

Scottish Youth Parliament Climate Conversation

14 April 2018

OVERVIEW

An adapted [Climate Conversation](#) was held with the Transport, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee of the Scottish Youth Parliament. The aim of the session was to encourage discussion on climate change and to get people thinking about how climate change may affect places they love. We also used the session to trial an adapted format of the Climate Conversation. Instead of the Scotland 2030 activity we asked the participants to give their ideas for how they would encourage other young people to uptake some of the [10 key behaviours](#). More information on the adapted format can be found in **Annex A**.

There was a general understanding of climate change, how it may affect places they know and value, and why people should change their behaviours. There was a general acceptance of the majority of the behaviours tested. The main barriers preventing young people from taking up the behaviours discussed were high costs, and lack of understanding about why they should change behaviour or how to make changes. Ways of overcoming these barriers that were put forward by participants were reduced costs for young people and information on behaviour change being provided in the school curriculum. Another major barrier perceived by the participants were material barriers, i.e. poor condition/ availability of public transport (particularly bus).

The participants all said that they had enjoyed the session and had found the session practical, interesting and useful. SG offered to continue working with the TERA Committee of SYP which was met with enthusiasm. SG officials contact details are with the Convener.

CROSS-CUTTING THEMES

Across all of the behaviour areas education was a key theme, with many individuals noting that these actions should be taught about in school to ensure people know why they should be doing them and what benefits there are. Personal, Social and Health Education and Home Economics were subject areas that individuals thought would be best placed to provide this information.

Some interesting ways that the participants felt they could do to help engage young people were creating and/or promoting apps that reminded and encouraged low carbon behaviours. Creating and/or sharing memes on social media were also suggested as a medium of sharing information.

The majority of things written down were regulatory or infrastructure changes that would require government / business involvement, however they were discussed as ideas that the TERA Committee could lobby on. A number of the suggestions are things that TERA are already lobbying on, such as lower rail fares for young people.

BEHAVIOURS

1. Keeping the heat in

- Education about insulation / double glazing / energy efficiency in schools, e.g. in Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) curriculum
- Educate young people so they can educate those they live with
- Tell young people about savings from insulation, e.g. when people are buying first homes, moving into new flats etc
- Cheaper insulation / double glazing
- New legislation and regulations with leadership from the First Minister

2. Better heating management

- Wear more clothes in the house
- Education, e.g. included in PSHE curriculum
- More regulations on home insulation (particularly new builds)
- Raise awareness of fuel poverty, e.g. through TV adverts

3. Saving electricity

- Reminder apps on phones/tablets to prompt energy saving behaviours
- Financial incentives
- Door knocking to raise awareness of energy saving behaviours
- Memes

4. Becoming less reliant on cars

- Provide more bike hire schemes, e-bikes in hilly areas
- Cheaper and more regular public transport, particularly in rural areas
- Make public transport faster than driving
- Improve state of roads and pavements
- More trams

5. Travelling more efficiently

- Include in education system. Teaching on how to travel and live more efficiently
- Promote / incentivise communal travel, e.g. specific lanes for car-shares
- Improve rail services
- More accessible public transport: lower fares, reliable services including trains during the night, better bus services
- Better link up of services, e.g. Oyster-style cards across different forms of transport
- Electric cars: more charging points and more subsidies
- More public bike hire schemes, including e-bikes

6. Using alternatives to flying where possible

- Encourage car sharing
- More subsidies for rail travel
- Improve public transport services (buses and trains)
- High speed railway
- Regulate the aeronautical industry

7. Avoiding food waste

- Better and more effective teaching of Home Economics in schools, focussing on: how to use less; looking after food; planning meals; portion sizes
- Ensure council food waste bags are available for free from accessible locations
- Ban supermarkets from throwing away unsold food
- Encourage people to freeze leftovers and compost unavoidable food waste

8. Eating a healthy diet, high in fruit and vegetables, in season where you live

- Promote healthy foods instead of unhealthy foods
- Encourage alternatives like sugar free drinks / fruit and veg
- Use Home Economics to teach young people how to make quality meals, not just soup/ baking
- More local markets, e.g. farmers markets
- Make fruit and veg cheaper than unhealthy alternatives, particularly in schools
- Better diet education in schools, e.g. PSHE / Home Economics
- Advertise healthy foods in supermarkets and on TV rather than unhealthy food

We began the session by discussing the aim of the conversation, what the data collected would be used for and the background to Climate Conversations.

The first activity used photographs of locations around Scotland to get people thinking about how these areas could change over time. Participants discussed first in pairs then shared to the group why they chose the picture and then discussed how the scene could change. This led to a discussion about how things could change because of climate change, such as sea level rise, reduced or increased vegetation/tree cover, and decline of species. There was also discussion about how things might change due to development and the implementation of climate change policies – for example more housing, more traffic and more trees.

The second activity began by giving an overview of the Low Carbon Behaviours Framework and the 10 key behaviour areas. We chose eight behaviours and each was laid out on a table, along with a flipchart asking the participants to think about how they could encourage other young people to take up the behaviour. SG officials moved between tables to listen to the discussions and encourage participants to write down their thoughts on the flipchart.

On reflection, it was felt that this format worked well for the age group and allowed opportunity participants to discuss between them what they already did or what barriers they felt stopped them from doing it. It also allowed for SG officials to answer some questions about the behaviours and why they are important for reducing emissions.