals into the marine environment has decreased by almost 80% compared to 1990 levels,<sup>260</sup> although legacy impacts of chemicals such as polychlorinated biphenyl (PCBs) continues to this day with little action proposed to deal with this.<sup>261</sup> All other forms of pollution are increasing. Diffuse pollution including nutrient runoff remains a major issue in all river basin districts in the UK,<sup>262</sup> leading to continued runoff into the sea despite the Government extending deadlines for meeting targets on the reduction of source pollution to 2021. Plastics are a particularly pervasive scourge that has gone unnoticed for decades and now dominates UK marine litter, making up almost 80% of all litter items on the seabed.<sup>263</sup> As shipping, offshore wind and oil and gas decommissioning activities all increase in UK waters over the next 20 years,<sup>264</sup> urgent solutions are also needed to prevent underwater noise impacts on fish and marine mammals. Finally, emissions of nitrogen oxides (NOX) and sulphur dioxides (SO<sub>2</sub>) from shipping and fishing have been found to be significantly higher than previously thought, although projected to reduce over time.<sup>265</sup>

The UK as a whole has made good progress in designating marine protected areas (MPAs), especially around coastal areas (Target 14.5). As of December 2017, 23% of UK seas were covered by almost 300 individual MPAs,<sup>266</sup> with further sites to be designated before 2020. However, as of 2013, only 28 of the most important sites had comprehensive management plans in place<sup>267</sup> and more recent assessments indicate that most habitats in the MPAs are not in favourable condition.<sup>268</sup> There is a real need to make these protected areas more than just “paper parks” and remove the most damaging activities from these sites. Recent progress to introduce fisheries byelaws in England and Scotland to protect vulnerable habitats such as reefs and seagrass beds are a welcome step forward.

The most recent aggregated data for UK fisheries show that a third of fish stocks in UK waters are harvested sustainably (Target 14.4).<sup>269</sup> This is a significant improvement compared to 20 years ago, when shamefully only 8% of stocks were at their maximum sustainable yield, but much work remains to end overfishing in line with Target 14.4.



### SDG 12

Plastics are a particularly pervasive scourge that has gone unnoticed for decades and now dominates UK marine litter, making up almost 80% of all litter items on the seabed



### SDG 13

There is some concern about the impacts of ocean acidification on future fisheries

Cod in the North Sea, for example, has been restored from commercial collapse to being MSC-certified.<sup>270</sup> However, even North Sea cod biomass remains at half of levels seen in the early 1970s<sup>271</sup> necessitating further careful management, while some commercial fisheries (particularly for shellfish) reflect the consequences of “fishing down the food chain” leading to degraded ecosystems that would otherwise contain much richer marine diversity.<sup>272</sup> There is also some concern about the impacts of ocean acidification on future fisheries (Target 14.3).<sup>273</sup> Fisheries subsidies in the UK are generally considered not to directly lead to or support overcapacity or illegal fisheries (Target 14.6). The impacts of the UK’s exit from the European Union on catching and importing the fish we currently consume, as well as on this subsidy regime, are still to be determined.

Many of the SDG14 targets, with the exception of ocean acidification, are translated into UK policy through the UK Marine Strategy,<sup>274</sup> which sets domestic targets and actions for biodiversity and a range of pressures, including pollution, fisheries and protected areas. This strategy is currently being reviewed and, if ambitious, could guide the future implementation of SDGs in the marine environment.

## Synergies and coherence

As so many pressures on marine ecosystems originate on land and as the oceans provide so many benefits to UK communities and economies, SDG14 is closely interlinked with, and dependent on, almost all the other SDGs. Given the vital role oceans play in mitigating and adapting to climate change, action on affordable and clean energy (SDG7) and climate (SDG13) will be critical to the long-term resilience of UK seas, while securing sustainable agricultural and fisheries regimes (SDGs 2, 6 and 12) will help reduce direct threats.

## Local to international dimension

International cooperation is crucial to SDG14 delivery. Marine systems are dynamic and transboundary and so are the human systems and the pressures upon them. Most seafood caught in the UK, for example, is exported to other countries or processed internationally before being imported back into this country. Plastics and other forms of pollution travel globally, as highlighted by the myriad destinations 28,000 plastic duck bath toys lost at sea have reached since 1992. What is more, SDG14 targets on nature conservation reflect international commitments under the Convention on Biological Diversity, to which the UK is a signatory.



### SDG 2

Diffuse pollution including nutrient runoff remains a major issue in all river basin districts in the UK, leading to continued runoff into the sea



## Recommended actions

1. Proper implementation of River Basin Management Plans to address point source and agricultural pollution into our coastal waters
2. A ban on all forms of single use plastic by 2025, as well as introducing Deposit Return Schemes and other behavioural incentives to reduce plastic use
3. A comprehensive UK-wide strategy to reduce all forms of underwater noise, particularly in important areas for sensitive species such as harbour porpoises
4. A new fisheries regime in the UK with healthy, resilient ecosystems at its heart, with financial support provided only where it supports sustainable activities and effective monitoring to support enforcement and accountability, as well as a plan to avoid bycatch of seabirds, cetaceans and non-target species
5. A revised and more ambitious UK Marine Strategy that explicitly sets targets to restore marine biodiversity and reduce collective human pressures
6. The urgent completion of a well-managed, ecologically coherent network of marine protected areas, including an increase in areas set aside as “no-go” marine sanctuaries

## Case study

### Phasing out discarding of unwanted fish

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#### **SDG TARGETS: 12.3, 14.4**

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Before 2014, under EU rules and fishing quotas, the practice of discarding unwanted or undersized fish resulted in approximately one million tonnes of dead but perfectly edible fish being thrown back in the sea every year.

The practice received lots of public attention due in part to a campaign called Fish Fight led by television chef Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall. The UK was one of the leading nations which supported the adoption of an EU wide ban on this practice so that all fish now need to be landed and reported through a so-called “landings obligation” under the reformed EU Common Fisheries Policy (CFP). Currently, this obligation applies to species such as cod, haddock and mackerel, and will extend to all quota species by 2019. The revised CFP also led to an agreement on fishing the maximum sustainable yield, aimed at maintaining sustainable fish stocks, and decentralised the management from Brussels to the member states affected.

Despite its good intentions, implementation is proving challenging and future UK policy will need to maintain the landings obligation and ensure it is effectively monitored and enforced.

## Case study



### Turning the Plastic Tide

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#### **SDG TARGETS: 14.1, 12.4**

Plastics are one of the most pervasive forms of pollution, with no part of the oceans untouched by plastic in some form or other, from abandoned fishing line to tiny microplastic fragments that get ingested by organisms right along the food chain. Around 8 million tonnes of plastic end up in the world's oceans each year, and while the UK is by no means the worst offender, plastic makes up almost 80% of all litter on the seabed in England. Action is being taken to reduce the use of single-use plastics, with charges on single-use carrier bags now across the UK and a ban on the use of microbeads, but more will be needed to fundamentally change the way we look at and use plastic in all its forms.

The issue of marine plastics rose to the forefront of consumer consciousness in 2017, thanks largely to the BBC's screening of David Attenborough's *Blue Planet II* and the horrific images of marine litter and their impact on biodiversity. A stream of commitments has followed from some of the UK's biggest retailers. In April 2018 WRAP launched its UK Plastics Pact where 42 companies pledged to make 100% of their plastic packaging recyclable, compostable or reusable by 2025.

**[www.wrap.org.uk/content/the-uk-plastics-pact](http://www.wrap.org.uk/content/the-uk-plastics-pact)**

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## Life on land

Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

Prepared by





Ecosystems and species are the building blocks we depend on for food, water, clean air, climate regulation and many other benefits and the risks posed by biodiversity loss should be considered on the same scale as climate change.<sup>275</sup> Land in the UK is intensively managed and used, with agriculture accounting for approximately 70-75% of land use.<sup>276</sup> There are large pressures on UK wildlife and habitats with 56% of species declining between 1970 and 2013 and reports stating that this is one of the world's most nature-depleted countries.<sup>277</sup> The UK Overseas Territories are also important for biodiversity, 94% of our unique species can be found across these fourteen territories.<sup>278</sup>

2020 is a key year for action. A post-2020 global biodiversity strategy to replace the Aichi Targets (2011 to 2020) will be negotiated under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and, because of this, it is also the year that many of the targets under SDG15 come to an end. In its 25 Year Environment Plan the UK Government pledged to work internationally to build support for an ambitious post-2020 agenda under the CBD. It is vital that ambition under SDG15 continues to 2030.



## Performance rating

Sustainable Development Goal Target	Rating
<b>15.1</b> By 2020, ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in particular forests, wetlands, mountains and drylands, in line with obligations under international agreements	●
<b>15.2</b> By 2020, promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and substantially increase afforestation and reforestation globally	●
<b>15.3</b> By 2030, combat desertification, restore degraded land and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought and floods, and strive to achieve a land degradation-neutral world	●
<b>15.4</b> By 2030, ensure the conservation of mountain ecosystems, including their biodiversity, in order to enhance their capacity to provide benefits that are essential for sustainable development	●
<b>15.5</b> Take urgent and significant action to reduce the degradation of natural habitats, halt the loss of biodiversity and, by 2020, protect and prevent the extinction of threatened species	●
<b>15.6</b> Promote fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources and promote appropriate access to such resources, as internationally agreed.	●
<b>15.7</b> Take urgent action to end poaching and trafficking of protected species of flora and fauna and address both demand and supply of illegal wildlife products	○
<b>15.8</b> By 2020, introduce measures to prevent the introduction and significantly reduce the impact of invasive alien species on land and water ecosystems and control or eradicate the priority species	●
<b>15.9</b> By 2020, integrate ecosystem and biodiversity values into national and local planning, development processes, poverty reduction strategies and accounts	●
<b>15.a</b> Mobilize and significantly increase financial resources from all sources to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity and ecosystems	●
<b>15.b</b> Mobilize significant resources from all sources and at all levels to finance sustainable forest management and provide adequate incentives to developing countries to advance such management, including for conservation and reforestation	●
<b>15.c</b> Enhance global support for efforts to combat poaching and trafficking of protected species, including by increasing the capacity of local communities to pursue sustainable livelihood opportunities	●





## Key findings

1. The biggest threats to UK biodiversity remain policy-driven agricultural change and climate change. UK indicators for species trends have a general downward trajectory which has continued since the 1970s, and the decline has not slowed in recent years
2. Just 10% of UK land is currently protected for biodiversity, and a low proportion of these areas are in favourable condition. Degradation of habitat outside protected areas, including peatland, continues at an alarming rate
3. While there are significant efforts to improve “Life on Land” in the UK, such as expanding woodland coverage and protected areas, these actions do not always ensure that biodiversity recovers or is protected. For example, woodland expansion has generally favoured low biodiversity value non-native species
4. National ambition for biodiversity conservation needs to be clearly set out in binding ‘SMART’ targets and regular reported milestones
5. Governments in the UK need to ensure improved and better resourced land management schemes and targeted species recovery schemes to prevent declines continuing, with significant progress in improving the condition of habitats both within and outside protected areas
6. As the UK leaves the EU, there is an opportunity to redirect public money for land management towards public goods such as biodiversity

## Performance and progress

Target 15.1 has two distinct indicators which, rated separately, would result in an Amber rating for forest areas and Red for protected areas. The overall rating is Red because of the current condition and extent of UK protected areas and the impact these have on ecosystems and species conservation.

Woodland cover doubled across the UK between the 1940s and the 1980s<sup>279</sup> and today covers 13% of the total land area<sup>280</sup> (Target 15.1 and Target 15.2) (10% in England; 8% in Northern Ireland; 16% in Wales and 18% in Scotland).<sup>281</sup> However, the UK remains one of the least wooded countries in Europe (average woodland cover 37%).<sup>282</sup> All four UK nations have ambitious expansion targets but woodland growth has historically favoured non-native commercial species.<sup>283</sup> Governments should ensure that these targets support native woodland expansion and are met in an environmentally sensitive way.

The UK Forestry Standard<sup>284</sup> ensures that minimum international sustainable forestry and environmental commitments are met. The UK Woodland Assurance Standard<sup>285</sup> (UKWAS) builds on this as an independent means to verify sustainable woodland management but it is voluntary and only 44% of UK woodlands are in UKWAS.<sup>286</sup>

Only 10% of UK land is currently protected for its biodiversity (rather than for its landscape value). Such areas need to be effectively managed as well as protected to maintain and restore their biodiversity value. Data on the condition of these sites (where available) makes clear that much of this area is not being effectively managed.



### SDG 13

Nature based solutions provide up to 37% of the emission reductions needed by 2030 to keep to a 2-degree climate target

In England, only 38% of Sites of Special Scientific Interest by area are in a favourable condition; that figure has been declining over recent years.

The UK Government(s) need to address significant gaps in the protected areas network and establish an improved regulatory framework which enshrines clear, ambitious, and time-bound targets for improvements in their conditions, with an independent and sufficiently resourced and robust environmental watchdog (or watchdogs) with power to hold government(s) to account.

The Committee on Climate Change recommends that all UK soils should be sustainably managed by 2030,<sup>287</sup> including bringing all blanket bog into favourable condition by 2030. Peatland condition generally is poor with only 4% of England's upland deep peatlands in good ecological condition.<sup>288</sup> The areas of peat under agriculture release even more greenhouse gas emissions than our uplands; a fundamental change to their management and use is required to halt both emissions and soil loss. Agricultural practice on other soil types should also change to harness the benefits of ecologically healthy soil for farming. The post-Brexit agriculture framework and the England Peatland Strategy<sup>289</sup> are key opportunities to set a course for achieving Target 15.3. Both could adopt actions that end carbon emissions from soils, as a key indicator of soil sustainability.

UK indicators for species trends have a general downward trajectory (Target 15.5) which has not slowed in recent years. There are 12 UK biodiversity indicator measures for species; one (for seabirds) has not been assessed and another (plants in the wider countryside) is under development. Of the ten that have been assessed, the short-term trend was improving for one, deteriorating for four with little or no overall change for five.<sup>290</sup> The State of Nature, a collaborative report that collates data from over 50 organisations, provides an update on how wildlife is faring across the UK, its seas, Crown Dependencies and Overseas Territories. Its 2016 analysis found that for protected species, extinction risk is high, and 15% of the 8,000 species assessed in Great Britain were threatened with extinction.<sup>291</sup> The biggest threat to biodiversity in the UK remains policy-driven agricultural land-use change.<sup>292</sup> The UK Government(s) need to ensure improved and better resourced land management schemes and targeted species recovery schemes to prevent declines continuing.

The UK has improved its legislation for invasive alien species (IAS) (Target 15.8) since the EU's IAS Regulation<sup>293</sup> came into force in 2015. But there remain significant and systemic gaps in the legislation and its implementation, with four statutory implementation deadlines missed and no timetable for achieving them. This target also encourages signatories to control or eradicate IAS already established in their territories. The Government has not identified a list of priority species for management, although it does have a framework to do so under the EU IAS Regulation. The Government should legislate for and implement statutory IAS border inspections, surveillance networks and requirements for rapid eradication of establishing IAS.

Biodiversity policy, planning and development processes are all devolved to the different administrations of the UK (Target 15.5). Public authorities have biodiversity duties and the planning systems of each country all refer to the need to protect or enhance biodiversity, but it is unclear how these duties and powers are exercised. There is a growing use of natural capital accounting by both public bodies and land managers and increasing commitment to biodiversity net gain, but only on a voluntary and unregulated basis. Because there is no baseline data for Target 15.5 and no UK-level indicator has been



## SDG 2

Land in the UK is intensively managed and used, with agriculture accounting for approximately 70–75% of land use



## SDG 12

The UK Forestry Standard ensures that minimum international sustainable forestry and environmental commitments are met

developed, it is not possible to assess progress objectively. An assessment based on the UK 5th national report to the Convention on Biological Diversity<sup>294</sup> suggests an amber assessment for the current state.

The ONS indicator for Target 15.a is the Overseas Development Aid for Forestry estimates in duplicate with 15.b but this does not reflect the “financial resources from all sources to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity and ecosystems”. The best indicator available, published by the JNCC, measures UK public spending on biodiversity.<sup>295</sup> Charitable and private sectors do provide some funding but public spending is the largest source. Since 2008-09 total UK public spending has fallen from £611 million/year to £497 million/year. Public spending plans for the coming years do not reverse that trend.<sup>296</sup> Beyond 2020, however, there is the opportunity for the UK to achieve this reversal by maintaining the total Common Agricultural Policy budget and redirecting most of it to environmental land management.<sup>297</sup>

## Synergies and coherence

The environment is one of the core pillars of the SDGs with nearly half of the human population directly dependent on natural resources for their livelihoods<sup>298</sup>. In a recent assessment, the Intergovernmental Science Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services has found that failure to meet the environment goals of the SDGs will totally undermine the achievement of all others. Biodiversity and ecosystems therefore feature across many of the SDGs and associated targets. SDG15 is particularly important in tackling climate change (SDG13) given greenhouse gas emissions from land use change, and nature based solutions can provide up to 37% of the emission reductions needed by 2030 to keep to a 2-degree target.<sup>299</sup> There are also strong connections with SDGs 1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12 and 14.

## Local to international dimension

Protecting, conserving and restoring the natural environment and its ecosystems has local, regional and global relevance. The resources we consume in the UK have international supply chains; these can have both positive and negative impacts on the countries we source goods and materials from, perhaps most evidently through deforestation. The habitats we provide in the UK can support species such as migratory birds or pollinating insects that have global importance.

At a local level, we can create positive or negative change too - from polluting a water course and subsequently impacting wildlife downstream, to providing the right conditions for species to flourish and spread, such as the successful reintroduction of the Red Kite.



## Recommended actions

1. National ambition for biodiversity conservation needs to be clearly set out in binding ‘SMART’ targets with regular reporting milestones
2. Forestry: Commission a mapping assessment for each part of the UK in order to guide decisions and target support where it will maximise sustainable forestry delivery. Further promote and encourage sign up to sustainability standards
3. Protected areas: Address gaps in the protected areas network and establish an improved regulatory framework with clear, ambitious and time-bound targets to improve their condition with robust enforcement mechanisms to ensure accountability
4. Soil: Strategies for agriculture and peat should include sustainable management of soils to end carbon emissions
5. Habitats and species: Improved, better resourced land management schemes and targeted species recovery schemes
6. Invasive Alien Species (IAS): Legislate for and implement statutory border inspections, surveillance networks and requirements for rapid eradication of establishing IAS
7. Planning: Introduce a national spatial plan for England providing an effective framework for spatial planning and helping to integrate and deliver other objectives, including for the natural environment. Biodiversity net gain should be mandated across the UK
8. Finance: Maintain the scale of the budget for the Common Agricultural Policy post-Brexit and shift towards a public money for public goods-based land management policy

## Case study



### WWF Timber Scorecard

**SDG TARGETS: 12.2, 15.1, 15.2**

The UK imports almost 80% of its timber, making it the second highest net importer of timber products after China.<sup>300</sup> UK actors need to take responsibility to ensure the sustainable use of this timber, and the sustainable management of the world's forests where it is sourced. Businesses can incentivise sustainable forest management through only trading in products that generate social, environmental, and economic benefits in timber-producing countries.

In 2017, WWF published its second Timber Scorecard, reviewing the actions that UK companies are taking to ensure the timber products they buy are sustainable. This sort of transparency allows citizens to make informed decisions and contributes to a global marketplace aligned with the sustainable management of forests.

The scorecard examined over 120 companies from a range of sectors: furniture, construction, general retail, publishing and beyond. The results were mixed. Some companies perform well, with strong commitments to sustainable sourcing. They recognise that the long-term viability of their business depends on a sustainable supply of timber products, and that their customers increasingly expect products that don't damage people or planet. Equally, the Scorecard showed that many companies haven't yet aligned their business to sustainable practices, and more action is needed to achieve a fully sustainable UK timber market.

[www.wwf.org.uk/timberscorecard](http://www.wwf.org.uk/timberscorecard)

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## Peace, justice and strong institutions

Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

Prepared by



At the core of SDG16 are key democratic principles including respect for the rule of law and access to justice, principles which have underpinned the historical development of parliamentary democracy in the United Kingdom. SDG16 aspires to protect fundamental freedoms, access to justice, a peaceful society, reduced corruption and bribery, as well as increased transparency and participatory decision-making.

So, at face value, implementation of SDG16 in the UK may appear to be an easy task – the UK is a long-established western democracy with statistical trends over the last ten years or so showing decreasing violence and crime. However, contemporary challenges – such as disruptive technologies, populism, terrorism, high-level corruption, social media, the impact of austerity, the removal of legal aid, and leaving the European Union – mean the UK Government cannot be complacent about recent backsliding that threatens implementation of SDG16.

As Scotland (in its National Performance Framework)<sup>301</sup> and Wales (in the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act)<sup>302</sup> take measures to report and track progress on the SDGs, further UK-wide measures to ensure effective, accountable and inclusive institutions, provide justice for all and maintain a peaceful and inclusive society for sustainable development by 2030 and beyond are needed.



## Performance rating

Sustainable Development Goal Target	Rating
<b>16.1</b> Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere	●
<b>16.2</b> End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children	●
<b>16.3</b> Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all	●
<b>16.4</b> By 2030, significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organized crime	●
<b>16.5</b> Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms	●
<b>16.6</b> Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels	●
<b>16.7</b> Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels	●
<b>16.8</b> Broaden and strengthen the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance	●
<b>16.9</b> By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration	●
<b>16.10</b> Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements	●
<b>16.a</b> Strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, for building capacity at all levels, in particular in developing countries, to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime	●
<b>16.b</b> Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development	●



## Key findings

1. There has been an overall long-term reduction in the rates of violence and crime in the UK, but in the last few years there has been a sharp increase particularly in the rates of reported harassment and hate crimes (on race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity)
2. Although the conflict in Northern Ireland ended following the 1998 Good Friday Agreement, the UK is still under the threat of ‘international terrorism’ – there were attacks in London and Manchester in 2017
3. While corruption isn’t endemic in the UK, there are concerns in sectors such as construction and prisons. Investigations into ‘grand corruption’ show limited efforts to halt illicit financial flows into the country
4. The UK has established independent human rights institutions in compliance with the Paris Principles, but continued threats and actions from the UK Government may restrict fundamental freedoms

## Performance and progress

The devolved nature of justice and policing means there are various policies dealing with crime in each of the UK’s home nations. Nevertheless, they have all experienced an overall decrease in the number of reported homicides (Target 16.1), cases of sexual or physical violence (Target 16.1), and crimes related to discrimination (commonly referred to as ‘hate crimes’) in the last ten years (Target 16.b).<sup>303</sup> Only Scotland has seen a reduction in firearms offences (Target 16.4).<sup>304</sup>

Since 2015 however, the number of reported sexual or physical violence and homicides in the UK has begun to rise, as illustrated by the headlines about the spike in knife crime and murder in London, although in Northern Ireland the rate of homicide has continued to fall.<sup>305</sup> Yet despite the recent rise in some kinds of violence, it appears the majority of the UK population – men more so than women, and in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland more than in England – report feeling increasingly safe walking the streets after dark year-on-year since 2012/13 (Target 16.1).<sup>306</sup> Hate crime has also started to rise again in recent years – and while race-related hate crimes remain the most commonly reported type, sexual orientation or disability-related hate crimes have risen more sharply since 2012.<sup>307</sup> As reports of human trafficking increases, it is notable that women and girls are more likely to be exploited for sexual exploitation and men and boys for labour exploitation (Target 16.2).<sup>308</sup>

The pre-trial detention rate in England and Wales has been relatively consistent but is considered high, at around 11% of the prison population, because many people are either acquitted following a period on remand or are released from court.<sup>309</sup> The Lammy Review has highlighted potential problems in the way black and ethnic minority defendants are treated.<sup>310</sup> They are over 20% more likely to be on remand in prison awaiting trial in Crown Courts than white defendants (Target 16.3).<sup>311</sup> Violence in prisons has also risen sharply in recent years.<sup>312</sup> Cuts to legal aid in the UK since 2013 have decimated access to justice according to Amnesty International, leaving thousands of the most vulnerable without essential legal advice and support.<sup>313</sup>



### SDG 10

While race-related hate crimes remain the most commonly-reported type, sexual orientation or disability-related hate crimes have risen more sharply since 2012

Concerning protection of children (Target 16.2), the 2014 UN Universal Periodic Review recommended the UK provide better protection from sexual abuse and exploitation. Clauses in UK and Scottish law that allow “reasonable chastisement” of children (Children Act 2004 (Section 54)) and “justifiable assault” (Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2003 (Section 51)) have been labelled inadequate, particularly given UK obligations under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.<sup>314</sup> On the other hand, the Goddard Inquiry on child sexual abuse has led to increased spending on support for sexual abuse services as well as a Centre for Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse to help tackle child sexual exploitation.<sup>315</sup>

Recent studies show an increase in the percentage of 16-to-24-year olds reporting having experienced psychological abuse (8.2% in 2017) and sexual assault (3% in 2017) (Target 16.2).<sup>316</sup> Also of concern is the rise in online abuse, and trafficking and exploitation by ‘county lines’ criminal networks selling drugs.<sup>317</sup>

While the 1998 Good Friday Agreement signalled the end to the longstanding conflict in Northern Ireland, the threat of conflict and violence there is still considered possible but unlikely (Target 16.1).<sup>318</sup> The biggest change to conflict-related deaths in the UK has been the rise of terrorist incidents inspired by overseas terrorist organisations, such as the attacks in London and Manchester in 2017 that killed over 30 people.

Corruption (Target 16.5) is not endemic in the UK but there are concerns to be addressed. Bribery is not recognised as a widespread problem: 5% of UK citizens said they had paid a bribe in the past year when polled by Transparency International in 2013.<sup>319</sup> However, higher instances are noted in certain sectors such as construction where over a third of respondents to a survey in 2013 stated that they had been offered a bribe or incentive at least once.<sup>320</sup>

Other investigations by journalists and civil society organisations have highlighted corrupt activity in local government,<sup>321</sup> prisons,<sup>322</sup> and politics. Transparency International UK found some 40 examples of loopholes across UK political institutions where rules allow behaviour that can open the door to corrupt activity and lobbying abuses.<sup>323</sup>

The UK is a top destination for money laundering. The National Crime Agency estimates at least £90 billion in illicit wealth flows through the UK every year.<sup>324</sup> Investigations into ‘grand corruption’ show that the UK has a weak anti-money laundering system which corrupt individuals can bypass using ‘professional enablers’ to buy UK property anonymously through foreign companies. Transparency International UK has identified 176 properties worth £4.4 billion in the UK bought with suspicious wealth (Target 16.4).<sup>325</sup>

As a long-established democracy, a member of the Council of Europe, OSCE and other international organisations, the UK has long been seen to guarantee fundamental freedoms. The UK’s human rights institutions comply with the Paris Principles with the UN-recognised ‘A’ status accreditation (the highest) renewed in 2015 for both the Equalities Commission and Northern Ireland Human Rights Institution (Target 16a).<sup>326</sup>

Even though the UK Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 2000 guarantees the public’s right of access to information with limited exceptions, and the Scottish FOI Act offers a slightly more transparent regime, both laws offer a narrower interpretation of that right compared to some European countries (Target 16.10).<sup>327</sup> Legislative changes attempting to weaken the UK FOI Act have failed<sup>328</sup> but government has still become less transparent in



### SDG 5

It is notable that women and girls are more likely to be exploited for sexual exploitation and men and boys for labour exploitation



### SDG 17

The UK is a top destination for money laundering. The National Crime Agency estimates at least £90 billion in illicit wealth flows through the UK every year

practice since 2010.<sup>329</sup> Recently, unpublished Brexit impact assessments in Westminster, Northern Ireland's Renewable Heating Initiative scandal and concerns around the lack of minute-taking in Scottish government have highlighted these concerns.<sup>330</sup>

While the provision of some form of legal identity is not a problem for the majority of the UK population, recent events around the treatment of post-war Commonwealth migrants have put the issue under the spotlight and raised concerns about treatment of EU migrants once the UK leaves the EU (Target 16.9).<sup>331</sup>

The UK is one of the lowest-ranked Western European countries in the World Press Freedom Index. While there are high-profile cases like the extensive online abuse and threats to BBC political editor Laura Kuenssberg, there are significant concerns related to implementation of the Investigatory Powers Act, threats to restrict encryption tools such as WhatsApp, and insufficient protection mechanisms for whistleblowers, journalists, and their sources (Target 16.10).

## Synergies and coherence

SDG16 is essential for successfully and sustainably implementing all other SDGs. Targets related to institutions and good governance also appear in SDGs 1, 5, 10, 11, and 17, while SDG10 supports the full participation of all people in society. The rule of law and access to justice aspects of SDG16 are supported by targets of other SDGs related to discrimination and equality (SDGs 4, 5 and 10), and for employment and labour rights (SDG8).

SDG16 supports promoting a culture of peace (SDG4) by providing safe environments of various kinds (SDG4, 8 and 11) as well as through preventing and ending violence, including gender-based violence (SDG5) and harmful and abusive practices (SDGs 5, 8 and 10).

## Local to international dimension

The Open Government Partnership (OGP), of which the UK is a member, channels the global open government movement by requiring national government reform to be more transparent, participatory and accountable. SDG16 and open government principles are also increasingly relevant to local government around the world, as the global OGP initiative pushes open government reforms locally via its OGP Local Programme, of which Scotland is a participant. As part of becoming a more open government, Scotland aims to improve on all the SDG indicators, and has incorporated measurement against the specific targets in its National Performance Framework.





## Recommended actions

1. Develop and implement measures that will reduce crime and violence including hate crime
2. To tackle increasing prison violence and self-harm, the UK Government must urgently increase the staff-prisoner ratio
3. Identify key actions that the UK Government and devolved administrations will take to ensure all children have a good childhood and the best possible start in life, following recommendations from the UN Committee and Universal Periodic Review
4. Accelerate introducing a public register of the real owners of overseas companies being used to buy UK property and bid for UK government contracts
5. Build a better picture of corruption in the UK and work up a plan to tackle the problem
6. To break the cycle of continuing overspends in public service provision the UK Government should budget to spend more money on these services up-front
7. The UK Government should aim to ensure those in senior civil service positions come from more diverse backgrounds
8. The UK Government, Parliament and devolved administrations should work towards improving public participation and deliberation in decision making-processes, particularly to address complex challenges that the UK collectively faces
9. Monitoring and reporting progress on SDG16 targets should be on a UK-wide basis

## Case study



### Grassroots

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#### SDG TARGETS: 16.1, 16.3

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Grassroots is a faith-based organisation in Luton, working at the sharp edge of engagement between faiths and society. Grassroots collaborates on issues such as community cohesion, peace-building, injustice and inequalities. It works in partnership with the local authority, police service, faith communities and religious leaders, foodbanks, environmental organisations, schools, businesses, and women's groups. Extremism has been a concern within Luton's multi-ethnic communities and Grassroots has been strategic in pulling together key actors to prevent community destabilisation. They have worked with partners to nurture a content, secure, and vibrant community.

Grassroots has been responsible for providing community education in schools, delivered accredited multi-faith, multicultural awareness training to young people through the Catalyst programme, and been a key provider for local theological social justice training for churches and other faith organisations. Through its advocacy for and promotion of Fairtrade products and goods, the establishment of community peace gardens, sport programmes, and support for mental health, Grassroots has demonstrated a deep-seated commitment to fostering all-round health and well-being in Luton.

From its inception, Grassroots has worked collaboratively with faith organisations and been grounded within the communities, working together to fulfil their needs as well as support ambitions for a better future.

[www.grassrootsluton.org.uk](http://www.grassrootsluton.org.uk)

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## Case study



### Open Government Partnership

#### SDG TARGETS: 16.6

In 2011, the UK co-founded the Open Government Partnership (OGP), an international initiative to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption, and harness new technologies to strengthen governance.

At the core of the OGP process are National Action Plans, developed and implemented in two-year cycles. They contain commitments to open government reform developed jointly in a participatory process between civil society and government. Good open government reforms transform the way government works, ensuring it is properly responsive to citizens while improving efficiency and effectiveness, and preventing abuses of state power.

In 2018, the UK started the cycle for its fourth national action plan. Previous action plans have included ambitious reforms such as the creation of a public register of beneficial owners of companies, a cross-government anti-corruption plan, and increasing the transparency of payments received by extractive companies as well as government spending on international aid and development. Scotland is also developing its second open government action plan. One of the commitments made in the first - to introduce participatory budgeting - is a UK first. Other commitments in Scotland's first action plan included reforms on financial transparency, measuring Scotland's progress, delivering a Fairer Scotland and increasing participation.

[www.opengovpartnership.org](http://www.opengovpartnership.org)

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## Partnerships for the Goals

Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

Prepared by



Supported by





The UK Government played an important role in drawing up the SDGs and has maintained its official commitment to their implementation. SDG17 calls for an effective set of structures and partnerships fit for furthering sustainable development, both locally and internationally. Yet the most striking feature of the UK's current performance on SDG17 is the absence of two important types of mechanisms vital for coherent and effective implementation of the SDGs as a whole. One is a cross-government mechanism for sustainable development policy development and co-ordination at a senior level in Whitehall. The other is an official UK-wide multi-stakeholder partnership for SDG implementation and the exchange of ideas. The first could be established fairly easily, the second could simply formalise UKSSD as the multi-stakeholder partnership that government becomes active in. Neither raises difficult issues of policy or principle.

In the context of current Brexit preparations there is now a need for much greater focus on the content of trade and trade arrangements, which have major implications for environmental and public health standards, and for the domestic economy. The lack of parliamentary control over trade agreements is a matter for concern and an important missing piece in the country's SDG partnership arrangements.



## Performance rating

Sustainable Development Goal Target	Rating
17.1 Strengthen domestic resource mobilization, including through international support to developing countries to improve domestic capacity for tax and other revenue collection	<span style="color: orange;">●</span>
17.2 Developed countries to implement fully their official development assistance commitments, including the commitment by many developed countries to achieve the target of 0.7% of ODA/GNI to developing countries and 0.15 to 0.20% of ODA/GNI to least developed countries; ODA providers are encouraged to consider setting a target to provide at least 0.20% of ODA/GNI to least developed countries	<span style="color: green;">●</span>
17.3 Mobilize additional financial resources for developing countries from multiple sources	<span style="color: gray;">●</span>
17.4 Assist developing countries in attaining long-term debt sustainability through coordinated policies aimed at fostering debt financing, debt relief and debt restructuring, as appropriate, and address the external debt of highly indebted poor countries to reduce debt distress	<span style="color: gray;">●</span>
17.5 Adopt and implement investment promotion regimes for least developed countries	<span style="color: green;">●</span>
17.6 Enhance North-South, South-South and triangular regional and international cooperation on and access to science, technology and innovation and enhance knowledge-sharing on mutually agreed terms, including through improved coordination among existing mechanisms, in particular at the United Nations level, and through a global technology facilitation mechanism	<span style="color: green;">●</span>
17.7 Promote the development, transfer, dissemination and diffusion of environmentally sound technologies to developing countries on favourable terms, including on concessional and preferential terms, as mutually agreed	<span style="color: gray;">○</span>
17.8 Fully operationalize the technology bank and science, technology and innovation capacity-building mechanism for least developed countries by 2017 and enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology	<span style="color: green;">●</span>
17.9 Enhance international support for implementing effective and targeted capacity-building in developing countries to support national plans to implement all the sustainable development goals, including through North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation	<span style="color: green;">●</span>



Sustainable Development Goal Target	Rating
<b>17.10</b> Promote a universal, rules-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system under the World Trade Organization, including through the conclusion of negotiations under its Doha Development Agenda	●
<b>17.11</b> Significantly increase the exports of developing countries, in particular with a view to doubling the least developed countries' share of global exports by 2020	●
<b>17.12</b> Realize timely implementation of duty-free and quota-free market access on a lasting basis for all least developed countries, consistent with World Trade Organization decisions, including by ensuring that preferential rules of origin applicable to imports from least developed countries are transparent and simple, and contribute to facilitating market access	●
<b>17.13</b> Enhance global macroeconomic stability, including through policy coordination and policy coherence	●
<b>17.14</b> Enhance policy coherence for sustainable development	●
<b>17.15</b> Respect each country's policy space and leadership to establish and implement policies for poverty eradication and sustainable development	●
<b>17.16</b> Enhance the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in all countries, in particular developing countries	●
<b>17.17</b> Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships	●
<b>17.18</b> By 2020, enhance capacity-building support to developing countries, including for least developed countries and small island developing States, to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts	●
<b>17.19</b> By 2030, build on existing initiatives to develop measurements of progress on sustainable development that complement gross domestic product, and support statistical capacity-building in developing countries	●



## Key findings

1. The Government deserves praise for sticking to and achieving its overseas aid expenditure commitment
2. There is no effective cross-departmental mechanism in Whitehall dealing with sustainable development policy development and co-ordination
3. There is no official UK sustainable development partnership to bring Government and other stakeholders together
4. There is a need, in the context of Brexit, to bring together stakeholders and establish parliamentary control for negotiations on the UK's future international trade arrangements

## Performance and progress

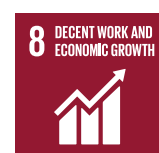
The UK has a good record on having established and maintained many of the underpinnings necessary for implementation of the SDGs, such as the capacity for collecting statistical information and tax revenue. These aspects of SDG17 are now principally a matter for governments of developing countries, although the existence of tax havens outside the UK itself, in Crown Dependencies and Overseas Territories, remains a problem (Target 17.1). There is always scope for improving and increasing the range of statistics, for example on the scale of technology transfer particularly relevant for sustainable development (Target 17.16) or in relation to the circular economy.

The UK lacks an effective cross-cutting mechanism for sustainable development policy development and co-ordination across Whitehall (Target 17.14). There is some interdepartmental co-ordination on the SDGs organised by Department for International Development (DFID) and the Cabinet Office, but in the vast majority of cases this has not succeeded in its aim of embedding the SDGs in the Single Departmental Plans.<sup>332</sup> Previous mechanisms, established following the 2005 ‘Securing the Future’<sup>333</sup> white paper, including the ‘watchdog’ role of the Sustainable Development Commission, have been dismantled and not replaced. The 2005 arrangements were often subject to being overruled in practice by the Treasury, but could usefully be re-examined as a starting point for devising new arrangements.

The House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee (EAC) considered this question in a recent inquiry and report,<sup>334</sup> to which the Government responded.<sup>335</sup> This response relied a great deal on the Single Departmental Plans which each Whitehall department produces. Although the second iteration of the plans has seen many Departments align their objectives to the SDGs, this does not yet amount to a specific delivery plan and there is no review of policy coherence issues or gap analysis. The connection to SDG targets is also missing so it is not yet detailed enough to assess if the UK is on track or not.

There is currently an important opportunity here. This centres on the question of what, after Brexit, will replace the roles played by the European Court of Justice and the European Commission in the enforcement of air quality and other environmental standards. Ministers have promised a consultation on options for setting up a new environmental watchdog body. The enforcement of good environmental standards is important, but the remit of the new body could be expanded beyond that area of responsibility to cover a broader sustainable development remit, enabling it to take the initiative in leading and/or monitoring Government action for all of the SDGs.

The UK also lacks an official cross-sector structure or process for promoting sustainable development (Target 17.17). Positive initiatives are being taken by a variety of stakeholders, not least UKSSD, including businesses, trade unions, faith organisations, NGOs, and in local government. However, these are not being fully brought together and therefore the benefits of government leadership and resources, dialogue between stakeholders, public engagement and co-ordination of efforts are not being felt on as large a scale as could be achieved through the creation of a new multi-stakeholder structure or process. This, along with an across-departmental mechanism within Government discussed above, could make key contributions to achieving SDG17 and the other goals.



SDG17 also raises issues concerning trade, investment, and overseas aid (Targets 17.2, 17.3, 17.5, 17.10, 17.11 and 17.12). Here there are problems of coherence with other Goals. Trade, investment, and aid have not always been helpful for the achievement of Goals on, for example, biodiversity (SDGs 14 and 15), climate change (SDG13), and equalities (SDGs 5 and 10). This is principally a problem in the design of the SDG17 targets and indicators rather than a failure by the UK to play its part. The Government deserves particular praise for sticking to its overseas aid expenditure commitment (Target 17.2).

Trade negotiations and agreements are currently conducted by government through Crown prerogative, with limited parliamentary involvement. Brexit makes this anomaly a much more important and urgent problem than it was previously, because the Government proposes to achieve new trade agreements with the EU27, USA, Australia, India, and many other countries. A new government department (Department for International Trade) has been set up for this purpose. Trade agreements have major implications for the ability of a country to maintain environmental, public health, and consumer protection standards, and to maintain its own domestic economy in sectors which are important for national security, anti-monopoly, employment, and other reasons. The context of Brexit has moved the need for parliamentary decision-making over trade agreements higher up the political agenda.

It will also be important to reform the World Trade Organisation's objectives and operations (Target 17.10) so that it works in line with the SDGs, including those where there is most risk of conflict – on climate change (SDG13), biodiversity loss (SDGs 14 and 15), and equalities (SDGs 5 and 10). The UK Government should follow up on its earlier involvement in drawing up the SDGs by taking action internationally to promote the application of the Goals by global institutions including the WTO, especially in its disputes procedures.

## Synergies and coherence Issues

Some of SDG17's targets and indicators suffer from being apparently indiscriminate as to the content (sustainable or otherwise) of, for example, investment (Target 17.5), overseas aid expenditure (Target 17.2), trade volume (Target 17.10), and it is therefore necessary that SDG17 is considered in conjunction with the other Goals and their targets.

## Local to international dimensions

A UK multi-stakeholder partnership for sustainable development could play an important role internationally (as implied by Target 17.16), as well as within the UK. The UK's statistical and scientific expertise could also be brought to bear on the development internationally of improved indicators of sustainability (as implied by Target 17.19), so that GDP no longer plays as wide a range of roles within decision-making as it does currently.





## Recommended actions

1. Establish arrangements for effective cross-government sustainable development policy, development and co-ordination
2. Include in this a wide-ranging sustainable development remit, in addition to an environmental standards enforcement role, for the new ‘watchdog’ body proposed by ministers
3. Reform the Treasury so that it plays a positive role in the delivery of the SDGs. This should include the appointment of a Cabinet minister as Sustainable Development Secretary to the Treasury
4. Convene a multi-stakeholder process for co-operation and the exchange of views on the implementation of the SDGs, ideally with UKSSD as a formal partner
5. Introduce or amend legislation to establish parliamentary control over new trade agreements
6. Propose within the WTO the further rolling out of the SDGs so that they govern WTO disputes procedures and other activities

## Case study



### UK Stakeholders for Sustainable Development

#### SDG TARGET: 17.17

UK Stakeholders for Sustainable Development (UKSSD) emerged in 2015 as an informal network of organisations who wanted to work together to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals in the UK. The early stages of UKSSD involved conversations between interested organisations – mainly held virtually – to share insights and information on activities both in the UK and internationally on the Sustainable Development Goals. It became clear very quickly that there was an interest from a range of stakeholders in an initiative which was specifically focused on the UK's delivering of the Goals domestically.

In April 2016 UKSSD launched at a conference, *Towards a Sustainable UK*, hosted by Pearson in London, to a delegation of 100. During the day, delegates explored the relevance and opportunity presented by the Agenda 2030 framework and discussed how to implement it domestically. This early event in UKSSD's short history highlighted the drastic need to raise awareness about the Goals in the UK. During the course of 2016 a number of smaller events, meetings and roundtables were held, introducing the Goals and exploring the role of different stakeholders.

In January 2017 UKSSD stepped up a gear, publishing a letter to Prime Minister Theresa May in the *Times* which called on her to work with business and other stakeholders to deliver the Goals. The letter was supported by some of the UK's best-known businesses. This was followed in March by a conference to 300 delegates, which focused on turning the ambition of the Goals into transformative action for the UK.

From five Partner organisations at the end of 2015, UKSSD had grown to have close to 90 Partner organisations and more than 1000 in its wider network. Partner organisations believe that by working together, they can address the challenges represented by the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, and UKSSD continues to create a space to inform, influence and inspire the action needed to create a sustainable UK.

[www.ukssd.co.uk](http://www.ukssd.co.uk)





## Part 2:

# Governance and action for the SDGs

This section of the report considers the procedural aspects of delivering the SDGs in the UK. It outlines the sorts of governance structures that may be needed, the monitoring and review process, the localisation of the Goals in the UK and the role of different stakeholders. It also proposes recommendations for government and others to support the implementation of the Goals.

## Governance and architecture

### National plans and processes

The Government intends to embed the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals into Single Departmental Plans (SDPs). In December 2017 the Cabinet Office published *Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals*<sup>336</sup>, an online collection of relevant SDPs and links to respective department websites. There is a strong expression of support from Cabinet Office in the report:

**‘The UK is committed to the delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals. The most effective way to do this is by ensuring that the Goals are fully embedded in planned activity of each Government department’.**<sup>337</sup>

Although the plans published in May 2018 show a positive alignment between Departmental objectives and the SDGs, this does not yet amount to a specific delivery plan and there is no review of policy coherence issues or gap analysis. The connection to SDG targets is also missing.

As the UK prepares to deliver a Voluntary National Review (VNR) for the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in 2019 it is presented with an opportunity to comprehensively and coherently embed the Goals and targets in its SDPs. To be effective and ensure that the links between targets are not missed, this will need cross-departmental integration and leadership from within the Government, ideally from the Prime Minister or a Minister with strong domestic policymaking reach.

In January 2017, the DFID published *Leaving no one behind: Our promise*<sup>338</sup>, focused on the overarching SDG principle that no one should be left behind in the process to transform our future. While the paper includes pledges and ways in which it will operationalise this principle, this is not examined through the lens of specific SDG targets, nor is it linked to the SDPs. Much of the contents of the report is focused on DFID’s international work and misses the importance of leaving no one behind in the UK too.



### Recommendations

Based on the findings of this report, UKSSD believes that the following actions are needed if the UK is to achieve the SDGs by 2030:

- a. To guarantee that the cross-departmental action necessary to achieve the SDGs is implemented, and to ensure policy coherence across Whitehall, top-level political leadership is needed. Responsibility for the Goals should ideally be in the Prime Minister’s Office, or with a senior minister in a role with a significant domestic policymaking remit
- b. The Voluntary National Review process is an opportunity to engage stakeholders across the country in producing a comprehensive and integrated plan to implement the SDGs. Given its coordinating role, it would be appropriate for the Cabinet Office to lead an inclusive and transparent process to produce a whole-of-government response

*In addition:*

- c. The Prime Minister could establish a secretary of states' SDGs committee to ensure policy coherence across government and close working relationships with the devolved administrations and local authorities, as well as outreach to stakeholders across the UK
- d. The Government could build on this UKSSD report to establish which Goals and Targets apply to different policy areas and identify policy conflicts and gaps. This would need to be done in partnership with devolved administrations, local authorities including elected mayors, and other public bodies. The outcome would ideally be made public and stakeholders invited to respond to the results. Cabinet Office is best positioned to lead this work
- e. Regular reporting against the Targets will be necessary to ensure progress against the SDGs is monitored. Ideally the Government would conduct a full progress report on all of the Goals and a Voluntary National Review every four years, with the ONS reporting annually on the indicators used to monitor SDGs progress in the UK
- f. As in Wales, the opportunity could be used, for a UK-wide dialogue with key actors on the SDGs at the local level. This could be instigated and led by local authorities
- g. Cabinet Office should incorporate the Government's pledge to 'Leave No One Behind' in domestic policy implementation. The use of appropriately disaggregated data across all SDG areas would help ensure that the experiences of different demographic groups are recognised and incorporated in decision-making

## Budgets and finance

One of the key influences on the UK's ability to implement the SDGs in the next few years will be the Government's future plans for overall public expenditure. The impact of historical spending restraint is already affecting the UK's ability to contribute to some of the SDGs, particularly in areas reliant on public service delivery such as healthcare. Mobilising the right levels of resource will impact on the UK's ability to take more than a 'business as usual' approach to some of the targets – particularly where more resource would support better connected and joined-up efforts between government departments or stakeholders. It is likely that there is a need to increase public spending on certain areas to meet the SDGs.



### Recommendations

- h. Including the SDGs in national budgets would provide a means of mobilising the resources necessary and catalysing further investment (public and private) in their implementation
- i. Spending Reviews and Annual Budgets could be used as an opportunity to encourage departments to think about what areas of expenditure and policy fit with the SDGs, to consider where there are gaps and work to maximise positive and minimise negative links between the Goals. To support reporting processes, departments will need to report on spending in a way that is easy for Cabinet Office to collate and share publicly and during VNR reporting processes

## Data and accountability

The UK has advanced statistical and data collection capacity. The ONS reported in 2017 that the UK currently has 57% of the necessary data to report on the 231 global SDG indicators, with a further 11% in progress.<sup>339</sup> The research here shows that gaps do exist in both ONS and other public sources of data. These gaps will need to be addressed if the UK is to report on how it is performing against the SDG Targets in full.

As there are difficulties in determining the best indicators to use to monitor the SDGs, discussions over national and international data requirements must be advanced. In some areas, such that of Goal 12, the data is necessary for monitoring the actions of other stakeholder such as business, not just policies and outcomes.

The ability to disaggregate data for relevant demographics is key to ensuring that the Leave No One Behind principle is upheld in the UK. Efforts are being made by the ONS in this regard but more can be done to disaggregate the statistics held by government departments.



### Recommendations

- j. To benefit from the range of expertise outside of the ONS and government departments dialogues on data should be conducted in a multi-stakeholder manner, and must include academics, civil society and business. It will be necessary to identify and use sources of non-official data held by stakeholders for official purposes subject to quality assurance
- k. Robust and comprehensive statistical processes are needed to ensure the measurements of progress include for those groups who have been previously left behind, both in terms of measurement and development
- l. The ONS and Cabinet Office should convene a multi-stakeholder group including the Devolved Administrations, local authorities and other non-state actors to consider how to quality assure and utilise non-official data sets

## Means of Implementation

The UN defines means of implementation (MoI) as “the interdependent mix of financial resources, technology development and transfer, capacity-building, inclusive and equitable globalization and trade, regional integration, as well as the creation of a national enabling environment required to implement the new sustainable development agenda, particularly in developing countries.”<sup>340</sup> Within the SDGs framework the MoI targets relate to a variety of issues. Some issues concern levels of overseas development aid spending and specific thematic areas, while others relate to more structural matters such as trade, international institutions, technology and debt. As is clear from the research on SDG17, such targets require coordinated action across government departments to ensure that activity is pursued in a coherent way.

A limited number of MoI targets also have a UK domestic policy application and should be considered as such during VNR and SDP processes.





## Recommendations

- m. Detailed assessments must be undertaken to define the UK's role in contributing to the SDGs through UK international development policy including, but not limited to, its Overseas Development Assistance commitments. Doing so alongside a more integrated approach to domestic policymaking will result in greater overall policy coherence
- n. Some of the SDGs describe issues where, historically, departmental expertise has not been allocated. It is necessary to increase government capacity and understanding in the aspects of the SDGs in which they may currently lack policy strength, expertise and programmes. This relates particularly to our consumption of goods and materials and the global impact of that consumption. This will be vital to ensure that we uphold the universal aspects of this agenda and recognise our impact on the rest of the world

## Stakeholder engagement

To date there have not been any discussions led by the Government in England, or across the entire UK, involving the public or stakeholders across sectors on the applicability and implications of the SDGs for domestic policy.

This report is evidence of an opportunity to build on the good will and commitment of UKSSD stakeholders and others to increase transparency, raise ambition and develop definitive plans.

New mechanisms are needed for the engagement of UK stakeholders to support the application and implementation of the SDGs through UK domestic policy. This should be distinct from a dialogue on the UK's support for SDG implementation internationally. A cross-government SDG Group has recently been established and has engaged with UKSSD. Establishing formal modalities and processes to interact with stakeholders from all sectors would strengthen the productivity of this initiative. This wider engagement would improve transparency, promote participatory decision-making and the co-creation of solutions, and result in stakeholder buy-in for resulting policies.



## Recommendations

- o. Formal modalities and processes between government, departments and stakeholders from all sectors should be established as a part of the Government's implementation strategy for the SDGs
- p. Parliamentarians should be engaged in the SDGs. This could encourage Parliamentary Select Committees' scrutiny of departmental performance on the SDGs and debates on the VNR and the UK's approach in both Houses of Parliament. All Select Committees should be encouraged to explore their role in scrutinising UK performance on the SDGs. As a first step, we would encourage the Parliamentary Scrutiny Unit to conduct an inquiry into the Government's approach to the SDGs. Increasing awareness with Select Committees could lead to further joint inquiries into UK performance on SDG Goals or Targets

- q. During the VNR reporting process and production of the Single Departmental Plans there could be a formal mechanism to enable representatives from stakeholder communities including local authorities, regional groups and cities to engage and input (along the lines of that set up in Scotland)

## The UK's role in delivering the SDGs around the world

### Overseas Development Assistance (ODA)

It will not be possible to achieve the SDGs globally without a financial investment of trillions of dollars from numerous sources. The UK's achievement of, and continued commitment to, 0.7% Official Development Assistance (ODA) has a significant role to play in achieving the SDGs around the world. It is something the UK can be hugely proud of.

In 2017 this commitment translated to an ODA spend of £13.9bn. However, recent years have seen significant changes to how and where ODA is provided. While the DFID is still the primary spender of ODA (72.5% of the UK's total ODA spend in 2017), the proportion being spent by other departments is increasing, and the Government's aid strategy commits it to allocating 28% of UK aid outside DFID by 2020.

### Reporting where ODA is spent

In DFID's 2014-15 Annual Report and Accounts, the last before the signing of the SDGs, global progress towards the Millennium Development Goals through DFID's bilateral programmes was analysed in-depth, with a colour coding system used to assess progress against specific MDG indicators. Such comprehensive reporting is also crucial in understanding the impact of ODA in achieving the SDGs. Ideally DFID annual reporting should be comprehensively aligned to the SDG targets and indicators and include a focus on reaching those furthest behind, in line with the UK's Leave No One Behind pledge.

### Using ODA to deliver on all the SDGs

Countries that receive ODA from the UK should be able to determine their own development priorities, and will be reporting on the impact of that money when they produce their own Voluntary National Reviews. The Goals integrate social, economic, environmental and governance aspects of development. ODA needs to support all four of these areas of development in a balanced way, rather than just focusing on certain goals and targets. As such, DFID will need to be comprehensive in its approach to the Goals.

In addition, it will be important to ensure that ODA spending is consistent with all four aspects of sustainable development. DFID will need to manage its policy portfolio to support policy coherence for sustainable development. For example, at present the UK does not have a policy that sets how it is delivering against the goals and targets covering the natural environment and resource use. Such a policy should set out safeguards to ensure that investments in other areas (eg infrastructure) are consistent with a healthy and sustainable environment.

## Localising the SDGs in the UK

### The promotion of sustainable development in Wales

The pursuit of sustainable development has long been an important goal in Wales. The Government of Wales Act 1998 which established the Welsh Assembly imposed a duty on that Assembly from its inception to report regularly on how it promotes sustainable development in the exercise of its functions.

Recognised as world leading, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (WBGFA) elaborated this further and put in place seven well-being goals for a prosperous, healthier, resilient, more equal and globally responsible Wales, with cohesive communities and a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language. A set of 46 national indicators has been established to track progress towards these goals.

While not being identical to the UN's 17 SDGs and their targets and indicators, the seven well-being goals were created with the SDGs in view and they cover the most salient and relevant priorities for the Welsh context.

The indicators do not represent targets for government alone, but are meant to delineate the sustainability aspirations of the Welsh nation as a whole. The Welsh Government is committed to publishing an annual report on progress and to shaping its policies in a supportive way. The latest report “Well-being of Wales” report published figures for 2016–2017.

The WBGFA also requires the Welsh Government to appoint a ‘Commissioner for Future Generations’ whose task is to promote the sustainable development principle throughout Wales and, in particular, to monitor and assess the extent to which the well-being objectives are being met across the entire range of public bodies in Wales.

### The promotion of sustainable development in Scotland

Scotland has a strong identity as a distinct nation within the UK which draws on its own culture and language, history, politics and economic development and also on Scotland's distinct landscapes and natural environment. Historically, perceived oppression, poverty and struggle of local communities alongside Victorian Highland splendour have influenced a desire for local rights and connection to place and landscape. National identity is thus linked to aspects of sustainability, including connection with nature, community empowerment, language, culture, food, an ambivalence regarding a wealth hierarchy and a broad education.

The Scottish Parliament was reconvened in 1999 with the devolution of many responsibilities, including education, health and infrastructure. Legislation supporting sustainable development includes the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009, considered to be one of the most ambitious worldwide. The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 and the Land Reform (Scotland) Acts in 2003 and 2016 contribute to a strategy to redress land access and ownership inequalities.

The Education (Scotland) Act 2016 extends children's rights and promotes learning across socio-economic barriers. Teaching and learning for sustainability has become

part of professional requirements for teacher education and continuing professional development. Sustainable development education, outdoor learning, and global citizenship have long been strengths of Scottish education, and aspects have recently been brought together in the concept of 'learning for sustainability' (LFS). The Scottish Government's LFS Implementation Group took forward 'One Planet Schools'<sup>341</sup> work, linking LFS to the SDGs, to create the Vision 2030+ report<sup>342</sup>, endorsed by the Scottish Government.

The First Minister Nicola Sturgeon was one of the first national leaders to publicly commit to the SDGs. There is therefore a high-level support for a strategic response. Initially, the SDGs were mapped against the National Performance Framework (NPF). There was then an analysis of the SDGs against the refreshed Scottish international development strategy, human rights legislation and indicators already collated by the ONS. As the NPF is revised, further clarity on which department within the Scottish Government will hold responsibility for Scotland's alignment with the SDGs and how an action plan will be further developed is expected.

In parallel with government processes, a multi-stakeholder partnership emerged: SDG Network Scotland. Originally a civil society grouping with external funding and support, connecting different organisations, this partnership now links NGOs, communities, academics and government representatives. It has successfully lobbied the Scottish Government and other stakeholders and created a space to share lessons, resources and ideas regarding the SDGs.

There is, then, both will and precedent to take action on the SDGs in Scotland. The relatively small size of the country, the focus on interconnectedness across legislative areas and key drivers align well for action on the SDGs both independently, in collaboration with other parts of the UK and with global partners.

## The Promotion of Sustainable Development in Northern Ireland

Advancing the pursuit of sustainable development has been a longstanding goal of the Northern Ireland Government. On 9 May 2006 the Secretary of State Peter Hain launched Northern Ireland's first Sustainable Development Strategy and a year later a Statutory Duty for Sustainable Development was introduced conferring a legislative duty on public authorities to adopt the principles outlined in the Strategy; this came into effect on 31 March 2007 and remains so. The strategy and subsequent legislation sent a strong signal about the need to tackle climate change, to encourage sustainable development, and to make the strategy's objectives a reality in all public bodies throughout Northern Ireland.

With some degree of political stability by 2010, the Northern Ireland Executive decided that the original 2006 strategy, having been adopted during a period of 'direct rule', did not fit its requirements and published a new high-level strategy, *Everyone's Involved*,<sup>343</sup> with an accompanying implementation plan containing hundreds of targets across all government departments and a collective contribution from councils.

It was always the intention of the Northern Ireland Executive that the Northern Ireland Programme for Government would be the main vehicle for delivering sustainable development in the region. As such, the draft Programme for Government (PfG) framework has been constructed around economic, social and environmental outcomes to further integrate sustainable development principals into the work of Government.

The PfG has a strong correlation with the SDGs and delivering them was considered when finalising PfG Delivery Plans.

A scoping exercise carried out by the Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) to map the PfG outcomes and indicators to the SDGs showed that the PfG is directly working towards progressing 16 of the 17 Goals, alongside other existing legislation and/or policies. The Northern Ireland Assembly has no remit in foreign affairs so therefore the progression towards Goal 17 to ‘strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development’ is being led by the UK Department of International Development.

The Programme for Government will be the mechanism used to measure Northern Ireland’s progression towards the SDGs. Given the complexity facing the leadership of Northern Ireland’s Government at the time of writing it is unclear how effective this will be.

## The SDGs and the UK’s overseas territories

Approximately half a million British passport holders live in the UK’s 17 Overseas Territories and Crown dependencies. These territories face diverse and distinct development issues, and are made up of some of the richest and most important land and marine habitats in the world. They create important responsibilities for the UK Government in respect of SDG implementation and reporting.

The UK Government acknowledges clear responsibilities for the people who live in them: the UK, the Overseas Territories and the Crown Dependencies “form one undivided Realm”, in which all citizens have the “right to expect the same high standards of governance as in the UK”.<sup>344</sup> While each territory has its own constitutional arrangements, the Crown Dependencies have a distinctive status from both Overseas Territories and the UK. The UK Government remains fundamentally responsible for security, good governance, and external relations of these territories, including their relations with the United Nations. In 2017, the UK Government re-committed to a vision of the Overseas Territories as “vibrant and flourishing communities”.<sup>345</sup> The UK also benefits from the economic and financial opportunities they provide, and sees the potential of the Overseas Territories’ “natural and environmental resources”.

There is a need to plan and report on SDG implementation in these contexts. This should be in partnership with the people of these territories and their administrations, or should create a space in which these territories can report themselves. Not doing so would “leave behind” a section of the UK, including some of its most vulnerable and disadvantaged people. If the UK is not accountable for SDG reporting and review for these territories, it is not clear who would be.

In some cases, the relevance of the SDGs to these territorial contexts will reflect that of the UK mainland. Crown Dependencies such as Jersey and the Isle of Man face many issues that are similar to those on the ‘mainland’ of Great Britain. In such cases, it will be worth paying attention to the extent of environmental protection, discrimination, inclusion, and to vulnerable and marginalised groups – for example, in Jersey, the proportion of old people on relatively low incomes is twice that for the UK generally.<sup>346</sup>

The populated overseas territories are diverse and there is good reason to think that a range of SDG targets perhaps not thought as applicable to the UK, will be relevant:

- While corruption, illicit financial flows and tax transparency (SDG16) might be perceived as a limited problem in the UK, it is much more salient in some Overseas Territories.
- Climate change adaptation (SDG13) and disaster risk reduction planning have special relevance for small islands in the Caribbean.<sup>347</sup>
- The recognised biodiversity of the territories and their presence outside of the EU fisheries framework make SDGs 14 and 15 especially relevant.
- Those overseas territories that are largely unpopulated are often especially rich and diverse natural habitats, requiring and enjoying special protection. The British Antarctic Territory alone is several times the size of the UK and crucial to any assessment of the UK's compliance with the environmental objectives of SDGs 14 and 15.

Up-to-date, comprehensive data on these overseas territories is much less available than for the UK. Coverage is comprehensive in some areas and entirely lacking in others. The capacity of some of these small island territories for data collection and analysis is limited. There is the potential to develop a stronger data partnership of local governments, NGOs and other stakeholders to address data collection, and to offer people greater participation in the future direction of the territories.

The Overseas Territories' needs are diverse, and they face different challenges to mainland Great Britain. A review of the territories in the context of the SDGs would provide an opportunity for assessment of these needs and challenges. Perhaps more importantly, the Goals highlight the need for any such review to be participatory and inclusive of the people in these territories themselves.



# The role of stakeholders

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The complexity, interconnected and dependent nature of the 17 SDGs necessitates action from all stakeholders and citizens if we are to achieve them by 2030. In this section we briefly consider the role of different stakeholders and the mobilisation of them in the UK.

## Business

Although the Goals are the responsibility of government, business has a critical role to play in implementing many of the actions that are necessary to achieving them. Evidence supports the view that responsible and sustainable business practices secure the long-term survival of businesses of all scales. The risks of inaction are too great. Take for example, climate change, which evidence suggests places US\$43 trillion of assets at risk.<sup>348</sup> As we enter the 4th Industrial revolution, as consumers have greater access to information and become increasingly aware of the power of their choices, business is waking up to the need to adapt and change to survive.

Alongside the mounting evidence around risks and the costs of inaction, evidence shows us that the SDGs are a business opportunity. The Better Business, Better World<sup>349</sup> report from the Business and Sustainable Development Commission indicates that achieving the SDGs opens up US\$12 trillion market opportunities in four economic systems.<sup>350</sup>

Although there is a clear call for action on the SDGs and evidence to motivate business to do so, commitment and uptake of the Goals as a strategic priority has been slow. Research by WBCSD and DNVGL in 2018 found that 76% of companies have prioritised the SDGs for their organisation, and almost all companies recognise there are benefits to taking action, but this has yet to translate into additional action, with only 6% setting new SDG-related targets. Encouragingly, 41% plan to establish targets while 47% have aligned to existing targets in the business, leaving only 7% that do not plan to set any SDG-related targets.<sup>351</sup> However, the sample consists of the relatively 'engaged' businesses so not representative of the sector as a whole.

UKSSD's informal research on business engagement with the Goals has shown that too often the iconography of the 17 Goals is used to indicate support for them rather than real commitment to the level of change that is needed to achieve them. Where commitment does exist, it is often to a selection of goals or targets that relate to existing strategies or programmes. This could risk losing the fundamental value of the SDGs framework – an integrated and coherent approach to addresses systemic challenges – although this should be balanced with a recognition that certain Goals and targets are within the influence of a business and others aren't.

One of the challenges facing business engagement with the SDGs is how the Goals align with existing reporting frameworks that have been designed specifically for corporate reporting. A new initiative founded by Aviva, the World Benchmarking Alliance, is one example to support business to do more. The initiative aims to bring together existing frameworks and use these to benchmark and compare business performance against the Goals.

In the UK, business efforts have been inhibited by a lack of clarity about the Government's commitment and plans to deliver the Goals domestically. Clearer direction from the Government is needed to encourage those businesses that have limited their engagement with the Goals to increase it. In an open letter, facilitated by UKSSD and published in *The Times* newspaper in 2017, over 80 UK businesses noted that sustainable development was good for UK business and asked the Prime Minister to work with them on the Goals;<sup>352</sup> despite her assurances that the Government would do so<sup>353</sup> the situation has changed very little since then.

Businesses have significant reach as employers and providers of goods and services across the UK, they contribute significantly to the UK's global footprint and can benefit the local communities in which they operate. Not to mention their role in the health and productivity of the UK's economy and potential for them to influence other nations through trade and supply chain management. Evidence from our review on Goals 2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15 indicates a need for a reduction in our consumption of natural resources. The UK, like many high-income countries, is consuming far more resources than is fair or that the planet can support. Business is self-interested in becoming sustainable and has a fundamental role to play in minimising this impact.

Much of the business action on the SDGs has been from large and multi-national corporations, those that have the widest and greatest impact on the UK and globally. But we should not neglect the need to also bring SMEs, of which the UK has over 5.7million (representing 99% of all businesses in the UK), towards the Goals.<sup>354</sup> These SMEs, many of which are suppliers, distributors, or partners of large businesses, also need to consider their role in supporting the Goals. Many SMEs will only be able to embed and act on the Goals using tools provided by business associations or larger corporations, whose leadership, alongside the Government's is essential. The Government should prioritise its work with large businesses and encourage them to support and enable SMEs to adapt to the changing needs of the UK in support of the Goals.

Business has a critical role to play in leading UK responses to the SDGs. This report offers the opportunity to understand where they can have a positive impact on the SDGs in the UK to improve the lives of people and the natural environment. By aligning their business strategies with the needs identified in this report, businesses have the potential to enable the UK to achieve the Goals while also generating significant economic opportunities.

UK business should be celebrated for its response to the SDGs thus far, however we need to go further and faster. This will require innovative thinking and collaborative action within and between sectors.



## We recommend that businesses take the following actions:

1. Identify and prioritise the goals and targets that are most relevant to their business and stakeholders – taking into account those highlighted by this report as requiring further action
2. Commit to take action, and to regularly share progress
3. Collaborate with customers, suppliers, peers and others to overcome complex issues

## Civil society and other stakeholders

Civil society in all its forms, from village groups to national campaign groups, from faith-based organisations to service delivery charities, can play a role in the drive to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. They directly deliver on the Goals through their programmes and services and can contribute to their monitoring. They advocate for the principles that underpin the Goals and hold government to account, for leading at the national level and for implementation through local public services. They also play a critical role in holding business and other stakeholders to account for their activities and provide a level of scrutiny that is needed to challenge and encourage higher levels of ambition.

UK civil society comprises over 160,000 charities, non-governmental organisations and many more community groups. Their awareness of the SDGs is highly variable, with no reliable data on what level this has reached. Despite the high level of engagement of civil society during the development of the SDGs, this has not translated into the same momentum since the Goals were launched. Engagement varies depending on the organisation's area of specialism, size and exposure to messaging about Agenda 2030. As the UK Government ramps up its efforts to raise the profile of the SDGs, reports on progress regularly and as models of how these can be localised become more widely shared, now is the moment that wider stakeholder engagement can be nurtured and supported.

## Academia and research

Academia and academic institutions have a specific role to play in promoting and delivering education for sustainable development – see SDG4 and Target 4.7 in particular. In addition to research to promote sustainable development, academia has the opportunity to equip students with the competencies, knowledge and attributes needed to work and live in a way that safeguards environmental, social and economic wellbeing, both in the present and the future. Universities and schools themselves offer a physical testing group for more sustainable behaviours and operations as well as hands-on learning.

Academic research has had, and will have, an inestimable impact on our planet and its people, particularly through its role in driving decision-making.

There is a need to move toward more fluid and integrated engagement with stakeholders to develop demand and solution-oriented research which can then be actively applied to

policy and business sectors. The Research Excellence Framework is one example where researchers and academic institutions are being actively encouraged to think more about the application and impact of their work. The success of strategic research collaboration with societal issues has been particularly noticeable in complex, interdisciplinary research that is associated with high levels of uncertainties and complexities such as environmental change.

Making research more participatory and inclusive will enhance the quality and relevance of evidence and analysis available to decision-makers, leading to more informed decisions and better outcomes. Building on and responding to the existence of evidence-based knowledge related to the SDGs will help further efforts made to achieve them in the UK and internationally.

## Citizens

Public engagement and awareness of the SDGs is low in the UK and we have not seen the Goals entering public discourse and dialogue with decision-makers. This is a missed opportunity. Citizens can take action in their own communities and hold governments to account for the commitments they make. Wider awareness in the UK populace would both aid and monitor government action.

The devolution of decision-making offers us an opportunity for local processes to raise awareness and engage citizens with the Goals. Local and city plans, and neighbourhood development forums are all processes which need a dialogue with citizens to be framed in such a way that helps identify priorities; the SDGs could provide a framework for this. Having sufficient data to understand local needs will be crucial in localising the Goals and to avoid skewing policies or programmatic impacts.

As well as holding government to account, citizens also have a role in influencing business action. Evidence from PwC showed that 67% of citizens surveyed in the UK believed that it's very important for business to sign up to the Goals, and that this should go as far as being embedded in strategy and in their way of doing business.<sup>355</sup>

The Global Goals campaign, led by Project Everyone, is one example of global efforts to engage citizens with the SDGs. A locally and contextually applicable version of such a campaign, supported by the Government and with the input from a variety of stakeholders, is one way to raise the low awareness levels in the UK.

## Financial institutions and investors

An estimated \$5-7 trillion a year is needed to realise the SDGs worldwide.<sup>356</sup> The development of infrastructure alone (roads, railways, buildings etc) in low-income countries is going to require \$9tn of investment year on year by 2025.<sup>357</sup> Investor decision-making now has the potential to 'lock-in' future social, environmental and governance outcomes.

Investors fiduciary duties require them to consider environmental, social and governance (ESG) factors to represent the best interests of their beneficiaries. According to the PRI (Principles for Responsible Investment) the SDGs act as a material list of the ESG factors and should be taken in to account by the industry.<sup>358</sup> In recent years there has been a shift

away from ESG towards impact investment. Where ESG focuses primarily on material risk, impact investment focuses on outcomes and impact. This is perhaps most notable from the letter Laurence Fink, chief executive of giant investment firm BlackRock, sent to the world's leading businesses demanding that they do more than make profits because "society is demanding that companies, both public and private, serve a social purpose".

Global financial institutions are recognising the value of the Goals in this regard: In 2017, HSBC launched its SDG Bond Framework<sup>359</sup> and the World Bank launched an SDG-linked bond with BNP Paribas<sup>360</sup>. UN Global Compact, UN Environment Finance Initiative, and the Principles for Responsible Investment launched a new Global Alliance on SDG Finance to help mobilise the capital needed to support the Goals.<sup>361</sup>

Investors and financial institutions have a transboundary and global role to play in delivering the Goals. That said, there is also a need to localise this in the UK. One example is the Threadneedle UK Social Bond Fund,<sup>362</sup> set up by Big Issue Invest and Columbia Threadneedle Investments in 2013, which has aligned its nine portfolio areas to the Goals.

Mobilising the resources needed to achieve the Goals in the UK and internationally is one of the greatest challenges facing the delivery of the framework. Governments and financial institutions have an opportunity to work together, along with other stakeholders, to address it. There are examples of this in other countries, such as SDGI, a Dutch initiative to enhance SDG investment through collaboration between stakeholders led by the Dutch Central Bank and Government.<sup>363</sup> In recognition of the spending constraints facing the UK Government, it could be beneficial to consider how collaboration or greater coherence with private investment could support areas of poor or concerning performance in this report.

## Partnerships for the SDGs

UKSSD could not produce a report on the Sustainable Development Goals in the UK without dedicating a section to partnerships. While Goal 17 is dedicated to the 'global partnership for sustainable development', Agenda 2030 also embeds the principle of partnerships throughout.

The level of ambition, the challenges we face and the complexity of the systems represented by the SDGs require action on a number of levels and by all stakeholders. While the framework may have been produced with Government in mind, the spirit of the process and negotiations for Agenda 2030 clearly showed that all stakeholders have responsibility for SDGs.

Though we all have an individual responsibility we also need to work collaboratively, across sectors, localities and industries to have a meaningful impact and to create real change. We may call on the Government to initiate a new partnership with stakeholders in the UK but we also recognise the obligation on the rest of us to play a part.

UKSSD is one example of partnerships in practice, there are other evolving and developing partnerships globally and in the UK. Some of them are used as case studies in this report.

## Conclusion

Contained within this report are recommendations covering each of the SDGs and their Targets, and the process by which we can achieve them in the UK.

By evaluating the SDGs in this detail, we can establish a baseline so we can monitor our future performance against them. The actions that are needed to achieve them require engagement, support and collaboration across sectors in the UK. We will need to work together if we want to achieve them by 2030.

While there is an enormous amount to celebrate, the most vulnerable places and people in our society are increasingly being left behind. It is particularly important we take action when the challenges relate to people in our country not having access to a standard of living they should have and when our way of life is damaging our natural environment.

### What needs to happen to achieve the Goals by 2030

The responsibility for the Goals does not sit with Government alone. But as well as each of the individual recommendations listed against the Goals, UKSSD believes that the following actions are needed if the UK is to achieve the SDGs by 2030:

1. To guarantee that the cross-departmental action necessary to achieve the SDGs is implemented, and to ensure policy coherence across Whitehall, top level political leadership is needed. Responsibility for the Goals should ideally be in the Prime Minister's Office, or with a senior minister in a role with a significant domestic policymaking remit
2. The Voluntary National Review process is an opportunity to engage stakeholders across the country in producing a comprehensive and integrated plan to implement the SDGs. Given its coordinating role, it would be appropriate for the Cabinet Office to lead an inclusive and transparent process to produce a whole-of-government response

### Reflecting on our process – our lessons

In future, should the Government or UKSSD lead a project of this nature we provide the following advice:

- **Have plenty of time and resource.** We were fortunate to benefit from the generous investments of time and enthusiasm from the organisations in our network to produce this report. And the financial support of our sponsors and donors, which gave us the capacity to coordinate the work. Other than UKSSD staff time, this report was delivered voluntarily and in a short timeframe. From October 2017 to July 2018 we ran a comprehensive and intensive research and review process. In future, this process should be longer to give us more time for outreach and engagement, and ideally the organisations with significant roles should be provided adequate resource to cover the cost of their time too.



- **Increase engagement levels early.** We have an established network of organisations who know and care about the SDGs but there are gaps in this network. Ideally, before any research begins those gaps should be filled to make sure the expertise is available at the right time.
- **Make your purpose clear.** We developed this project because our network wanted to know how the UK was performing on the Goals to better understand what impact they could have. We were willing to commit our expertise and resource to do this ourselves but would have liked to work with the Government to do so. We understand that the Government, and some stakeholders, may have felt that our purpose was to blame or criticise. This was never the case and we hope this is now clear. We do and have always wanted to work with government because we cannot achieve the Goals unless we work together. Making our purpose clearer in future will hopefully open the door to future collaboration with the Government and other stakeholders.

## There is more to be done

By conducting this project we've identified several areas for future work to unpick the SDGs in the UK.

- We need to better understand our impact and reliance on the rest of the world. The many SDG Targets related to resource use, pollution, the natural environment and trade demonstrate that we don't have a full understanding of this. In the same way as understanding 'the state of the nation', we can use the framework to understand our global impact comprehensively for the first time
- We need to understand the opportunities, particularly the economic benefits, the SDGs provide to the UK – and the costs of inaction.
- We should learn from best practice from around the world and from within our own country, including learning from the best practice that exists within the nations of the UK
- We need to localise the Goals, to understand the differences that exist within the nations, at regional and local level – including within our cities

Most importantly we need to act on the challenges presented in this report in a way that addresses them for current generations without undermining future generations.

This report is not perfect but it is a good starting point to build on.

We would like to, once again, thank the organisations who have led, supported or contributed to this research and the production of this report. We invite anyone to join UKSSD or work with us in future as we continue to drive action on the SDGs in the UK.

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### **SDG2**

WWF

### **SDG4**

Pearson

### **SDG8**

ICAEW

### **SDG12**

Sodexo

### **SDG13**

PwC

### **SDG14**

Thai Union

### **SDG17**

Stakeholder Forum

### **The role of stakeholders**

DNVGL

### **Communications**

Stakeholder Forum





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