UK Climate Policy
The Climate Change Act of 2008

- Set greenhouse gas emissions targets of at least 80% by 2050 against 1990 levels
- Requires the government to set legally-binding ‘carbon budgets’ to act as stepping stones towards the 2050 target
- Established the Committee on Climate Change (CCC) to ensure that emissions targets are evidence-based and independently assessed.
- In addition, the Act requires the Government to assess the risks and opportunities from climate change for the UK, and to prepare for them.
The Climate Change Risk Assessment and National Adaptation Programme

- The Climate Change Act requires the UK Government to produce a UK Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA) every five years. The CCRA assesses current and future risks to and opportunities for the UK from climate change.
- In response to the CCRA, the Climate Change Act also requires the UK government to produce a National Adaptation Programme (NAP).
- The Act also gives powers to the UK Government to require certain organisations to report on how they are adapting to climate change. This is called the Adaptation Reporting Power.
Devolved administrations

- The governments and assemblies of the devolved administrations (Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland):
  - Create climate change policy for their devolved area
  - Help to implement UK-wide policies.
  - As well as being covered by the Climate Change Act, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have separate climate change policies.
Who is responsible for climate change policies?

- **Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS)** – leading on policy for reducing emissions
  - Responsible for ensuring secure energy and promoting action on climate change in the UK and internationally.

- **Department for Environment and Rural Affairs (Defra)** – leading on domestic adaptation policy
  - Responsible for developing the National Adaptation Programme to address the risks set out in the most recent UK Climate Change Risk Assessment.
Key UK Climate Policies

- **Electricity Market Reform**
  - Framework for investment in clean, secure and affordable energy

- **Clean Growth Strategy**
  - Outlines 50 key policies and proposals
  - Phase out coal by 2025
  - Energy efficiency
  - Green finance
  - Low carbon transport
  - Technology investment
The UK has an EU target of cutting emissions by 20% by 2020
- Achieved in part through the European Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS)

EU Environmental Regulation
- 1. EU Renewable Energy Directive (RED)
- 2. Recycling targets
- 3. The EU's Ambient Air Quality Directive
Implications of Brexit

- As a current member of the European Union (EU), the UK participates in EU action to tackle climate change.
- Leaving the EU will change how UK carbon budgets are delivered: where policies previously agreed at EU level no longer apply or are weakened, new UK policies will need to replace them.
- But it does not change the need to cut greenhouse gas emissions, the level of carbon budgets (which are set in UK law), or the duty on the Government to act to tackle climate change.
In October 2016 the UK published a briefing on the implications of brexit on UK carbon budgets

1. The UK’s climate goals have not changed
2. The Government’s plan to meet carbon budgets must be able to meet them whatever the brexit outcome
3. In areas where these EU-level mechanisms are working effectively, the UK should either remain in these schemes or replicate them at UK level
   - These include product and efficiency standards, the EU Emissions Trading System, research collaboration and innovation funding.
4. The UK should take opportunities to improve on some EU policy approaches
Brexit and the Paris Agreement

- Brexit does not affect the architecture of the Paris Agreement.
- Brexit will prompt a technical clarification of the UK’s nationally determined contribution (NDC) and its relationship to the EU NDC. There is no mandate for the level of UK ambition to diminish and it will be maintained under current UK law.
- Brexit could affect the timeline for EU ratification, but should not disrupt the timeline for the Paris Agreement entering into force.
Comparative Policy

US-UK
- Climate change policy enjoys broad political and public support
  - Cost of energy
- UK has a comprehensive framework, which the US lacks
- Market-based v market-interventions

UK-EU
- Shared values and policies
- Independent, legally binding targets
- Power sector approach