

ACT NOW AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE

YOU CAN make a difference.

YOU – at **home**

YOU – at **work**

YOU – as a **voter**

YOU – in **Government**

Climate Change is happening. We all must act to adapt to the inevitable global temperature rise (of 1 - 2°C) and avoid 'tipping points' (a rise of 3 - 6°C) where climate change processes rapidly accelerate beyond the levels the Earth has seen in millions of years.

Not everything we need to do is easy, and not everything can be accomplished immediately, but **we can solve this global problem.**

We need to:

1. **Act now**
2. **Make small changes in our daily lives**
3. **Encourage government to act**

The **EASY STEPS** in this leaflet will **help** you to stop Climate Change by **cutting your personal carbon footprint.**

They will also **help you save money** and **improve your health.**

Northern Ireland should be a **leading low carbon economy.** The suggested government actions will demonstrate that Northern Ireland is committed to tackling the problem. These actions will also deliver immediate substantial community and economic benefits. You can help by telling government that you want Northern Ireland to play its part and are willing to support these actions.

EVERY STEP YOU TAKE HELPS

Personal Action

Government Action

ENERGY

Turn it OFF - Over £1 billion worth of energy is wasted in the UK each year by leaving appliances on standby.

Insulate your home and office - Around 50% of the heat lost in the average home is through the walls and loft. If everyone in the UK that can installed cavity wall insulation, we could cut carbon dioxide emissions by a huge 7 million tonnes.

Use renewable energy - Sign up to eco-tariffs and use current grants to install renewables to cut your dependence on fossil fuels and avoid future cost rises.

Introduce a rate rebate for energy efficiency - The rate rebate scheme has been running in England and Wales for three years and has resulted in thousands of householders installing cavity wall or loft insulation.

Extend Grants for renewable energy under the EREF and introduce 'net metering' for all renewable installations - A greater mix of renewable technologies provide Germany with a higher percentage of renewable energy due in part to their feed-in tariffs for microgenerators.

Enhance building regulations so that all new buildings are 'zero carbon' by 2012 - England has made a commitment to meet this target by 2016 but the technology to achieve the target is already available.

Personal Action

Government Action

TRANSPORT

Fly less - One long haul and one short haul flight add a whole planet to your 'carbon footprint'. It's not always practical to avoid flying when you live in NI, but think before you fly. Over the past 30 years air passenger numbers in the UK have increased fivefold.

Walk or Cycle for short journeys; take the Bus or Train for longer - Short journeys are the most polluting, yet 25% of all car journeys are less than two miles and 58% are under five miles. If you walk or cycle you'll be doing both your health and the environment a favour.

Drive less - Drive sensibly - Having your car tuned properly, driving at the speed limit and avoiding high acceleration all decrease fuel use and carbon emissions. If all drivers in NI followed the 'Smarter Driver' tips CO₂ emissions from cars could be reduced by 8% - saving motorists £59 million annually.

Introduce fuel duty on aircraft fuel - The Tyndall Centre predicts that aviation may contribute 50% of the total UK emissions in 2050.

Provide efficient public transport system - Public transport accounts for about 30% of NI government transport spending – this should be greatly increased so that public transport becomes a viable alternative for the majority of commuters and many other journeys.

Enforce speed limits and emission levels - It takes at least 14% more fuel to drive at 80 mph than at 70 mph, and there are huge safety implications as well.

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Personal Action

Take your own bags - It's a small thing, but they all add up – 230 million plastic bags are used in Northern Ireland every year, and bags pose a serious hazard to marine wildlife.

Choose products with less/recyclable packaging - On average, each household in the UK produces over a tonne of household waste every year. That is the weight of a small car, and over 1/3 of it is packaging.

Choose to Reuse - Rather than buying new, see if what you have can be mended, if you can buy recycled material or whether you need it at all!

Government Action

Fully commit to the 'Waste Hierarchy' of Reduce – Reuse – Recycle - With landfill and incineration only as the last options for the final residue after all three other options have been maximised.

Deliver the Waste Management Strategy in full - Including a full communications programme and addressing all sectors including business, agriculture and biodegradable wastes.

Provide recycling facilities for all packaging materials - Currently much that could be recycled is not being so due to economics; government should drive the market to provide facilities. This should be coupled with drives for manufacturers and retailers to use materials that can be easily recycled.

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Personal Action

Buy less, don't waste - Do you need it? How much of what we routinely buy do we really need, and how much ends up all too soon as waste disposed of in landfill sites? A quarter of China's carbon footprint is used to produce goods for export to the 'West'.

Consider the origin - Fairtrade, carbon used in production, organic and transport distance all impact on the carbon footprint of everything we buy—so these should be considered in every purchasing decision. Fair trade has already improved the lives of thousands in the developing world, and the movement is growing rapidly.

Use fewer chemicals - Less toxic to environment and to you. There are hundreds of different man-made chemicals in the average household, and they all come with a carbon cost.

Government Action

Promote 'choice editing' for lifetime carbon content by retailers - Just as you can't purchase personally dangerous goods, you shouldn't have the option of buying environmentally damaging products.

Promote the use of carbon labelling - A standardised system will allow consumers to make intelligent decisions on true costs of products.

Lead by example through government purchasing policies - The annual NI public procurement budget is £1.8 billion. Sustainable purchasing practices could play a huge role in driving markets as well as educating consumers.

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Personal Action

Reduce water use - NI Water is the biggest electricity user in NI – so even if we have enough water, the treating and pumping it to our homes is not ‘carbon free’.

Wait for full loads - Wash dishes and clothes in full loads to save both energy and water. Tumble dryers are very energy hungry – use a washing line instead.

Don't buy bottled water - Roughly 1.5 million tons of plastic are expended in the bottling of 89 billion litres of water each year, and that's not even counting the shipping costs.

Government Action

Utilise sewage as a resource - Using energy to burn sewage is a waste of a valuable resource; new techniques should be applied to harvest its value.

Require harvesting of all storm-water for use in all new development - All of our water is treated to drinking standards, but about 40% of household water is used to flush the toilet and in the garden.

Introduce universal metering - Only by having the amount people pay for water directly linked to the amount they consume can we fulfil our international obligations and encourage water conservation.

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Personal Action

Eat less meat - Eating more fruit and vegetables and less meat could reduce your food footprint by up to 40%. A kilogram of beef leads to the emission of greenhouse gases equivalent to 36.4 kilograms of CO₂ - equivalent to the CO₂ emitted by the average car driving 250 kilometres.

Choose local - A selection of 20 fresh food items purchased from British supermarkets had travelled an average of 5,000 miles each. Eating locally produced and in season food saves huge amounts of energy and supports local farmers.

Choose organic/low input - The largest carbon contribution of food overall comes from the chemicals used to grow it.

Government Action

Carbon labelling - Develop a system for labelling products with their life cycle carbon footprint.

Include agriculture in emission reduction schemes - In terms of global emissions, agriculture is believed to be responsible for 25% of CO₂, 65% of methane and 90% of nitrous oxide emitted.

Support local and organic food production - Provide funding packages to encourage diverse and organic production to supply local markets, helping local farmers to expand their markets and increase their economic viability.