

#2015/01225

## The Climate Change (Duties of Public Bodies: Reporting Requirements) (Scotland) Order 2015

### INTRODUCTION

The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 acknowledges the role of trade unions<sup>1</sup> by setting out in other climate change provisions - adaptation programmes. The Act also requires the Programme to set out the arrangements for involving employers, trade unions and other stakeholders in meeting Scottish Ministers objectives; and the mechanisms for ensuring public engagement in meeting those objectives.

In the key principles of the guidance (3.3) Public bodies are encouraged to think about the consultation they carry out in relation to their climate change duties plans and policies, and how they disseminate information about these and progress against them.

We believe that long term sustainability of communities, workplaces, future jobs and indeed the wellbeing of society needs an holistic approach enabling collective action and wide spread participation to realise the ambitions laid out in The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009.

The Act has been a platform that's mobilised society participation and provided leadership opportunities for public bodies to lead by example and be accountable for their impact on and use of planetary resources.

Equally applauded is the acknowledgment in the Act of trade unions and the guidance on Five Steps to Managing your Climate Risk Guide for public bodies in Scotland provided via the [Adaptation Scotland](http://AdaptationScotland) website.

### SHARED CLIMATE CHANGE COMMITMENT

The Public Sector Body Guidelines<sup>1</sup> states, "Building resilience to climate change is a challenge that cannot be tackled alone. Creating a lasting awareness of climate threats and adaptation opportunities across the community will ensure threats and opportunities are addressed in the right way, at the right time."

We believe, from experience, that trade union workplace representation in the public bodies of Scotland contribute to the wider good of society but also to good, transparent and sustainable business. The employment and training implications of the transition to a low carbon economy are profound, as is the need to manage the changes fairly.

We share the understanding that corporately and individually we are stewards of the planets natural resources. Prospect's environment and climate change policy reflects Scotland's

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.adaptationscotland.org.uk/Upload/Documents/v6SNIFPublicSectorGuidelines.pdf>

ambition. We also believe that trade unions have a significant role to play in workplace ambitions. Climate change is a trade union matter because:

- the move to a low-carbon economy has massive implications for jobs;
- it has huge economic consequences;
- it is linked to many Prospect policies such as staff well-being, health & safety, skills and international development; and
- it has implications for the working environment.

## **WELL PLACED IN NATIONAL DEVOLVED PUBLIC BODIES**

Prospect members are employed in many areas of the environment sector, including forestry, food, fisheries, biodiversity, sustainable development and environmental protection. As well as protecting the environment we live in, they are also involved in research to ensure our continued health and that of our planet.

With more than 11,500 Prospect members living and working in Scotland across both the private and public sector with members and elected representation in the national devolved public bodies - we believe Prospect participation in the climate change adaptation plans would;

- provide a consistent approach across the diverse public bodies required to report;
- embed the partnership approach and widen stakeholder engagement;
- provide a platform for thorough consultation with trained elected representatives;
- contribute to business and operational efficiency;
- contribute to positive behavioural change through shared learning across the Prospect member networks;
- ensure that plans have equal weighting between staff and financial considerations; and
- provide an additional layer of transparency and accountability to plans, activities and validation of reports.

## **THE CASE FOR ENVIRONMENT REPRESENTATIVES IN THE PUBLIC BODIES OF SCOTLAND**

The project partnerships between workplace management and trade union environmental representation have delivered tangible results on environmental performance, ethical sourcing, changing behaviours and overall awareness of climate change and environmental impacts.

## **TRADE UNION EXPERIENCE**

We have a long and successful history of being part and parcel of governance structures and consultation forums for workplace health and safety and we would welcome transference of this knowledge and experience to support workplace climate change programmes and activity.

Our advocacy is based on successful outcomes of Prospect's (and other trade unions) work on initiating environment related projects and is well documented in various reports including:

1. **Labour Research Department:** Green Unions at Work 2012: The outcome of a survey of 1,200 environment reps which gives detail data on energy, resource efficiency, travel policies and improving operational procedures.
2. **Greening the workplace project report:** Case studies include BT Adastral Park, Ipswich; Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children, London; Leicester City Council; National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh; National Museums Liverpool; National Union of Teachers and United Utilities.

- 3. Report: Union effect on greening the workplace:** Labour Research Department’s study of the “union effect” on greening the workplace - union shop stewards and activists working on creating sustainable workplaces.

The new genre of trade union environment representation is supported through guidance for trade unionists on workplace environmental sustainability. Greening the workplace and targeting climate change guidance outlines the international and national policy framework; gives an overview of why this is a trade union matter and gives specific detail on workplace related matters of water, waste, transport, energy, investments etc. The resources supporting our work are listed in the table below.

Prospect environment representative guide <a href="#">Greening the Workplace</a>	TUC handbook: <a href="#">Go green at work</a>
Examples of briefings to Environment Reps on Environmental <a href="#">auditing</a> and <a href="#">Biodiversity</a>	TUC workbook: <a href="#">Targeting climate change</a>

### SHARED AGENDA IN THE WORKPLACE

As a trade union we believe and have evidence that elected environment representatives, with facility time, make a positive contribution to the capacity building of the listed Organisations to embed new approaches and behaviours that contribute to reducing Scotland's greenhouse gas emissions by at least 80% by 2050.

The “workplace” offers a unique platform (or environment) to educate, participate and share the values of sustainability as set out in the Act. Sustainability challenges and workplace representation on internal networks and committees have been addressed by Prospect through supporting members by:

- 1. Awareness raising:** We are part of well informed networks at global, national, regional, sector and workplace level. To add to this are elected representative bodies with established structures and communication channels. This is the framework used to actively promote and support sustainable development objectives in view of a shared agenda.
- 2. Support:** Equally we support members who arrange workplace events in support of sustainable development objectives. These have included workplace thermal imaging demonstrations, environment days, cycling to work and Fairtrade fortnight.
- 3. Training:** Prospect has developed training modules, thematic briefings, guidance and presentations to enable members and Environment Representatives to effectively contribute to workplace activity.
- 4. Validating reports:** Learning from work on corporate social responsibility and sustainability committees at a national, European and international level we provide support and guidance to members on standards, codes and principles relating to reporting, auditing & verification of CSR & Sustainability reports.

### DELIVERING POLICY THROUGH THE JUST TRANSITION PRINCIPLES

The table of objectives is an excellent example a holistic and inclusive approach to dealing with the climatic changes. We do however believe that the global principle of a “Just Transition” ought to be referenced in these objectives.

Just transition is the concept that articulates the social element of climate change and provides the narrative and indicators for ensuring that as societies (and indeed workplaces) transition fairly and equitably to low carbon operations to mitigate against and adapt to climate change.

The elements of Just Transition within an Organisation would include indicators of consultation on:

1. Work processes changing as a result of new low carbon technologies. For example, home working with ICT implications or introduction of zero paper usage.
2. Work patterns changing as result of programme related objectives. For example energy efficiencies to reduce carbon emission resulting in changes to lighting, heating, access to buildings etc
3. Travel (parking) policies changed to reduce carbon emissions for petrol vehicles or air travel.
4. Health and well-being considerations in relation to policies on extreme weather.
5. Creation of new jobs as a result of climate change mitigation and adaptation.

The Trade Union Sustainable Development Advisory Committee (TUSDAC) subscribes to the view that climate change is perhaps humanity's greatest challenge in the 21st century. It points out that, "sustainability' is not something we put in a separate box marked 'green'. It is a core trade union and workplace issue."

We believe, from experience, that trade union workplace representation in the public bodies of Scotland contribute to the wider good of society but also to good, transparent and sustainable business.

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<sup>i</sup> Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 - Part 5, Other climate change provisions, Chapter 1 Adaptation, Adaptation programmes