



SE² Case Study:

Adapting to climate change: a scoping study for the schools sector

What was the problem?

Although considerable effort is focused on mitigating against climate change, there may be some alterations in weather patterns and resource availability that necessitate changes in behaviour to adapt to new conditions. The Department for Children, Schools and Family (DSCF) commissioned SE² to carry out an initial scoping study which would, for the first time, investigate the potential impacts of climate change on the schools sector and children's services.

Why did it matter?

Climate change may mean that we have to change our day to day activities. By understanding these changes, we can better prepare for and manage their impacts. This is especially relevant to the DSCF and its work, as children are particularly vulnerable to the changes that are predicted as a result of climate change: for example the health impacts of extreme weather conditions and the impacts of natural disasters.

What did we do?

SE² carried out a scoping study exploring four major risks: increased temperatures, varying availability of water, wider global climate changes and availability of power. For each of these, the implications for school management were discussed, further areas for research were identified and a role for DCSF suggested. A summary of existing research and case studies for each theme was provided, along with a complete bibliography and further reading list for the report.

What difference did it make?

The scoping study set out the potential impact of climate change on the schools sector and children's services, along with the steps that may need to be taken to adapt to these impacts. As a result of the report, DSCF commissioned SE² to produce an evidence paper investigating two impacts in more detail. Increased incidence of flooding and the overheating of school buildings were identified as the having the most immediate potential impact, therefore the evidence base for these was investigated further. This has given DSCF the necessary information to include adaptation measures in its Sustainable Development Action Plan, as well as firmly embedding climate change adaptation thinking in its policy making and preparation.

For further information about SE²'s work on this project, please contact Liz Warren on 020 8469 1333 or email liz.warren@se-2.co.uk.