

# Cleaning For Climate Change: 8 Years Left To Make A Difference

2 years ago



*Insight from Nina Wyers, Marketing & Brand Director at The Floorbrite Group*

## What Is Global Warming And Climate Change?

In April 2022 I delivered my first speech about Climate Change at The Manchester Cleaning Show. The global warming definition is one that many organisations such as National Geographic, the Met Office and other environmental groups agree on. It is the greatest environmental challenge facing the planet today. Global warming is caused by the increase in concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere related to human activities. Global warming is the cause of climate change and there are fundamental links between climate change and marine plastic pollution.

The main environmental impacts of climate change are the following:

Melting of polar ice caps and rising sea levels.

Changes to ecosystems.

Mass migrations.

Acidity of our oceans.

Species extinction.

Extreme meteorological phenomena.

After discussing the above impacts of climate change on our planet, I shone a light on how the cleaning

industry contributes to greenhouses gas emissions and pollution through plastic production and usage from cleaning chemical containers to VOC's (Volatile Organic Compounds), that are included in cleaning chemicals and pollute the atmosphere, adding to global warming. Last year's speech was titled 9 years left to make a difference...

This year in March, I delivered another speech at The London Cleaning Show, creatively titled 8 years left to make a difference. Time is running out. 12 months ago I reported that Climate breakdown will occur within the next nine years unless we see that difference. However, my update this March details a study, published January 30<sup>th</sup> 2023 in Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences in the United States, suggesting new evidence that global warming is on track to reach the 1.5 degrees Celsius mark increase we had hoped to avoid in the early 2030s, regardless of how much greenhouse gas emissions rise or fall in the coming decade. To stick to the target, countries, companies and individuals would have to cut their emissions by half every decade until 2050. Something drastic has to happen.

### What Can You Do?

This article is therefore going to outline how you as individuals, business leaders and influencers, can focus on setting your own goals across a number of parameters. Industry needs to support the UK's ambitious climate change target to reduce its greenhouse-gas emissions by 78% by 2035 compared to 1990 levels and to net zero by 2050.

### Do You Have An ESG Strategy?

What are you doing now to support this? Have you defined your environmental goals or created an ESG strategy? Do you have an environmental manager in your organisation or someone that can focus on this area for you to make considerable and lasting change to your business and endeavour to identify potential improvements and commit to making them happen?

If you want to know where to start. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries – (developed and developing) – in a global partnership. They recognize that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests.

17 different Sustainable Development Goals might seem overwhelming to start, so in line with the 17 SDGs, The Floorbrite Group saw our potential impact having an effect on 5 of them initially, and that's where we chose to start. You can't eat an elephant in one bite!

We took the 5 SDG's that had been chosen and created our own ESG Strategy and roadmap to 2035, breaking down how we were going to achieve them, and then concentrated in detail on the next 3 years.

### For those not familiar, What Does ESG Mean for a Business?

Adopting ESG principles means that corporate strategy focuses on the three pillars of – the environment, social, and governance. This means taking measures to lower pollution, CO2 output, and reduce waste. It also means having a diverse and inclusive workforce, – at the entry-level and all the way up to the board of

directors. ESG may be costly and time-consuming to undertake but can also be rewarding into the future for those that carry it through.

#### How Can You Make The Changes To Support Your Environmental Goals?

So what can you do? Look at your suppliers and their credentials, ask the right questions when considering your own supply lines. If purchasing products, what are they made from, is there a sustainable alternative. Are they safe, are they 100% recycled or partly recycled, are they recyclable or reusable, are they biodegradable, or compostable even? Where have they come from, how have they been transported, how will you or your customers dispose of them? Look at your internal processes, how can you reuse or recycle, if manufacturing, can you create a circular economy? Can your business save water, use electric vehicles, transfer to a green tariff for your energy provider? Look at how you can support your environment locally, even if it's litter picking, tree planting, cleaning up the water ways and beaches. These are simple actions you can start doing today when it comes to creating your own environmental strategy to tackle climate change, they all add up. Everything you do matters to change the outcome in 8 years' time.

If you'd like to learn more about the information in this article, take a look at my speech at The London Cleaning show in March about this subject on Floorbrite's YouTube channel.

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