

# LEARNING FOR SUSTAINABILITY ACTION PLAN

**Learning for Sustainability (LfS)** is a cross-curricular approach which enables learners, educators, schools and their wider communities to build a socially-just, sustainable and equitable society. An effective whole-school and community approach to LfS weaves together global citizenship, sustainable development education and outdoor learning to create coherent, rewarding and transformative learning experiences.

LfS is an important component of [Curriculum for Excellence](#), an entitlement for learners and a core part of teachers' professional standards. It supports the development of knowledge, skills and the values at the heart of the curriculum's four capacities and provides a mechanism for promoting and working towards the [UN's Sustainable Development Goals](#).

## Background

Learning for Sustainability has always been part of Curriculum for Excellence and there are fantastic examples of how the exploration of social, environmental and economic sustainability continues to deliver outcomes across the curriculum. You can find out how Learning for Sustainability can be promoted and supported on [Education Scotland's National Improvement Hub](#).

LfS has been developed and informed by the work of both the '[One Planet Schools Working Group](#)' and the 'Learning for Sustainability National Implementation Group'. This work culminated in the 2016 publication of the '[Vision 2030+](#)' report which recommended that:

- i. All learners should have an entitlement to Learning for Sustainability
- ii. In line with the GTCS Professional Standards, every practitioner, school and education leader should demonstrate Learning for Sustainability in their practice
- iii. Every school should have a 'whole-school' approach to Learning for Sustainability that is robust, demonstrable, evaluated and supported by leadership at all levels
- iv. All school buildings, grounds and policies should support Learning for Sustainability
- v. A strategic national approach to support for Learning for Sustainability should be established

Scottish Ministers have accepted all five of the above strategic objectives as well as the other recommendations outlined by both groups.

## An Action Plan for Learning for Sustainability

A new (2019) Learning for Sustainability Action Plan sets out how the Scottish Government will implement the recommendations of the Vision 2030+ report over the next 3-5 years. It has been informed by consultation with a number of relevant stakeholders and delivery partners. The Action Plan is a living document and will be amended as appropriate as further opportunities to promote and deliver Learning for Sustainability become apparent.

## Support from Practitioners

Taken as a whole, the action plan aims to act as a catalyst to support the increased prevalence of Learning for Sustainability. However, lasting progress will only be achieved by the efforts of practitioners in our early years settings, schools and colleges. Practitioners in those establishments and colleagues at local authorities and other relevant organisations are therefore encouraged to renew their commitment to Learning for Sustainability.

## Stakeholders

Given its cross-curricular nature and relevance to many aspects of learning, this action plan will be relevant to many stakeholders including but not limited to: Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA), Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework Partnership (SCQF), Skills Development Scotland (SDS), Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC), Care Inspectorate, Association of Directors of Education in Scotland (ADES), Scottish College for Educational Leadership (SCLE), Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA), General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS), College Development Network (CDN), providers of initial teacher education, the teacher professional associations, Scottish Funding Council (SFC), Environmental Association for Universities and Colleges (EAUC), Scottish Futures Trust (SFT), Learning for Sustainability Scotland (LfSS), The Development Education Centres in Scotland (DECS), The International Development Education Association of Scotland (IDEAS), Keep Scotland Beautiful, National Network for Outdoor Learning (NNOL), Scottish Advisory Panel on Outdoor Education (SAPOE), carers, parents and learners.

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Vision 2030+ Strategic Objectives	To achieve this we will...	No.	Specific Actions	Relevant Vision 2030+ Recommendations	Delivery Partner(s)
<b>A strategic national approach to supporting Learning for Sustainability (LfS) should be established</b>	<p>Bring together organisations involved in the delivery of Learning for Sustainability in order to support the strategic implementation of this action plan.</p> <p>Support joined-up approaches to Learning for Sustainability across policy areas within Scottish Government.</p> <p>Invite contributions to development, delivery and promotion of LfS from a wide reach of networks and organisations.</p> <p>Develop and demonstrate the relevance of Learning for Sustainability to key national strategies and programmes, including amongst others:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UN Sustainable Development Goals;</li> <li>• National Performance Framework;</li> <li>• Scottish Attainment Challenge;</li> <li>• Developing the Young Workforce;</li> <li>• STEM Education Strategy; and</li> <li>• Getting it Right for Every Child.</li> </ul>	1.1	The Scottish Government will convene a Learning for Sustainability Policy and Stakeholder Network that will collectively support the delivery and promotion of Learning for Sustainability across Scotland.	Recommendations 3, 12, 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organisations involved in the Learning for Sustainability Policy and Stakeholder Network.</li> </ul>
		1.2	<p>The Scottish Government and Education Scotland will establish and disseminate a consistent narrative that shows how LfS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• contributes to the four capacities and four contexts of learning of Curriculum for Excellence; and</li> <li>• supports understanding, engagement with and the delivery of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).</li> </ul>	Recommendations 2, 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organisations involved in the Learning for Sustainability Policy and Stakeholder Network – in relation to the effective dissemination of the narrative.</li> </ul>
		1.3	<p>The Scottish Government will develop key performance indicators to demonstrate the impact of actions contained within this plan.</p>	Recommendation 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organisations and individuals providing data to support the measurement of impact.</li> </ul>
<b>All learners should have an entitlement to Learning for Sustainability</b>	<p>Learning for Sustainability is part of Curriculum for Excellence and all learners are therefore entitled to experience this cross-curricular approach to learning. To make that entitlement clearer we will further embed Learning for Sustainability within core Curriculum for Excellence guidance, allowing learners and</p>	2.1	The Scottish Government will contribute to the work of the Curriculum and Assessment Board in its consideration of a refreshed narrative on Scotland's curriculum, with the aim of ensuring appropriate references to Learning for Sustainability.	Recommendation 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curriculum and Assessment Board.</li> </ul>
		2.2	The Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA), working in partnership with Education Scotland and other organisations, will ensure that the inclusion of LfS-related	Recommendations 13, 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SQA</li> </ul>

	practitioners to see its value and applicability within both the broad general education and the senior phase.		content is considered when SQA national qualifications are being periodically reviewed.		
	The Scottish Government and Education Scotland will work with stakeholders to monitor the extent to which learners are receiving their entitlement to Learning for Sustainability.	2.3	The SQA, in partnership with Education Scotland and other organisations, will develop new LfS qualifications and pathways where appropriate.	Recommendations 13, 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SQA</li> </ul>
		2.4	The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) Partnership will identify LfS-focused qualifications and awards in the senior phase that are already recognised on the SCQF and those which could potentially be recognised on the framework, to ensure young people are aware of relevant pathways and receive credit for the learning they have undertaken.	Recommendation 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SCQF Partnership</li> </ul>
		2.5	Skills Development Scotland (SDS), in partnership with Education Scotland, will work to identify and raise awareness of how sustainability education can lead to high quality careers.	Recommendation 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SDS</li> </ul>
		2.6	Education Scotland will ensure that LfS-relevant senior phase and career pathways (identified with SCQF and SDS) are promoted and disseminated within the education sector.	Recommendation 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SDS</li> <li>• SCQF</li> </ul>
<b>In line with GTCS Professional Standards, every practitioner, school and education leader should demonstrate Learning for Sustainability in their practice</b>	Work to ensure that all 3-18 education practitioners engage with Learning for Sustainability through their professional standards and, through professional learning, are supported in embedding it within their practice.	3.1	The Scottish Government will work with the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) to ensure that strengthened references to Learning for Sustainability are included in their refreshed standards for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• registration;</li> <li>• career-long professional learning; and</li> <li>• leadership and management.</li> </ul>	Recommendations 5, 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GTCS</li> </ul>
		3.2	The Scottish Government will work with the Care Inspectorate and Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) to communicate the relevance of Learning for Sustainability as appropriate to their professional roles. We will disseminate Learning for Sustainability practice in early learning and childcare across the sector as part of that process.	Recommendations 5, 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SSSC</li> <li>• Care Inspectorate</li> </ul>

		3.3	The Scottish Government will work with the College Development Network (CDN) to ensure that Learning for Sustainability remains an explicit part of the Professional Standards for College Lecturers in Scotland. We will disseminate Learning for Sustainability practice in the college sector as part of that process.	Recommendations 5, 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CDN</li> </ul>
	Ensure that Learning for Sustainability continues to be embedded within initial teacher education.	3.4	The Scottish Government will work with the GTCS to ensure that Learning for Sustainability continues to be referenced in the Initial Teacher Education (ITE) Accreditation Framework.	Recommendations 5, 6, 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GTCS</li> </ul>
		3.5	The Scottish Government will work with the Scottish Council of Deans of Education (SCDE) to establish the best way to support the delivery of Learning for Sustainability as part of the initial teacher education process.	Recommendations 5, 6, 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SCDE</li> </ul>
	Support practitioners across the 3-18 learner journey in identifying and accessing resources and advice in relation to Learning for Sustainability.	3.6	Education Scotland will create and maintain a Learning for Sustainability 'landing page' on the National Improvement Hub which will be regularly updated with links to relevant guidance and exemplars.	Recommendations 1, 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education Scotland</li> </ul>
		3.7	The Scottish Government and Education Scotland will work with the Learning for Sustainability Policy and Stakeholder Network to ensure that LfS-relevant advice and support is provided to those in the education sector across Scotland.	Recommendations 1, 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning for Sustainability Policy and Stakeholder Network</li> </ul>
		3.8	Education Scotland will continue to utilise communication networks to promote and disseminate practice and opportunities in relation to Learning for Sustainability.	Recommendations 1, 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education Scotland</li> <li>• Learning for Sustainability Policy and Stakeholder Network</li> </ul>
		3.9	The Scottish Government will work with bodies who represent parents and carers in Scotland to communicate the importance of Learning for Sustainability. This will help to ensure that parents and carers are supportive of LfS being prioritised within Curriculum for Excellence.	Recommendation 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bodies representing parents and carers in Scotland</li> </ul>

		3.10	The Scottish Government will engage with groups of learners to produce a communication on why Learning for Sustainability matters to them. This will help to ensure that practitioners are encouraged to include LfS within their learning and teaching.	Recommendations 5, 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learner groups</li> </ul>
<b>Every school should have a whole-school approach to Learning for Sustainability that is robust, demonstrable, evaluated and supported by leadership at all levels</b>	Ensure that leaders and decision makers at all levels in the education sector are aware of the relevance and importance of Learning for Sustainability and therefore promote its delivery at a strategic level.	4.1	The Scottish Government will ensure the newly agreed LfS narrative and findings from the LfS literature review (referenced below) contribute to the articulation of how LfS supports educational outcomes and contributes to other relevant programmes and initiatives such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the National Improvement Framework;</li> <li>the Scottish Attainment Challenge;</li> <li>Developing the Young Workforce;</li> <li>STEM Education and Training Strategy; and</li> <li>Getting it Right for Every Child.</li> </ul>	Recommendations 1, 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scottish Government</li> <li>Education Scotland</li> </ul>
		4.2	The Scottish Government will work with strategic networks such as the Association of Directors of Education in Scotland (ADES), the Scottish College for Educational Leadership (SCEL), Teacher Professional Associations, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) and Education Scotland staff supporting the Regional Improvement Collaboratives (RICs) to help ensure that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LfS is reflected within their respective principles and programmes; and</li> <li>that they are providing coherent, relevant and meaningful LfS support packages to education leaders and decision makers.</li> </ul>	Recommendations 1, 3, 5, 7, 8, 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scottish Government</li> <li>Education Scotland</li> <li>ADES</li> <li>SCEL</li> <li>COSLA</li> <li>Teacher Professional Associations</li> </ul>
		4.3	The Scottish Government will commission a literature review on the impact of Learning for Sustainability on educational outcomes. We will disseminate the findings of that review in an effort to inform practice.	Recommendations 1, 3, 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scottish Government</li> </ul>
		4.4	Education Scotland will ensure that quality improvement frameworks continue to support improvement and self-evaluation in relation to Learning for Sustainability.	Recommendations 5, 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Education Scotland</li> </ul>

		4.5	Education Scotland will draw on evidence from scrutiny activities and its regional activity to identify and share highly effective and interesting practice in relation to Learning for Sustainability.	Recommendations 5, 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education Scotland</li> <li>• Care Inspectorate</li> </ul>
		4.6	The Scottish Government will work with the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) and the Environmental Association for Universities and Colleges (EAUC) to ensure the continued requirement to address sustainability, including Learning for Sustainability for senior phase learners, in the ambitions of the outcomes agreements with Scottish colleges.	Recommendations 5, 9, 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SFC</li> <li>• EAUC</li> </ul>
<b>All school buildings, grounds and policies should support Learning for Sustainability</b>	Aim to influence practice by ensuring that decision makers in relation to the design and development of learning estates (across the 3-18 learner journey) understand the importance of sustainable practices and procedures and of an educational environment which facilitates the delivery of Learning for Sustainability.	5.1	The Scottish Government will ensure that Learning for Sustainability is explicitly referenced in the forthcoming Learning Estate Strategy and that the importance of sustainability education and the creation of sustainable learning estates are reflected in the strategy's guiding principles.	Recommendations 9, 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scottish Government</li> <li>• The Scottish Futures Trust (SFT)</li> </ul>
		5.2	The Scottish Government will include reference to the importance of learning estates in supporting the effective delivery of Learning for Sustainability in the next update of the Scottish Government's 'Suitability Core Fact Guidance'. This will help to ensure that learning estate managers know that the physical environment of an establishment (including its outdoor space) is central if it is to be considered suitable to deliver Learning for Sustainability.	Recommendations 1, 9, 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scottish Government</li> </ul>
		5.3	The Scottish Government will work with the Association of Directors of Education (ADES) Resources Network and the Scottish Heads of Property Services (SHOPS) to help ensure that learning estate managers and decision makers are aware of the importance of Learning for Sustainability, the importance of creating sustainable learning estates and the importance of the learner voice when designing and developing learning estates.	Recommendations 1, 3, 7, 9, 10, 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scottish Government</li> <li>• ADES</li> <li>• SHOPS</li> </ul>

		5.4	Education Scotland will identify and disseminate practice examples of learning estates which embed sustainability policies and effectively facilitate Learning for Sustainability within the curriculum.	Recommendations 1, 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scottish Government</li> <li>• Organisations involved in the design, development and promotion of learning estates</li> </ul>
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