

Briefing for the Public Petitions Committee on petition [PE1880](#): Introduce awareness and practical experience of litter picking and waste separation into the school curriculum, lodged by Calum Edmunds, Susanna Zanatta and Tannith Diggory of Cleanup Glasgow

Curriculum

Scotland's curriculum, the Curriculum for Excellence, is non-statutory. It is intended to be an outcomes-based curriculum and there are few prescribed activities.

The learning experience in schools is intended to be led by local authorities, schools, teachers and pupils themselves. Nonetheless, the Scottish Government has a strategic role and has supported specific in-school initiatives through partnership working. Often this is to support pupils' entitlements to particular aspects of learning (e.g. learning languages).

Learning for Sustainability (LfS) is part of the Curriculum for Excellence. [Education Scotland states](#) that LfS is "an approach to life and learning which enables learners, educators, schools and their wider communities to build a socially-just, sustainable and equitable society". The current approach to LfS is based on a report published in 2012. The [Learning for Sustainability \(LfS\) report](#) recommended that every learner should receive their entitlement to LfS and every practitioner should demonstrate LfS in their practice. In addition, it called for every school and centre to develop a coherent, whole school approach that impacts on their establishment's culture, curriculum and campus and connects them fully to their wider communities. An implementation group was set up to take forward the recommendations of the report; [that implementation group reported in 2016](#).

Eco-Schools

[Keep Scotland Beautiful delivers the international Eco-Schools programme](#) in Scotland. Eco-Schools Scotland is described as a whole school, pupil-led approach to Learning for Sustainability.

Eco-Schools is a seven step framework which is intended to introduce, manage and complete environmental actions in the school and local community. This framework is designed to put young people at the heart of these environmental actions. As part of the planning, the school's Eco-Committee should develop an action plan covering three (or five for a renewal process) of 10 listed topics. Two of these topics are Waste and Litter.

Litter strategy

In June 2014, the Scottish Government published the country's first National Litter Strategy [Towards a Litter Free Scotland: A Strategic Approach to Higher Quality Local Environments](#). That strategy stated that the Scottish Government would:

“work with council education services and organisations such as Education Scotland and Young Scot to develop initiatives and resources that encourage young people to do the right thing with waste. We encourage delivery partners to contribute to the development of materials and to include these within their existing education projects.”

Zero Waste Scotland [produced a guide for working with schools on issues to do with litter](#). In May 2017, Young Scot launched 'Supporting a shift in attitudes and behaviours to littering in Scotland', a report by Generation Change, a group of young people who were looking at how to combat littering. Their ideas included introducing an app to show young people where the closest bins are and making bins across Scotland more colourful and visible to encourage people to use them. Other ideas included public art projects to highlight the community impact of littering, and creating a national education campaign.¹

In 2019, the Scottish Youth Parliament published [Pack it Up, Pack it In](#) which identified young people's views and recommendations

¹ SPICe was unable to locate the original report. Secondary reporting on this document can be found here: <https://www.outdoorrecreation.org.uk/stories/communicating-young-people-changing-behaviours-well-shape-develop-policy-national-level/>

on reducing litter and single-use packaging, and improving recycling in Scotland. The report's recommendations included:

“Local Authorities and the Scottish Government should make funding and support available for young people and other community groups to carry out local projects to reduce the impact of littering and increase community pride in their local area. ...

“All young people in Scotland should receive improved practical environmental awareness education, and be empowered to take action to live more sustainably. To help achieve this, the Scottish Government and Education Scotland should take a human rights based approach when implementing the ‘Learning for Sustainability (LfS) Action Plan’, by meaningfully including children and young people in the design and delivery of LfS programmes. ...

“Local Authorities and the Scottish Government should do more to raise awareness amongst young people to help them understand what can be recycled, and when recycling is collected, in their communities.”

The 2014 Scottish Litter strategy [was reviewed in 2019](#) (albeit the review was published in 2021). This review called for a substantial “review and refresh of Scotland’s future strategy to tackle littering”.

Key Organisations and relevant links

Scottish Government

Education Scotland

Zero Waste Scotland

[Keep Scotland Beautiful](#)

Young Scot

Scottish Youth Parliament

[Association of Directors of Education Scotland](#)

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