Experiences of Education for Sustainable Development in the Further Education and Training Sector

A workforce survey report

August 2021

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FOREWORD

The further education and training (FE) sector has a critical role to play in combatting climate change and achieving broader sustainability goals. It is uniquely placed to bring about transition and transformation in our society.

FE is the pipeline for the workforce of many industries, employers and sectors which have a critical role to play in sustainable development, including construction, manufacturing, agriculture, catering and transport. The sector reaches millions of learners from all walks of life. It employs over 100,000 staff and reaches communities in every town and city in the country. Imagine if everyone in the FE community – staff, learners, partners – had the knowledge, skills, attributes and agency required to be part of creating a sustainable and just future. That's the Education and Training Foundation's (ETF) vision for education for sustainable development (ESD).

Despite the enormous potential reach of ESD in the FE and training sector, progress to date has been fragmented and slow, with ESD not yet seen as a central pillar of the sector and its work. It could be argued that we've gone backwards over the last decade, as competing priorities and reduced resources have meant that FE and training providers simply haven't had the motivation, capacity or space to progress their ESD work.

Despite strong learner demand for ESD, exposure to ESD teaching, even on courses traditionally associated with sustainability (geography, the sciences etc.), is reported as low[1]. FE and training providers are largely unprepared for the transition needed[2]. The recent work of the UK Climate Commission for FE and HE Leaders and Students, particularly the Climate Action Roadmap for FE Colleges, is welcome and needed, but alone does not provide the sector with the incentives, nor equip them, to create systemic change across the whole of the FE and training sector[3].

The UK was at the forefront of negotiating the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and became a signatory of them in 2015. In the wake of the Coronavirus pandemic, there are many signals that ESD will continue to rise up the agenda. The Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution, announced by the Government in November 2020, is the most overt sustainability commitment from Government since the 2008 Climate Change Act and focuses on building back better. This includes the ambition to make the UK a global leader in green

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[1] Students Organising for Sustainability (SOS). 2020. Sustainability Skills Survey 2019-20: Research into Students' Experiences of Teaching and Learning on Sustainable Development. Available at https://www.sos-uk.org/research/sustainability-skills-survey
[2] SOS, NUS *et al.* 2020 How climate friendly is my institution? Available at https://www.carbontargets.uk/
[3] Climate Commission for UK Higher and Further Education and Nous Group. 2020. Climate Action Roadmap for FE Colleges. Available at https://www.eauc.org.uk/fe_roadmap

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technologies, supporting green jobs, and accelerating the UK's path to net zero carbon emissions[4].

The UK Government intends to publish a plethora of strategies this year in the run up to COP26. These will set out how the UK will reduce emissions in different sectors ranging from transport to the heating of buildings culminating in an overall net zero strategy.

The Committee on Climate Change has recommended that the Department for Education works with the Home Office, Ministry of Justice and the Department for Work and Pensions to reduce the carbon emissions of the education sector (including zero carbon buildings), uses education to support the transition to a net-zero economy, and ensures a 'just transition' for workers transitioning from high-carbon to low-carbon or climate resilient jobs. These recommendations have led to the establishment of the Green Jobs Taskforce to set the direction for the job market as we transition to a high-skill, low carbon economy. The Taskforce published its recommendations for the sector as well as for Government and industry in July 2021.

The Institute for Apprentices and Technical Education (IFATE) has recently established a Green Apprenticeships Advisory Panel and Community to create new apprenticeships to reflect the occupations needed to reach net-zero carbon emissions. It has also launched a sustainability framework which will enhance all future apprenticeships to ensure they meet the needs of employers within the growing green economy.

Given the urgency of the climate emergency, ecological crisis, and social inequalities we face, investment and prioritisation of ESD is critical, and therefore this focus from Government and the sector is welcome. Here at the ETF we are ready to work with the whole FE sector, and its stakeholders, to rise to the challenge of the sustainability and social justice goals we face.

We know that many FE colleagues want support to be able to equip their learners with the knowledge and competencies needed to meet these goals. Through this research we wanted to better understand opinions, barriers, opportunities and how we can help. This in turn will inform our approach and ensure we are best serving the sector's needs. We've chosen to publish the data to enable our peers and partners to also benefit from these insights, and to inform policy and decision makers about the needs of the sector.

It's our first major ESD-related publication, but we fully intend it to be the first of many pieces of work which helps enable and equip the FE and training workforce to deliver excellent quality, and impactful, ESD.

Charlotte Bonner

National Head of Education for Sustainable Development

Education and Training Foundation

August 2021

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[4] HM Government. 2020. The Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution: Building back better, supporting green jobs, and accelerating our path to net zero. Available at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/936567/10_POINT_PLAN_BOOKLET.pdf

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Education and Training Foundation (ETF) recognises the vital role the further education and training (FE) sector has to play in combating climate change and achieving sustainability and social justice, both nationally and globally. Not only does our sector provide the technical and vocation skills required to help transition to a sustainable future, it also reaches millions of learners from all walks of life, spread across diverse communities.

This report provides the results and an analytical narrative of findings from a survey carried out among the FE and training sector workforce about their experiences of education for sustainable development (ESD). We wanted to understand the current landscape, and particularly the experiences and needs of those who work in the sector.

With the support of the [Society for Education and Training](#) (SET) and other partners, we surveyed 830 people who work in the FE and training sector. Our data showed that while there was almost widespread recognition of the potential and importance of ESD, the extent to which it is being practiced at an individual and organisational level varies greatly. There are a range of barriers which we also explored, alongside solutions.

The most significant results are presented overleaf as an infographic. Our findings broadly fall under one of five headlines:

1. Sustainability as a concept is broadly well understood
2. There's widespread belief that the sector is well placed to lead on sustainability solutions
3. Diverse subject specialisms all have a role to play
4. Different FE and training providers are at different stages of their ESD journey
5. The FE workforce has had very little training on how to deliver quality, impactful ESD.

We then provide a summary of our main headlines prior to the full report, which gives our results alongside an analytical narrative of our findings. The insights from this work will enable the ETF to develop our strategy and initiatives to help support the sector's adoption of ESD to enhance teaching, learning, assessment and leadership. They will also enable us to benchmark current ESD practice across the FE training sector workforce, and give practitioners, providers and stakeholders data with which to plan their own ESD approaches.

This research was conducted concurrently with an audit of ESD content in the most popular FE qualifications. This was to further explore the barriers identified by practitioners through this survey – that the formal curriculum didn't allow for ESD content. We'll be publishing the audit results alongside a series of case studies which look at how educators and leaders are developing their ESD practice across a variety of subject specialisms.

74% of teaching staff feel that they haven't received adequate training to embed sustainability in their work nor to educate learners about sustainability or climate change.
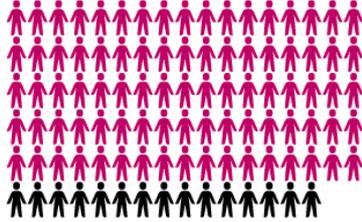
The majority of respondents (85%) agree that that the FE and Training sector has a valuable role to play in the achievement of sustainability goals.

68% feel that the current UK post-16 education system does not adequately educate learners on sustainability issues. **68%**
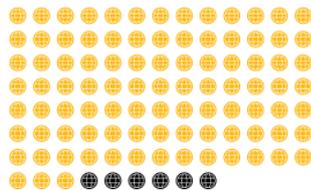
Nearly all respondents (94%) believe that all UK learners should be taught about sustainability issues – this is often referred to as an ESD curriculum entitlement.

43% of people are familiar with the sustainable development goals (SDGs).

61% of respondents (who teach a diverse range of subject specialisms) report that they already actively incorporate sustainability themes into their teaching/work to some extent. **61%**
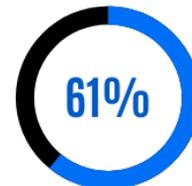
Only 35% of respondents agree that the curriculum requirements support delivery of sustainability issues.

24% of respondents didn't know what their organisational approach to sustainability is. **24%**

30% of respondents feel sustainability is an issue for all parts of their organisation.

Sustainability as a concept is broadly well understood

There is much debate regarding the concept of 'sustainability', and the definition of the terms 'sustainable development', and 'education for sustainable development'. This report does not contribute to this debate but aligns with the approach developed by UNESCO[5], and the UN SDGs[6]. Sustainability isn't just about the health of our planet, but also creating just social structures to promote good quality of life and economic prosperity for all. We need ecological and social health in which people and planet can thrive.

Most respondents broadly understand sustainable development in these terms. Perhaps unsurprisingly, environmental issues were most commonly associated with sustainability, but 74% of respondents associated sustainability with economics issues and 64% with social justice issues. There was broad consensus that sustainability relates to current issues as well as future challenges society will face.

Despite this broad understanding, awareness of arguably the most significant sustainability targets both globally and for the UK, the UN's SDGs, is relatively low. Just 43% of respondents were familiar with them prior to participating in the survey.

There's widespread belief that the sector is well placed to lead on sustainability solutions

Most respondents (85%) agree that that the FE and training sector has a valuable role to play in the achievement of sustainability goals. Nearly all respondents (94%) believe that all UK learners should be taught about sustainability issues – this is often referred to as an ESD curriculum entitlement.

Whilst there is widespread belief in both the power of the sector to achieve sustainability goals and the ESD curriculum entitlement, 68% feel that the current UK post-16 education system does not adequately educate learners on sustainability issues. Over 70% of respondents feel there needs to be either more or a lot more teaching about a range of subjects that relate to ESD.

There was strong recognition that to ensure the sector is fit for purpose significant change is needed in education policy with 84% of people feeling this is the case. This shows strong demand for top-down changes to enable the sector to embrace a greater uptake of ESD. Currently, there are relatively few policy drivers encouraging ESD at a practitioner and organisational level.

Despite this, respondents largely feel confident in their own personal knowledge and understanding of sustainability issues (74% agree with this) although the number of respondents who feel they're able to make positive sustainability impacts through their roles is lower with only 62% agreeing. Although this seems positive, it means that 20% of respondents don't feel confident in their knowledge and understanding of sustainability and 26% feel they're not able to make positive impacts.

Diverse subject specialisms all have a role to play

Some 61% of respondents (who teach a diverse range of subject specialisms) already actively incorporate sustainability themes into their professional practice to some extent; however, because of the broad levels of comprehension of sustainability themes, it's difficult to understand the depth or quality of this inclusion. This figure is particularly interesting when compared with the latest data into learners' reporting of exposure to sustainability themes in their education/learning, which is much lower – 46% and below for themes such as ethics, long term planning, systems thinking, global

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[5] See https://en.unesco.org/themes/education-sustainable-development
[6] See https://sdgs.un.org/

learning etc.[7] This suggests a need for educators to bring sustainability themes explicitly into their teaching so learners can clearly identify them.

When exploring the experiences of the 39% respondents who don't actively incorporate ESD into their professional practice, 18% report that this is because they can't. The top three reasons given were the lack of ESD content in the curriculum (54%), lack of guided learning hours (39%) and lack of personal knowledge (35%).

Only 35% of respondents agree that curriculum requirements support delivery of sustainability issues. Given the current context of ESD (see Foreword), this is a significant signal that the curricular to which practitioners are teaching are barriers to quality ESD. Our concurrent publication, *Leadership for ESD in the FE curriculum* (forthcoming), explores this in more detail.

We invited those respondents who were incorporating ESD in their work to share examples of how they do this. Respondents from diverse subjects (that go beyond those where sustainability issues have traditionally featured namely science and geography) shared examples of operational changes they'd made, how they'd embedded ESD within their subject specialisms, and how they'd used different sustainability themes and pedagogical approaches in their teaching. Examples spanned changes to curriculum content, co-curricular activity, community partnerships and working culture. This reinforces that all learners can be sustainability learners and provides much inspiration for both practitioners and providers looking to take a whole-institution approach to ESD.

Different FE and training providers are at different stages of their ESD journey
When asked whether or not their organisation is doing enough to positively impact sustainability there was a lot of variation in the responses: some are leading the way, others are lagging behind, and many are in the middle. Independent research on the Carbon Targets website, which assessed 336 FE and training providers' carbon management strategies and plans, concludes largely that they need greater support to meet net-zero by 2030 goals[8]. This shows that those working within the sector feel their performance is better than those reviewing the sector externally.

Thirty per cent of respondents feel sustainability is an issue for all parts of their organisation, 26% report it as a strategic priority but only 11% feel it's part of their organisation's core business. This suggests it is more common for organisations to adapt sustainability practices and ESD within their current model of delivery, rather than repurposing their organisational approach in line with sustainability goals.

Respondents agreed that leadership support for ESD is needed – only 20% of respondents felt that their leadership team are driving positive changes, which suggests support for FE leaders and governors is necessary to further enable the agenda to progress at an organisational level. There was the same response (20%) for those who feel their organisation meets relevant legislation but does nothing beyond that.

Perhaps most notably when considering organisational approaches, 24% of respondents didn't know what their organisational approach to sustainability was. This suggests that the sector needs further support to communicate its sustainability ambitions and activities, where these exist, to their workforce to develop a positive culture of sustainability action.

The research also explores barriers organisations face when trying to do more on sustainability.

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[7] Students Organising for Sustainability (SOS). 2020. Sustainability Skills Survey 2019-20: Research into Students' Experiences of Teaching and Learning on Sustainable Development. Available at https://sustainability.nus.org.uk/resources/sustainability-skills-2019-20-he
[8] SOS, NUS *et al.* 2020 How climate friendly is my institution? Available at https://www.carbontargets.uk/

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Most cited were organisations having or choosing to prioritise other issues, including financial security, Prevent, British Values and supporting SEND learners. It could be argued that taking action on sustainability issues more broadly aligns well with all of these agendas and could be woven through an organisation's approach. However, this doesn't seem to be the approach organisations are taking, so support to help organisations, their leaders, and their staff draw parallels between these issues could be helpful.

Lack of staff capacity and resources was the second most reported response, although it's unknown whether this is a long-term barrier or one that has been heightened because of the Coronavirus pandemic. Other barriers cited included the lack of financial resources (39%), financial security (32%), and lack of a sustainability culture within the organisation (33%). Given culture can be so critical in terms of impact to an organisation's success, those seeking to enhance ESD uptake across the sector need to recognise this considerable barrier and should draw on wider change management methods to enhance a pro-sustainability culture.

Other respondents cited issues that relate to the FE and training sector rather than the organisation themselves. Twenty per cent of people cited lack of regulation (e.g. from Ofsted) as a barrier and 13% say that the broader sector isn't supportive of sustainability.

The FE workforce have had very little training on how to deliver quality, impactful ESD
Between 63% (non-teaching staff) and 74% (teaching staff) of respondents feel that they haven't received adequate training to embed sustainability in their professional practice. We need to invest not just in ESD for initial teacher education but also CPD for the existing FE workforce. This is in addition to relevant organisational development and leadership support for the sector. This will ensure the sector is equipped to deliver relevant ESD, whether demanded by Government policy, curriculum specifications or the needs of industry.

When asked about preferences for relevant CPD and how this could be obtained, there's a preference for opportunities that suit those who are time poor. Asynchronous online learning, resources to build knowledge (that people can access in their own time), template resources to aid the inclusion of ESD without significant external input and regular communications about ESD, were all cited as preferable. Live courses were far less popular.

ABOUT THE RESEARCH

The FE White Paper, Skills for Jobs, published in January 2021 prioritises outstanding teaching and explicitly recognises that a focus on staff recruitment, retention, training and development is the key that unlocks excellence in the education system[9]. Critical to meeting our sustainability goals will be the competence and capacity of education professionals.

Surveys of primary and secondary school teachers show that they don't feel they have received adequate training to educate students about climate change[10]. We wanted to investigate this same issue with those who work in the FE and training sector.

For three weeks in February 2021, the ETF invited members of the FE workforce to complete a survey designed to gather insights into their experiences of education for sustainable development. The survey was promoted by the ETF, the Society for Education and Training (SET), the Association of Colleges (AoC) and the Environmental Association of Universities and Colleges (EAUC). We thank colleagues who supported this work and communicated the survey to their members.

Responses were not incentivised other than SET members being offered exclusive access to the results prior to publication. The survey took on average nine minutes to complete. We received 830 responses.

All research was conducted in line with the Market Research Society code of conduct and all applicable data protection laws.

This report sets out the overall findings, with questions forming the following themes:

- Experiences of sustainability in education
- Perspectives of learners and sustainability
- Sustainability and subject specialisms
- Sustainability approaches of FE and training organisations
- Training and continued professional development (CPD) related to sustainability and education.

Not all respondents were asked all questions – teaching staff and non-teaching staff were asked only questions relevant to their role, and demographic information was not collected when SET already held this data and respondents shared their SET membership number.

We analysed each question for statistically significant differences between answers depending on demographic information, role type (e.g. teaching/non teaching/leadership), type of organisation, and so on. A difference is significant when it is likely to have been caused by something other than random chance. Due to the relatively small numbers of respondents from some segments of the sector (e.g. leadership roles, managers, assessors) there wasn't a large enough base (n>30 was needed) to show any differences, therefore the answers given represent the whole respondent-base.

A robust data set can be used to leverage change within business cases, funding and resource applications and to inform policy. Individual organisations can also benchmark against the national data. Ideas and examples of how the data presented in this report can be used can be found on the ETF's website.

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[9] Department for Education. 2021. Skills for Jobs: Lifelong Learning for Opportunity and Growth. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/957856/Skills_for_jobs_lifelong_learning_for_opportunity_and_growth__web_version_.pdf
[10] UKCSN, Oxfam *et al*. 2019. Climate Change Education. Available at https://sustainability.nus.org.uk/our-research/our-research-reports/energy-and-climate-change/climate-education

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RESULTS

Understanding of sustainability

The most commonly recognised definition of sustainable development is that provided by the 1987 Brundtland report: *Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own need".*[11] This is arguably a radical concept as not yet in human history have we met the full needs of present society, let alone those of future generations too. Sustainability is often described as having three, or four pillars – environmental, economic and social, with some also including cultural issues.

Most respondents broadly understand sustainable development along these lines as outlined in Figure 1.

Unsurprisingly, environmental issues were the most common response, as sustainability is often associated with 'green' issues.

Other findings of note include:

- Just over a third (35%) of respondents don't perceive sustainability to relate to current challenges society faces. Presumably this is a different third to those (31%) who don't perceive it to relate to future challenges society will face, but instead more pressing ones.
- Amongst sustainability experts there's wide recognition that we need to work to ensure we don't overshoot planetary boundaries that protect the planet's life supporting systems, alongside a social foundation that ensures no one is left falling short on life's essentials: a balance of ecological and social health in which people and planet can thrive. Within the survey, social justice issues are only perceived to be part of the sustainability agenda by 64% of respondents. This shows a need to greater show the potential of the sustainability agenda to achieve prosperity for both people and planet.
- Despite economic issues being the second most common response, only 53% of respondents felt financial viability was relevant to sustainable development.
- Only 57% of respondents associate sustainability with community issues, perhaps as a result of this being a UK based survey whereby sustainability issues are perhaps less immediate due to our high-income, high quality of life economy (although of course there are sustainability challenges, impacts and solutions here in the UK) and therefore sustainability issues are seen as things that are more relevant to others.
- One of the most prolific frameworks used to introduce and progress sustainability goals is the UN SDGs. These set global environmental, social and economic goals to be achieved by 2030 and are underpinned by partnership and collaboration. Relatively few respondents (48%) associated sustainability with collaborations and partnerships.

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[11] Brundtland, G. H. (1987). Our Common Future, Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development. Available here.
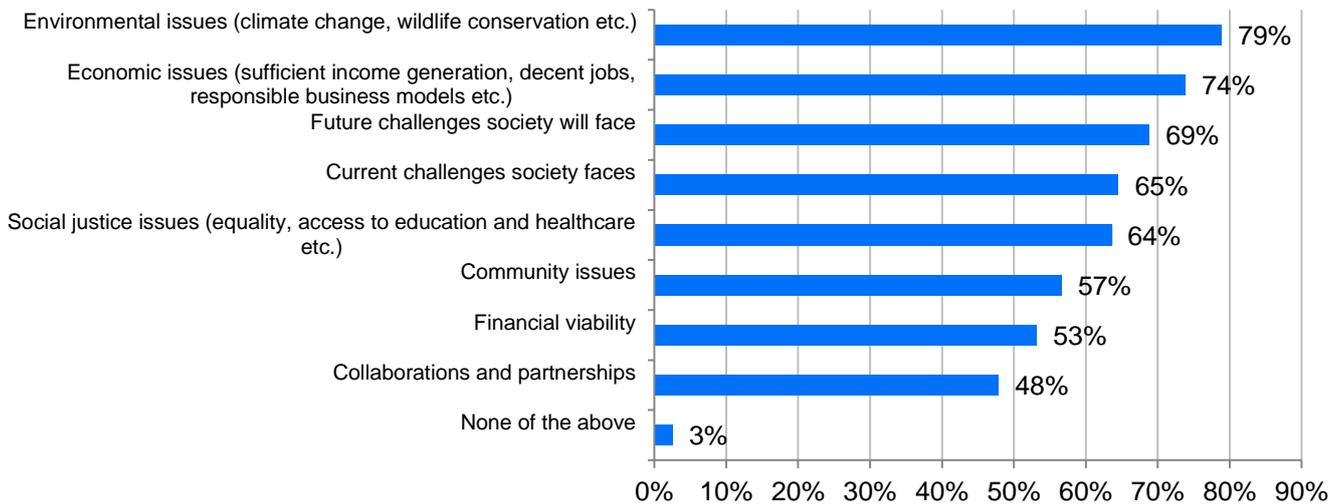
Figure 1 Which of the following subjects do you associate with sustainability? (n. 697)

The 47 respondents who chose to write a comment in the 'Other' option either further explained their opinions in line with the choices given (i.e. those in the y axis labels in Figure 1) or focused on the links between sustainability and other elements of life as outlined in Table 1 Other factors respondents associate with the term sustainability (n. 47). Given the nature of the audience and survey promotion, it's not surprising that education was the second most mentioned theme.

Coded topic	Number of responses
Brundtland/SDGs	14
Education	8
Psychology/behaviours	4
Politics	3
Science, technology and innovation	3
Jobs	3
Inclusion/social justice	3
Culture	3
Economic models	3
Partnerships	2
Change management	1
Citizenship	1
Leadership/governance	1
Health	1

Table 1 Other factors respondents associate with the term sustainability (n. 47)

"Education fit for purpose and aligned to existing and future needs… a forward thinking process"

Open ended response answer to the question: "Which of the following subjects do you associate with sustainability?"

Despite this broad understanding, awareness the UN's SDGs, arguably the most significant sustainability targets both globally and for the UK, is low. Just 43% of respondents were familiar with them prior to participating in the survey (Figure 2Figure 2 On September 25th 2015,193 countries adopted a set of goals, the

Sustainable Development Goals (or SDGs) to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure prosperity for all. Each goal has specific targets to be achieved by 2030. Before answering this survey had you heard of the SDGs? (n. 697)). However, 61% of respondents find the SDGs inspiring (Figure 5).
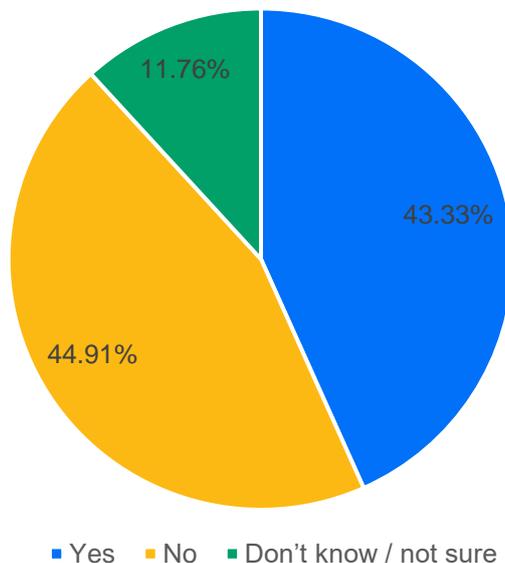

- Yes - No - Don't know / not sure

Figure 2 On September 25th 2015,193 countries adopted a set of goals, the Sustainable Development Goals (or SDGs) to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure prosperity for all. Each goal has specific targets to be achieved by 2030. Before answering this survey had you heard of the SDGs? (n. 697)

43% of people are familiar with the sustainable development goals (SDGs).

- Strongly agree - Agree - Disagree - Strongly disagree - Don't know - N/A
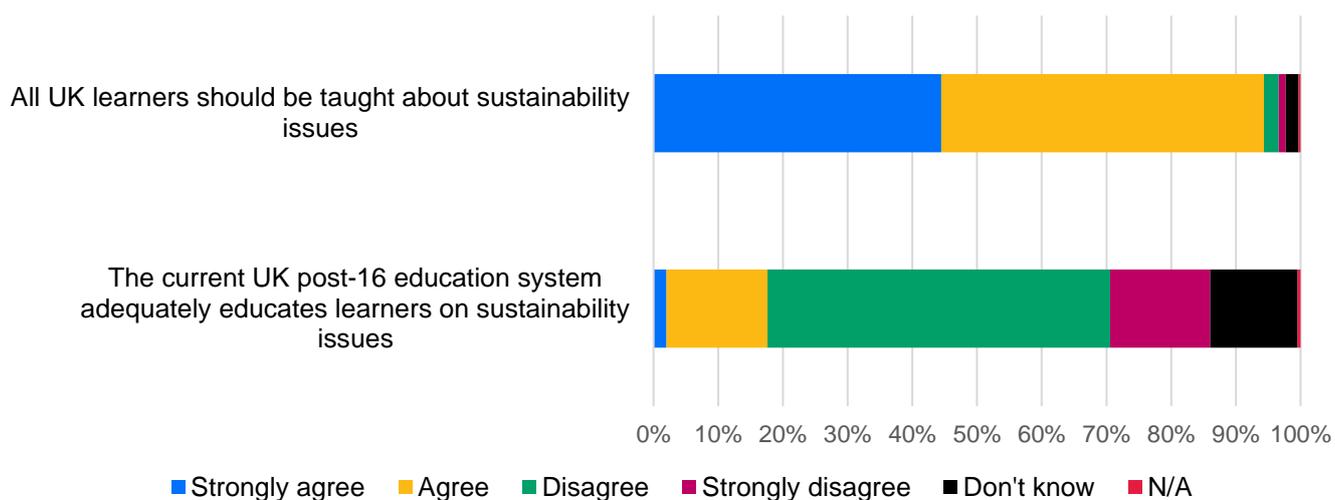
Figure 3 Thinking generally about the UK's post-16 education system, to what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (n.652)

Sustainability in the FE and training sector

Most respondents (85%) agree that that the FE and training sector has a valuable role to play in the achievement of sustainability goals (Figure 5).

Nearly all respondents (94%) believe that all UK learners should be taught about sustainability issues – this is often referred to as an ESD curriculum entitlement (Figure 3).

Figure 64 goes into more depth in this issue and shows that respondents largely feel (consistently over 93% of respondents were in agreement) that this entitlement should cover knowledge and understanding about sustainability challenges but also agency to acct upon that knowledge and understanding. Respondents believe this should include: positively developing learners' ability to communicate well with others about sustainability challenges; skills that equip them to respond to sustainability changes in their current or future profession, job or career; skills that enable them to create positive change for sustainability and the motivation to respond positively to sustainability challenges.
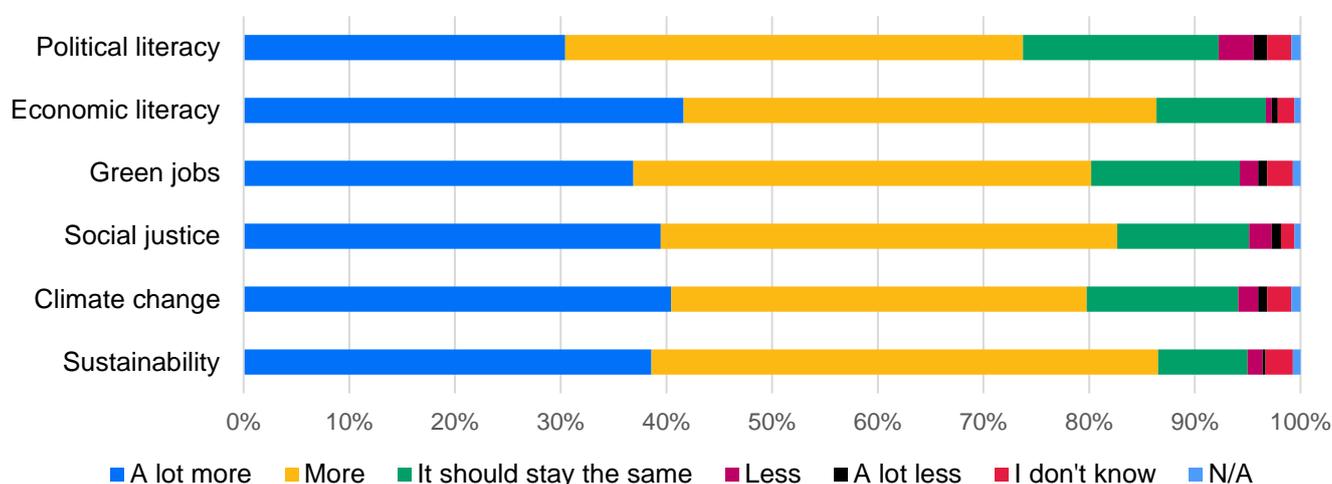

Figure 4 Do you think there should be more or less teaching in the post-16 UK education system about the following issues? (n.697)
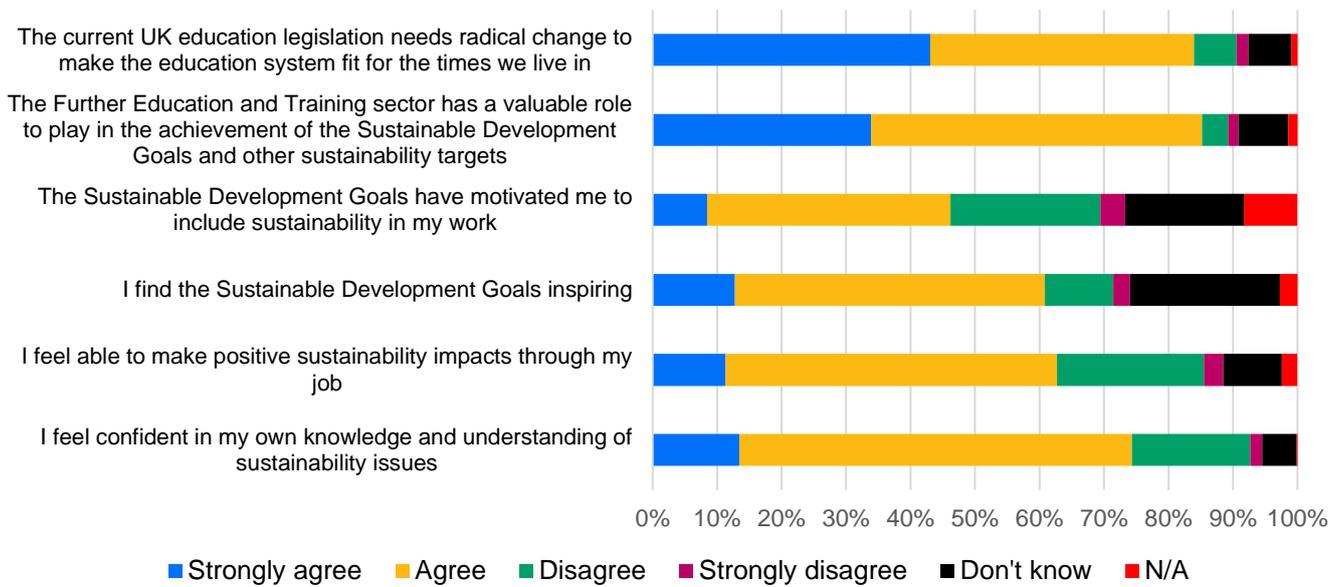
Figure 5 To what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? (n.697)
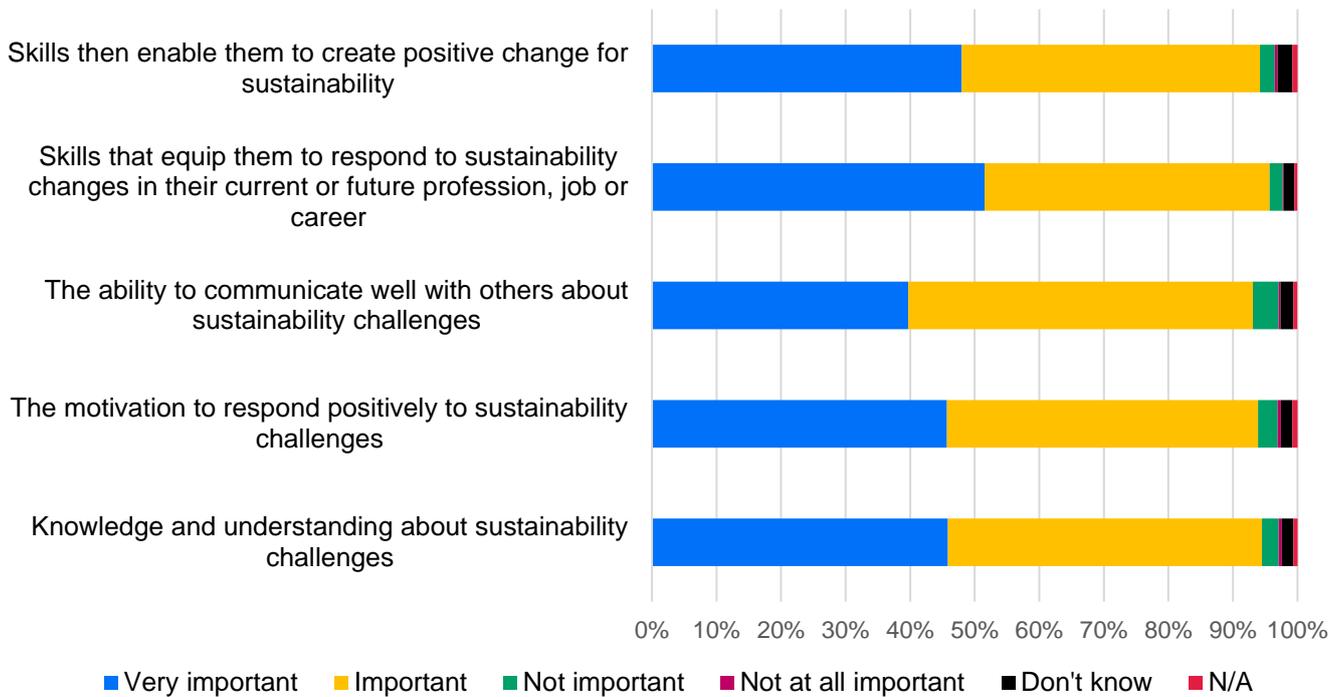
Figure 6 How important, if at all, do you think it is that UK learners leave education with each of the following? (n.652)

Despite this widespread belief in both the power of the sector to achieve sustainability goals and the ESD curriculum entitlement, 68% feel that the current UK post-16 education system does not adequately educate learners on sustainability issues (Figure 3). Over 70% of respondents feel that there needs to be either more or a lot more teaching in the post-16 UK education system about a range of subjects that relate to ESD (Figure 4).

The majority of respondents (85%) agree that that the FE and Training sector has a valuable role to play in the achievement of sustainability goals.

There was strong recognition that significant change is needed in education policy to ensure the sector is fit for purpose, with 84% of people feeling this is the case. This shows strong demand for top-down changes to enable the sector to embrace a greater uptake of ESD. Currently, there are relatively few policy drivers encouraging ESD at a practitioner and organisational level with ESD seldom mentioned in regulatory or funding frameworks, kitemarks, curriculum specifications, teacher training or professional standards frameworks.
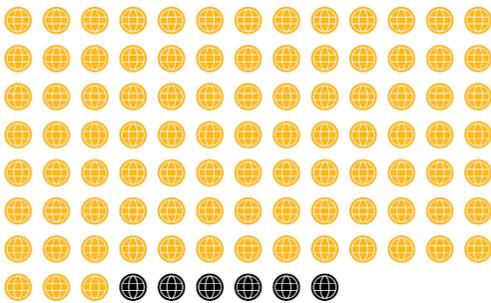
Nearly all respondents (94%) believe that all UK learners should be taught about sustainability issues – this is often referred to as an ESD curriculum entitlement.

Despite this, respondents largely feel confident in their own personal knowledge and understanding of sustainability issues (74% agree with this, Figure 5). Although this seems positive, it means that 20% of respondents don't feel confident in their knowledge and understanding of sustainability and 26% feel they're not able to make positive impacts. We'll explore this further in the 'ESD training and CPD' section later in this report. We should also be mindful that survey respondents tend to report what they believe the researcher expects to see, or report what reflects positively on their own behaviours, abilities, knowledge, beliefs, or opinions[12].

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[12] Cook, T. D., & Campbell, D. T. 1979. Quasi-experimentation: Design and analysis issues. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company.

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> "If sustainability means to develop today whilst maintaining the world for future generations to prosper then all subjects are linked to sustainability."
>
> *Open ended response answer to the question: "Which of the following subjects do you associate with sustainability?"*

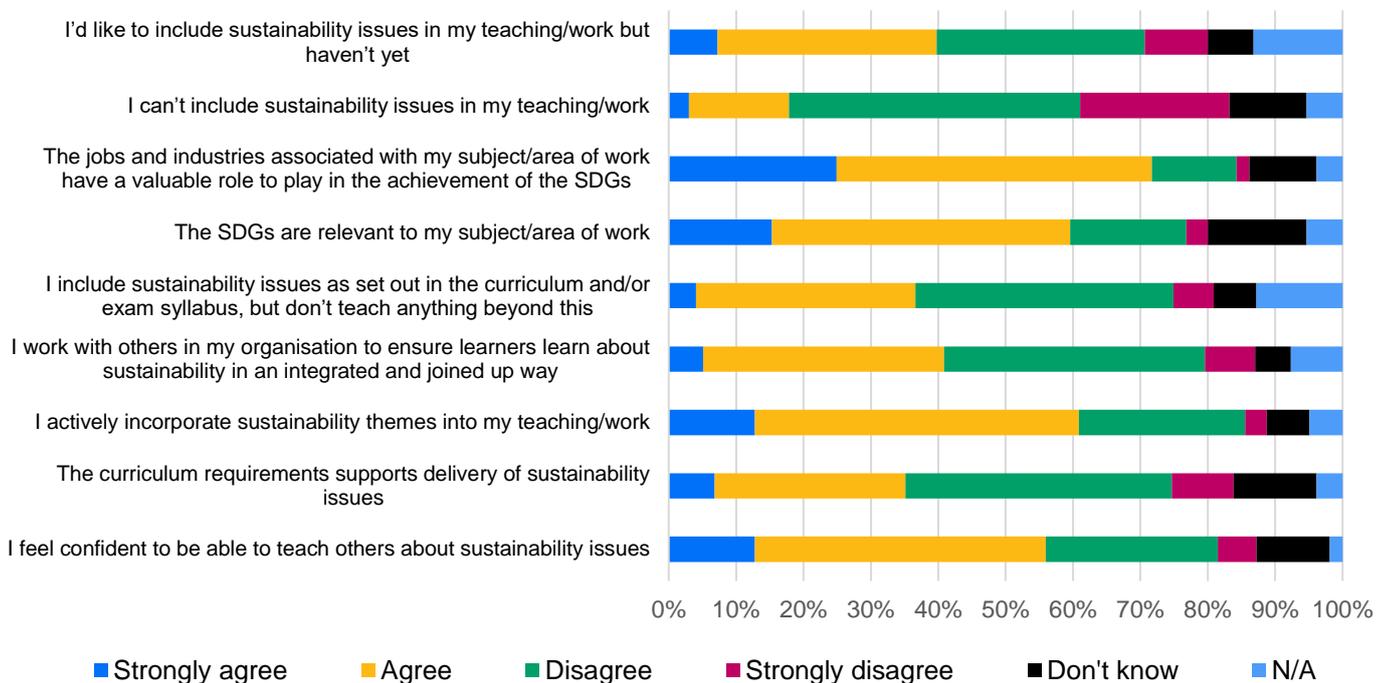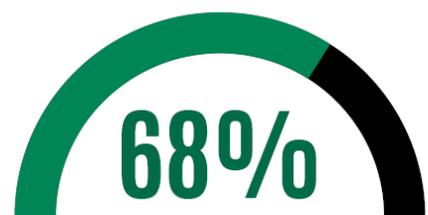*Figure 7* To what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? (n.470)

68% feel that the current UK post-16 education system does not adequately educate learners on sustainability issues.

68%

Sustainability and subject specialisms

Respondents with a teaching and learning role specialised in a range of subjects (see

Demographics section at the end of this report). Despite this diversity, 61% of respondents actively incorporate sustainability themes into their teaching/work (Figure 7). Because of the broad levels of comprehension of sustainability themes (see Figure 1), it's difficult to understand the depth or quality of this inclusion. This figure is particularly interesting when compared with the latest data into learners' reporting of how sustainability themes have been included in their education/learning, which is much lower – 46% and below for themes such as ethics, long term planning, systems thinking, global learning etc.[13] This suggests a need for teaching professionals to bring sustainability themes more explicitly into their work so learners identify them clearly.

Less than half (46%, Figure 7) of respondents feel confident to be able to teach others about sustainability issues. This is surprising given the level of confidence people have in their own understanding and knowledge. Even fewer (41%) collaborate with others in their organisation to ensure learners learn about sustainability in an integrated and joined up way which is perhaps an indicator of a lack of whole-organisation approaches to ESD in the sector, and that sustainability isn't yet an organisational priority for many.
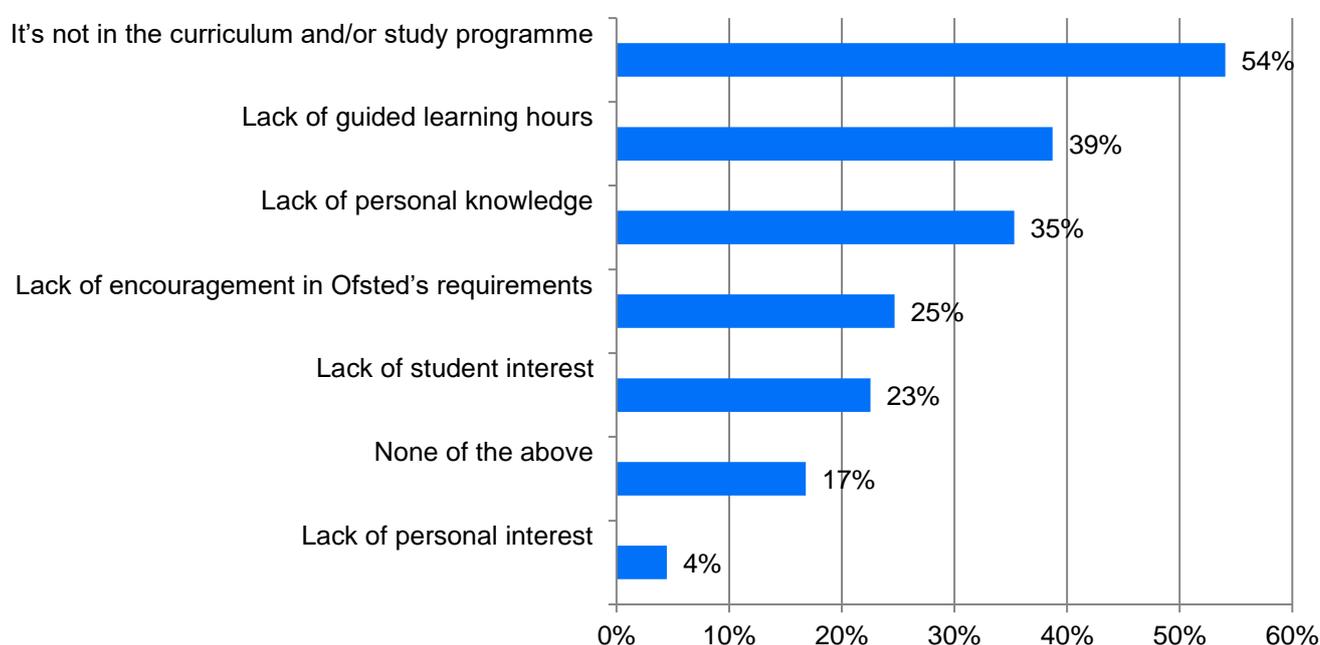
Figure 8 Please tell us more about what, if anything, is preventing you from including sustainability issues in your teaching/work. Please select all that apply (n.470)

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[13] Students Organising for Sustainability (SOS). 2020. Sustainability Skills Survey 2019-20: Research into Students' Experiences of Teaching and Learning on Sustainable Development. Available at https://sustainability.nus.org.uk/resources/sustainability-skills-2019-20-he

Presumably it's the same respondents who report not actively incorporating sustainability themes into their teaching/work that report they'd like to but haven't yet. Eighteen percent report that this is because they can't (more on that below). Thirty seven percent of respondents include sustainability issues as set out in the curriculum and/or exam syllabus but don't teach anything beyond this. Only 35% of respondents agree that the curriculum requirements support deliver of sustainability issues. Given the current context of ESD (see Foreword), this is a significant signal that the curriculum to which practitioners are teaching is itself a barrier to quality ESD. This is something that the ETF is now researching in a separate project to this one.

61% of respondents (who teach a diverse range of subject specialisms) report that they already actively incorporate sustainability themes into their teaching/work to some extent.

61%
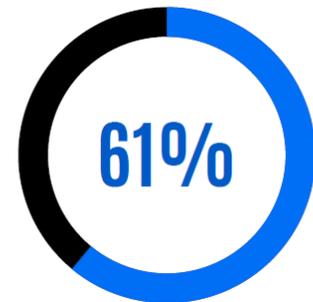
There's also mixed opinions about the relevance of sustainability themes to subject specialisms. Despite the SDGs being very broad and arguably relevant in some way to all topics, 20% of respondents don't feel they are relevant to their subject or area of work (Figure 7). There's greater recognition that the jobs and industries relevant to their subject specialisms have a role to play in the achievement of the SDGs, with only 15% of respondents feeling this isn't the case. It is a widespread belief within the ESD field that all subjects can lead to meaningful learner engagement with sustainable development themes [e.g. 14, 15, 16].

Of those that feel they're prevented from including sustainability issues in their professional practice, again the curriculum specification and study programme is cited as the biggest barrier followed by lack of guided learning hours and lack of personal knowledge (Figure 8). Lack of encouragement in Ofsted's requirements is next (historically Ofsted have provided guidance regarding sustainable development in learning and skills inspections, but this is no longer the case) followed by a lack of student interest. This is again interesting given longitudinal data of both FE learners and higher education students shows significant demand for greater uptake of ESD across the whole education sector[17] and shows a disconnect between the FE workforce and their learners.

Only 35% of respondents agree that the curriculum requirements support delivery of sustainability issues.

[14] For example, Scottish Government. 2021. Educational outcomes of Learning for Sustainability: literature review. Available at: https://www.gov.scot/publications/educational-outcomes-learning-sustainability-brief-review-literature/.

[15] UNESCO. 2012. Education for Sustainable Development Sourcebook. Available at: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/926unesco9.pdf

[16] Tilbury, D. 2011. Education for sustainable development: An expert review of processes and learning. Available at https://sdgs.un.org/sites/default/files/publications/927unesco10.pdf.

[17] Students Organising for Sustainability (SOS). 2020. Sustainability Skills Survey 2019-20: Research into Students' Experiences of Teaching and Learning on Sustainable Development. Available at https://sustainability.nus.org.uk/resources/sustainability-skills-2019-20-he

Respondents were also given the option to write a comment in the 'Other' box. Those that did so either further explained their opinions in line with the choices given (i.e. those in the y axis labels in Figure 8) and/or further exemplified the barriers they face as outlined in Table 2.

Six respondents cite lack of management interest, which will be further explored in 'Organisational approaches to ESD' below.

Four respondents cited that the SEND needs of their students made engagement with sustainable development issues difficult, challenging or inappropriate. Specific support for SEND coordinators as well as teachers and learners to explore the links between sustainability and inclusion, as well as to support embedding ESD in their work while also meeting learners' needs, would be welcome.

"You have to make room to introduce changes, you can't keep piling them on top of everything else and expect them still to happen."

Open ended response answer to the question: "Please tell us more about what, if anything, is preventing you from including sustainability issues in your teaching/work?"

Time was also cited – not just in terms of guided learning hours but in terms of teachers having to room to engage with CPD in ESD and time to adapt work plans. There's a sense of resentment from staff at the suggestion that further elements need adding to already full programmes of work, without sufficient resource being allocated to enable teachers to do this well. This is particularly important when considering 35% of respondents cite their own lack of personal knowledge as being one of the barriers preventing more engagement with ESD – investment in the capacity of the workforce will be needed to enable any further ESD uptake.

Similarly some participants felt that other areas, (e.g. Prevent, British Values, value for money) take priority. Again, this shows the need for strong leadership at policy maker and organisational level if ESD is to progress.

Coded topic	Number of responses
Curriculum restraints	8
Lack of management interest	6
SEND needs of students	4
Lack of personal knowledge	4
No room/time to incorporate changes	4
Other areas (e.g. Prevent, British Values, value for money) take priority	4
Lack of alignment with subject specialism	3
No guidance given/lack of resources	2
Not of interest to Ofsted	1
Sustainability is 'political' and therefore shouldn't be included in teaching	1
Lack of belief in sustainability agenda	1
Lack of motivation	1
Government policy	1
Sustainability concepts too vague	1

Table 2 Other factors respondents feel limit their ability to include sustainability in their teaching/learning (n. 39)

There were additional comments from respondents that cover issues such as a lack of personal motivation, a lack of belief in the need for a sustainability agenda, that sustainability is 'political' and therefore shouldn't be included in teaching or that Government policy is preventing their engagement with ESD. As only a few participants cited these reasons, we can assume they are not widespread barriers.

The survey asked respondents to describe a strong example of how they had incorporated sustainability issues into their work. Where respondents hadn't done this, they could skip the question. The purpose of this was twofold – to further assess understanding of ESD amongst respondents and to develop a collection of bitesize case studies we can use in future.

We coded the responses, identifying subject areas (Table 3), sustainability themes (Table 4) and pedagogical approaches used (Table 5).

Coded subject area	Number of responses
ITE	11
ESOL/English	9
Business/economics	7
Art	6
Design and technology	5
SEND learners	4
Maths	4
Life skills	4
Languages	3
Science	3
Early years	2
Construction	2
Engineering	2
Hair and beauty	2
Animal management	2
Catering	2
Faith	1
Health and social care	1
History	1
Tourism	1
Geography	0
Fashion	0

Table 3 Subject specialisms cited by respondents exemplifying their own ESD work when asked 'In one short sentence, please describe one strong example of how you have incorporated sustainability issues into your work. If you do not have an example, please leave this question blank' (n.208)

Table 3 shows us the breadth of subject specialisms where respondents are already embedding ESD in their work – they go beyond those (namely science and geography) where sustainability issues have traditionally been found.

In terms of the sustainability themes covered, these too were diverse (Table 4) and showcase respondents' understanding of the breadth of sustainability with topics

spanning people, planet, prosperity, partnerships and peace. Some respondents applied a local lens, others a more global perspective. Some drew links with other organisational priorities such as faith or British Values. Some of the responses focussed heavily on operational sustainability practices such as recycling foil or reducing paper use rather than ESD linked to their form curriculum. While these are important and are considered to play a role in the subliminal curriculum (how learners adopt norms and a culture of sustainability), there is more work to be done helping practitioners embed sustainability teaching directly within their subject specialism as it has been shown that this is a more impactful approach for learners and is in line with learner demand[18].

Respondents also outlined various pedagogical approaches they use to engage learners with ESD (Table 5 Pedagogical approaches cited by respondents exemplifying their own ESD work when asked 'In one short sentence, please describe one strong example of how you have incorporated sustainability issues into your work. If you do not have an example, please leave this question blank' (n.208).). Group discussions and debate were the most popular method cited. This was followed by using ESD examples to build skills. This was particularly common in subject specialisms such as English and languages where ESD resources and examples were used to build vocabulary and linguistic understanding. Similar examples were provided in maths where practitioners reported using ESD activities to build calculating, measurement and analysis skills.

Building links between sustainability themes, skills and employers' needs was also regularly cited, as was collaboration with sustainability organisations and experts such as local Wildlife Trusts, sustainability charities, conservation groups and ESD specialists.

What is clear is that there are various mechanisms practitioners are using to embed ESD in their teaching and learning that span formal, informal and subliminal curriculum areas. Many of these approaches could be inspiration to those seeking to include more ESD in their professional practice.

We asked participants to rank the main factors that influenced what they include in their work and teaching. The survey software we used then calculated the average ranking for each answer so we can see which was most preferred overall. The answer with the largest average ranking is the most preferred option. The results are presented in Figure 9.

Again we see the importance of curriculum specifications as most impactful on what is taught. The needs of relevant industries and businesses and the Ofsted framework are cited as second most influential. Learners' preferences/interests, organisational leadership teams, colleagues and existing resources were ranked in decreasing importance. This shows us that structural changes (e.g. to formal curriculum specifications, occupational and professional standards and the education inspection framework) are all more impactful than people-led changes (learner interest, colleagues)

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[18] Students Organising for Sustainability (SOS). 2020. Sustainability Skills Survey 2019-20: Research into Students' Experiences of Teaching and Learning on Sustainable Development. Available at https://sustainability.nus.org.uk/resources/sustainability-skills-2019-20-he

in directing classroom content.

Coded sustainability theme	Number of responses
*Recycling, waste and litter	41
*Supply chain/Sustainable products/Natural resource use	31
Environmental issues	27
Social justice	19
*Digital/Paperless	18
*Energy (efficiency)	18
Climate change/Carbon emissions	16
Food systems	12
Health	11
Industry transformation/Impact of sustainability on relevant sector	10
Public awareness/Community engagement	10
Inclusion	9
Local needs	9
Personal behaviours	7
Global learning	6
Wildlife/nature	5
Individual behaviours	4
Innovation/design	4
Value for money, costs, business case	3
Citizenship	2
British values	2
*Tree planting	2
Water	1
Legislation	1
Policy	1
Responsible advertising	1
Electric vehicles	1
Green ambassadors	1
Ecocide/Green crime	1

Table 4 Sustainability themes cited by respondents exemplifying their own ESD work when asked 'In one short sentence, please describe one strong example of how you have incorporated sustainability issues into your work. If you do not have an example, please leave this question blank' (n.208). *Those marked with * are operational approaches*

Again we see the importance of the formal curriculum specifications as the most impactful on what is taught. The needs of relevant industries/business were second closely followed by the Ofsted framework. Learners' preferences and interests, organisational leadership teams, colleagues and existing resources were ranked in decreasing importance. This shows us that structural changes (e.g. to formal curriculum specifications, occupational and professional standards and the education inspection framework) are more impactful than people-led changes (e.g. learner interest, colleagues) in directing classroom content.

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Coded pedagogical approach	Number of responses
Group discussions and debate	15
Using ESD examples to build skills	15
Employability, career paths and jobs	9
Collaboration with sustainability orgs/experts	7
Using ESD resources e.g. articles, documentaries, foot printing tools	6
Assessment	5
Curriculum design and lesson planning	3
Student research/presentations	3
Gardening/Outdoor education	3
Tutorial	3
Small group discussions/work	2
Scheme of learning template	1
Awards	1
Apprenticeships	1
SDGs Teach In	1
Students' union	1
Field trip	1
Enrichment	1
Subliminal/hidden curriculum	1

Table 5 Pedagogical approaches cited by respondents exemplifying their own ESD work when asked 'In one short sentence, please describe one strong example of how you have incorporated sustainability issues into your work. If you do not have an example, please leave this question blank' (n.208).

Figure 9 What are the main factors that influence what you include in your work/teaching? (n.470)

Coded topic	Number of responses
Personal interests	20
Current affairs	11
Time/workload constraints	6
Learner preferences/interests	5
Community/society needs	5
Funds	5
Peer discussions/sharing ideas and resources/CPD	4
Needs of industry/business	3
Politics/Policy/Legislation	3
Research	2
Existing resources	2
Social media	1
Professional bodies	1
Extra-curricular activities	1
Commercial contract	1
Learner's families	1
Lack of resources	1
Organisational wide approaches	1
Health and safety	1
Partnerships	1
Equipment available	1
Assessment schedule	1

Table 6 Other factors that influence what respondents include in their work/teaching (n.69)

As with previous questions, we also gave respondents the opportunity to tell us about other factors not listed, that influence what they include in their work/teaching (Table 6).

Some respondents used this opportunity to reiterate and reinforce their selection from the previous question, but there was a clear indication that personal interest and current affairs also influence professional practice. Local community and societal needs also have an influence, as does continued professional development (CPD) and peers. There was also a recognition that time constraints and funding limited creativity and innovation regarding what was included. This needs to be recognised in any ESD programmes targeting FE and training practitioners or providers.

Organisational approaches to ESD

Respondents vary in their opinion of their organisation's approach to sustainability. The most common choice on the scale provided was middle-of-the-road with 18% of respondents signalling the felt their organisation was neither doing badly nor well (Figure 10). Slightly more respondents (43.8%) felt their organisation was not doing enough compared to those who felt their organisation was (37.9%).

> "It's integrated into every decision that we take. Leadership are trying to role model best practice, but practice keeps shifting as we learn more, science develops, …entrepreneurs offer more [and] suppliers listen to our concerns."
>
> *Open ended response answer to the question: "Which of the following options best describes your organisation's overall approach to sustainability?"*

Despite ESD being far from a new concept (there are multiple examples of the sector engaging with ESD since the 1970s[19]) and despite some organisations obviously making considerable progress, this shows many are slow to embrace ESD as a central part of their work.

This is further explored in Figure 11 which shows respondents' perceptions of their organisation's approach. This data again shows diversity across the sector and differing viewpoints. Thirty percent of respondents feel sustainability is an issue for all parts of their organisation, 26% report it as a strategic priority but only 11% feel it's part of their organisation's core business. This suggests it is more common for organisations to adapt sustainability practices and ESD within their current model of delivery, rather than repurposing their organisational approach in line with sustainability goals.
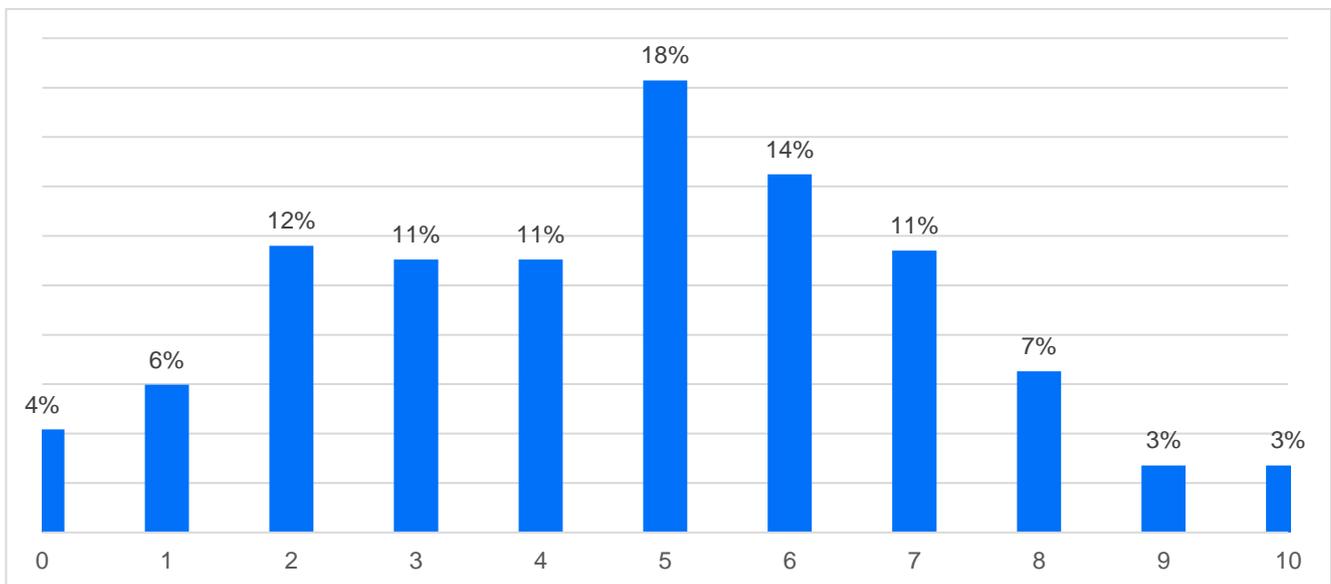

Figure 10 Overall, do you think your organisation is doing enough to positively impact sustainability? Please click on the scale below to show where you feel your organisation is on the scale from 0 - 'nowhere near enough' to 10 - 'doing all that the organisation can' (n.553)

> "I'm not sure my organisation engages with sustainability at all."
>
> *Open ended response answer to the question: "Which of the following options best describes your organisation's overall approach to sustainability?"*

Where a whole-organisation approach isn't taken, respondents report sustainability being relevant to teaching and learning (22%) more often than as an estates/facilities issue (18%) which marks a shift in

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[19] Scott, W. and Vare, P. 2021. Learning, Environment and Sustainable Development. Routledge. Abingdon.

approach as traditionally sustainability action has begun with operational changes. However, this may be indicative of the demographics of respondents, the majority of whom are teaching staff.

Only 20% of respondents felt that their leadership team are driving positive changes which suggests support for FE leaders and governors is necessary to further enable organisations to contribute to sustainability goals. There was the same response rate (20%) for those who feel their organisation meets relevant legislation but does nothing beyond that. Others felt it was a reputation enhancing issue (19%) or an opportunity to save money (17%). Just 5% felt their organisation was undertaking research relevant to sustainability. Perhaps most notably, 24% of respondents didn't know what their organisational approach to sustainability was. This suggests that the sector and its providers needs further support to communicate sustainability ambitions and activities, where these exist, to the workforce.
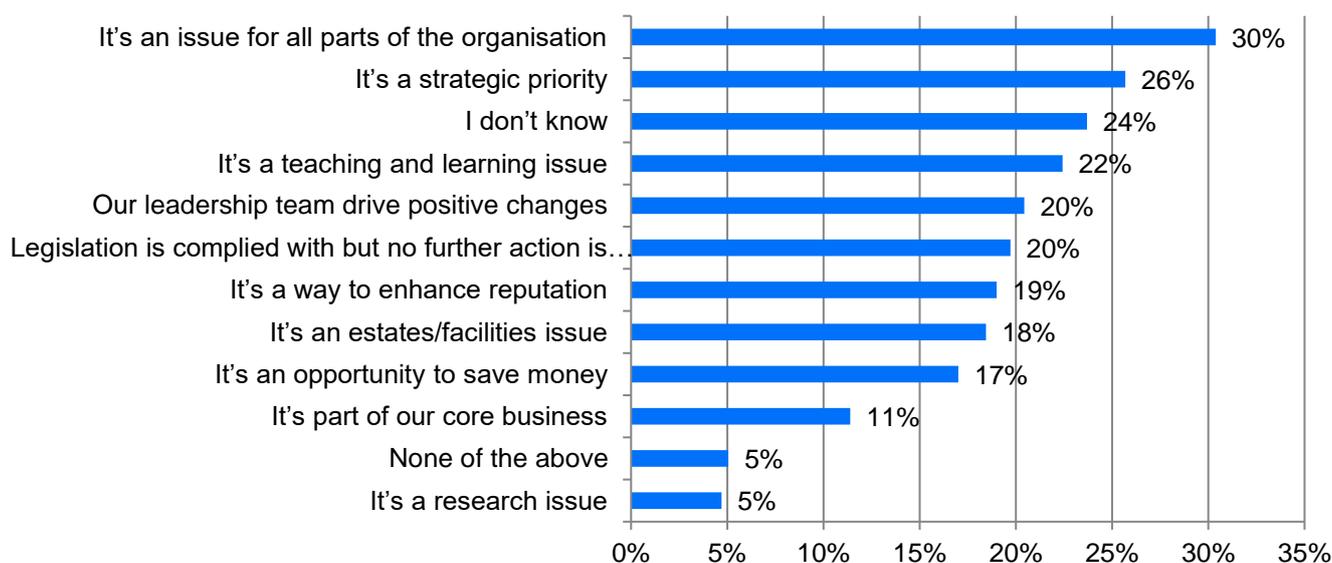
Figure 11 Which of the following options best describes your organisation's overall approach to sustainability? Please select all that apply. (n.553)

24% of respondents didn't know what their organisational approach to sustainability is.

24%

"I'm not sure my organisation engages with sustainability at all."
Open ended response answer to the question: "Which of the following options best describes your organisation's overall approach to sustainability?"

Again respondents were given the opportunity to expand upon or tell us about other perceptions of their organisation's overall approach to sustainability. Some respondents used this opportunity to reiterate and reinforce their selection from the previous question, whereas others told us about additional

approaches (Table 7).

The most common responses given where when the organisational approach to sustainability was perceived to be somewhat lacking, either because it's never mentioned, there's a narrative from leadership that doesn't translate into action or the organisation is simply at the beginning of its sustainability journey. Fewer comments were received for other approaches including partnerships, a focus on financial sustainability, awards, role models, waste and recycling, reactive approaches, sector benchmarks and procurement.

30% of respondents feel sustainability is an issue for all parts of their organisation.

In the final question seeking to better understand FE providers' approaches to sustainability at an organisational level, we asked about the barriers organisations face when trying to do more on sustainability as shown in Figure 1.

Coded topic	Number of responses
Never mentioned	5
Leadership narrative but not translated into action	5
Early in journey	4
Partnerships	2
Compliance	2
Financial sustainability focus only	2
Awards	1
Leaders as role models	1
Waste and recycling	1
Only mentioned/prioritised upon inspection	1
Reactive rather than proactive	1
Sector benchmarks	1
Procurement	1
Other	1

Table 7 Other opinions respondents cited about their organisation's approach to sustainability (n.32)

As has been identified by respondents in other questions, the results show that organisations are prioritising other issues (41% of respondents selected this) and there's a lack of staff capacity/resources. It's unknown whether this is a long-term barrier or one that has been heightened because of the Coronavirus pandemic. Cultural issues were also cited – either in that there isn't a sustainability culture within the organisation (33%); the organisational infrastructure and ways of working prevent sustainability uptake (24%); staff and learner interest in sustainability is low (20% and 18% respectively, see further commentary on page 17) or there's lack of support from senior leaders (19%).

One model used when analysing or promoting a whole-organisation approach to sustainability is that of the four C's – campus, curriculum, community and culture[20]. Given culture can be so critical

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[20] Original source unknown

in terms of impact to an organisation's success, those seeking to enhance ESD uptake across the sector need to recognise this considerable barrier and should draw on established change management methods to enhance a pro-sustainability culture.

Other respondents cited issues that relate to the FE and training sector rather than the organisation themselves. Twenty percent of people cited lack of regulation (e.g. from Ofsted) as a barrier and 13% say that the broader sector isn't supportive of sustainability.

Fifteen percent of respondents didn't know what barriers their organisation faced in doing more on sustainability, perhaps indicative of a lack of dialogue around sustainability issues in their organisation, and 5% felt that none of the options provided were barriers.

Figure 12 In your view, what barriers does your organisation face in doing more on sustainability? Please select all that apply (n.553)

Again respondents were given the opportunity to expand upon, or tell us about other perceptions of the barriers their organisation did face (Table 8).

Coded topic	Number of responses
Lack of leadership	4
Need for systemic change	3
Not in contracts for work	2
Curriculum	1
Lack of understanding re: sustainability	1
Local politics	1
Lack of regulatory focus	1
Lack of time	1
Lack of collaboration	1
Lack of coverage in tutorials	1
Lack of student interest	1
N/A	6

Table 8 Other opinions respondents cited about the barriers their organisation faces in doing more on sustainability (n.22)

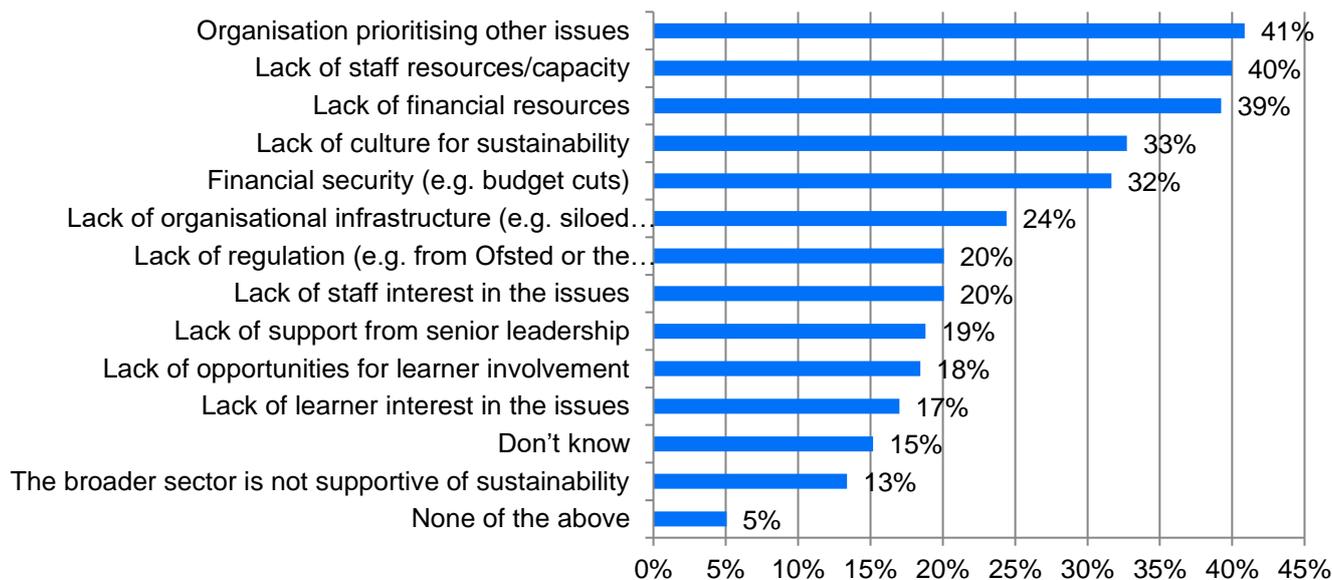Although the majority of responses reinforced the information provided in Figure 12 In your view, what barriers does your organisation face in doing more on sustainability? Please select all that apply (n.553)Figure 1 and indeed previous answers relating to the curriculum and levels of engagement with sustainability amongst the FE workforce, some new information was provided. Three respondents mentioned the systemic nature of change required for a sustainable future (e.g. as emphasised in Jickling and Sterling 2017[21]), two mentioned the contracts to which they work excluding sustainability and one respondent mentioned local politics explaining that the political tendencies of their community were not aligning with the sustainability agenda. This echoes an earlier response suggesting sustainable development was too political for inclusion in the curriculum (see Table 2). Perhaps historically the sustainable development agenda has been perceived to be the realm of the left, but increasingly right wing political parties are seeing the need for ambitious sustainability policies, such as the Conservative UK Government's 2020 Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution. This is also reflected in organisations such as Green Bright Blue and the Conservative Environment Network.

Time, lack of coverage in tutorials and lack of collaboration were also all mentioned.

"If the finances are not there, or cut, it does not happen however the good intentions are.."
Open ended response answer to the question: "In your view, what barriers does your organisation face in doing more on sustainability?"

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[21] Jickling, B. and Sterling, S. 2017. Post-Sustainability and Environmental Education: Remaking Education for the Future. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham

Training and continued professional development

The final section of the survey asked about respondents' experience of, and preferences for, training and continued professional development (CPD) relating to ESD.
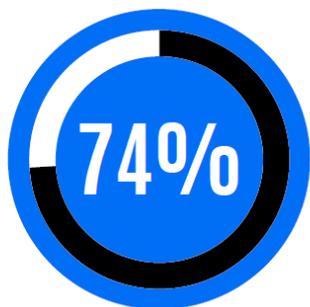
74% of teaching staff feel that they haven't received adequate training to embed sustainability in their work nor to educate learners about sustainability or climate change.

Between 63% and 74% of respondents feel that they haven't received adequate training to embed sustainability in their work nor to educate learners about sustainability or climate change. This is slightly lower than similar research conducted with primary and secondary teachers[22].
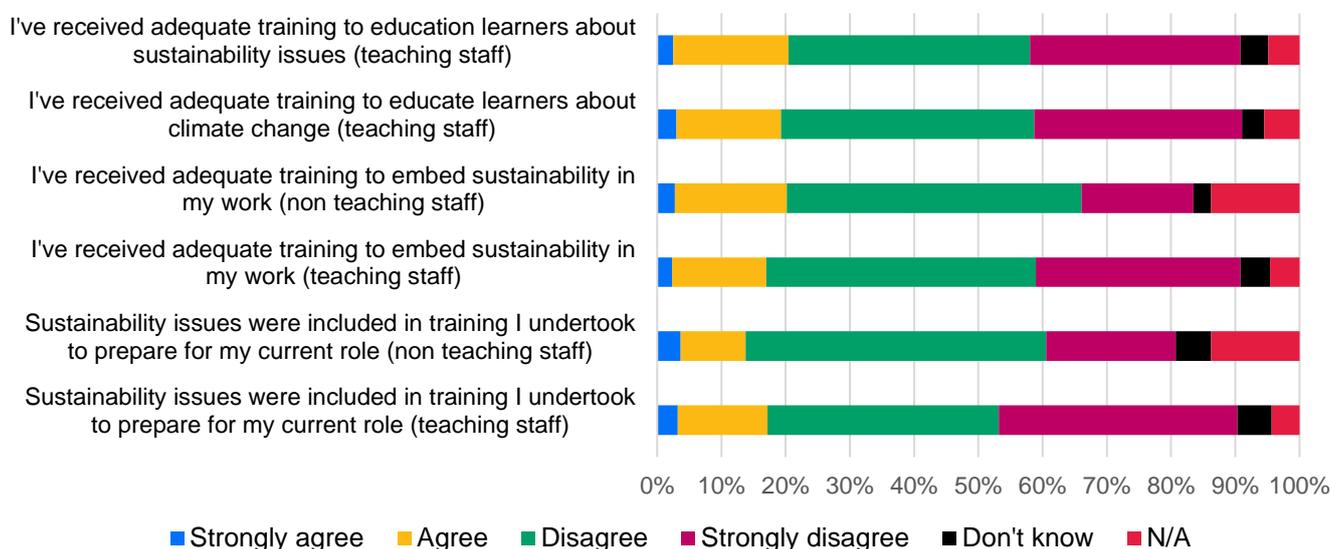

Figure 13 To what extent, if at all, do you agree with the following statements? (n.545)

"I need to be confident in the subject before I can teach someone else. At present I am not confident in this area but would like to explore and learn more about sustainability issues."
Open ended response answer to the question: "Please tell us more about what, if anything, is preventing you from including sustainability issues in your teaching/work?"

As we saw earlier, despite this lack of training respondents largely feel confident in their own personal knowledge and understanding of sustainability issues (74% agree with this) showing that respondents have obtained confidence in sustainability issues through other means.

We also asked respondents about their preferred format of future learning and development opportunities related to ESD. This will help the ETF and other sector

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[22] See UKCSN, Oxfam *et al.* 2019. Climate Change Education. Available at https://sustainability.nus.org.uk/our-research/our-research-reports/energy-and-climate-change/climate-education and Teach the Future. 2021. Teaching the Future: Research with UK teachers on the current state and future of climate education. Available at https://www.teachthefuture.uk/teacher-research.

organisations provide fit-for-purpose programmes and products. Results are presented in Figure 14.

The most popular results align with the message repeated throughout the survey that respondents are very time poor – asynchronous online learning, resources to build knowledge (that again people can access in their own time), template resources to aid the inclusion of ESD without significant input and regular communications about ESD were all popular choices. Live courses were far less popular.

Figure 14 Which, if any, of the following opportunities would you be interested in to further your own understanding of sustainability issues, and how to embed these subjects in your work and/or teaching? Please select all that apply (n.545)

Final comments

As a final open-ended question to the survey, we gave participants the opportunity to provide any final comments. Generally people didn't leave comments – from which we can presume they felt they'd been given sufficient opportunity to give their views relevant to the survey's subject matter – 68 respondents (0.08% of the total survey response rate) provided comments.

These comments were coded to demonstrate their sentiment (positive, negative or neutral) towards ESD as a theme, towards their organisation's or the sector's approach to ESD and towards the survey itself (Table 9). Given the timing of the survey period (fieldwork was undertaken during February 2021), it's unsurprising that some of the comments received reflect on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on ESD.

Coded topic	Number of responses
Positive sentiment towards the survey or those supporting it (SET, ETF, AoC, EAUC)	6
Positive sentiment towards organisation/sector approaches	0
Positive sentiment towards ESD as a theme	22
Neutral	14
Negative sentiment towards the survey or its or those supporting it (SET, ETF, AoC, EAUC)	6
Negative sentiment towards organisation/sector approaches	24
Negative sentiment towards ESD as a theme	2
Impact of COVID-19 on ESD	4

Table 9 Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about your experiences of sustainability in the FE sector that hasn't been covered by the questions in this survey?

Where comments were deemed additional to the results already presented, or well reflected the sentiment of the comments received, we've published these below, or throughout the report where they are most appropriate.

"The AoC conference made me aware of how big an issue this is not just for society but in education ."

"Climate change is the most important issue facing society today - its impact could ultimately be even more profound than Covid-19 - yet climate change is almost invisible in FE curricula and rarely taken into account when colleges make business decisions. Many sectors of the economy are making a transition to more sustainable practices yet FE is behind the curve."

"At present it is not a big priority as you can understand. Open, close, part open, part close, work from home, carry out student examination, don't carry out examination. Reopen and carry out Covid testing on staff and students. It will become a priority only once we return to normal operation and delivery."

"FE is under pressure from all areas and delivering sustainability is a challenge for all - teaching theory is fine but practice is a challenge. Govt funding should directly support sustainable targets and transitions for the greater good as well as teaching, learning and

assessment."

"Would like to see dedicated posts to focus on sustainability - embedding it into curriculum and also enrichment."

"International Education often drops through the net - but it is here that we can link through to other societies' offerings on sustainability issues."

"Only that I'm extremely sceptical of this particular agenda in its current form. It has become far too politically driven in my opinion. Twisting the well-intentioned goals of what should be."

"Your survey's wording is biased and makes assumptions that cannot be challenged."

"I've just done a short course, 'Introducing Learning for Equity and Sustainability', with the British Council and Learning for Sustainability Scotland. It's inspired me to do more!.."

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RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

We collected data about the survey respondents in two ways:

- Where respondents signalled they were a member of the Society of Education and Training (SET) and were able to provide their membership number, we drew their demographic information from the SET membership database before deleting their membership number prior to analysis to retain anonymity of responses
- Where respondents were either not SET members or were not able to provide their SET membership number, we asked them a series of demographic questions, based on Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) workforce data collection categories[23].

Because the data SET holds about its members is slightly different to the ESFA categories, the data is presented different depending on how it was collected. Respondents were not obligated to provide this data.

Our plan had been to analyse each question for statistically significant differences between answers depending on demographic information, role type (e.g. teaching/non teaching/leadership), type of organisation etc. A difference is significant when it is likely to have been caused by something other than random chance. Due to the relatively small numbers of respondents from some segments of the sector (e.g. leadership roles, managers, assessors) and demographic groups, there wasn't a large enough base (n>30 for each segment was needed) to show any differences, therefore the answers given in the report represent the whole respondent-base. What the data in this section does show is that although the representation from some segments of the FE sector is low, we did get broad coverage beyond large FE colleges.

SET membership database		Survey data collector	
Academy	9	Adult (19+) education provider	17
Adult and Community Learning	31	Agriculture and Horticulture College	1
Armed Service	10	Art, Design and Performing Arts College	1
FE College	92	Employer provider	16
General Further Education	1	General Further Education College	158
HE Private academy	4	Group Training Association	0
Higher Education	11	Higher Education Institution	16
Offender Learning	4	Independent training provider	35
Public Service	8	Information Advice and Guidance / National Careers Service	5
School	32	Local Authority training provider	27
Sixth Form College	5	National Specialist College	4
Voluntary and Community Learning	5	Offender Learning and Skills Service (OLASS) provider	3
Work based Learning	12	Sixth Form College	20
Other	21	Specialist Designated College	5
Unknown	4	Third sector / charity training provider	19
		Other (please specify)	32
TOTAL	**249**		**327**

Table 10 Please select the type of organisation you work for (n.576)

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[23] Education and Skills Funding Agency. 2021. Further education workforce data collection. Available at:
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/further-education-workforce-data-collection

SET membership database		Survey data collector	
Assessor/verifier	7	Administrator	1
CEO/Director/Principal/Head of Service	7	Assessor/verifier	12
Consultant	3	CEO/Director/Principal/Head of Service	15
Curriculum Lead/Manager	4	Clerk	1
Designated Safeguarding Lead	1	Governor/non-executive director	0
Head of Department/curriculum	8	Head of Department/curriculum	14
Support worker/staff	8	Learner/student/apprentice/trainee	3
Trainee teacher	8	Manager	22
Teacher/tutor/trainer/lecturer	66	Support worker/staff	8
N/A	4	Teacher/tutor/trainer/lecturer	215
Unknown	133	Technician / technical staff	2
		Trainee teacher	6
		Prefer not to say	6
		Other (please specify)	22
TOTAL	**249**	**TOTAL**	**327**

Table 11 What is your current job/role? (n.576)

SET membership database		Survey data collector	
Arts, media and publishing	4	Agriculture, horticulture and animal care	7
Construction, planning and the built environment	1	Arts, media and publishing	12
Education and training	5	Business, administration and law	22
Engineering and manufacturing technologies	4	Community development	1
Health, public service and care	1	Construction, planning and the built environment	16
Humanities	4	Education and Training (including initial teacher education)	31
Languages, literature and culture (including literacy)	11	Engineering and manufacturing technologies	15
Leisure, travel and tourism	1	English (including literacy)	35
Preparation for life and work (including ESOL)	7	Family learning	0
Science and mathematics (including numeracy)	11	Health, public services and care	30
Other	13	Humanities	6
Unknown	187	Information and communication technology (ICT)	9
		Languages, literature and culture	7
		Leisure, travel and tourism	5
		Mathematics	20
		Preparation for life and work	23
		Retail and commercial enterprise	2
		Science	21
		Social Sciences	6
		Other (please specify)	59
TOTAL	**249**	**TOTAL**	**327**

Table 12 What is the main subject you teach? Please choose the most appropriate category. (n.576)

Female (including male to female trans women)	358
Male (including female to male trans men)	176
X (see note above)	4
Prefer not to say	31
Other (please specify)	5
Unknown	2
TOTAL	**576**

Table 13 Please describe your gender identity. 'X' and 'other' are intentional internationally recognised options to enable anyone who wishes to do so to choose a gender identity that is different to the traditional gender binary of male and female.(n.576)

SET membership database		Survey data collector	
Asian or Asian British Indian	6	Asian/Asian British – Indian	8
Asian or Asian British Pakistani	1	Asian/Asian British – Pakistani	8
Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi	2	Asian/Asian British – Bangladeshi	3
Black or Black British African	15	Asian/Asian British – Chinese	0
Black or Black British Caribbean	12	Asian/Asian British – Any other	1
Mixed White and Black Caribbean	2	Black/African/Caribbean/Black British - African	12
White British	105	Black/African/Caribbean/Black British - Caribbean	6
White Irish	4	Black/African/Caribbean/Black British - Any other	4
Other Asian or Asian British Background	4	Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups - White and Black Caribbean	4
Other Black or Black British Background	1	Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups - White and Black African	0
Other Mixed Background	2	Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups - White and Asian	0
Other White Background	11	Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups - Any other	3
Other	9	White – English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	218
I'd rather not say	7	White – Irish	7
Not provided	68	White – Gypsy or Irish Traveller	1
		White – Any other	26
		Other ethnic group - Arab	1
		Other ethnic group - Any other	3
		Not provided	22
TOTAL	**249**	**TOTAL**	**327**

Table 14 What is your ethnicity? (n.576)

14-19	1
20-24	10
25-29	19
30-34	35
35-39	38
40-44	70
45-49	72
50-54	87
55-59	111
60-64	77
65-69	22
70-74	9
75+	4
Prefer not to say	21
TOTAL	**576**

Table 15 What is your age? (n.576)