

**PE1437/B**

## **Education Scotland contribution to Public Petition PE1437**

### **What measures are being put in place to ensure that schools comply with the duties placed on them by the Waste (Scotland) Regulations 2012?**

Sustainable development education, as a key aspect of global citizenship, is a theme across learning within Curriculum for Excellence and features prominently in many experiences and outcomes, particularly within the curriculum areas of sciences, social studies and technologies. This provides schools in Scotland with many opportunities to develop in learners, and in their communities, an understanding of key environmental, social and economic aspects of sustainability including those pertaining to the minimisation of waste.

For instance, within the social studies curriculum learners are given the opportunity to consider ways of looking after their school or community and encouraging others to care for their environment (SOC 1-08a). The issue of litter and waste provides a suitable context for this experience and outcome. Similarly at the third level, learners are expected to be able to identify the possible consequence of an environmental issue and make informed suggestions about the ways to manage the impact (SOC 3-08a). Within the technologies curriculum at second level, learners are expected to analyse how lifestyle can impact on the environment and on Earth's resources, and make suggestions as to how they can live in a more sustainable way (TCH 2-02b).

Through these learning experiences schools are developing a strong awareness in children and young people, and their wider community, about our collective responsibility to reduce waste. Learners have also been provided with many opportunities, as active global citizens, to take responsibility for addressing this issue.

For many schools, this work has also been undertaken through their Eco-School activities. Scotland has one of the most successful Eco-Schools programmes in the world with 98% of local authority schools participating in the programme. As of Oct 2011, some 3784 schools were registered with Eco-Schools Scotland (including local authority schools, independent schools and early-years establishments). Of these schools, 2541 had achieved Bronze award, 2274 had reached Silver and 1408 had attained Green Flag status. Within the Eco-Schools Scotland programme, litter is a compulsory topic and all schools are expected to develop an effective action plan for their school to address this issue. Waste Minimisation is also one of the ten topics within the programme which schools are expected to address on a rotational basis with the other topics. In progressing in their journey to becoming an Eco-School many educational establishments have established innovative and successful programmes to promote recycling and reduce waste drastically.

In addition to working closely with Eco-Schools Scotland, Education Scotland has worked with a number of local authorities to support strategic developments in relation to energy and waste. In 2011/12 funding was provided to The Highland Council to undertake a pilot programme to enable local authority waste officers, energy officers and countryside rangers to support schools in reducing their energy use and waste. This provided opportunities for staff in associated school groups to network and share approaches which have proved successful. This pilot work will inform a wider roll-out to schools across the authority. In the same year, further strategic support was given to schools in Fife Council to promote the engagement of schools in creating a zero-waste Scotland. These approaches have been shared and disseminated to other local authorities to inform their plans for year 2012/13.

Education Scotland has supported this process by undertaking a significant refresh of its Schools Global Footprint website. This work was undertaken in 2011/12 and allows schools to measure their ecological and greenhouse gas footprints in relation to six topic areas including: waste, energy, water, food, buildings and transport. The Schools Global Footprint website is a useful online tool for all those schools concerned with waste allows schools to measure the area of land they require (i.e. their global footprint) to provide them with all the resources they need and to also absorb their waste. The online calculator also enables schools to measure the impact of the amount of waste they produce in relation to greenhouse gas emissions. This gives them a measure of the impact of their waste in terms of climate change. In October 2012, just under 1000 unique visitors used this website.

Furthermore, in 2011/12 Education Scotland has supported a number of national initiatives which promote innovative approaches to reducing waste through a circular economy approach. This work has been taken forward in partnership with the Ellen MacArthur Foundation and the University of Edinburgh. The basis of the circular economy approach is to 'design-out' waste through better product design so that products can be easily disassembled at the end of their life cycle and the biological and technical ingredients re-purposed within other products. This is an innovative approach to waste minimisation which fully supports Scotland's ambitions to be a low-carbon and zero-waste society. Education Scotland in partnership with the Ellen MacArthur Foundation and the University of Edinburgh has provided a range of professional learning opportunities for practitioners across Scotland to promote understanding of the circular economy and provide opportunities for learners to develop their awareness and skills in relation to this concept. This work is new and innovative and Education Scotland has engaged in early discussions with Scottish Enterprise, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, the Scottish Government and Zero-Waste Scotland to look at opportunities for strategic national partnerships to engage schools, further and higher education institutions and businesses in taking this forward. This is a long-term approach but providing learners in schools with an opportunity to engage in learning relating to the circular economy ensures that the future

workforce have the skills and attitudes required to bring about this transformation in our economy and thinking.

Finally, the work undertaken in schools in relation to waste and sustainability is likely to be strengthened further in the coming year and beyond following the imminent publication of Learning for Sustainability, the report by the One Planet Schools Working Group. This group was established by Dr Alasdair Allan, Minister for Learning, Sciences and Scotland's Languages, following a SNP manifesto commitment ahead of the last Scottish Parliamentary Election. The group have identified a range of recommendations to promote whole school approaches to sustainability, outdoor learning and global citizenship and also give consideration to the 'greening' of the school estate. This report will be made public in December 2012 with a response from the Scottish Government expected by March 2013.

### **What are your views on what the petition seeks?**

Education Scotland recognises 'waste' as an important social, environmental and economic issue. Our role is to support schools and local authorities through programmes of learning which relate directly to Curriculum for Excellence and also to support the sharing of good practice in relation to citizenship and sustainable development education. The purpose of this learning is to develop children and young people as active global citizens who are committed to living sustainably within the ecological limits of the planet. This process of learning and engagement with schools, local authorities and other partner organisations is crucial if Scotland is to realise its ambitions to be a pioneering low-carbon and zero-waste society.