

A Guide to Activist Networks for Mental Health Professionals

Are you concerned about the climate and ecological emergencies? Are you looking for an opportunity to take useful action and join colleagues concerned about climate instability? Read on!

A rough guide to climate action

#PsychDeclares is a group of predominantly UK-based psychiatrists (various grades and subspecialties) who initially grouped under the name "Divest Psych" with the aim of lobbying RCPsych to divest from funding fossil fuels. This goal was achieved in February 2020. Since then it remains an active group advocating for climate and ecological leadership from psychiatrists. The group has links with organisations Medact, Health Declares, and Doctors for XR. Below there is an explanation of each of these groups, and contact details for those interested in joining.

#PsychDeclares - open to all mental health professionals and service users and free to join by email. (see below) We aim to:

- highlight the impact of the climate and ecological emergency on mental health, the essential role of a healthy natural environment in maintaining mental wellbeing, the links between climate and environmental justice and racial justice worldwide
- encourage and support our professional bodies to respond appropriately and knowledgeably to the CEE, and to use their collective power to demand a proportionate and effective response in government
- promote the many and varied health, social and psychological benefits of alternatives to fossil fuels, of decarbonisation of our societies, and of reconnection with the natural world.

We are currently advising on the college position statement on CEE and supporting efforts to encourage MHTrusts to declare a CEE. From time to time we will invite mental health professionals to sign open letters and come together in other actions, and we welcome psychiatrists concerned about the CEE to join us! We meet monthly on zoom; and are in contact via whatsapp.

Info on Psychdeclares: <https://healthdeclares.org/psych-declares/>

How to contact Psychdeclares: email: elcooke@gmail.com and kirsten.shukla@btinternet.com

A WhatsApp group provides a quick way of communicating within the group and gives info about its monthly zoom update meetings.

RC Psych - has an expert reference group chaired by President Adrian James, which hosted roundtable discussions on 7 climate related themes in 2020, and is developing a position statement, due to be published in Dec 2020. The college has 2 registrars for Sustainability - Drs Lisa Page and Jacob Krzanowski, who chair the Sustainability committee.

Sustainability Committee, meeting around 3 times a year focuses on sustainability in psychiatric practice, 10 top tips, choosing wisely, the College's internal sustainability plans. On this committee Alan Kellas leads on Nature connections, Green care and Nature-Based mental health care. The college also hosts green scholars Adam Monsell, Dasal Abayaratne and Kathryn Speedy and former green scholars include Katherine Kennet (social prescribing lead). See <https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/improving-care/working-sustainably>

R C Psych CAMHS faculty host the Greener CAMHS group, which meets virtually 3-4/yr. The co-chairs are Nick Barnes and Catriona Mellor, and it is supported by Faculty chair Dr Bernadka Dubicka. This group have led on an eco-distress factsheet released in November 2020.

See: https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/docs/default-source/members/rcpsych-insight-magazine/rcpsych-insight-13---autumn-2020.pdf?sfvrsn=1140af4f_2

Doctors for XR - a group of doctors linked to XR who are engaged in health related non-violent direct action to highlight the health effects of the CEE. <https://www.doctorsforxr.com/>

Medact - an established charity and advocacy group, which works across medical/health colleges; campaigning on climate and health, poverty, inequality and migrant rights <https://www.medact.org/>

HealthDeclares - Health Declares are a group of health professionals and medical students working within their professional organisations,; which grew out of XR <https://healthdeclares.org/>

Centre for Sustainable Healthcare - an active Oxford based charity, with sustainability links to medical faculties; who run NHS Forest, courses in SusQI, green care, and has been instrumental in supporting the RCPsych sustainability scholarship in the past: <https://sustainablehealthcare.org.uk/>

Climate Psychology Alliance - is an established UK not for profit group, reflecting the widely studied field of climate psychology, exploring the immeasurable psychological impacts of climate change, and the learning that psychological and psychodynamic thinking can bring understanding to climate grief and denial, and fostering action and inaction. CPA host events, talks, writing and support, and have a well-resourced website at <https://www.climatepsychologyalliance.org/>

Climate Psychiatry Alliance - a group of US and Australian psychiatrists aiming to ensure 'optimal mental health by preventing and mitigating climate change's impact on mental health and maximizing the mental and physical health co-benefits of a sustainable, regenerative, global response' <https://www.climatepsychiatry.org/>

RCPsych has some links with:

<https://shcoalition.org/>

<https://www.sduhealth.org.uk/> (related to the Greener NHS programme)

<https://sustainablehealthcare.org.uk/>

RCPsych pays to be a member of the leading UK advocacy organisation, coordinating health professional bodies work on climate and Health

<http://www.ukhealthalliance.org/>

On Declaring a climate emergency:

<https://www.climateemergency.uk/>

<https://climate-emergency.com/>

Last updated 22/2/21 AK