

T SENDING THE RIGHT SIGNALS

Main messages

The effect of tax increases on petrol and diesel prices has been somewhat offset by falls in underlying prices. The real cost of motoring remained unchanged between 1974 and 1998, whereas public transport fares increased by over 50 per cent and disposable income by about 80 per cent.

Public awareness and understanding of sustainable development issues was low in 1996/97.

Whilst the proportion of women in senior positions increased between 1970 and 1998 there is still some way to go before parity with men is established.

Energy efficiency in the non-devolved government estate improved by 19.1 per cent between 1990/91 and 1997/98.

Relevance

Government has a role to play by setting an example, as the country's biggest employer, through introducing a range of policy instruments, and increasing awareness. For example, taxes and duties, which lead to higher prices of key resources such as fuel and energy, can promote innovation and efficiency. Regulations may lead to more spending to limit pollution but in the long run businesses will be encouraged to develop cleaner processes rather than spending on clean-up equipment. However, we need to avoid undesirable side effects such as adverse effects on competitiveness, and also social consequences such as hardship for the least well off.

The extent to which the key objectives identified in the Strategy are being achieved, as reflected by the indicators, is illustrated in the following table.

Key Strategies

- *A better quality of life. A Strategy for sustainable development in the UK. (5.1-5.27)*

Some other related indicators:

Emissions of greenhouse gases (H9); Road traffic (H11); UK resource use (A1); Energy efficiency of economy (A2); Energy use per household (A3); Businesses recognised as Investors In People (C4); UK companies implementing ethical trading codes of conduct (C11); Consumer information (D1); Adoption of environmental management systems (ISO14001) and the EU Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) (D4); Corporate environmental engagement (D5); Environmental reporting (D6); Travel (G1-G5); Integrated policies and involving everyone (L1-L3); Climate change (N1-N3); Net Official Development Assistance (oda) (U2); UK public expenditure of global environmental protection (U4); Implementation of multilateral environmental agreements (U5)

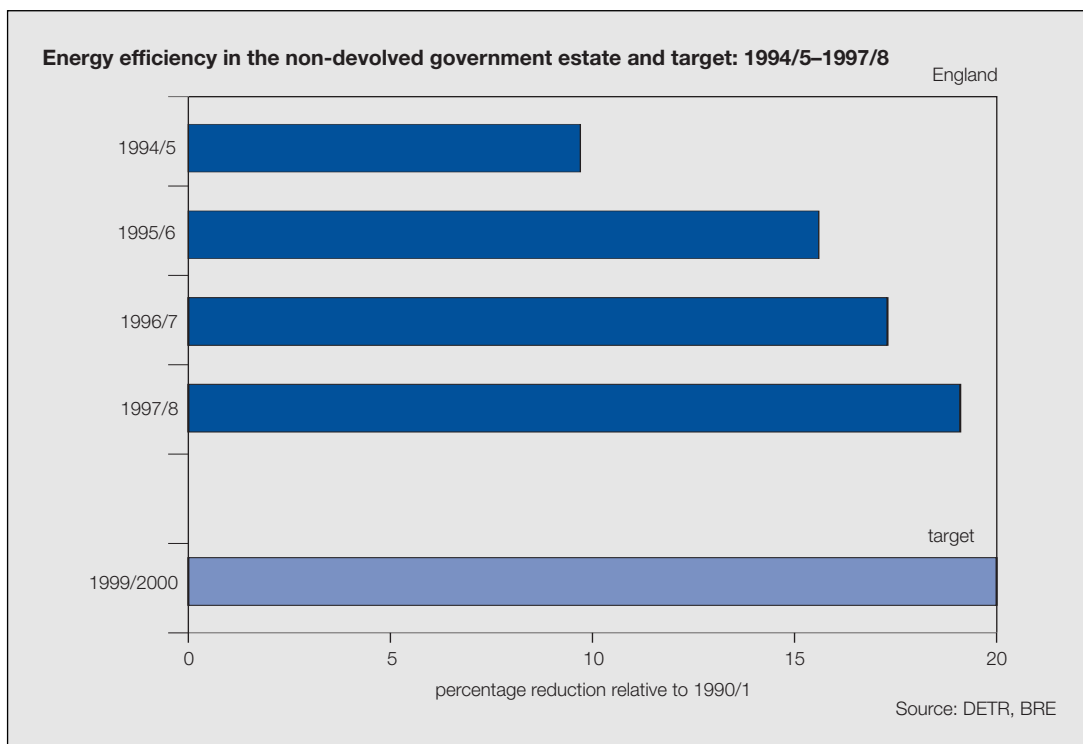
Key	
✓	significant change, in direction of meeting objective
≈	no significant change
na	not applicable, in cases where the indicator is for contextual purposes
✗	significant change, in direction away from meeting objective
•••	trend is uncertain or no quantitative data available

Objective	Ref no.	Indicator		Data used	Change since		Specific targets/goals
					1970	1990	
Integrating the environment into each Department's policies and operations	T1	Greening government operations		1994/95-1997/98	...	✓	20% improvement relative to 1990/91 by March 2000 for the non-devolved government estate.
Help promote women's interests and fairness at work	T2	Women in public appointments and senior positions	Public appointments	1991-1998	...	✓	Set at departmental level with overarching commitment in principle to equal representation of men and women
			Senior civil servants	1975-1998	✓	✓	By 2004/05 fill 35 per cent of the senior civil service and 25 per cent of the top 600 posts in Great Britain
			Senior police	1970-1999	≈	≈	
			Secondary school head-teachers	1970-1997	≈	✓	
Contextual indicator	T3	Prices of key resources – fuel	Petrol/diesel	1980-1998	na	na	
			Industrial/domestic	1970-1998	na	na	
Explore the scope for using economic instruments to deliver more sustainable development, and avoid "perverse subsidies" which work against sustainable development	T4	Real changes in the cost of transport		1974-1998	✗	✗	
Cost-effective ways to comply with pollution abatement and aim to move to cleaner processes in the long term	T5	Expenditure on pollution abatement		1997	
Where new regulation is used it will conform to the government's principles of better regulation and be enforced effectively	T6	Enforcement of regulations	Water	1993-1997	...	✓	
			Noise	1976-1997/98	✗	✗	
			Wildlife	1990-1998	...	≈	
Improve awareness of sustainable development	T7	Public understanding and awareness		1993-1996/97	...	≈	
	T8	Awareness in schools		1999	
Encourage individuals to do their bit	T9	Individual action for sustainable development		1989-1996/97	...	✓	

Objective Integrating the environment into each Department’s policies and operations

Indicator Greening government operations

T1



Energy efficiency in the non-devolved government estate improved by 19.1 per cent between 1990/91 and 1997/98.

Relevance Improving energy efficiency reduces emissions of greenhouse gases which cause climate change.

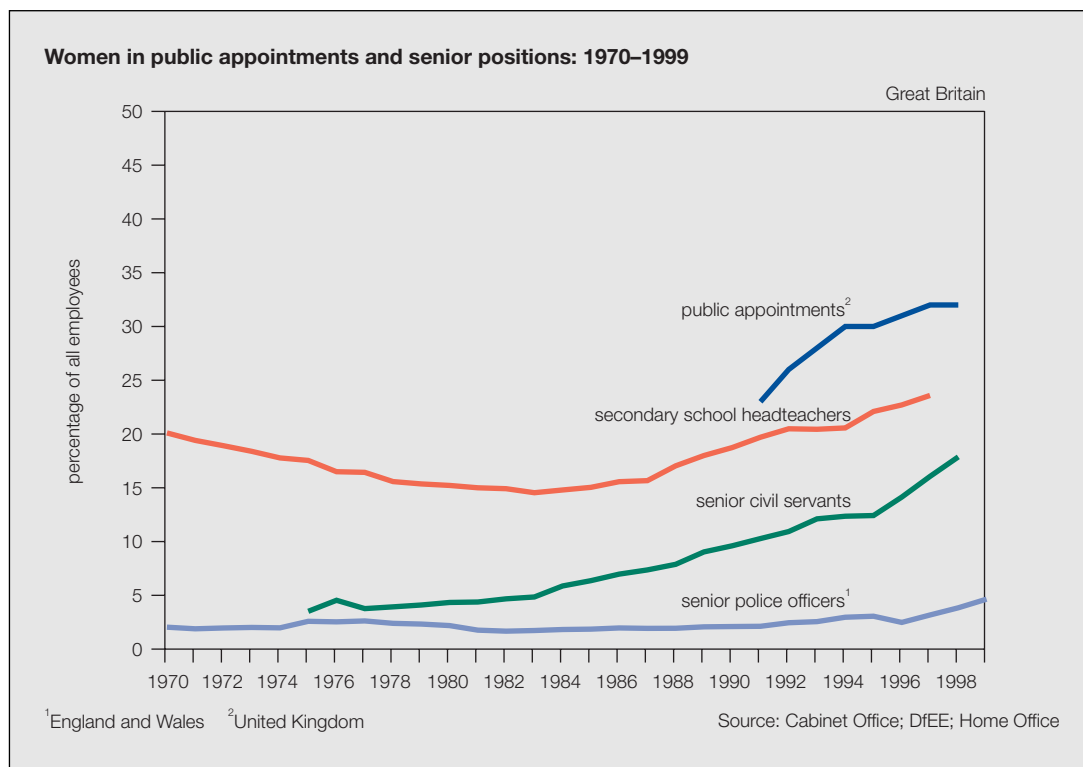
Targets and goals In 1990, the Government announced an energy efficiency target for the UK government estate of 15 per cent savings in energy consumption over the five years to 31 March 1996. This target was met. In December 1996 the target was extended to 20 per cent by 31 March 2000, measured from the same 1990/91 baseline. This target now applies to non-devolved departments only. The National Assembly for Wales, Scottish Parliament, and Northern Ireland Office are responsible for setting their own targets.

Trends Between 1990/91 and 1997/98, energy efficiency in the UK government estate as a whole improved by 18.7 per cent (figure revised since announced in July 1999).

Background The government implements its Greening Government Initiative through the network of Green Ministers across departments. They are responsible for promoting sustainable development; for integrating the environment into policies and for greening departments’ operations. A new waste recovery target for the government estate was introduced by the Green Ministers first annual report published in 1999. Departments will work towards implementing the target to recover a minimum of 40 per cent of total office waste, with at least 25 per cent of that recovery coming from recycling or composting in 2000/2001. There are also transport based targets on the introduction of Green Transport Plans across departments.

Objective Help promote women’s interests and fairness at work

Indicator Women in public appointments and senior positions T2



Whilst the proportion of women in key positions and in public life increased between 1970 and 1999 there is still some way to go before parity with men is established. The latest figures available show 5 per cent of police officers at superintendent and above are women; 18 per cent of senior civil servants; and 24 per cent of secondary school headteachers. In 1998 women held 32 per cent of public appointments.

Relevance The workplace should reflect the full diversity of society and this can only be achieved through equality of opportunity.

Targets and goals By 2004/05 women should fill 35 per cent of the senior civil service (the most senior 3,000 civil servants) and 25 per cent of the top 600 posts in Great Britain. Public appointment targets are set at a departmental level with an overarching commitment in principle to equal representation of men and women.

Trends The proportion of women rose for all positions shown in this indicator. For the senior civil service it increased substantially from less than 4 per cent in 1975 to 18 per cent in 1998; the proportion of secondary school headteachers rose from 20 per cent to 24 per cent between 1970 and 1997; for senior police officers it increased from 2 per cent in 1970 to 5 per cent in 1999; and for people in public appointments it increased from 23 per cent in 1991 to 32 per cent in 1998.

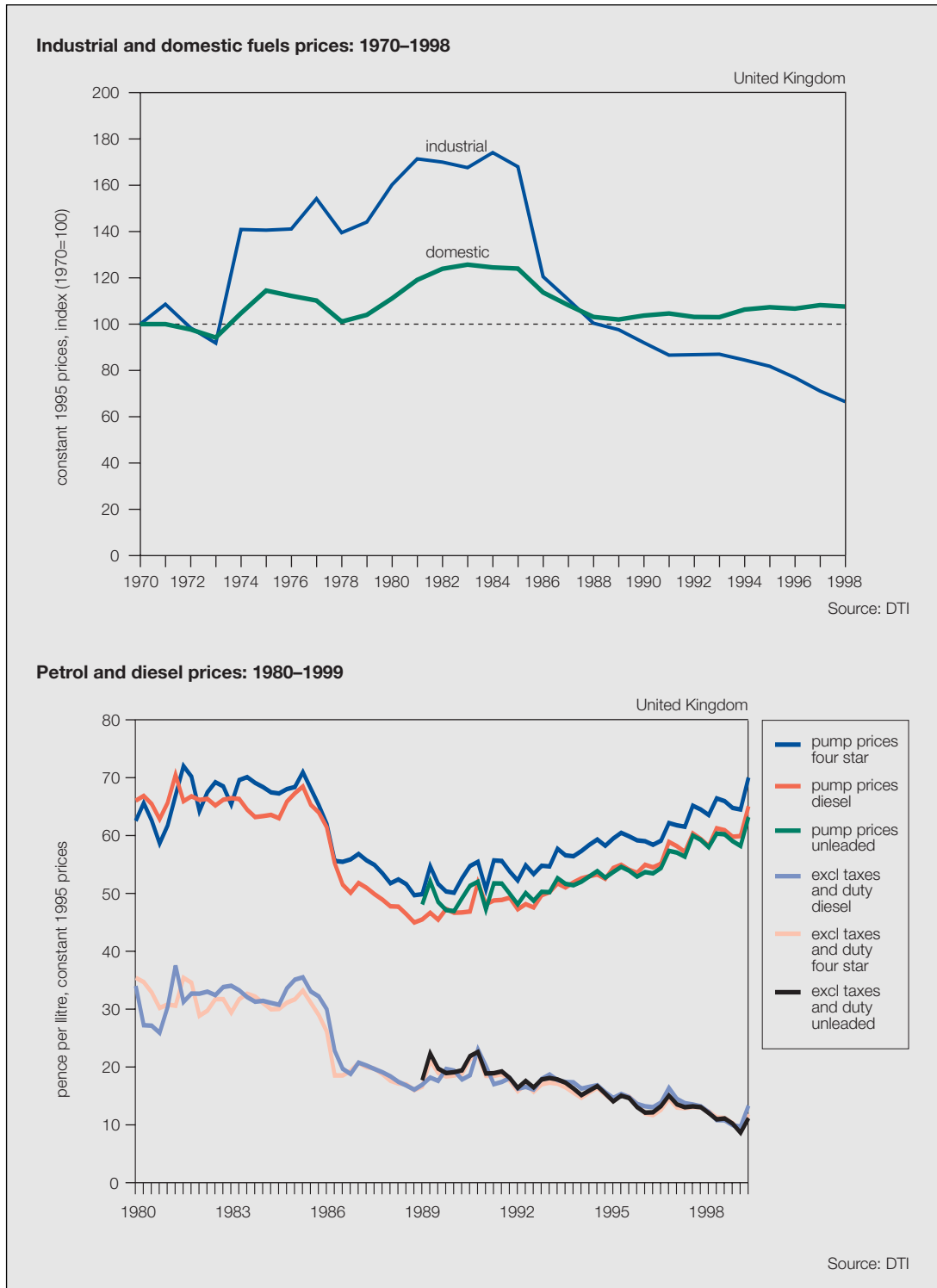
Background Putting these figures in context, just over half of all secondary school teachers (52 per cent) in 1997 and a similar proportion of civil servants (51 per cent) in 1998 were female. In 1999, 16 per cent of all police officers were female.

In the Opportunity 2000 survey of 186 organisations held in 1999, women formed 46 per cent of the private sector workforce, but only 10 per cent of executive directors and top administrators.

Objective Contextual indicator

Indicator Prices of key resources – fuel

T3



Industrial and domestic fuel prices fell in real terms between 1984 and 1998. Petrol and diesel prices have increased in real terms between 1990 and 1998 as a result of tax and duty.

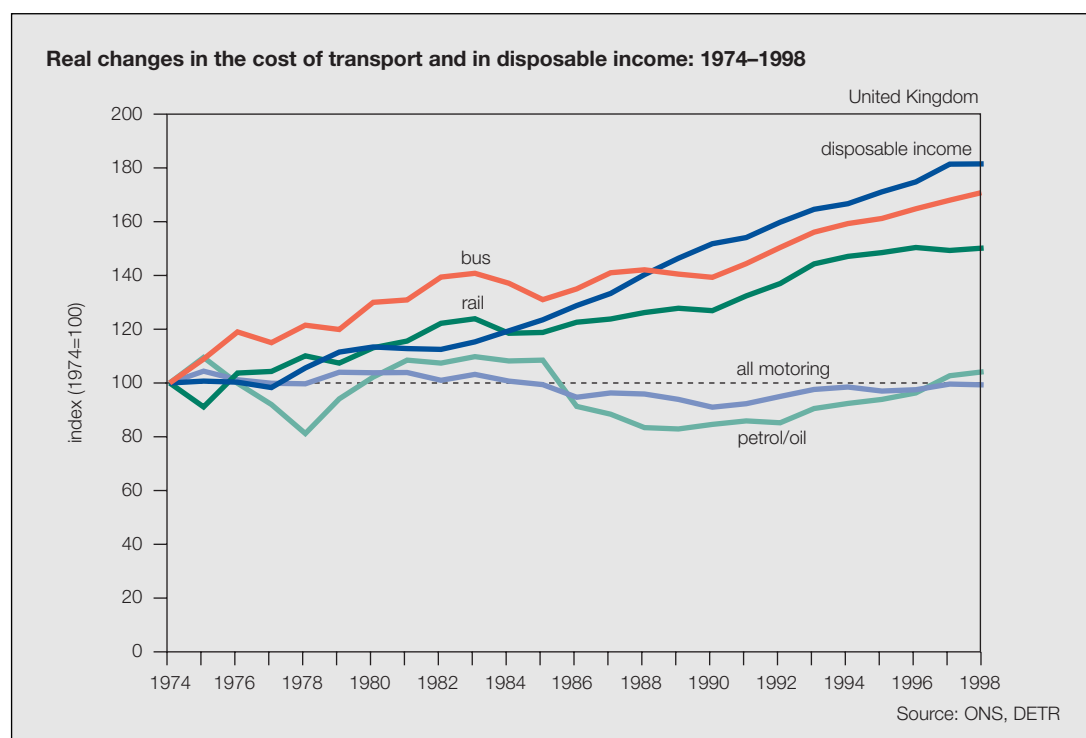
Relevance Measures such as taxes can promote more efficient resource use and reduce pollution (eg switch to unleaded fuel).

- Trends* Both industrial and domestic fuel prices have fallen in real terms between 1984 and 1998, following rising prices in the 1970s which partly resulted from substantial increases in the price of oil. Petrol and diesel prices have risen in real terms between 1990 and 1998 due to increased taxes and duties.
- Background* Fuel prices can be heavily influenced by supply factors. Prices of petrol and diesel have been increasing in real terms because of increases in taxes and duty. The price of unleaded petrol is cheaper because of lower duties, which has shifted demand from leaded to unleaded fuel. The privatisation and ensuing opening up of UK energy markets to competition has also had an impact on the changes in prices.

Objective Explore the scope for using economic instruments to deliver more sustainable development, and avoid 'perverse subsidies' which work against sustainable development

Indicator Real changes in the cost of transport

T4



Public transport fares rose by over 50 per cent in real terms between 1974 and 1998 whereas the real cost of motoring has remained virtually unchanged, although the real cost of fuel has increased over the last decade. Real household disposable income has risen by about 80 per cent since 1974.

Relevance Continued rapid growth in road traffic is unsustainable. We need to improve alternatives to the car if we are to achieve a more sustainable transport system. The relative cost of using different forms of transport is a factor in this.

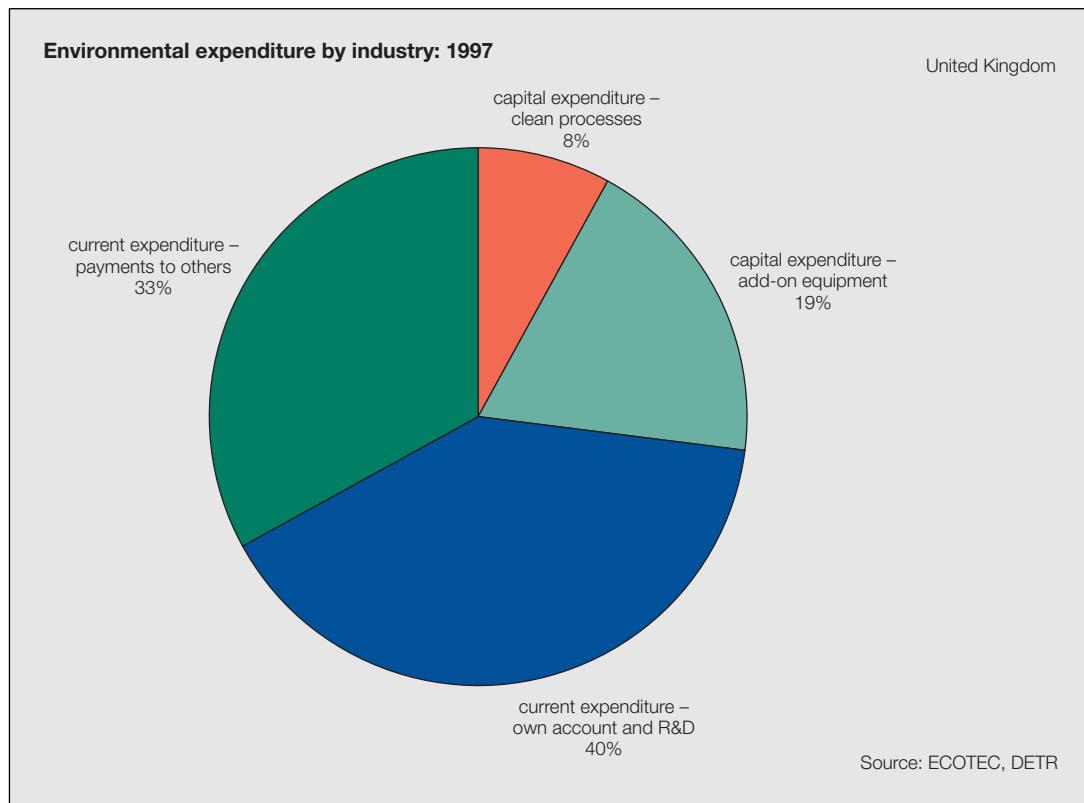
Trends In real terms, fuel costs fell sharply in 1986 and, despite increases in fuel duty in recent budgets above the rate of inflation, by 1998 they were still only 4 per cent above the 1974 level.

Background Although the overall real costs of motoring have remained unchanged since the early 1970s, the effects of fuel duty rises have increased the real cost of fuel in the last decade, which has been balanced by a reduction in other motoring costs.

Objective Cost effective ways to comply with pollution abatement and aim to move to cleaner processes in the long term

Indicator Expenditure on pollution abatement

T5



Between £3.5 and £5 billion was spent on environmental protection by UK industry in 1997. Less than a third of environmental capital spending was on clean processes.

Relevance Protecting the environment from the polluting effects of industrial activity.

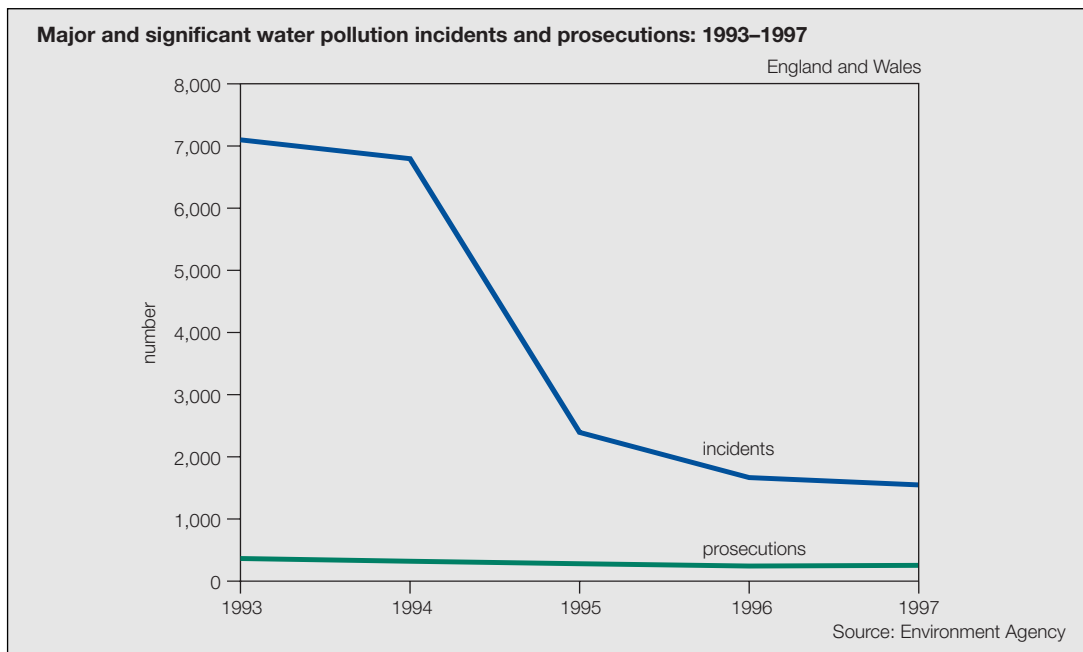
Trends No reliable trend information is available so it is not possible at present to say whether environmental protection expenditure is increasing or decreasing. Latest estimates are that spending by industry is £4.2 billion or 0.5 per cent of GDP. About a third of spending was on the protection of water, a quarter on protection of air, and a quarter on waste disposal.

Background In the long term the aim is to move to spending on cleaner processes rather than spending on clean-up equipment.

Annual estimates on environmental spending will be made from 1999 onwards. Increases in expenditure are not in themselves a sign of sustainable development, but such an indicator, taken together with other indicators, can help to show up unsustainable trends; for example if abatement expenditure and pollution both continued to rise.

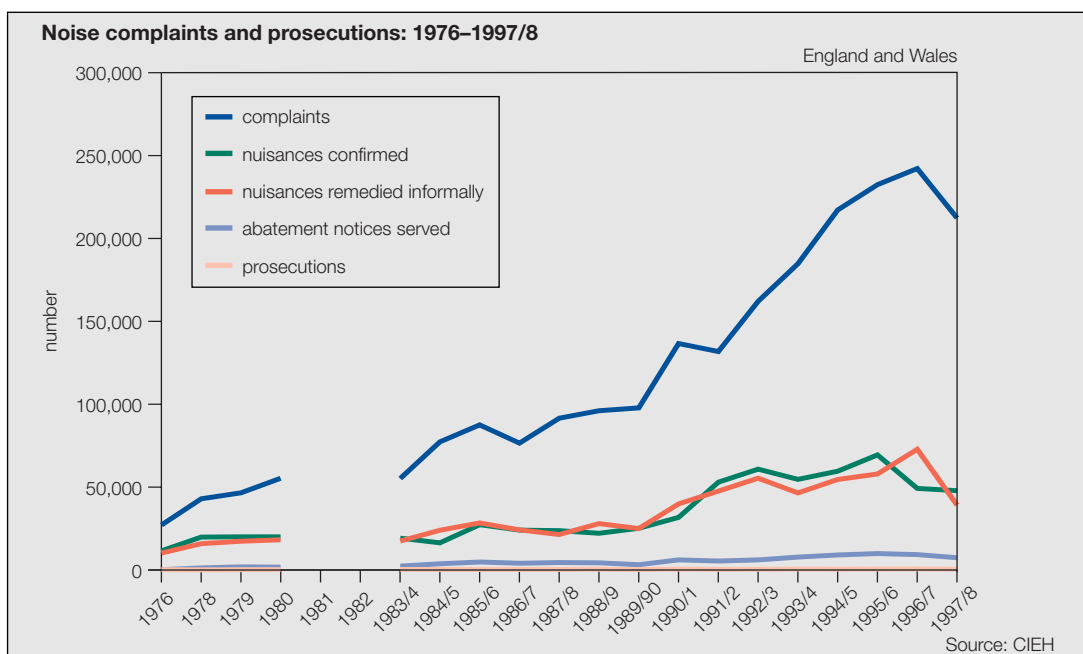
Objective Where new regulation is used it will conform to the government’s principles of better regulation and be enforced effectively

Indicator Enforcement of regulations (to be developed) **T6**



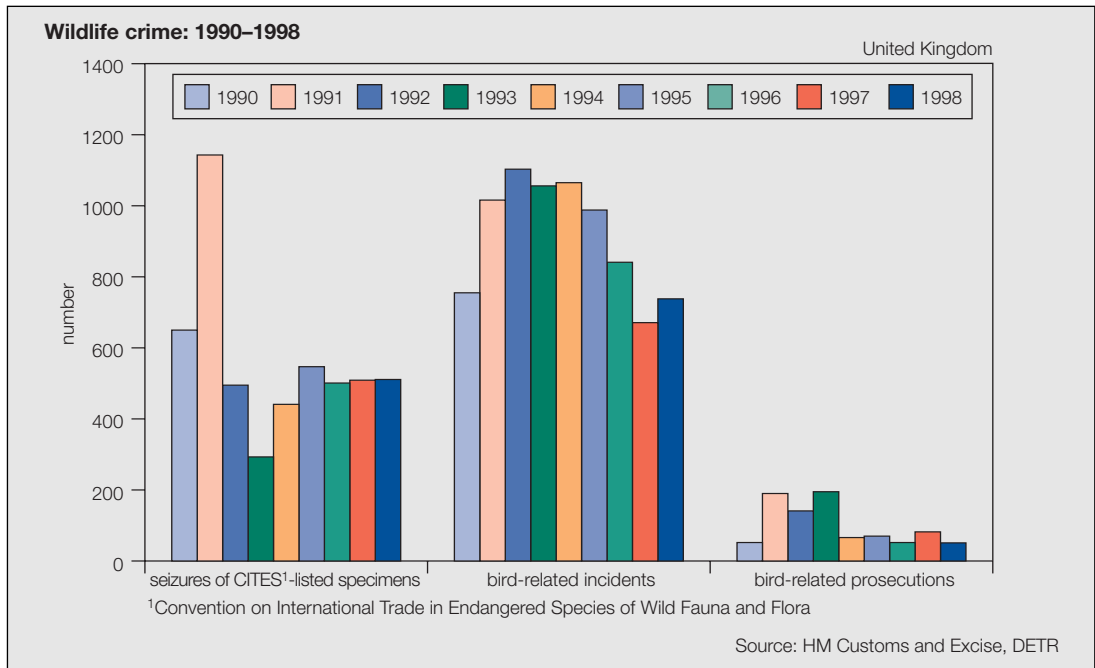
Water pollution incidents and prosecutions

The number of major and significant water pollution incidents fell by nearly 80 per cent between 1993 and 1997, whereas the number of prosecutions related to these incidents only fell by 30 per cent. The proportion of incidents which led to prosecution rose from 5 per cent in 1993 to 16 per cent in 1997.



Noise complaints

Unlike water pollution incidents, complaints about noise levels have risen steeply. Less than a quarter are confirmed as a nuisance and most of these are remedied informally. Abatement notices are currently served on around 15 per cent of those confirmed and prosecutions on around 1 per cent.



Wildlife crime

CITES specifies species for which trade is controlled. The number of cases of seizures under CITES has been fairly stable in recent years at around 500 a year. The number of reported incidents involving bird-related offences in the UK has fallen since 1992. On average about 10 per cent of incidents have resulted in prosecution.

Relevance Regulations play a key part in protecting the public and the environment. But regulations are only effective if organisations and individuals comply with them. Enforcement is necessary to ensure this.

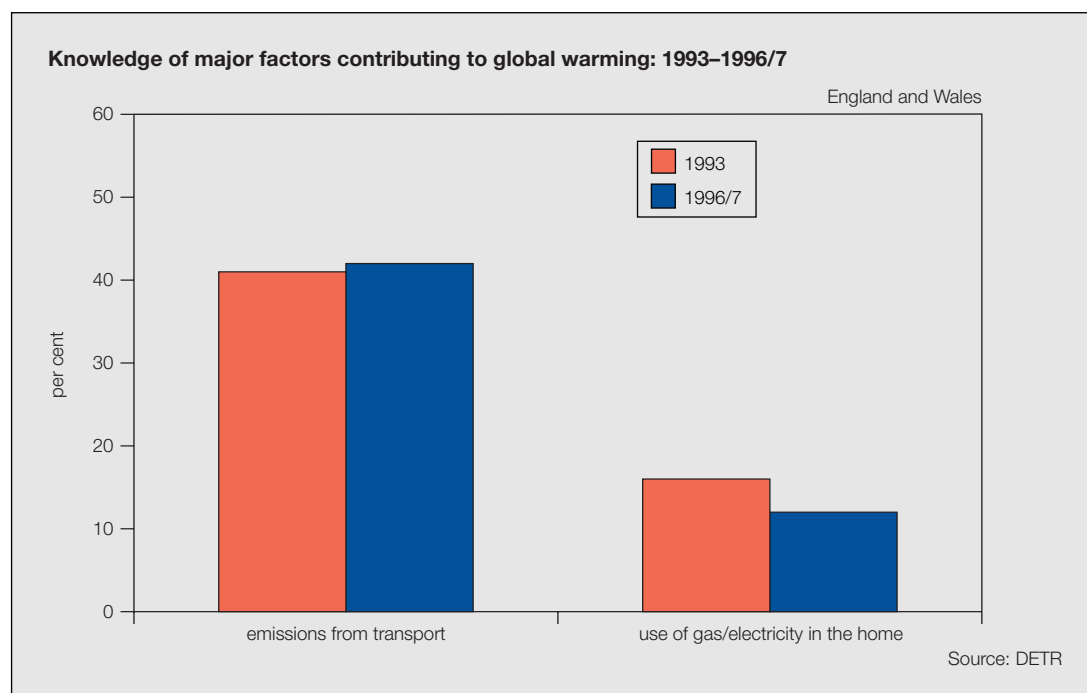
Background Non-compliance with regulations may be identified through complaints, investigations or routine inspections. Maintaining compliance is addressed in a variety of ways – through education, publicity, informal agreements, enforcement notices and, in the worst cases, prosecutions. The degree to which methods such as enforcement notices and prosecutions are used, and hence their impact on total non-compliance, varies widely with the issues regulated. It is therefore difficult to envisage an overall indicator to measure enforcement of regulations. Further work would be needed to develop this indicator.

Three indicators are used here as examples of different situations.

Objective Improve awareness of sustainable development

Indicator Public understanding and awareness

T7



Fewer than half of people responding to a 1996/97 survey thought that emissions from transport were a major factor contributing to global warming. Only 12 per cent of people thought that use of gas or electricity in the home was a major factor.

Relevance Improved awareness of sustainable development can be a powerful tool for change. People can have an influence on their local and global environment.

Trends Those understanding that use of gas or electricity in the home was a major factor contributing to global warming fell from 16 per cent in 1993 to 12 per cent in 1996/97. There was little change in those understanding that emissions from transport were a major factor.

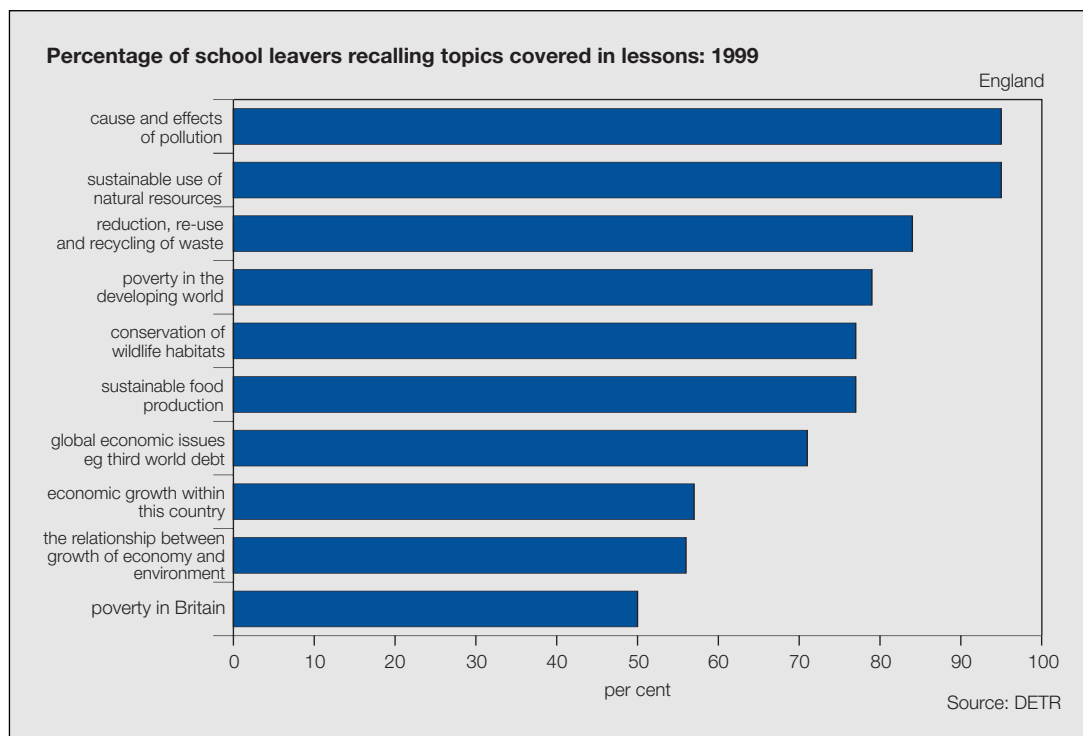
Background Use of fossil fuels and transport emissions are both major factors contributing to climate change. The relatively small proportion of people realising this illustrates the scope of the challenge in achieving public understanding and awareness of sustainable development issues.

It is difficult to assess people’s overall understanding and awareness of sustainable development. As a proxy measure these responses to a question on major factors contributing to global warming from the DETR’s public attitude surveys have been used. These answers were two from a list of 8 possible answers given to respondents. Further work will be carried out to try to develop a more robust indicator reflecting awareness of a broader range of sustainable development issues.

Objective Improve awareness of sustainable development

Indicator Awareness in schools

T8



Most school leavers in a survey in England in 1999 recalled studying the cause and effects of pollution, and the sustainable use of natural resources. The social and economic elements of sustainable development appeared to be less well covered, including the links between the growth in the economy and the environment. 56 per cent of the schools surveyed were aware of the term ‘sustainable development’ when given a definition of the term.

Relevance Improved awareness of sustainable development can be a powerful tool for change.

Trends The survey revealed that almost every school in England teaches environmental issues. Global development, and social equity, were taught by about 80 per cent of schools; economic prosperity through the wise use of resources was taught by about 60 percent. Three quarters of all schools which teach at least some of these issues do link them together in some way.

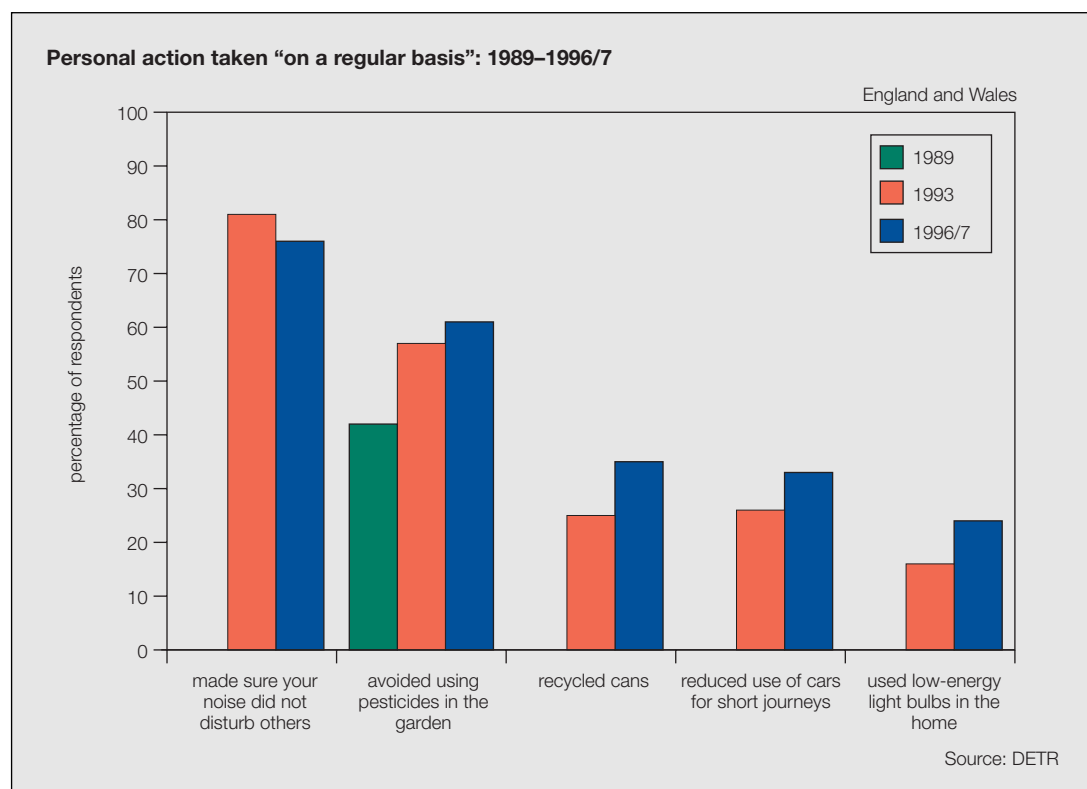
Background The Sustainable Development Education Panel, set up by the government in 1998, recently commissioned some research in England to identify the extent of the teaching, and the level of awareness and understanding, of sustainable development in schools through a survey of teachers and 16 year old pupils.

It is difficult to assess awareness of sustainable development in schools. An indication is given by the responses of the school leavers to the coverage of particular topic areas and the extent to which the schools link the environment, social and economic dimensions in their lessons. The school leavers in the survey identified school as the most important source of information on these issues (particularly on environmental issues), with television and then newspapers the next most important.

Objective Encourage individuals to do their bit

Indicator Individual action for sustainable development

T9



Whilst a number of individual actions for sustainable development have generally increased, data from a 1996/97 survey in England and Wales show that approximately a third of those surveyed regularly reduced the use of their car for short journeys and a similar proportion recycled cans.

Relevance People can influence their local and global environment by acting sustainably. Individual sustainable action can enable people to enjoy a better quality of life, now and in the future.

Trends The numbers of people using low-energy light bulbs in the home and those avoiding using pesticide in the garden have both increased substantially in England and Wales. Those using low-energy light bulbs increased from 16 per cent to 24 per cent from 1993 to 1996/97, whilst those avoiding using pesticides in the garden has increased from 42 per cent in 1989 to 61 per cent in 1996/97. However, not all sustainable actions have increased and those saying that they made sure that their noise did not disturb others decreased from 81 per cent in 1993 to 76 per cent in 1996/97.

Background It is difficult to assess people’s overall action for sustainable development. As a proxy measure five particular actions have been selected and the proportion of people in the DETR’s public attitude surveys claiming to take these actions on a ‘regular’ basis illustrated. These actions reflect 5 issues i.e. disturbance of others, use of chemicals, recycling, use of car and purchasing green products.

Further work will be carried out to try to develop a more robust indicator reflecting a greater range of sustainable development actions.