



WIG

The Whitehall & Industry Group
connecting the sectors



'Environment & Climate Change' Series

Climate change adaptation - a cross-sector perspective

Tuesday 8 June

Expert Insight

We were delighted to be joined by Baroness Brown of Cambridge, Chair of the Adaptation Committee of the Committee on Climate Change, and an expert cross-sector panel for this session exploring how organisations across the sectors can work together to adapt to current and future risks to the UK from climate change.

- Baroness Brown reminded us that next week will see the CCC's publication of a comprehensive new Evidence Report to underpin the UK's next Climate Change Risk Assessment (due 2022), which will go on to inform national adaptation programmes in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (due 2023).
- She outlined the range of risks from climate change which require adaptive action: risks of increased flooding, of varied plant and animal disease, risks to health from heat, to food production and supply, to our natural capital (including ability to deliver nature-based solutions) and to water supply.
- Stephanie Holt-Castle, Director of Growth, Communities and Environment at Kent County Council discussed their proactive approach to adaptation, having declared a climate emergency in 2019, which seeks to deliver co-benefits in terms of well-being, quality of place, local skills and productivity.
- Stephanie noted that investing upfront is more cost-effective than reactive spending, and shared details of practical on-the-ground actions such as the cool towns pilot in Margate, where tree planting offers both shading and water retention.
- David Black, Interim Chief Executive of Ofwat, spoke about the need to look at both supply side solutions, and reducing demand.
- Water demand management includes, setting 15% leakage reduction target across the industry, consumer behaviour change, and working with industry on innovative solutions.
- Jo Harrison, Director of Environment, Planning and Innovation, United Utilities, discussed how her team are working to ensure resilient service provision in the long term.
- UU's holistic risk management approach includes potential impacts of climate change on their workforce and supply chains. Adaptation challenges specific to the water supply / waste water context include reduction in river flows and algae growth impacting water quality.



Presentation Spotlight

Our panellists shared a range of supporting information in their slides, which can be accessed [here](#), including insight from Jo Harrison into the increased extreme weather experienced in the North West in recent years. As Baroness Brown noted, increases in maximum temperature are of significant concern, not just average temp rises.

100%

**of the 10 hottest years
have occurred since 2002**

50%

**of the 10 wettest years
have occurred since 2000**

0%

**of the 10 coldest years
have occurred since 1963**

Our members' questions

Our members asked some challenging questions, topics touched upon included:

- The training and educational needs of organisations across the sectors, around climate literacy, adaptation and living systems awareness, and how the FE/HE sector can help fill these skills or knowledge gaps.
- The importance of cooperation at the international level for effective climate change adaptation in the UK, in the context of COP26.
- To what extent the concept of, and need for, climate change adaptation is understood by the general public, and how this could be increased to drive behaviour change.

WIG members can listen to the panel's presentations [here](#)
To see our full programme of webinars, visit www.wig.co.uk