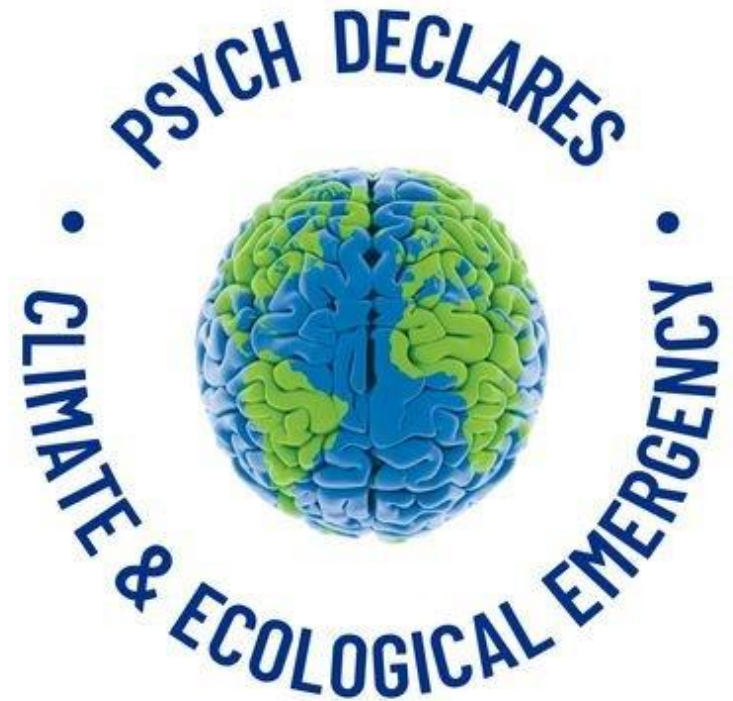


Actions the
RCPsych has
taken and
what more
is there to
do?

Dr Kirsten Shukla
October 2023

Setting up Psych Declares as a pressure group

- Psych Declares was set up in October 2019 by a few psychiatrists to come together and organize.
- A sustainability committee already existed within college
- Still, it was felt more pressure was needed so that RCPsych would
- declare a climate emergency
- divest from fossil fuels
- advocate for climate action



We're so proud of all the fossil free health workers



“The climate and ecological emergency is a mental health emergency.

Our mental health is entwined with the health of our natural world.”

Dr Adrian James
President, RCPsych



[@DrAdrianJames](#)

An Institution with Power

“use the college’s network to lobby government...on policies... which do not adequately acknowledge the MH consequences of the CEE”



PS03/21

**Our planet’s climate
and ecological
emergency**

Education resources for members (in planning) and Net Zero Mental Health Care

- Creating Green Plans
- Eco CAMHS
- Nature Matters
- Psychotherapy through a sustainable lens
- Public Health and Sustainability
- Staff wellbeing
- Sustainable pharmaceutical prescribing
- **Medical Activism**



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Protesting for public health: a case for medical activism during the climate crisis

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ABSTRACT

Anthropogenic climate change and its sequelae are de-stabilizing our environmental, social, economic and political systems. Not surprisingly, the direct and indirect effects of disrupting these key determinants of health are profoundly detrimental to mental health and wellbeing. Psychiatrists feel compelled to speak out. However, decades of gentle persuasion have failed to invoke sufficient government action so many have turned to activism. Others doubt whether this is, or should be, within their scope of practice. In this article we present the case for medical activism. History has shown prominent activist medics and psychiatrists have been instrumental in creating social and cultural change. We propose that psychiatrists are well-placed to advocate for health issues that cross socio-political-environmental boundaries. We suggest that, not only do we have a moral imperative to act for the wider determinants of health, but we are also advantageously positioned as trusted professionals with the necessary skills to articulate the problem and advocate for the most vulnerable in society. We call on our training and regulatory bodies to support health activism.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 11 April 2022
Accepted 21 June 2022

KEYWORDS

Psychiatry; activism; climate change; wider determinants of health; non-violent direct action

Introduction

Consultant Psychiatrist Dr Hayley Pinto described herself as a law-abiding citizen who limited her engagement with major world issues to ‘grumbling over the kitchen table’. With no prior background in activism, she shocked family and friends when she was arrested at a peaceful protest for action on the climate and ecological emergency (CEE). Sitting on a bridge in London during a protest, a police officer had asked her to move her protest to a permitted area. She responded by saying she had previously tried that approach but been ignored: ‘There’s no time for that now’.

Dr Pinto’s urgent concerns regarding the CEE are well-evidenced. The Lancet Health and Climate Change Commission has declared the impacts of climate change on human health to be ‘potentially catastrophic’ and ‘the biggest public health threat of the century’ (Costello et al., 2009). The 2022 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)

report acknowledges the direct effects of climate change in exacerbating mental ill health, through extreme weather events and the trauma and loss of livelihoods and culture they cause (IPCC, 2022; Lawrance, 2021), and the indirect effects which can exacerbate mental and emotional distress (Panu, 2020).

Many doctors feel compelled to speak out. Despite decades of raising awareness and gentle persuasion, there has been insufficient action from governments and corporations. A rapid overhaul of policy and practice is needed to curb global temperatures to the internationally agreed 1.5-degree threshold (IPCC, 2018). There is no time for slow incrementalism. Like Dr Pinto, many have turned to activism, defined as ‘the use of direct and noticeable action to achieve a result, usually a political or social one’ (Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary & Thesaurus, 2022).

This article presents the case for medical activism. We explore: prominent examples of psychiatrists as activists through history; our moral imperative to

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*These authors contributed equally to this work and should be considered as joint first authors.

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Police

Psychiatrists warn of police and crime bill’s impact on young people

Academics and clinicians say bill ‘will have a profound negative impact on young people’s mental health’

Damien Gayle

@damiengayle

Sat 15 Jan 2022 10.09 GMT

- Signed Fossil Fuel Non Proliferation Treaty
- Signed letter to Steve Barclay,
Health Secretary,
to support the Climate and Ecology Bill
- Signed a letter to the Prime Minister
to reverse the decision
to license new oil and gas



Campaign to change RCPSych's bank account



- College should move bank accounts from Barclays to a more ethical and sustainable bank
- Barclays tops the list of climate offenders for fossil fuel finance
- “Europe’s dirtiest bank”

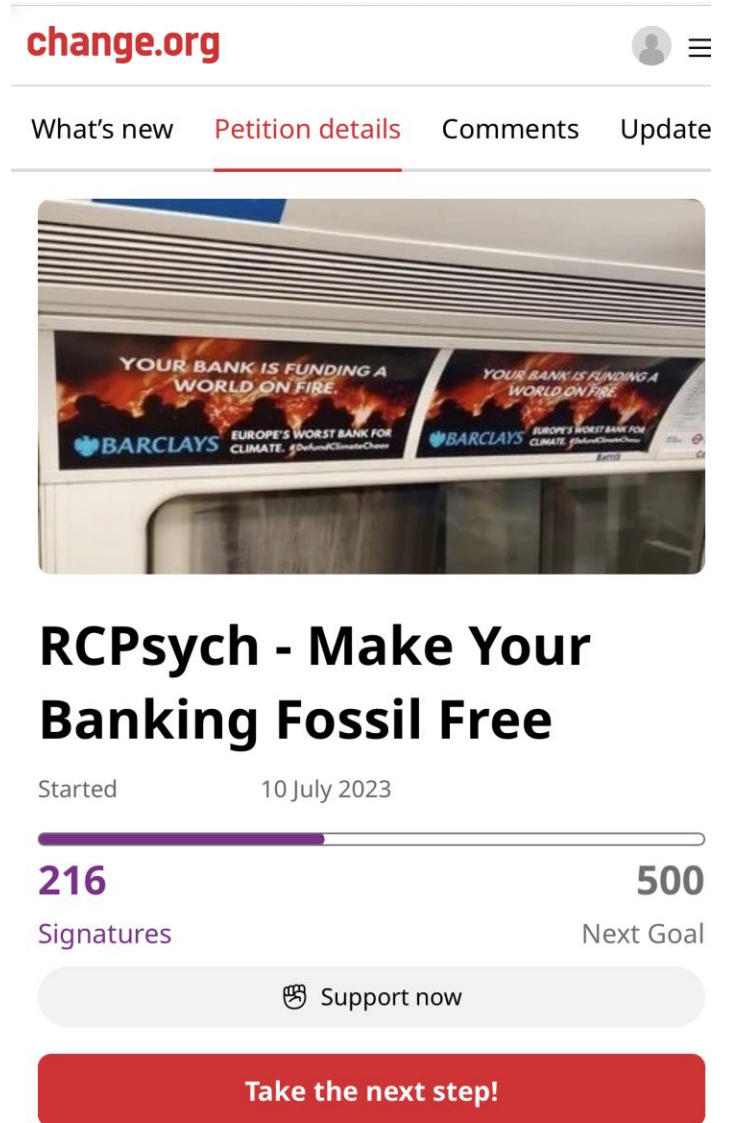
How's the campaign progressing?

- Met with college treasurer late 2022
- Financial management Committee rejects move in May 2023
- London Division supports move in June 2023
- Other Divisions like SouthWest are now getting on board



Online petition


Any member of the RCPsych can sign!



The screenshot shows the Change.org website interface. At the top, the 'change.org' logo is on the left, and a user profile icon with a menu icon is on the right. Below the logo, there are navigation tabs: 'What's new', 'Petition details' (which is underlined), 'Comments', and 'Update'. The main content area features a photograph of a train carriage with two posters. Each poster has a background of a fire and the text: 'YOUR BANK IS FUNDING A WORLD ON FIRE.' Below this, it says 'BARCLAYS EUROPE'S WORST BANK FOR CLIMATE' with a small 'DofundClimateChange' logo. Below the photo, the petition title 'RCPsych - Make Your Banking Fossil Free' is displayed in large, bold black text. Underneath the title, it says 'Started 10 July 2023'. A progress bar is shown with a purple segment on the left. Below the bar, the number '216' is shown in purple, with 'Signatures' written below it. To the right, the number '500' is shown in black, with 'Next Goal' written below it. At the bottom, there are two buttons: a grey button with a hand icon and the text 'Support now', and a red button with the text 'Take the next step!'.

change.org

What's new **Petition details** Comments Update



RCPsych - Make Your Banking Fossil Free

Started 10 July 2023

216 **500**

Signatures Next Goal

Support now

Take the next step!

Libya

“The countries of Morocco and Libya have been struck by devastating natural disasters leaving their communities grappling with the aftermath of a 6.8 magnitude earthquake and torrential flooding”

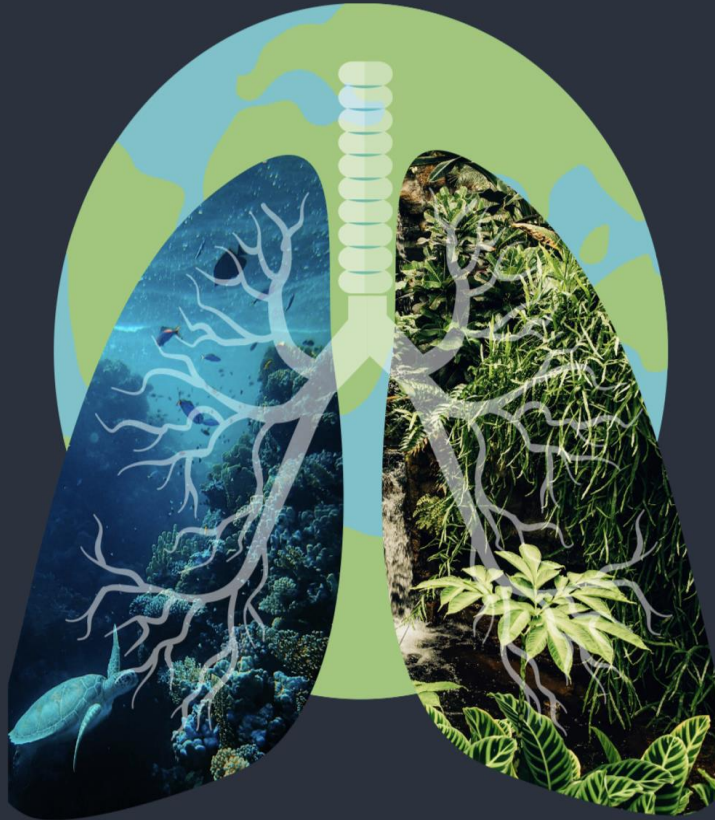
“Our hearts go out to the people in the affected region”.

(14.9.2023, College communication)



Biodiversity, climate change and health

A policy report from the UK Health Alliance on Climate Change



 UK Health Alliance
on Climate Change

September 2023

No let up in nature's decline



#StateOfNature

2023

 state of nature
FOR THE PEOPLE



Dr. Aaron Thierry @Thierry... · 7h ...

Another [#StateofNature](#) report won't get our government's to act.

"We don't have an information deficit, we have a power deficit..."

System change is only brought about by social movements building counter-power & challenging vested interests"

[#RestoreNatureNow](#)

[#NoNatureNoFuture](#)



4

46

113

4,013





**OUR HEALTH NEEDS
A HEALTHY PLANET**

**TOGETHER
FOR
CLIMATE & HEALTH**

GENETICIST

MEDICAL STUDENT

MENTAL HEALTH

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST

GP

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST

NURSE

PARAMEDIC

SPEECH & LANGUAGE THERAPIST

Green Health Wales

Healthy Planet
Healthy body & mind

THE CLIMATE CONNECTION
Doctors' Association UK

THE CLIMATE CONNECTION
Doctors' Association UK

DON'T BOYCOTT THE SEA

References

- <https://www.bankingonclimatechaos.org>
- <https://www.portfolio.earth>
- <https://reclaimfinance.org>
- Psych Declares is a member of Health Declares a Climate and Ecological Emergency. We are a group of health professionals from across the UK, who recognise that the climate and ecological crises are health emergencies requiring urgent action, and we are committed to acting and advocating to protect planetary and human health. We are calling on our healthcare organisations and institutions to declare, divest and take action. <https://healthdeclares.org/psych-declares/>