Website - <u>UKSSN Operations Group</u> LinkedIn - <u>(3) UK Schools Sustainability Network Operations Group | Groups | LinkedIn</u>

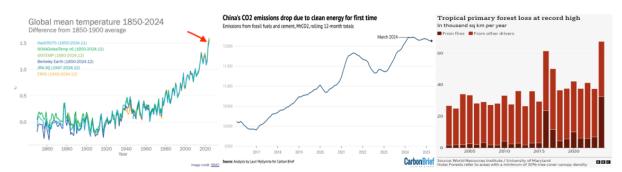
Stories to spark conversation, fresh ideas for your climate action plan, signposts to support services, a wealth of CPD and events, and  $\mathbf{\hat{w}}$   $\mathbf{\hat{w}}$   $\mathbf{\hat{w}}$  ....grab yourself a  $\mathbf{\hat{e}}$  and enjoy  $\mathbf{\hat{v}}$ .

'Our collective goal must be to spare future generations from having faded memories of our once flourishing planet, as a fragment of time trapped in natural history books.'

Mary Myatt

### Stories to share this week

The world is not yet moving fast enough to 'bend the curve on climate change and biodiversity loss. Global temperatures in 2023, 2024—and now 2025—are smashing records. For every **green shoot of improvement** (the Financial Times reports that China is set to become the world's first "electrostate"—a nation rapidly weaning itself off oil and coal in favour of low-carbon electricity. For the first time, the growth in China's clean power generation has caused the nation's carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions to fall despite rapid power demand growth) **there are stories of loss** (the world's tropical forests, which provide a crucial buffer against climate change, disappeared faster than ever recorded in 2024).



China - <u>Analysis: Clean energy just put China's CO2 emissions into reverse for first time - Carbon</u> <u>Brief</u>

Tropical Primary Forest - Fires cause record loss of tropical forests in climate threat - BBC News

The constant stream of climate change news—oscillating between hopeful breakthroughs and dire warnings—can be overwhelming, triggering a freeze, fight, or flight response as we struggle to process the emotional whiplash and looming sense of uncertainty.

This same stress response can manifest at an organisational level, where institutions stall in decision-making (**freeze**), aggressively defend the status quo (**fight**), or divert attention and resources away from climate action altogether (**flight**), undermining coordinated and sustained efforts to address the crisis.

### 😳 Freeze

School leaders talk about finding themselves in a state of paralysis when it comes to climate action. This "freeze" response is often driven by **barriers such as lack of funding, time, and expertise** (not helped by the recent example of the **withdrawal of the Low Carbon Skills Fund (LCSF)**, which had supported schools in developing decarbonisation plans). There is also **fear of failure**— attempting to act and falling short or inadvertantly overstating progress (aka greenwashing) is worse than doing nothing at all. This mindset can lead to inaction, as maintaining the status quo feels safer than risking visible failure.

### 🎕 Flight

In some cases, schools exhibit a "flight" response, where **leadership diverts resources to other priorities**, avoiding the climate issue altogether. Despite overwhelming scientific evidence that climate change is a complex and critical threat to the next generation, it is often sidelined. Competing demands, short-term pressures, and a lack of oversight and immediate accountability allow climate action to be deprioritised, even when the long-term consequences are dire.

### 🔏 Fight

Schools defending their strategy of minimal action by pointing to limited resources, competing curriculum demands, and the absence of strong regulatory compulsion; for example neither Ofsted inspections nor the Academy Trust Handbook explicitly require schools to implement comprehensive sustainability measures, allowing climate action to remain a discretionary rather than mandated priority.

### 🛉 Constructive Hope 🍦

Ojala (2016, p. 14) calls the ability to face environmental risks and uncertainty, believe one's own actions and the actions of others can make a difference and find positive meaning in action, 'constructive hope'. Perhaps what we need now is to nurture a 'fight' response that nurtures **constructive organisational hope**, and led by a new school leader role with -

- Expertise to understand the complexities of climate action
- Knowledge of what actions are effective
- Seniority to influence decisions and allocate resources

- Change management skills to implement initiatives strategically
- **Resilience** to persist through setbacks

By empowering such leaders, schools can shift from paralysis and cynicism to meaningful, sustained action. Climate action in education is not just a moral imperative—it is a strategic necessity for preparing students and communities for the future they will inherit.

### 🖆 Ideas for Climate Action this week 🎬

- Climate Change Education: Curriculum for Climate Literacy & CAPE
- DfE Update: Climate Snapshot
- **DfE:** Youth Sustainability Champions
- Finance: Low Caron Skills Fund (LCSF)
- Energy: Half-term switch off
- Water: 10 ways to cut your water usage
- Waste Management: UKSSN Network Meeting
- Nature: Education Nature Park update
- Green Skills: Upskill your workforce
- Our Shared World: Climate Psychology:

# Climate Change Education (CCE): Curriculum for Climate Literacy MetLink - Royal Meteorological Society A Curriculum for Climate Literacy

The need for better climate education in schools across the UK is undeniable – from calls from young people, teachers and employers and evidence from climate literacy surveys. The DfE in England's Curriculum and Assessment review interim report specifically states that: "Rapid social, environmental and technological change necessitates that the curriculum keep pace; including a renewed focus on digital and media literacy, and a greater focus on sustainability and climate science."

The Royal Meteorological Society has engaged with UNESCO's <u>Greening Education</u> <u>Partnership</u>, <u>TIDE</u>, <u>CAPE</u> and <u>SOS-UK</u> to develop a 'Curriculum for Climate Literacy' to support those charged with developing national curricula, exam specifications and school level curricula and ultimately equip students with the knowledge needed for their lives as local and global citizens, and with the skills for careers shaped by a changing climate.

We encourage all school leaders - including those working in Operations and support services - to engage with the curriculum document. Schools that develop a 'whole-school approach' to climate action are able to connect what children and young people gain through their curriculum with their school's practice in the canteen, corridor and outdoor spaces; they actively enable constructive hope.

#### **Climate Wise Programme**

The CAPE Alliance CPD programme for school and subject leaders is open for applications. 'Climate Wise Schools' is designed to support you with the knowledge and skills necessary to deliver high-quality, evidence-informed, Climate Change Education in your school or Trust. The celebration event for this year's Climate Wise cohort was held this week. The event was perhaps the highest quality conferences I have attended in a long-time; a reminder of why high-quality climate change education is so vitally important; why simple 'fast-food' solutions are not fit for purpose in addressing such complex issues; and the progress being made in creating thoughtful, evidence-based, curriculum solutions. See the attached documents for more information.



I-r: Heena Dave (CAPE), Jen Plews (CEO Northern Star Academies Trust), Mary Myott (educator, author, leader)

### **DfE Update: Climate Snapshot (May 2025) sway.cloud.microsoft/kLnzlhRBL**

The latest Climate in Education snapshot has been published by the DfE. This months edition includes:

- DEFRA Simpler recycling regulations for workplaces
- Climate Ambassadors scheme and webinars
- Modeshift Stars Free support!
- Sheffield Hallam University hosts inaugural Climate Leaders' conference
- Enhance your school's Climate Action Plan with support from Eco-Schools and the department
- Ashden's Let's Go Zero Wins Green Project of the Year!

### 🔀 DfE: Youth Sustainability Champion 🛣

### Work for us - Job Vacancies | SOS-UK

Students Organising for Sustainability (SOS-UK) has partnered up with the Department of Education to help them find their next Youth Sustainability Champions – 3 young people who will help shape policy and advocate for young people at the heart of Government. This is an unparalleled opportunity for young people aged 18-23 to influence policy. The role is a paid, 2 year part-time contract. If you know any young people who might be interested, or networks who work with them, please do feel free to share the link.

Applications should be submitted by May 28, 2025, 17.00

### 😨 Finance: Low Carbon Skills Fund 😨

We have been informed by government that there will be <u>no funding for the Public Sector</u> <u>Low Carbon Skills Fund</u> in financial year 2025/26. Delivered by Salix, it has provided grants for public sector organisations to engage specialist and expert advice, and skills needed to create robust heat decarbonisation plans. These have helped prepare for heat decarbonisation and energy efficiency works.

They have pointed schools to the local Net Zero Hubs, which may be able to support the development of the strategy stage of a Heat Decarbonisation Plan (HDP) as a first step. There is also now some detailed guidance from the <u>Energy Systems Catapult</u>, which gives a clear view on the required data and stages of the plan going beyond strategy to initial feasibility, advanced feasibility and detailed design.

Schools may indeed be able to get the strategy stage completed in-house using the guidance freely available, but they normally won't be able to progress beyond that without additional expert support – which will now need to be self-funded, given the absence of any grant equivalent to the LCSF. Other options - energy efficiency measures, on-site power generation and storage - are feasible alternatives but generally require specialist support. Advice and support is available, for example <u>ReEnergise</u>, <u>Barker Associates</u>, <u>BAM</u>. Find a trusted partner to help you navigate the complexity.

### + Energy: Half-term switch-off +

### Students and staff create a holiday switch off checklist | Energy Sparks

On average, schools use 15% of their energy during the school holidays. In fact, the average primary school spent  $\pounds$ 300 and the average secondary school spent  $\pounds$ 2,000 on energy during summer half term last year (Energy Sparks). As CFO of a Multi-Academy Trust, I am bust trying to make a budget balance when funding simply isn't keeping up with expenditure. Energy is one of the biggest non-staff costs schools have to manage; if I can save even 10% by simply ensuring non-essential equipment is switched off when not in use I can protect more jobs (and improve outcomes for childen); I can support our community (where the majority of our employees live); and help protect the environment.

'When sustainability is viewed as being a matter of survival for your business, I believe you can create massive change.' (Cameron Sinclair)

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	Photocopiers and printers	

# Students and staff create a holiday switch off checklist

Create a school switch-off checklist to be used before weekends and holidays to ensure nothing is forgotten

30 KS2 KS3 KS4 KS5 Citizenship

Zenergi has also produced an 'Energy walkaround checklist', free to download here: <u>Zenergi\_walkaround\_checklist\_New.pdf</u>

### 🕒 Water: Reducing your water usage 🗳

### 10 Innovative ways schools can slash water usage - Lets Go Zero

As climate change intensifies, every action to save water matters. Schools have a unique opportunity to lead in water conservation, not only by reducing their environmental impact but by teaching students sustainable habits for the future. Let's Go Zero has published 10 innovative strategies that can help school's minimise water usage while promoting eco-friendly practices. Make sure these are embedded into to your Climate Action Plan.

#### Plus:

With growing pressure on water supplies, learn more about why water management is a critical part of an effective Climate Action Plan: <u>Water Literacy | Accredited Learning</u> <u>Experience</u>

### 🚮 Waste Management: UKSSN Network Meeting 🚮

On Thursday we held our latest UKSSN network meeting where we focussed on waste management.

## 'There is no such thing as 'away' when we throw anything away. It must go somewhere.' (Annie Leonard)

Our speakers shared some of the brilliant work they have been doing to support our schools.

- Olio (Sophie Leader) <u>Olio Your Local Sharing App</u>
- Devon County Council (Bobby Hughes) Resources for Teachers & Parents Zone
- Shropshire Good Food Partnership (Emma Cantillion) <u>SCHOOLS FOOD WEB</u> | <u>SHROPSHIRE GOOD FOOD</u>
- St Bart's Multi Academy Trust (Julie Rowlandson)

Here is a link to the recording; presentations will be uploaded to the website shortly - <a href="https://tinyurl.com/yusympfe">https://tinyurl.com/yusympfe</a>

**Plus:** Mireille Digard (Sustainability Manager, Dudley College of Technology) who has supported from the very early days of UKSSN recently shared a video with us about waste management - <u>Everything about the bins1.mp4</u>. Don't let anyone tell you that waste can't be engaging, creative and fun...thank you Mireille **V V** 



### **X** Nature: Update from the National Education Nature Park **X** <u>E-Newsletter Signup | Education Nature Park</u>

The May Education Nature Park has been published, once again packed with great advice and support. A few highlights:

- How to explore and map the habitats on your site. Read case studies on how schools have done it and catch up on habitat mapping webinars to hear more.
- Be a habitat hero and win prizes for your school.
- Ideas to change grey areas into green spaces.

Take part in a computing co-creation day (Friday 11th July).

Sign up to their newsletter to get all of the links (plus lots more).



### Plus:

There is still time to embrace 'No Mow May' - Plantlife's No Mow May

Movement. Approximately 97% of flower-rich meadows have been lost since the 1930s, and with them, vital food and habitat needed by wildlife. No Mow May is Plantlife's annual campaign urging everyone to pack away the lawnmower, let wildflowers grow freely and help nature. Whether you're in a city, town or the countryside, it's super easy to take part. No lawn is too small! Even the smallest wild patch can provide vital food needed by bees and butterflies, connecting us with nature and giving nature the best start to summer.

### 🕈 Green Skills: Upskill your workforce 翰

### https://tinyurl.com/3j42f5yk

A 2024 survey by LinkedIn - the 'Global Green Skills Report' suggests that by 2050, about 50% of green economy jobs will not have qualified candidates.

### Green jobs are abundant. Green workers are not. | Corporate Knights

We need to double the size of the green talent pool by 2050—at a bare minimum—to keep pace with projected demand. Whilst acknowledging the skills gap is important for school Careers teams, it is also vitally important to support the existing school workforce -

- 1. Schools will struggle to deliver a whole-school approach, reduce their carbon footprint, increase biodiversity, or any other measure of environmental success if they do not have a workforce equipped with 'green' knowledge and skills.
- 2. As the green economy grows, a workforce equipped with sustainability knowledge can access new roles, including environmental leadership, estates management, finance and procurement, curriculum development, and community engagement.
- 3. Training in green skills enables everyone to better support children and young people by embedding climate awareness and practical skills into everyday learning. By modelling climate-conscious practices, staff inspire students to pursue careers in emerging green sectors.

Investing in green skills today will help ensure that schools and Trusts become hubs of innovation, resilience, and opportunity in a rapidly changing world.

A few useful resources (there are lots more CPD opportunities listed below)

- ISBL Sustainability Standards ISBL Professional Standards ISBL
- Project Drawdown Job Function Action Guides | Project Drawdown



**CLIMATE SOLUTIONS AT WORK** 

Climate Solutions at Work, presented by Drawdown Labs, is a how-to guide for employees looking to make every job a climate job.

### 👼 Our Shared World: Climate Psychology 🤯

### Climate, Psychology and Change: Our Shared World Learning Lunch Tickets, Tue, May 27, 2025 at 1:00 PM | Eventbrite

Our Shared World are excited to bring you a new Learning Lunch from Steffi Bednarek, Director of the Centre for Climate Psychology and author of the recent book 'Climate, Psychology and Change: Reimagining Psychotherapy in an Era of Global Disruption and Climate Anxiety'.

Steffi works to equip a new generation of climate leaders with the psychological and systemic wisdom to navigate complex systems in a time of upheaval, supporting long-term mental, social and environmental well-being. Sign up to learn more about the critical role of psychology and emotions in leading climate action.

### Plus:

### <u>Select tickets – Climate Courage Schools: launch – Zoom</u>

Education needs to take the emotional impact of climate change seriously. But this is a hard message to get through when Climate Change Education is in its infancy and the increase in young people struggling with their mental health. The Climate Courage Schools is a campaign to ensure all young people gain the practical, emotional, and cognitive skills needed to "adapt and thrive in the world and workplace of the future", as pledged by the Department for Education. The launch event (link above) is Wed 25 Jun 2025, 4.30-6pm.

### 🞽 Support Services: Where to turn for help 🎽

### Sustainability Support Hub - <u>Action for Climate by Sustainability Support for</u> <u>Education</u>

Sustainability Support for Education are holding more Action for Climate webinars throughout May and June.

- Identify key actions for your plan
- Engage the right colleagues
- Access expert resources for successful implementation

### National Education Nature Park - <u>Home | Education Nature Park</u>

Join the National Education Nature Park and explore the habitats in 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. Register today and kickstart your adventure with our <u>Habitat Heroes activity</u>. Already involved? <u>Time to map your site</u>! Create a baseline for improving your outdoor spaces and track the difference you're making for both people and wildlife.

### Let's Go Zero - <u>Climate Action Advisors - Lets Go Zero</u>

One simple step we can all take is to sign up and engage you local (& free!) LGZ Climate Advisor. Let's Go Zero are also offering Carbon Literacy courses, a key part of your CPD plan for climate action -

• Carbon Literacy - Free Carbon Literacy training from Let's Go Zero

Change Agents UK also runs regular Carbon Literacy courses, a crucial step in everyone's Climate Action Plan - Change Agents UK Events - 7 Upcoming Activities and Tickets | Eventbrite

### Climate Ambassadors - <u>Contact us & get involved | Climate Ambassadors</u>

The Minister for Early Years, Stephen Morgan MP, who leads on sustainability at the Department for Education, has become the UK's 1,000th Climate Ambassador 2. Minister Morgan said: "The Climate Ambassadors programme is a vital part of our strategy to empower schools and educators in tackling the climate crisis, and I'm proud to be joining over 1,000 volunteers to support schools in developing and delivering their climate action plans."

### Count Your Carbon - Home - Count Your Carbon

Count Your Carbon is the nation's first free, full-scope carbon emissions calculator, built for – and in collaboration with – nurseries, schools and colleges.

It supports educational settings to calculate, understand, reduce and track your carbon emissions.

### **PLUS:**

### Blue Marble (New) - <u>Sustainable schools & trusts - start today with a Climate</u> <u>Action Plan - Blue Marble</u>

Blue Marble recently released a new Climate Action Plan tool for schools. According to their website the CAP tool is free for schools, designed to quickly and easily create a plan that unlocks meaningful action.

### Greener Schools Index - Greener Schools Index

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.

### Salix - Salix Finance - Salixfinance.co.uk

Since its formation in 2004 up to 31 March 2023, Salix has helped public sector organisations commit to more than 22,000 projects by administering £3.3 billion of funding, with projects saving 1.1 million tonnes of carbon dioxide annually.

### **The set of the set of**

There is a multitude of CPD, training and networking opportunities between now and the summer break to support climate and biodiversity action in education. Below are just some of the highlights.

### Thoughtbox - Transforming Leadership (June 2025)

### Leadership Application — ThoughtBox Education

The Transforming Leadership Programme is a four-week (4x 2 hour) online course for education leaders to delve into the roots of our nested crises and explore our role in enabling healthier futures. This nature-led leadership programme is designed to support you to grow resilience as a leader and strengthen practical experience alongside a community of peers on a journey of transformation, together.



Weds 4th June, Thurs 12th June, Thurs 19th June, Thurs 26th June, 4 - 6pm BST

### III Plus...

Here are a just a few more events to look forward to over the summer term:

- ASCL Annual Sustainability Conference, Manchester (5<sup>th</sup> June 2025)
- DSLS Climate and Nature in Education, Exeter (5<sup>th</sup> Jun 2025) email office@devonsls.co.uk
- Reading Climate Festival (University of Reading) Climate Action Planning
   <u>https://tinyurl.com/ycrk9nf3</u> (17th June, 15.00-18.30)
- North Hampshire Climate Action Planning in Education Workshop- Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> June 9:30am – 12pm, The Hurst School, Baughurst, Tadley, RG26 5NL-Registration form: <u>Hampshire's Climate Action Planning in Education Workshop</u>
- South Hampshire Climate Action Planning in Education Workshop- Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> June 9:30am – 12pm Park Community School, Havant, PO9 4BU- Registration form: <u>Hampshire's Climate Action Planning in Education Workshop</u>
- London Schools Eco-Network 2025, Highgate School (25th June 2025)
- Zenergi Energy Management workshop (ISBL accredited), Leeds

   <u>https://zenergi.co.uk/news/sustainability-lead-training-an-introduction-to-energy-and-carbon-management/</u> (25th June 2025) email Helen.burge@buoyantimpact.co.uk
   for free tickets

- North-West <u>Sustainability Learning Conference</u> (26<sup>th</sup> June 2025)
- Reimagine Places & Spaces, GovNews, London & Online <u>Reimagine Places &</u> <u>Spaces: The Future of Modern Workplace</u> (3rd July 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...

Don't forget there are other useful (& sometimes free) training opportunities to help progress your Climate Action Plan, including -

- Home Supply Chain Sustainability School
- Free Online Environmental Sustainability Training Course with Certificate
- IEMA Training
- <u>8-week, cohort-based programmes | Cambridge Institute for Sustainability</u>
   <u>Leadership (CISL)</u>

If you are aware of other high-quality courses please let us know and we will add to our growing list A

### 🙀 And finally....Bees 🙀

### World Bee Day | United Nations

**Did you know**....the production of one pound of honey needs 2,000,000 flowers and on average, a bee visits 50-100 flowers on each flight. The average bee makes just one twelfth of a teaspoon of honey in its lifetime.

**Did you know**....there are over 20,000 species of bees who, along with other pollinators such as butterflies and hummingbirds, support the production of 75% of our food crops.

**Did you know**....the UK has lost around 97% of its wildflower meadows since the 1930s, equal to the size of 7.5 million acres.

Pollinators are also critical for improving biodiversity and important ecosystem services, such as soil fertility, pest control, and air and water regulation. Yet bees and other pollinators, such as butterflies, bats and hummingbirds, are increasingly under threat from human activities.

### Ideas for action

- 1. A very simple action we can all take to support bees and pollinators is help raise awareness on their important role.
- 2. If you have a garden, you can avoid the use of pesticides and herbicides. You can also plant diverse native plants that flower at different times of the year.
- 3. Schools can include biodiversity in their Climate Action Plan and participate in national projects such as <u>B-Lines</u>, 'insect pathways' running through our countryside and towns, along which we are restoring and creating a series of wildflower-rich habitat stepping stones. They link existing wildlife areas together, creating a network, like a railway, that weaves across the UK landscape.

# 'Aerodynamically, the bumble bee shouldn't be able to fly, but the bumble bee doesn't know it so it goes on flying anyway'. (Mary Kay Ash)

Have a great weekend 💙

### Other recommended sources of advice and support

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

### 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-strategybeis.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