

Community Skills Development for Climate Change Guide

Communities in Northern Ireland will be affected by the changing climate, but it isn't always easy to understand what actions you can take. This guide has been developed to provide interested groups with some tips and knowledge which could help **build resilient and informed communities that can better navigate the challenges that lie ahead**.

What does climate change mean for Northern Ireland?

Climate change is one of the most pressing global challenges of our time, impacting ecosystems, human health, and communities worldwide. In Northern Ireland, this means overall there will be there will be a greater chance of **warmer, wetter winters and hotter, drier summers**.

A full range of issues caused by this change can be found in the third [UK Climate Change Risk Assessment \(CCRA3\)](#), but here are just a few:

- **Heat:** Summer heatwaves, with daily temperatures of over 30°C, have a 50% chance of happening every year by 2050. This can affect human health and water management.
- **Flooding:** Over 45,000 properties in Northern Ireland are currently at flood risk. The main factors of flooding locally include heavy rainfall, storm surges, flash flooding, river overflow and poor drainage. Issues can arise with damages to habitats, buildings and problems accessing insurance.

What can communities do?

Every individual plays a crucial role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. By understanding climate change and its impacts, communities can take meaningful actions to both reduce greenhouse gas emissions and build resilience against climate impacts.

Community Action Plans and Education

Community planning and education empower people to make informed decisions. **Community Climate Action Plans** (like this one in [Bristol](#)) can be implemented that outline specific goals, strategies, and actions for reducing emissions. **Workshops** and **public campaigns** can be launched through social media and community events to raise awareness about climate change and encourage sustainable practices.

Resources:

- **[Place Standard Tool – Our Place Scotland](#)**
 - This tool includes the [Place Standard with a Climate Lens](#), which has been developed to help people understand how climate change might play out in a local area and support them to design their future place with climate in mind.
- **[Community Climate Action Plans – Keep Scotland Beautiful](#)**
 - The Keep Scotland Beautiful Community Climate Action Plan programme supports communities to design and implement a climate action plan which will also help them to reach Net Zero and adapt to climate change.

Local Training Courses are also available:

- **[Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful Carbon Literacy Programmes:](#)**
 - Accredited knowledge and skills to engage with the climate emergency.
- **[Business in the Community Carbon Literacy Programmes:](#)**
 - Designed to explore the opportunities, risks and challenges that climate change will present. The training is accredited, and each participant receives an individual 'Carbon Literate' certificate.

Community Emergency Plans

Develop and share **emergency preparedness plans** and resources to help communities respond effectively to extreme weather events and short-term shocks.

Resources:

- [Template for Community Emergency Plan – NI Direct](#)
 - Use this template to help your community develop an effective emergency plan.



Sustainable Transport and Active Travel

Sustainable transport and active travel significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve air quality. Organise **community events** like walking challenges, car-free days, or cycle-to-work days. **Active transport** can also be supported through initiatives like Bike Buses, where groups of children cycle to school together with adult supervision.

Resources:

- [What is a Bike Bus and how can I set one up? – Sustrans](#)
 - Learn how to set up a Bike Bus to help your community make everyday journeys.

Food Security

Community Food Partnerships can support local areas with access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food, despite environmental challenges such as extreme weather events and shifting growing seasons. **Community gardens** can be established to provide fresh produce and teach sustainable gardening. **Local food production** can be supported through farmers' markets to showcase sustainable and climate-resilient agricultural practices.

Resources:

- [Social Farms & Gardens](#)
 - Social Farms & Gardens work with members on Community Growing and local food, individual and community health and well-being, social, care, and sustainable farming, action for climate, nature, and soil.

Energy Efficiency, Water, and Waste Management

Promote **water conservation programmes** such as rainwater harvesting and the use of water-efficient appliances for community projects. Host community composting and recycling programmes, and community clean-up drives to encourage **waste reduction and recycling**. Support **renewable energy cooperatives** where community members can pool resources to invest in shared renewable energy projects like solar or wind installations.

Resources

- Find examples of community climate action from across Northern Ireland and the UK at: <https://carboncopy.eco/>

Conclusion

Through education, collective action, and practical initiatives, local communities can significantly contribute to the global fight against climate change. By fostering a culture of sustainability and resilience, we can protect our planet for future generations and ensure a healthier world for all.