

WRITTEN SUBMISSION FROM SALVATION ARMY

Introduction

1. The Salvation Army welcomes the Climate Change (Scotland) Bill and endorses the proposal to cut emissions of greenhouse gases by 80% by 2050.
2. For The Salvation Army, climate change is a social justice issue. Our interest in the bill is in its overall impact and its implementation rather than in the technical detail. This submission is therefore confined to those questions that deal with broader issues. These are primarily questions 1-3, question 6, 7-9, 12, 13, and 20.

The Moral Imperative

3. The Salvation Army's general approach is summarised by the following statement.

The Salvation Army is concerned that climate change poses a serious and immediate threat to people everywhere, especially to the poor; and that climate change represents a failure in our stewardship of God's creation. We accept the need to reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases urgently to avoid dangerous and irreversible climate change; and to promote a more equitable and sustainable use of energy and resources.

4. For these reasons we strongly support the Bill and the contribution it can make to reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Public Involvement, Engagement and Commitment

5. Our main concern is that many people in Scotland do not feel involved, engaged and committed to the legislation.
6. We therefore believe that if it is to be effective the Bill should include provisions to require the Scottish Government to promote public awareness about the legislation and its targets; and to promote public involvement and engagement in meeting those targets. The broad Third Sector also has a vital role in raising concern about climate change and taking action to reduce negative impacts.

Overall targets (Questions 1-3)

7. The Salvation Army strongly supports the target of an 80% reduction in greenhouse gases by 2050. However this target may be too large and too remote for most people to understand. Faced with such a distant and such a demanding target people tend to set aside the challenge. To aid understanding and engagement short term targets are essential. We agree with the Church of Scotland's proposal that an annual target of 5% a year is helpful and generally welcomed by congregations as a realistic target.

Scottish Committee on Climate Change (Question 6)

8. The Salvation Army supports the view of Stop Climate Chaos that a Scottish advisory body, a Scottish Climate Change Commission, should be established when the Bill is enacted.

Reporting duties (Question 7)

9. In our opinion, the clauses on reporting duties need to be stronger to require the Scottish Government to set out how it has provided advice and information to the public, how effective that advice and information has been; and how it has promoted engagement and involvement in the delivery of targets. If the Government is not effective in this regard the Bill is likely to fail in its purpose.

Duties of public bodies relating to climate change (Question 8)

10. Duties on public involvement and engagement could usefully be extended to all relevant public bodies (including subcontractors and the wider Third Sector). Local authorities and community planning partnerships in particular have a duty under best value to promote public engagement in their policy planning process and have now developed substantial experience in the field. Churches, congregations and other voluntary organisations could also play an important role and the legislation could helpfully embody a recommendation for public bodies to engage with voluntary organisations in the delivery of this duty.

Adaptation (Question 9)

11. As with mitigation, communities should be at the centre of strategies to promote adaptation. We suggest that the Bill could include more specific reference to the need to engage with communities in developing programmes for adaptation.

Energy efficiency (Questions 12-13)

12. The promotion of energy efficiency is a crucial response to climate change and the clauses are welcomed. However it may be appropriate to relate these duties to the need to tackle fuel poverty as the two issues are closely related. It might be appropriate for the bill to require the Government to take on a more specific duty to promote energy efficiency and tackle fuel poverty by including targets that will lead to a systematic improvement of the housing stock and to reduce the proportion of the population living in fuel poverty.

General issues

13. In conclusion, The Salvation Army reasserts the importance of the legislation and its impact on people across Scotland. The Bill must seek to involve and engage people and communities and set out clearly how the Government will be expected to do this.