UK Health Alliance on Climate Change
2016 - 2017 Overview for Council

Overview
The UK Health Alliance on Climate Change was launched on the 30th of March 2016, announcing its establishment and writing to Secretary of State for Health, Jeremy Hunt. Three priority areas which centred on a range of health co-benefits of mitigation, namely: clean air; physical activity; and healthy diets. It also identified three strategic functions: supporting the health profession, communicating to the public and media, and engaging with Government.

This document provides a brief overview of the activities conducted throughout 2016 and 2017.

Establishing the Alliance
First Steps
In early 2016, a number of key steps were taken to prepare the Alliance for launch:
- Establish its branding, identity and messaging.
- Establish the Alliance’s web and social media presence (see: www.ukhealthalliance.org and @UKHealthClimate).
- Convene an Executive, currently comprising of representatives from RCOG, RCP, BMJ, RCGP, RCN, the BMA, and the CHC.
- Convene a Communications Working Group, Policy Working Group, and Public Affairs Working Group, with representatives invited from each Member.
- Set up offices at the BMJ and hire a full-time Policy and Communications Officers.
- Work with the BMA and RCP to explore potential future legal structures for the Alliance.

Membership
Since launch the Alliance has gained three new members:
- The Royal Society of Medicine
- The Royal College of Psychiatrists
- The Faculty of Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare
- The Royal College of Surgeons

In addition to this, the Alliance is currently discussion membership with the Royal College of Midwives and the Academy of Medical Sciences.
Launching the Alliance — March 30th

A number of events and resources were coordinated for the Alliance’s launch, including:

- **Launch Events**: A stakeholder briefing held at BMA House to introduce key partners to the Alliance, with attendees including representatives from the BHF, Women’s Institute, National Trust, BLF, Asthma UK, CRUK and Age UK.

- **Media**: Development of a joint press release and press briefing held at RCOG, as well as a series of one-on-one conversations organized between health editors and senior representatives from the Alliance. The launch was highly covered in print and broadcast, with coverage from the BBC, ITV and Sky News (a list of selected national coverage has been included below).

- **Political Engagement**: A letter, signed by every President (or equivalent) to the Secretary of State for Health announcing the Alliance’s establishment. This was followed up with a meeting with the Deputy CMO and the CEO and Medical Director of Public Health England.

- **Communications**: A variety of supporting communications materials, including infographics from the BMJ; FAQ and Fact Sheets; a launch communications package for Members and partners; and Spokesperson briefing documents.

  - See Appendix for the Alliance infographic coverage from The Tree.

**Thematic Focus: Air Pollution and Climate Change**

Following agreement at Council, the UK Health Alliance began developing an advocacy strategy around the links between air pollution and climate change, which included:

- **Developing Policy Position**: Working with the policy representatives from every Member, and external stakeholders, to develop the Alliance’s position statement on this and then draft and approve a report – “A Breath of Fresh Air”.

- **Report Launch**: The report launched on the 18th of March with an event at the Royal College of Physicians, with 175 attendees. Speakers included: Professor Brian Hoskins (Chair of the Grantham Institute and member of the Government’s Climate Change Committee); Professor Linda Luxon (Treasurer, RCP); Professor Helen Stokes-Lampard (Chair of Council, RCGP); Professor Neena Modi (President, RCPCH); Dr Fiona Godlee (Editor-in-Chief, BMJ).

- **Artwork**: Commissioning of a spoken word poet who developed and recorded a piece based on the Alliance’s report.

- **Initial Political Engagement**: The launch of the report coincided with letters, jointly signed by the heads of each Alliance Member, to the Secretary of State Greg Clark MP and Secretary of State Jeremy Hunt MP, expressing support for the Government’s proposed coal phase-out consultation. The Alliance received a very favourable response, and was informally told that the letters were highly impactful in assuring BEIS of the support for the policy. Less than a week later, the consultation was announced (which, in effect, announced the phase-out of coal in the UK).
- **Government Consultations**: Responding to a series of consultations, including the Mayor of London’s consultation on Air Pollution (30 July, 2016); the UK Climate Change Committee’s inquiry into the future of climate change policy; NICE’s Consultation on Outdoor Air Quality and Health; the Defra consultation on the expansion of Clean Air Zones; and BEIS’s consultation on coal generation in Britain; and the Defra Air Quality Strategy Consultation.

- **Follow-up Political Engagement**: The letters and responses to consultations have been followed up with a series of meetings and discussions with Government bodies (including the CEO of the Climate Change Committee; the CEO of Public Health England; the Special Adviser responsible for the BEIS coal phase-out consultation; Defra’s air quality management team; BEIS Policy Advisers for the Carbon Budgets; and MPs (including Geraint Davies MP, Matthew Pennycook MP, Neil Parish MP). The Alliance has also since presented its recommendations to the APPG on Air Pollution, had a number of discussions with the APPG on Climate Change. The Alliance has also agreed to hold an event in September, jointly with the APPG on Climate Change and the APPG on Health.

- **Media**: In addition to this, the Alliance worked on a number of pitches relating to air pollution and climate change following the release of the report. This was highly successful, with a number of high-profile interviews, including a 7-minute segment on the BBC evening news, with Fiona Godlee (Editor-in-Chief of the BBC).

- **Communications**: A series of communications resources were developed, including: an infographic explaining the Alliance’s recommendations (See Appendix); articles in The Lancet and the BMJ (see below); communications packages for Member communications teams to use. Members were encouraged to make use of the Alliance’s materials on their websites, in their communications to their individual members, and on their social media channels.

---

**National Clean Air Day**

On June 15 the UK Health Alliance will act as a convening host for the first ever “National Clean Air Day” with. In order to take advantage of the opportunity created by this moment, the UK Health Alliance will work to mobilise the health profession in London and across the country. NCDA is the perfect opportunity to reach the three audiences the Alliance has been mandated to engage with: health professionals, the media and policy-makers. The UK Health Alliance held a Communications Working Group meeting on the 10th of April with the Communications teams from its member organisations to discuss potential activities and communications materials for the day. The group supported the development of a package of online and physical communications materials, to be released on Thursday the 15th of June, which includes:

- Two articles in the British Medical Journal about the health effects of air pollution and clarifying the validity of the scientific figures used to talk about the public health impact of air pollution i.e. the 40,000 attributable deaths as first outlined in the RCP-RCPCH report.
- An infographic in the British Medical Journal on air quality monitoring around London’s hospitals.
- A video of the BMJ Editor-in-chief talking to the chair of the RCP Working Party on air pollution, and possibly Sadiq Kahn about the health impact of air pollution and the policy measures needed to tackle it.

- A fact sheet/menu of engagement options document about the work of the Alliance, the basic facts about air pollution and health and the opportunities that exist for health professionals to get involved to be distributed through the Colleges networks.

- Issue a press package which includes: new figures on the exposure of NHS facilities in London to dangerous levels of air pollution; and the results of public opinion polling conducted by the Alliance on the public’s willingness to respond to the issue.

The UK Health Alliance will also:

- Coordinate for many of the heads of Member organisations to wear air quality monitors in London and monitor their own exposure and eventually talk about air pollution and health from the health professionals perspective

- Co-organise a two hour event on the morning of the 15th at Great Ormond Street Hospital, to raise awareness of the Alliance activities

- Prepare an internal communications and spokesperson briefing package to support the communications teams of the Alliance member associations, and for their senior officers, respectively.

- Work with the communications officers to publish pieces in the magazines/newsletters of many of our member organisations, including: RCEM, RCGP, RCP, BMJ, RCoA, and RCPCH.

Engagement with Government and International Partners

In addition to its focus on air pollution and climate change, the Alliance also worked to engage with the UK Government on a range of other issues, looking to embed health within climate change discussions. This has included:

- Contributing to drafting the Chief Medical Officer’s annual report on pollution, including sections on air pollution and on sustainability.

- Responding to a personal request from the Minister of State for Climate Change and Industry on the Alliance’s views on various aspects of the Government’s 5th Carbon Plan.

- Representing the health profession on the Government’s National Cross System Group for Sustainable Development across the Health and Care System, which convenes the Arm’s Length Bodies within NHS England, on sustainability.

- Working with Public Health England to better communicate the links between health and climate change, by: building a rapid response media capacity around extreme weather events in the UK; collaborating on a joint strategy for advocacy on air pollution; and speaking at their annual science conference.

- Working with the Adaptation Sub-Committee of the Government’s Climate Change Committee when the 2016 Climate Change Risk Assessment Evidence Report was released. This involved media preparation and training for spokespeople; sourcing local case-studies and press packages (such as a nursing homes that were overwhelmed by a heatwave, or
hospitals that were flooded in 2015); and developing a communications package summarising the results for Alliance Members to use.

- Submitting evidence to the Climate Change Committee’s inquiry on Leaving the EU: implications for UK Climate Policy (22 August, 2016).
- The UK Health Alliance worked with the World Health Organization to source speakers and develop the agenda for their 2016 Ministerial Summit on Health and Climate Change, held in Paris. Fiona Godlee, Editor-in-Chief of the BMJ chaired the Summit.
- The UK Health Alliance was invited to present at the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change’s Conference of the Parties in Marrakech in late 2016.
- As the first of its kind, the UK Health Alliance has been working with health professional associations in Canada and the United States to facilitate the establishment of similar alliances. In early 2017, the US “Medical Society Consortium on Climate and Health” will launch, with membership including the American Medical Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American College of Physicians, and other US medical societies and academies.
- Briefing for the new Director-General of the World Health Organization on Health and Climate Change

Communicating with the Profession

Through the Members’ magazines and communications channels, and through The Lancet and the BMJ, the Alliance has also been working to communicate with individual health professionals.

Selected publications include:

- ‘Climate and health: joining up the pieces, scaling up the action’, The Lancet
- ‘Acting to improve air quality and health’, RCP’s Commentary
- Twin problems of climate change and air pollution’, the BMJ
- ’We have a responsibility to act on climate change’, Nursing Times
- ‘Getting Healthy Could Save the Planet’, Public Health Today
- Healthcare professionals must lead on climate change, the BMJ
- ‘Farewell to DECC: What does its closure mean for the UK’s commitment to tackling climate change?’, BMJ Blog
- ‘NHS must do more to prepare for health threat of climate change’, National Health Executive
- ‘End Coal not Lives’, The Lancet Global Health Blog
- ‘Brexit: bad for our health and bad for the environment’, Blog BMJ
- ‘Phasing Coal for the Good of our Health’, Essay for Bright Blue
- ‘New Alliance of Royal Colleges to tackle climate change’, BACAPH
- Development of three, 2-page briefings on health and climate change, written “for health professionals, by health professionals
Training health professionals

At the direction of Council, the Alliance has explored opportunities to strengthen its communication directly with the health profession. This has taken the form of a number of key moments, such as the National Clean Air Day, and the production of slide sets for senior officers of Member organisations to make use of when presenting on health and climate change.

Additionally, the Alliance has been supporting the NHS Sustainable Development Unit in developing and delivering an extended series of training sessions for health professionals. The intention is that there will eventually be one “Sustainability Ambassador” per STP, and that they will develop the ability to form place-based (rather than specialty-based) networks, which cut across various parts of the health profession. The first of these training sessions took place in Reading in May 2017, with many more planned for the future.

The opportunity to conduct training sessions specifically for each of the Alliance’s Members (and their members) has also been discussed and will be explored in the near future.

Selected National Media Coverage from 2016

- **National Broadcast Interviews:**
  - 6 minute segment on Sky News, 0645, March 30
  - ITV National News and ITV Regional, March 31
  - BBC interview between Hugh Pym (Health) and Howard Catton (RCN)
  - 7 minute segment on BBC News on air pollution and climate change, 5 January 2017

- **National Radio**: 4 minute Segment on the Today Programme on [NHS preparedness for climate change](http://www.bbc.co.uk), with Fiona Godlee

- **Selected National Online and Print:**
  - Infectious Diseases and Climate Change in the UK, [Daily Mail](http://www.dailymail.co.uk) (extended 2-page spread, co-developed with Daily Mail)
  - Climate change risks, [The Telegraph](http://www.telegraph.co.uk) (Rapid response to climate denier)
  - ‘Health Warning’, The Sun (print only, see below)
  - ‘Alliance Warns NHS Unprepared for Climate Change’, Press Association
  - ‘Health service not prepared for climate change effects’, [ITV News](http://www.itv.com) (online piece, accompanying broadcast segment)
  - Jeremy Hunt Urged To Tackle ‘Unacceptable’ Health Risks Of Climate Change, [Huffington Post](http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk) (online only)
  - British health systems 'unprepared for devastating effects of climate change', [The Guardian](http://www.theguardian.com) (online only)
  - ‘Climate Change very much a UK Health Issue’, [Mail Online](http://www.mailonline.co.uk)
Appendix: Selected Images and Infographics

Alliance-BMJ Infographic: The Health Co-Benefits of Climate Change Mitigation
Alliance-BMJ Infographic: Policy Recommendations on Health and Climate Change

**Health benefits**

- **Medium**
  - Reduce the number of health-focused policies which have an adverse effect on the environment.
  - **Cross-departmental collaboration**
    - Increase cross-departmental collaboration to promote a joined-up approach to tackling air pollution and climate change.
  - **Promoting diesel cars**
    - Some conventional biofuels
  - **Environmental benefits**
    - Reduce the unintended adverse health effects of policies which only consider the environment.
    - **Flue gas desulphurisation**
      - **3-way catalysts** (petrol)
      - **Particulate filters**

- **High**
  - A complete end to UK coal use would prevent:
    - 1,600 premature deaths
    - 68,000 additional days of medication
    - 363,366 working days lost
    - 1.5 million incidents of lower respiratory symptoms
    - Up to £3.1bn costs incurred
  - **Phase out coal**
    - The Alliance calls for a rapid coal phase-out by 2025, and the creation of a policy environment that supports clean energy sources.
     - **Carbon dioxide**
     - **Nitrogen oxides**
     - **Sulphur dioxide**

- **Medium**
  - **Clean air zones**
    - Less respiratory disease
    - Better health and quality of life
  - **Environmental benefits**
    - Less polluting road transport
    - Decreased CO2 emissions
    - Lessened impact of climate change

- **Low**
  - Vulnerable people are disproportionately affected by air pollution:
    - Children
    - Older people
    - People with chronic health problems
  - **Better monitoring**
    - Place air quality monitors around schools, hospitals, and healthcare facilities, where vulnerable populations are concentrated.
  - **Environmental benefits**
    - Increased engagement with air pollution can lead to a greater uptake of measures to tackle it.

- **Medium**
  - EU regulations define limits for:
    - CO
    - NOx
    - SOx
    - PM10
    - PM2.5
    - Particulate matter
    - Certain toxic heavy metals
  - **Retain standards from EU regulations**
    - It is essential that the UK continues to work with the EU in responding to trans-boundary air pollution sources and reducing climate change.
  - **Environmental benefits**
    - Climate change can only be tackled through collective action, therefore we need its continued close collaboration with the EU.

- **Low**
  - Health professionals can lead the way as advocates for more active and less polluting lifestyles.
    - **Health Professionals taking action**
      - We recommend health services and professionals:
        - **Switch to clean energy providers**
        - Use and promote cycling, walking, and ULEV
        - **Healthcare facilities**: reduce greenhouse gases from generation
        - **Healthcare facilities**: need for travel to healthcare sites

- **Medium**
  - Health benefits
    - Quality of life
    - Respiratory disease
      - Pollution near gas generation sites
    - Pollution near road transport
      - Quality of life
  - **Environmental benefits**
    - It is estimated that measures like these could reduce NHS carbon emissions by one million tonnes a year by 2020.

---

UK HEALTH ALLIANCE ON CLIMATE CHANGE, 6/0 BMJ PUBLISHING GROUP, TAVISTOCK SQUARE, LONDON, WC1H 9JR
Images from Selected Media Moments

RCN’s Howard Catton, interviewed by the BBC’s Hugh Pym

UK Health Alliance Director, Dr Nick Watts interviewed on Sky National News

Health Warming, The Sun

Fiona Godlee, being interviewed on BBC News on the links between air pollution, health and climate change
UK Health Alliance Council Meeting, June 2016

Professor Hugh Montgomery, being interviewed by ITV National News on health and climate change

Professor Sir Brian Hoskins, Chair of the Grantham Institute, presenting at the launch of the UK Health Alliance’s report, “A Breath of Fresh Air”
Screenshot of UK Health Alliance Letter to Jeremy Hunt MP, Secretary of State for Health, signed by all Heads of Alliance Member Organisations

Yours sincerely,

E. Janet Davies
Chief Executive and General Secretary, Royal College of Nursing

Professor Jane Dacre
President, Royal College of Physicians

Professor Lesley Regan
President, Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists

Neena Modi
President, Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health

Sir Simon Wessely
President, Royal College of Psychiatrists

Professor John Middleton
President, Faculty of Public Health

Dr Fiona Godlee
Editor-in-Chief, British Medical Journal

Linda H. Luxon
Treasurer, Royal College of Physicians
Chair, UK Health Alliance on Climate Change

Dr Richard Horton
Editor-in-Chief, The Lancet

Professor Parveen Kumar
Chair, BMA Board of Science

Dr Liam Brennan
President, Royal College of Anaesthetists

Professor Maureen Baker
Chair, Royal College of General Practitioners

Dr Taj Hassan
President, Royal College of Emergency Medicine

Professor Sue Atkinson and Dr. Robin Stott
Co-Chairs, Climate and Health Council

Mr Babulal Sethia
President, Royal Society of Medicine

Dr Asha Kasliwal
President, Faculty of Sexual and Reproductive Health

Dr Nick Watts
Director, UK Health Alliance on Climate Change

Copied to:
 Rt Hon. Phillip Hammond MP, Chancellor of the Exchequer
 Rt Hon. Greg Clark MP, Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
 Rt Hon Andrea Leadsom MP, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
 Rt Hon. Nick Hurd MP, Minister of State at the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy