

# Quarterly Policy Briefing: Environmental Sustainability

## January 2023

This document outlines the main policy changes seen in the last quarter that will impact Scottish institutions and related EAUC-Scotland activity as a result.

### Scottish Policy Updates

- In October 2022, the Scottish Government published [an update for 2022 on the Heat in Buildings Strategy](#) (HiBS). This included information on the Green Public Sector Estate Decarbonisation Scheme which provides capital funding for energy efficiency and heat decarbonisation of existing buildings in the public sector.
- In November 2022, as part of the [Deposit Return Scheme](#)'s phased implementation, the Scottish Government began working with retailers on a voluntary basis to allow people to return bottles and cans for recycling. The scheme is due to go live across Scotland on 16<sup>th</sup> August 2023.
- In December 2022, the Scottish Government published its [Biodiversity strategy to 2045: tackling the nature emergency](#), setting out its ambition for Scotland to be Nature Positive by 2030 and to have restored and regenerated Scotland's biodiversity by 2045.
- In December, the Scottish Government's Domestic Climate Change Division invited organisations to join its Climate Policy Engagement Network as part of the climate change commitments in its [third Open Government Action Plan](#).
- In January 2023, the Scottish Government published the [Draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan](#) for consultation. The document provides a route map to a net zero energy system.

### UK Policy Updates

- Following a classification review, in November 2022, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) made [the decision to reclassify colleges in England into the public sector](#). This will have implications for colleges' finances – particularly in terms of borrowing.
- In December 2022, the [Department for Education announced a £500 million investment to allow schools and colleges to make energy efficiency upgrades](#).

### Other Updates

- The UN COP27 climate summit took place in Sharm El-Sheik, Egypt in November 2022. International leaders restated their commitment to tackling climate change with the energy crisis at the forefront of discussion. However, there is widespread

sentiment that insufficient progress has been made towards the goal of limiting warming to 1.5°C or 2°C, with parties including the [Aldersgate Group releasing statements](#) urging nations to do more to keep 1.5°C alive.

- At COP27, the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) published its [Net Zero Guidelines](#), offering a common path for the definition of “net zero” amongst other principles and guidance.