



**The eco-crisis and CAMHS –
what's the relevance?**

25 February 2021 | Online

Faculty of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry Winter Conference

25 February 2021

Dr Adrian James, President, Royal College of Psychiatrists

About me

- **47th President** after winning the Presidential Election at the start of 2020.
- A **Forensic Psychiatrist** and front-line clinician for 36 years, served as the College Registrar for the previous 5 years
- My **priorities** as President are:
 - Equity between physical and mental health
 - Championing diversity
 - Supporting the workforce
 - Sustainability at the heart of all we do

Sustainability as a presidential priority

Developing a sustainable
College response to the
climate emergency and
ecological crisis.



Supporting the delivery of
the **UN Sustainable
Development Goals.**

Help members and mental health services better understand the
impact of sustainability and the climate crisis on mental health.

Some of our work so far...

- **Divested from all fossil fuel** in accordance with our commitment to ethical investments and re-invested in a portfolio that promotes the UN Sustainable Development Goals.
- First College to produce a position statement on **sustainable health care** and provide guidance on sustainable commissioning.
- Put sustainability into our **quality standards**.
- Member of the **UK Health Alliance on Climate Change**.

Development of our new position statement

- **RCPsych ERG on Climate and Ecological Emergencies** wrote our new position statement.
- ERG membership includes representatives from:
 - the **sustainability committee**
 - **key faculties**
 - the **devolved nations**
- New statement is based on **7 roundtables** held in 2020 with stakeholders, experts and experts by experience from across the UK.

Development of our new position statement

- Our **Child and Adolescent Faculty** ran a workshop with children and young people getting their thoughts on the topic.
- Input from **external organisations** including Lancet Countdown and the UK Health Alliance on Climate Change.
- The Statement is currently being finalised and will be published shortly.



The issues arising

- A changing climate is **exacerbating existing mental health problems** and leading to psychological distress and the onset of new episodes of mental illness.
- Extreme weather events **damage health infrastructure** and impact on the functioning of health and social systems.
- Biodiversity loss should concern all healthcare professionals. There is clear evidence that **healthy environments** and contact with nature are important for our mental health.

The issues arising

Half of child psychiatrists surveyed say patients have environment anxiety

Research finds young people in England feel growing distress about the future of the planet



▲ Young people are growing up with a backdrop of fear and worry about the planet's future. Photograph: Paul Quayle/Alamy

More than half of child and adolescent psychiatrists in England are seeing patients distressed about the state of the environment, a survey has revealed.

The findings showed that the climate crisis is taking a toll on the mental health of young people. The levels of eco-anxiety observed were notably higher among the young than the general population, according to the Royal College of Psychiatrists, which has just launched its first resources to help

- The changing climate is causing **instability** which can lead to forced migration and armed conflict.
- Historically **disadvantaged groups are facing worse health outcomes** due to the climate.
- Young people are already reporting the issue of **eco-distress**.

Our position statement

- Our 'planetary diagnosis' of the ongoing climate and ecological crises and we outline 'treatments' that are achievable by the College.
- Recommendations for action.
- Pledges of action by the College.
- Looks at ways in which mental health services can form part of the solution.



Any Questions?

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