

**Website** - [UKSSN Operations Group](#)

**LinkedIn** - [\(3\) UK Schools Sustainability Network Operations Group | Groups | LinkedIn](#)

***"The 'point of no return' is relative, it all depends on the severity you're talking about. It will never be too late to act."***

***John Schellnhuber***

### **In the news this week**

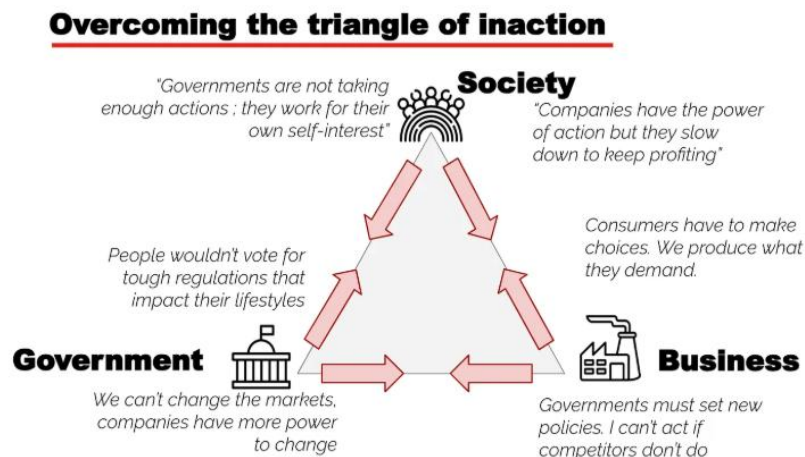
Only one place to start. I have been waiting for the day when I can talk about sustainability and the mighty Liverpool Football Club.



[The Red Way](#), which was launched in 2021, is Liverpool FC's award-winning sustainability strategy, and its third annual season report marks an important milestone in LFC's ongoing journey to becoming a more sustainable organisation.

- The club has reduced its Scope 1 (operational) emissions by 89% since its 2019/20 baseline season and has recently confirmed a 17% drop in Scope 3 (indirect) emissions within the same timeframe.
- Biodiversity efforts have flourished under the club's [award-winning grounds team](#), with more than 1,000 trees and hedges planted. Further initiatives include the installation of honeybee colonies and solitary bee habitats; the club now has 60,000 bees across all its sites. This helps to support local pollinators, attract new wildlife and plant species, and the continued success of the club's allotment, which produced half a tonne of food used within its busy kitchens.
- Liverpool FC also remains the first Premier League club to achieve ISO20121 (sustainability) and holds both ISO45001 (health and safety) and ISO50001 (energy) certifications – which reflects both its commitment and governance credentials in this space.

Why am I sharing the LFC story? Have you ever heard someone respond to your call for more climate action by saying they don't need to take action - someone else should? Perhaps that person thinks the government needs to regulate more, or less, or that businesses need to be more responsible, or that people just need to care more? Shifting the blame speaks to the 'Triangle of Inaction', shifting the blame to another group as a reason for doing nothing.



With budgets as they are in education I could easily argue we need to pull back from investing in sustainability and blame DfE, or Treasury, or suppliers inflating their costs. Why should we act when others are acting and if we stop, we give permission for others to stop too. Liverpool FC is just one example of the work that businesses are doing to play their part in preventing the worst impacts of climate change and biodiversity loss. Climate action can't be a nice-to-have; it must be a strategic priority for all of us; the next generation or relying on us to act.

### 🏆 Sustainability Learning Conference & Blackburn Rovers 🏆



It would be very remiss of me at this point not to also mention Blackburn Rovers Football Club. Blackburn Rovers' Sustainability Learning Conference has been shortlisted for the EFL Green Club Award at the 2025 EFL Awards.

[Rovers shortlisted for Green Club Award | rovers.co.uk](https://rovers.co.uk)

In June 2024, Blackburn Rovers Community Trust welcomed over 600 students from a diverse range of primary and secondary schools to the pioneering Sustainability Learning Conference, which offers students a hands-on opportunity to deepen their understanding of sustainability and environmental issues. Held annually at Ewood Park since 2017, the event – organised by Blackburn Rovers Community Trust, Blackburn Rovers, Lancashire Schools Sustainability Forum and Sustainability Learning CIC – is unique in providing young people with vital sustainability education.

Their next [Sustainability Learning Conference](#) is on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2025 and we definitely encourage schools and school sustainability leads to get involved if you can.

**And just in case all of the positive news doesn't convince you to act - [Global warming of more than 3°C this century may wipe 40% off the world's economy, new analysis reveals](#)** (and we are already half way to 3 degrees 😬)

## Ideas for Climate Action this week

- **Governance** - NEW Sustainability Governor Network
- **Guidance** - NEW Estate Management Competency Framework
- **Earth Overshoot Day** - Do you have anything planned? SEED
- **Sustainability job guide** - enabling your team
- **Nature** - Education Nature Park Spring update
- **Energy** - support from Solar for Schools
- **Sustainable Procurement** - Green Schools Project & Value Match
- **Catering** - Beef and poultry
- **Risk Management** - Flooding
- **Planning** - Greener Schools Index
- **CPD** - planning a summer term of learning

### **Governance: NEW Sustainability Governor Network**

<https://bit.ly/SustainabilityGovernorNetwork>

Governors are uniquely positioned to play a key role in the sustainability movement, building climate action into every school's strategic priorities. Earlier this week [Governors for Schools](#) announced the launch of the Sustainability Governor Network, made possible by their platinum sponsor Deloitte. Launched on 22nd April 2025 to celebrate World Earth Day, this network will provide essential guidance, resources, and collaboration opportunities to help school governors drive environmental action at a strategic level. The network is open and free to all those involved in school governance in England and Wales. Whether you're an established Sustainability link governor, or it's something you'd just like to know more about, please join. Hosted on LinkedIn, the network provides an opportunity to share best practice, ask questions, and hear more about the support available to schools.



### **Guidance: NEW Estate Management Competency Framework**

[Estate management: competency framework and relevant training - GOV.UK](#)

Earlier this week the DfE also published their 'Estate Management Competency Framework to help schools recruit and develop the essential levels of skills and competencies for estate management roles. It is great to see sustainability listed as a core function.

*'Managing your school estate effectively will help you to save money and ensure you have a healthy, safe and sustainable school environment.'*

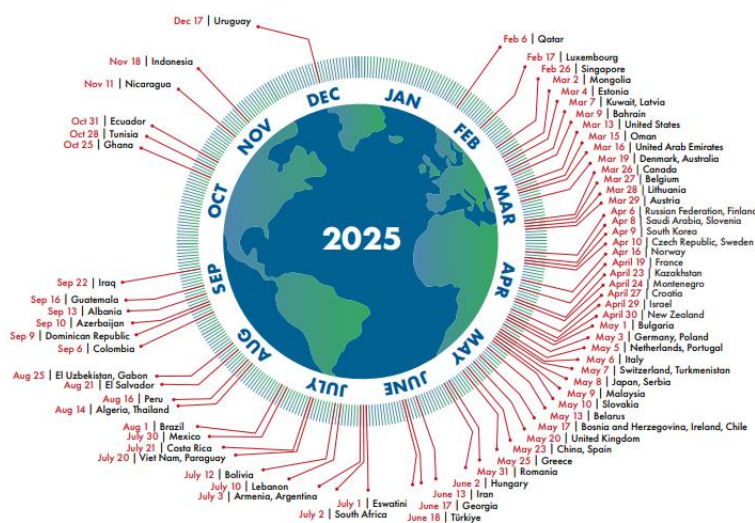
## 🌍 Earth Overshoot Day - May 20<sup>th</sup> 2025 🌍

### Country Overshoot Days 2025 - Earth Overshoot Day

If everyone around the world lived like we do in the UK, we'd have used up all the resources that the Earth can naturally replenish in a 12 month period, by 20th May this year. That's like burning through a year's wages in 5 months! The good news is it's improved by about a week, so whilst we've got a long way to go, it's moving in the right direction. Earth Overshoot Days are great moments to plan something for your people, as nothing makes it more pictorially clear just how much we are devouring our planet's resources.

## Country Overshoot Days 2025

When Earth Overshoot Day would land if all the people around the world lived like...



For more information, visit:  
<https://overshootday.org/newsroom/country-overshoot-days/>  
Source: National Footprint and Biocapacity Accounts, preliminary 2025 Edition  
York University, FoDafo, Global Footprint Network, [data.footprintnetwork.org](http://data.footprintnetwork.org)



**SEEd:** The [Sustainability and Environmental Education \(SEEd\)](#) newsletter is free and a great place to start for inspiration - [Commitment, Joy and Impact - March 2025 | SEEd](#)

**Giki:** Alternatively, sign yourself up to GiKi (again for free) for lots of ideas to get you started - [Giki - Making it easier to achieve your sustainability goals](#)

## 🧑 Sustainability Job Guides - Enabling your Team 🧑

Do your employees have a 'Sustainability Job Guide' to equip them to have an impact in their particular role? Without your people knowing HOW they can contribute, it is difficult for your employees to follow through on the good stuff you've been doing to try and engage them. A few ideas to help -

1. Project Drawdown is a useful place to start, with role descriptors for a range of job functions: [Job Function Action Guides | Project Drawdown](#)

2. ISBL Sustainability Standards provides guidance and support for the School Business Leader, Operations and support staff: [ISBL Professional Standards — ISBL](#)
3. Estates Management Competancy Framework to help schools recruit and develop the essential levels of skills and competencies for estate management roles: [Estate management: competency framework and relevant training - GOV.UK](#)
4. Design role-specific one-page guides for member of your school or Trust. Deliver an 'Every Job is a Climate Job' session to gather feedback and build engagement.

**WWF** is a great (and free) resource to support students interested in sustainability roles, with CPD to support schools deliver their course too: [Sustainable Futures - free secondary schools programme | WWF](#)

### **National Education Nature Park: Outdoor Learning in Spring**

The National Education Nature Park is a free curriculum-linked education programme that supports young people at every school, college and nursery in England to improve the biodiversity within their grounds, all while developing their green skills and enhancing their connection to nature. This spring, take teaching and learning outdoors! Join the National Education Nature Park and explore the habitats on your school, nursery or college site. Whether you're new to the programme or already involved, exploring local habitats is a fantastic way for students to connect with nature, develop essential skills and dive into real scientific research.

**New to the Nature Park?** Register today and kickstart your adventure with our [Habitat Heroes activity](#). Start exploring your site and get the chance to win a bundle of exciting prizes!

**Already involved?** [Time to map your site!](#) Create a baseline for improving your outdoor spaces and track the incredible difference you're making for both people and wildlife.

### **Plus: National Hedgerow Week (5-11 May)**

<https://bit.ly/3R59tG7>

Hedges are a common sight on school grounds, but did you know they're the UK's largest wildlife habitat and vital for stopping biodiversity decline? This [National Hedgerow Week](#), celebrate these incredible habitats by diving into activities from the National Education Nature Park! Whether you're new to the programme or already involved, explore the hedgerows and other habitats on your school grounds with your class—and start thinking about how you can create even more homes for wildlife together.





### ⚡ Energy: Solar for Schools ⚡

<https://education.solarforschools.co.uk/>

Solar for Schools has a very useful website with lots of ideas to support sustainability in schools. A few important points they have flagged recently for us all to be aware of -

- Schools are getting charges for surveys that they do free. You can obtain a free solar prediction via their website.
- £80 million was announced recently to support solar for schools...an interesting blog post: <https://www.solarforschools.co.uk/blog/80-million-for-solar-on-200-schools>
- The community benefit society will fund solar for most schools: <https://www.solarforschoolscbs.org.uk/>
- If you have solar already, do you have an asset management contract? Solar for Schools have been fixing systems that either aren't working or are unsafe on school roofs. Plus the added benefit that schools they support also get a personal education visit every year.

🤔 Energy and renewables is a complex area. Funding, technology, supply chains, procurement all need to be considered. We definitely recommend seeking independent expert advice to support investment decisions. 🤔

### 💻 Sustainable Procurement: Green Schools Project and Value Match 💻

The goods and services we buy make up over 50% of our carbon footprint. **Value Match** and **Green Schools Project** have joined forces to offer a new combined service that will help your school trust save money, procure sustainably, and drive forward climate education and action through a whole-school approach. To find out more email [laura.davies@value-match.co.uk](mailto:laura.davies@value-match.co.uk) or come along to a free taster session:

**Tuesday April 29th at 11:00 -**

**11:45:** <https://events.teams.microsoft.com/event/501f7b71-0074-4a6b-9046-96658b8ef83a@7c6a9453-a5d0-4963-8cd7-1c6bb4859e04>

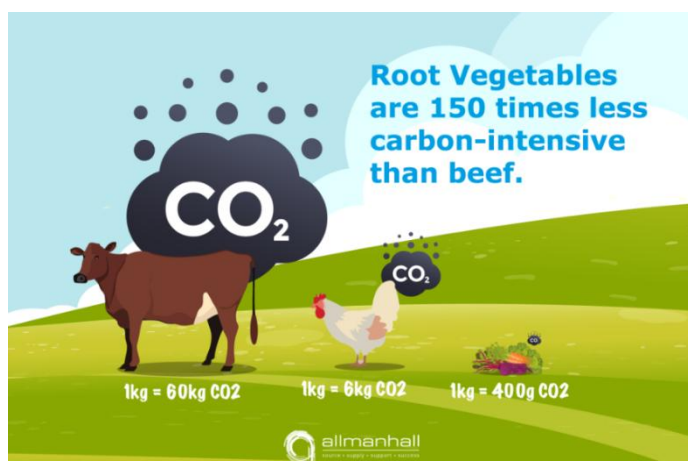
**Thursday May 8th at 16:00 - 16:45:** <https://events.teams.microsoft.com/event/363511d7-e740-425b-96b0-19e12471f30d@7c6a9453-a5d0-4963-8cd7-1c6bb4859e04>

### **Catering: Beef & Poultry**

Beef is currently 33% more expensive than this time last year and poultry prices are 9% higher than April 2024. With Universal Income Free School Meal funding increasing by significantly less than inflation, catering budgets have arguably never been under such pressure. Allmanhall has produced a useful blog to explain the food price increase - [Rising meat prices could force a menu rethink | allmanhall](#).

What can we do? A simple step is to reduce meat in the menu, saving money and the planet at the same time.

The [Planetary Health Diet, created by the EAT-Lancet Commission](#) on Food, Planet and Health, emphasises that a plant rich diet with more whole grains, fruits, vegetables, nuts and legumes and fewer animal source foods is healthy, sustainable, and good for both people and planet. It is not a question of all or nothing, but rather small changes for a large and positive impact.



Get Allmanhall's sustainable recipes [here](#) and [here](#).

🚩 The [Shropshire Good Food Partnership](#) will be joining us at our next UKSSN online meeting (22nd May at 4pm) to share some of their work on sustainable food, reducing food waste and how they are supporting schools to introduce systems that are good for 'people, place and planet' 🚩

### **Risk Management: Flooding**

#### [Assess and manage flood risk in schools checklist](#)

Flood risk is one of the three highest priority risk areas identified in the Climate Change Committee's independent assessment of UK climate risk. The Environment Agency



has developed prompts to help us prepare for flooding from rivers, the sea, the rain and reservoirs in your school, in the same way that we plan and prepare for other emergencies.

### **Planning: Greener School Index (GSI)**

#### **NEW! Greener Schools Index Report - Zenergi**

The first Greener Schools Index (GSI) report has been published. The report is based on findings from the pilot cohort of schools and Trusts. Whilst it is unlikely to be representative of the whole sector, the report shares key findings and actionable advice and tips from practitioners who have successfully developed and integrated their Climate Action Plans.

The GSI is a free tool self-assessment tool designed to support all schools, however big or small, and at whatever stage they are on their net zero journey. The second phase of GSI is now open and will help you assess your current level of climate action and identify areas for further development. Give it a try...it is free and a particularly useful planning tool.

## 🎓 CPD and Support 🎓

On Wednesday I had the privilege of delivering a workshop on sustainability and climate action planning with [Let's Go Zero](#) at the annual [The Trust Network](#) (TTN) national conference. They even let me join the afternoon panel 😊. If you work in Operations or Estates and aren't already a member of TTN, I would encourage you to sign up. There is a huge amount of expertise in our sector; we need successful networks like TTN to facilitate transferring that knowledge around the system.



## 👥 NEW - UKSSN Network Meeting - 22nd May, 16.00 on TEAMS 👥

### UKSSN Operations Group

The next UKSSN network meeting is fast approaching. Following the introduction of new recycling regulations at the end of March, our main focus will be on waste management. We will also be joined by the Shropshire Good Food Partnership to talk about their work with schools and strategies to reduce food waste.

*'Producing food requires significant resources including land, energy and water. Globally, 25–30% of total food produced is lost or wasted, and food waste is estimated by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change to contribute 8-10% of total man-made greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. If food waste were a country, it would be the world's third largest emitter after China and the USA.'*

[Action on food waste | WRAP - The Waste and Resources Action Programme](#)

Register for the meeting on our website (link above 😊)

## 👥 NEW - DSLS Climate and Nature in Education, Exeter - 5<sup>th</sup> Jun 2025 👥

[office@devonsls.co.uk](mailto:office@devonsls.co.uk)

DSLS is excited to announce that it has been collaborating with Climate Ambassadors to host an interactive Conference for school leadership teams and governors to support them with implementing a Climate Action Plan and Sustainability Lead in line with the Department for Education's (DfE) Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy.

The day will include why the climate change agenda is important; Climate Ambassador Programme scheme; UK Sustainability Schools Network (UKSSN); input from schools giving case studies and eco-committee pupil voice; and focused workshops.

Contact DSLS for information and booking.

### Plus...

Here are just a few more events to look forward to -

- #CCADIS 2025, Luton (2nd May 2025) - <https://lnkd.in/eiGBEjZc>
- [Schools Sustainability Showcase](#), ARU Peterborough (22nd May 2025)
- North-West [Sustainability Learning Conference](#) (26<sup>th</sup> June 2025)
- [ASCL Annual Sustainability Conference](#), Manchester (5<sup>th</sup> June 2025)
- [London Schools Eco-Network](#) 2025, Highgate School (25th June 2025)
- [Northern Sustainability Summit](#), Manchester, (10<sup>th</sup> July 2025), all sectors



*"The response to climate change and embedding changes into school and college life is a priority for many this year. The ASCL Sustainability Conference is returning and is taking place in Manchester on Thursday 5 June 2025. We are thrilled to announce Award Winning Engineer, Global Innovation and Sustainability Consultant, Yewande Akinola, as a keynote speaker. You will have the opportunity to attend some great workshop sessions for you to get practical takeaways to consider for your setting, and there will be a wonderful session delivered by students too! The full programme is now live on the website."*

If you are planning an event let us know and we will share with colleagues in the network.

**Plus, plus, plus...** plenty of free, high quality, online training and support -

- **Sustainability Support for Education** - [Action for Climate by Sustainability Support for Education. | Eventbrite](#)
- **Carbon Literacy** - [Free Carbon Literacy training from Let's Go Zero](#)
- **Water Literacy** - [Water Literacy | Accredited Learning Experience](#)
- **Salix Decarbonisation Dialogue (13<sup>th</sup> May at 14.00)** - [The Decarbonisation Dialogue](#)

**Change Agents UK** also run regular Carbon Literacy courses, a crucial step in everyone's Climate Action Plan - [Change Agents UK Events - 7 Upcoming Activities and Tickets | Eventbrite](#)

## ♥ And finally.... ♥

Climate action comes in lots of flavours. My favourite for today is here - [TDS Celebrates Earth Day by Tackling Climate Change | The Daily Show](#). Grab yourself a coffee and biscuit and enjoy 😊.

Have a great weekend ♥

## Recommended sources of advice and support

1. DfE sustainability hub: [Sustainability Support for Education](#) (with updated features for 2025 and updates in [LinkedIn](#))
2. UKSSN: [UKSSN Operations Group](#)
3. Education Nature Park: [Home | Education Nature Park](#)
4. Climate Ambassadors: [Climate Ambassadors: Turning Climate Ambition into Climate Action in Education | Climate Ambassadors](#)
5. Let's Go Zero: [UK Climate Change • Let's Go Zero](#)
6. EAUC: [The Platform - Environmental Association for Universities and Colleges, EAUC - United Kingdom](#)
7. FED: [FED | Climate Change](#)
8. Good Estate Management for Schools - [Good estate management for schools - Guidance - GOV.UK](#)
9. Sustainable Drainage (SUDS) - [Susdrain - The community for sustainable drainage](#)
10. The Trust Network (TTN) - [The Trust Network supporting good school estates & facilities management](#)
11. Salix - [Project delivery: support and guidance](#)

## Other useful references

### HM Government Net Zero Strategy (October 2021, page 29)

'Government is leading the way – embedding climate into our policy and spending decisions, increasing the transparency of our progress on climate goals, and providing funding to drive ambitious emissions reductions in schools and hospitals.'

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6194dfa4d3bf7f0555071b1b/net-zero-strategy-beis.pdf>

### Department for Education Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy (April 2022)

[Sustainability and climate change strategy - GOV.UK](#)

## **Streamlined Energy and Carbon Reporting (SECR)**

[Environmental reporting guidelines: including Streamlined Energy and Carbon Reporting requirements - GOV.UK](#)