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## Developing a National Climate Education Action Plan

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Climate change is the defining crisis of our generation, and it will be the lived reality for generations to come. Yet many people still do not understand the issue or feel able to respond to it adequately, including the very young people whose future will be most affected.

On 15 September 2021, the University of Reading brought together young people, scientists, teachers and educationalists, policymakers and campaigners at a Climate Education Summit to create an action plan for better climate education in schools and colleges in the UK. This is to ensure all young people today and generations to come are equipped with the knowledge and understanding, and are empowered, to respond to and tackle the climate and ecological crisis facing our planet.

No single organisation is able to take this agenda forward alone and so the joint plan will need to be led and contributed to by different groups and by young people themselves, coming together to make real change possible.

Implicit in our plan is that better climate education is needed and that this education should not be solely delivered in a single school subject or groups of subjects, nor confined only to academic study – climate change touches all areas of society and so our plan covers education broadly.

The action plan consists of nine points:

- Everyone involved in the education of children in school and college settings should be encouraged and supported to access accredited continuing professional development (CPD) to improve their personal understanding of up-to-date data and science of our changing climate and the impacts of these changes.
- All teacher trainers and initial teacher trainees should be able to access training that empowers them to effectively incorporate climate education within their teaching across all levels and subjects.
- Teachers and school leaders should be encouraged and empowered, both at a national and local level, to ensure time and space within and beyond the teaching day is included for climate education.

- Every school and college should identify a senior staff member to lead on climate education and provide them with support and funding.
- A structured programme or climate award for schools, colleges and youth organisations should be developed, providing a national focus to a range of extracurricular activities and supporting resources to aid delivery.
- A national scheme of quality assurance of teaching resources for climate education should be developed.
- A regular national meeting of the dynamic, well-supported, national networks of educators, scientists and young people should be held, to share ideas and promote collaboration among representatives of these groups.
- Professionals working in climate research and policy, from science and non-science disciplines, should pledge a proportion of their working time to providing help to teacher-led climate education initiatives.
- A national, guiding framework for all educational providers that outlines compulsory climate education for all young people via schools and colleges should be developed and implemented.