

# Toolkit for On Our Wave Length

These tips and suggestions were compiled by Tara Proud and Catherine Gemmell at the [Marine Conservation Society](#). Please do feel free to get in touch if you have any questions, I'd be happy to help:  
[tara.proud@mcsuk.org](mailto:tara.proud@mcsuk.org).

## Connect with young people around something that matters to them

Before diving in to talking about environmental issues, perhaps start with an icebreaker question such as 'what does the ocean mean to you?' The video on this webpage was produced by MCS and could be a good way to open the conversation: <https://www.mcsuk.org/our-blue-heart/>.

The advantage of this approach is that it will broaden everyone's minds to think about values and connection with our coastal and marine environment and not just issues and concerns.

This digital dive - with footage collected by our amazing volunteers - is an inspiring video to show young people some of the incredible life in UK seas:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TwlpvXrZr60&t=208s>

## Environmental issues are complex, so break the subject down

I would recommend first talking about plastic pollution in the sea. Blue Planet 2 created a global awareness about the issues of plastic pollution in our ocean and so this is a good place to start. We have all seen litter on beaches and in the sea and people may well have seen images and videos of animals such as turtles being harmed by litter. There is a clear and intuitive link between human actions and plastic pollution so these issues promote a sense of responsibility for our environment.

Other environmental issues – such as climate change, overfishing, and invisible pollutants - add layers of threat to marine life, so these topics can be introduced next.

Here are some great videos covering topics you may want to talk about:

Lizzie Daly is one of the Marine Conservation Society's Ocean Ambassadors and you can find her Earth LIVE Lessons here:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL1RC8b7npEwTH3J1GJxa3DWmH-4qpsljg>

Rachael Wright is an Education Officer at the Marine Conservation Society and she recorded a series of videos about marine conservation and climate change for the Youth Climate Summit recently, you can find the video's here:

1. An introduction to the Marine Conservation Society:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iw1wSDVEBS4>
2. Careers in Marine Conservation <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MbLpKP9YNY>
3. Ocean Recovery, starts at 3hr 44min 35  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X5UZzwe6SRI&t=40s>
4. Clean Seas, starts 5hr 1min 14, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_tFdvDhNdrs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_tFdvDhNdrs)
5. Responsible Seafood, starts 1hr 2min,  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gN20G-WkZzl&t=3720s>
6. Cosmetics, Clothing & the ocean, starts 2hr 10min  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NI1o5IT2Rwl>

### **Pitch the information at the appropriate level**

Ask the young people what they already know about the topic. This will help to know how to pitch the content.

If you're inviting guest speakers to meet your group then brief the speakers on the age of the group and their prior knowledge.

## Young people communicate and empower each other

Everything Greta Thunberg has achieved to raise awareness about climate change is amazing and inspiring, and there are many more Greta's – it is empowering to see the impacts they are having.

Young people you are working with may be interested to find out more and connect with other young people through the 'A Focus on Nature' network:

<https://www.afocusonnature.org/>, and for young people up to the age of 25 the '2050 Climate Group' may be of interest

<https://www.2050.scot/>

Peer to peer learning: are there young people in your group who have knowledge they could share?

Adults do not necessarily know more about climate change than young people: it is an ever changing science and as a topic is has been added to school curriculums relatively recently. This may mean that you feel daunted about engaging with young people on topics related to climate change and that's entirely understandable. If you would like to find out more about climate change then there are some great resources from the Royal Scottish Geographical Society here:

<https://www.rsgs.org/chalk-talks>.

At the Marine Conservation Society we are currently developing a suite of 'climate change and the sea' educational resources which will be suitable for all ages, so please do get in touch if you'd like to hear more.

## Make it relevant

If the young people you are working with live on the coast, then talk about their local beaches, ask if they have they seen litter on the beach. Bringing the conversation back to personal experience can help to keep focus, and to avoid the sense that environmental issues so big that there is nothing that we as individuals and communities can do to help (at the end of this document there is a list of positive actions that we can all take).

Beachwatch is the Marine Conservation Society's national beach cleaning and litter survey programme where people all around the UK can care for their coastline. Anyone can get involved and we'd be happy to help your group to talk part, you can find out more here:

<https://www.mcsuk.org/beachwatch/>.

Collecting litter from the beach and writing down what you find is a great way to make a positive impact to protect our coasts and seas.

The Great British Beach Clean in 2020 saw 459 litter picks take place, with over 2,100 volunteers getting involved to remove over 3 tonnes of litter from our environment.

Click here to find out more:

[https://www.mcsuk.org/news/gbbc\\_2020\\_results](https://www.mcsuk.org/news/gbbc_2020_results)

## Environmental topics can feel overwhelming and so it is important not to focus on the negatives

Frame it in a positive way: our advice is to try and avoid presenting problems without also presenting positive actions that can be taken to combat the problems.

Here are some examples of actions which we can all take to help our seas:



Take part in our [beach cleans](#)



Sign the [#StopOceanThreads petition](#)



Take the [Plastic Challenge](#) to help reduce how much single use plastic you use



Take part in citizen science - [Jellyfish Watch](#) & [Big Seaweed Search](#)



Use the [Good Fish Guide](#) to choose sustainable seafood



Write to your MSP or MP to tell them about issues that matter to you

Lastly, just get in touch if you have any questions, I'd be happy to help:

[tara.proud@mcsuk.org](mailto:tara.proud@mcsuk.org)