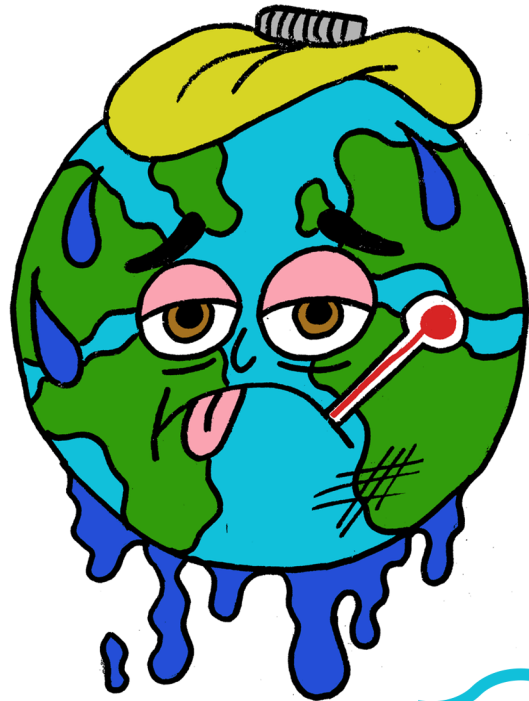




Sustainable Carlisle

# young person's resource pack

start your journey on becoming a powerful and positive change making young activist



No doubt you are already aware of climate change, or as it now more commonly referred to as, the climate crisis.

You've learnt a bit about the science of things like greenhouse gases and renewable energy in school, but what can you actually do about it? How can you make your voice heard to help make change? How can we look after our mental health doing this?

This resource pack will be your jump start into answering those questions and more.

## how did the planet end up like in the first place?

These are some of the biggest issues we face in regards to the climate, and each has it's own complex history of development behind them, but here's just a brief overview to place them into context.

### extinction of animals

bio-diversity loss  
↑  
eco systems unbalance  
↑  
destruction of habitats  
↑  
human need for resources  
↑  
rise of consumerism  
↑  
over population  
↑  
development of humans

### extreme weather

storms  
↑  
sea levels rise  
↑  
ice caps melting  
↑  
planet overheats  
↑  
planet atmosphere change  
↑  
creates greenhouse gases  
↑  
discovery of fossil fuels

### plastic pollution

entering into eco systems  
↑  
micro plastics  
↑  
poor disposal of plastics  
↑  
rise of the single use item  
↑  
throw away culture  
↑  
synthetic material discovery  
↑  
need for cheap and versatile items

Since scientists discovered how humans have been damaging our climate and planet, there has been a social and political aspect. From climate change deniers spouting their own version of truth, through too 'green washing' (making people believe that a company is doing more to protect the environment than it really is). The incredible prosperity of the human species, continuing to grow at a rapid rate, has put a huge strain on our planet. But we know what needs to be done, but it will take huge movement from us to ensure our world leaders get their act together and do the things that need to be done. Speak up!

# being a young activist

If you are feeling inspired to take action to help tackle the climate crisis, there are many different ways you do so! We have all become so familiar with the small changes in our day to day lives, such as using less plastic, but there are ways to have your voice heard and help enact societal change. We will cover some of those ways in this pack as a jumpboard for the start of your activism journey.

## environmental groups

Joining an environmental group is a great way to begin your activism, get involved with taking action and meeting like minded people. These are just some of the well known groups you could join, but there are many more out there in a variety of specialisms. Have a look into who might suit your ideals, for example some groups may be more radical and endorse getting arrested.

### - Local groups

One of the benefits of getting involved with a local group is that they can focus on projects that directly help the area you live in and are highly knowledgeable about your area's specific issues and ways to help. Meeting in person is also a lot easier! Sustainable Carlisle is one of those, and you can learn about them at [www.sustainablecarlisle.org](http://www.sustainablecarlisle.org).

### - Friends of the Earth

Friends of the Earth have been campaigning since 1971 and began with demonstrations such as blockades and have tackled a whole range of issues in their years, such as air pollution or the damage caused by importing mahogany.

### - Greenpeace

Another long standing group, Greenpeace is most famous for their ships that have been sailing the world's oceans protecting our planet and fighting for environmental justice.

### - CND

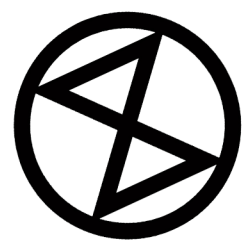
The originators of THAT peace symbol, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament campaign against the use of nuclear weapons across the globe.

### - Extinction Rebellion

More recent in their beginnings than the above, Extinction Rebellion, aka XR, have become known for their disruptive yet non-violent actions. There are many university based branches of XR too.

### - The Wildlife Trust

If issues concerning nature and animals are at the forefront of your passions, getting involved with your local The Wildlife Trust means hands on, practical positive action for



Young activist case study: Mya Rose Craig (aka Birdgirl): Born in 2002, Mya is the youngest person to have seen half of the world's birds, and the youngest in the UK to have received an honorary doctorate in science. Campaigning for racial equality and environmental & climate issues, Mya set up Black2Nature to help engage more children from minority ethnic backgrounds (BAME) in conservation. As Mya says "Now more than ever, it is important to recognise that inequality of engagement creates inequality of opportunity and an unequal world is not a sustainable one."





## writing a powerful letter to your local MP

As a UK citizen, you have many representatives across many levels of government. It is the duty of your local councillors to represent and address the needs of their 'ward'. Writing a letter, as part of a campaign or as an individual, is a legitimate way of communicating to those who have the legislative power to enact change.

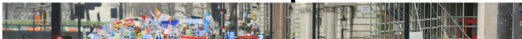
- **Fact versus fiction!** : Letters have much more strength when they are backed up by facts and evidence of what you are trying to say.
- **Speak from your heart** : Conversely, it is also good to have some element of a personal touch, why are YOU writing this letter? This will stand out much more than something that has been copied and pasted.
- **Who's who?** : Make sure you are writing to the right person on the right topic, have a look online to see who you should be addressing too.
- **Crystal clear** : Get to the point quickly and be clear in what you are asking for, no one wants to wade through a long ramble.
- **More the merrier** : If you aren't a confident writer, get a trusted friend or family member to proof read it for you, who knows, you might even inspire them to get involved with your case as well!

# VOTE!

When you are old enough to vote in your local and national elections, it is important do so as statistics show more older people than young people vote. Read up on your representative's manifestos and intentions and cast your choice!

Petitions are a great way to have your voice heard across many issues, which you can do from the comfort of your own home! Don't forget to share the petition across your social medias after signing it.

*making an eye catching protest banner / placard*

- \* Keep it big, bright and bold, it must be able to catch the eye and be relatively easy to read from a distance, as well as if the fabric is in motion.
  - \* Images and visuals should be kept simple and strong.
  - \* Test your design by looking at it from the other side of the room.
  - \* Be brief and straight to the point, banners are to provoke interest - more information and detail can be shared through conversation, leaflets etc.
  - \* Also pencil out and plan your letters beforehand so you don't end up with any squished up words!
  - \* Add that personal touch - speak from your own experiences for a more powerful statement.
- 



*Banners and placards have been used throughout history during demonstrations and protests as a way to communicate what the people are asking for or want to say.*

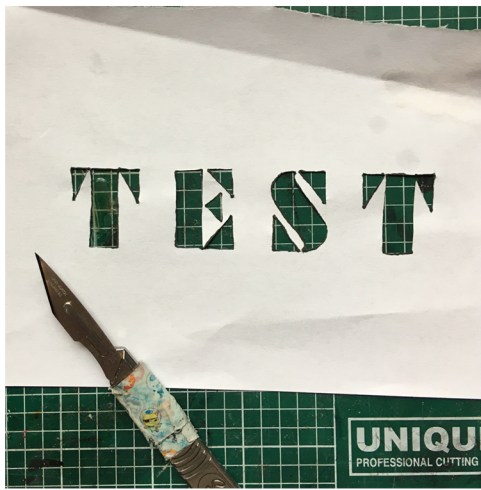
# MAKING AND USING STENCILS

Using a stencil can help you create neat and high impact looking text and images.

You will be able to use your stencil a few times so you could make a few posters or patches for your friends to use and display!

You will need ...

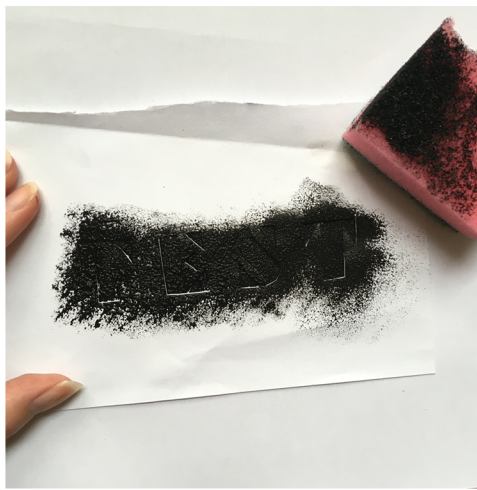
- \* a stencil font (these can be found online / in word processing software) which can be printed out, the one shown below is called futura black
- \* sharp scissors / a craft knife
- \* paper, the thicker the better
- \* a clean sponge
- \* something to protect work surface from the craft knife - a cutting matt, a thick bit of scrap card
- \* your paint of choice - you can get fabric paints from shops such as Wilkos or The Range, but acrylic paints will also work and are waterproof
- \* your 'canvas' - large pieces of cardboard destined for the recycling bin, or old bedding / plain tea towels / cushion covers are good and free sources of sturdy fabric that can be used.



## Step 1.

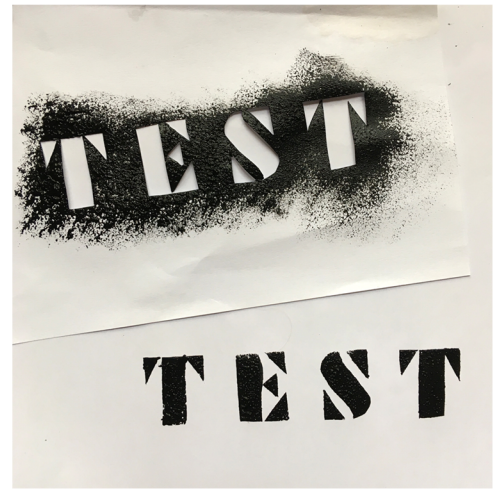
Cut out your words that you have printed out or drawn, proper stencil fonts should mean no middle bits of letters should fall out.

**FOR EXAMPLE**



## Step 2.

Gently dab a small and even layer of paint onto your sponge and then again gently dab paint through your stencil onto the banner fabric below. Using anything but a gentle sponge will damage the stencil and leave the paint all streaky and uneven.



## Step 3.

Remove the stencil, you should then have a nice clean 'print' of your words onto your banner.

This test example is just the beginning of how you can use stencils to create bold banner designs quickly and easily.

Experiment with creating images once you get the hang of cutting out stencils as well try layering different colour prints on top of each other.



Street artist Banksy uses stencils to create his bold and distinctive artwork.



# the climate crisis and our mental health

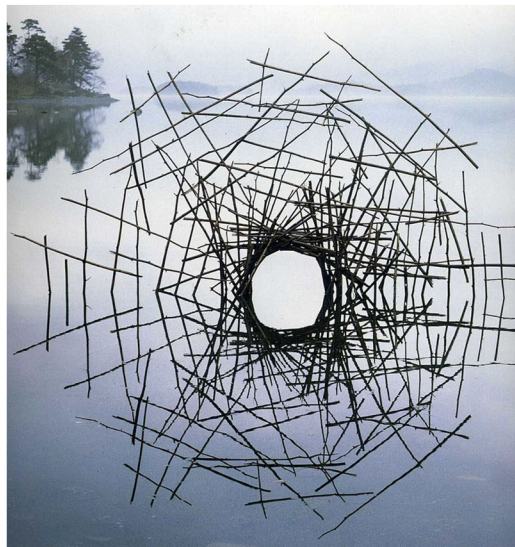
The climate crisis is one of the biggest issues of our age, affecting everyone in many different ways. It is common that it can stir up negative thoughts and feelings that can affect our mental health in the long term. Therefore it is very important to make sure we aren't over working ourselves to the point of "burn out" in our activism. If this all sounds familiar, please do know you are not alone in this.

## ● things we can do to help our mental health ● when dealing with the climate crisis

- - *Talking about it.* Sharing your experiences and worries with other people can help alleviate negative feelings, whilst knowing you are not alone in this can be comforting. If there is an eco group at school/college make a point to talk about each other's worries. If there is no one around you feel like you can talk to, see if local environmental groups have opportunities for conversations.
- - *Observing the good news.* It can very often seem that it is all doom and gloom, but finding the good news can help give a sense of hope. For example, finding sources of positivity (such as @thehappynewspaper) for your social media feed is a way to boost your daily intake of information.
- - *Being in nature.* It is an often echoed thing to do when helping our general mental health but getting out into nature, even with just a small walk in the park, can refresh and remind you of the beautiful planet we are all fighting to protect. Even watching relaxing nature documentaries can help you take a break from it all.
- - *Knowing you are making a difference.* It can be very easy to feel overwhelmed or angry, as it seems like such a massive global problem. But by acknowledging that by even making small actions to tackle the issue, you are helping make change and not helpless. As Greta Thurnburg said, "I have learned you are never too small to make a difference."
- If you are finding your mental health is deeply affecting you, there are many online resources and crisis helplines. [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk) is a good place to start.

## Get creative!

Doing something creative whilst getting hands on with nature is a great way to rest and regenerate the mind. Take inspiration from Alex Goldsworthy who uses found natural materials, without damaging any plants or locations, to create impressive pieces of art. You could use leaves on the ground to make patterns, stack stones into interesting shapes or use twigs to make a sculpture.





# climate justice = social justice

As we read from Mya Rose Craig on page 2, there is a direct relationship between the need for climate and social justice. Here are two points to demonstrate the point, but this is just scratching the surface, you just need to do a quick google to start seeing the reasons behind these facts.

- Communities of colour, working families and the poor. We build much of our polluting infrastructure – power plants, industrial sites, highways and waste facilities – in these communities. As a consequence, African Americans are nearly three times more likely to die from asthma-related causes than white people.  
- Julian Brave Noisecat for The Guardian

- Individuals who are hardest hit by climate change are often already vulnerable and have the least resources. These individuals also tend to be the least responsible for the climate emergency because they consume fewer resources than people with an economic advantage. - Khadij Rouf & Tony Wainwright for The Lancet

## starting your own campaign group

Feeling inspired but want to take matters into your own hands? Starting your own campaign group is great way to take control on what matters to you.

- Who, what, why? : Who would you like to join your group, and who will be your target audience of the action you take? Do you want to specialise in something? Perhaps you want to start a vegan club at school/university or perhaps you might to engage with local businesses about single use plastic. It's up to you, but having a clear vision of your intentions will make getting things actually done much easier!
- Make it snazzy : A decent name, logo and brief description of your intentions will make your group more legitimate and attractive to others. Use social media to your advantage, setting up your own page on your chosen platform will give your group a 'home', including on there what's going on along with general discussion.
- Sustainable sustainability : Keeping things going can be tough, particularly after a big event of action or during busy times in your own life. Taking turns to help lead the group ensures no one is always shouldering all of the work. If your group is growing well you could even apply for money to help develop, there are a lot of funding groups out there. Even ask another more established local sustainability group if they could point you in the right direction, they would love to support you!



Well done for reading through this resource pack - it is hopefully been an inspiring read through and will get you off on the right track in taking action against the climate crisis!