Summary 2023

UK Legislation

**UK Climate Change Act 2008**

* The first global legally binding climate change mitigation target set by a country
* Committed the UK to reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 80% by 2050 (compared to levels in 1990) and provided a framework to deliver these requirements
* In 2019, the Committee on Climate Change, established in the Act, committed the UK government to reduce GHG emissions by 100% (net zero) by 2050.

**The Paris Agreement 2015**

* This Agreement, a legally bound international treaty involving 200 countries, vowed to cut GHG emissions in an attempt to limit the rise in global temperatures to ‘well below’ 2°c and ‘purse efforts’ to limit temperature increase to 1.5°c
* Each country’s contribution to cutting emissions would be reviewed every five years

**Health and Social Care Act 2022**

* This legislation, which came into effect in July 2022, is the first legislation addressing the response of healthcare to climate change.
* It is now the legal duty of the NHS to consider climate in decision-making, complying with the Climate Change Act, 2008 and Environment Act, 2021 as well as adapting to current and predicated impacts of climate change

Scientific Updates

**Stockholm Resilience Centre - Planetary Boundaries** – 2023 Update

* In 2009, scientists proposted nine planetary boundaries interrelated to the biophysical Earth system within which humanity can continue to grow and thrive
* In 2023, for the first time, all nine boundaries were quantified demonstrating 6 boundaries crossed (increased from 4 boundaries in 2015). Crossing boundaries represents increased risk of irreversible environmental damage.

**The *Lancet*****Countdown on health and climate change** – 2023 Report

* The 2023 update demonstrated exponential health risks from global climate inaction including rising transmission of life-threatening infectious diseases, increasingly frequent health-threatening temperature rises and rapidly growing pressure on health systems.
* Positive news of 15.7% reduction in deaths attributable to fossil fuel-derived air pollution since 2005 and investment in clean energy exceeding that in fossil fuels.



**Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)** – 2023 Synthesis Report

* Human activity has unequivocally caused global warming (with temperatures in 2011-2020 reaching 1.1°c above that of 1850-1900) through continually increasing GHG emissions.
* This has resulted in widespread lossess and damages to nature and people disproportionately affecting vulnerable communities who have historically contributed the lease to current climate change.
* Rapid and sustained reduction in GHG emissions could slow down global warming within two decades.

Resources

Legislation

[What is the 2008 Climate Change Act? - Grantham Research Institute on climate change and the environment (lse.ac.uk)](https://www.lse.ac.uk/granthaminstitute/explainers/what-is-the-2008-climate-change-act/)

[A legal duty to act - Climate Change Committee (theccc.org.uk)](https://www.theccc.org.uk/what-is-climate-change/a-legal-duty-to-act/)

[The Paris Agreement | UNFCCC](https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement)

[New legislation places duty on NHS to tackle climate change | The BMJ](https://www.bmj.com/content/378/bmj.o1681)

Policy updates

[Planetary boundaries - Stockholm Resilience Centre](https://www.stockholmresilience.org/research/planetary-boundaries.html)

[Lancet infographic - Climate Countdown 2023 (thelancet.com)](https://www.thelancet.com/pb-assets/Lancet/infographics/climate-countdown-2023/climate-countdown-2023-1699998303753.pdf)

[AR6 Synthesis Report: Summary for Policymakers Headline Statements (ipcc.ch)](https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/syr/resources/spm-headline-statements/)