



Minutes of the UK Health Alliance on Climate Change Executive Committee

Held online 9 May 2024, 14.30-16.30

Present: Juliet Dobson (BMJ), Rose Gallagher (RCN), Terry Kemple (RCGP), Jacob Kranowski (RCPsych), Elaine Mulcahy (Director, UKHACC), Richard Smith (Chair, UKHACC), Sandy Mather (ICS), Liz Marder (RCPCH), Emma Radcliffe (GP), Eleanor Roaf (FPH), Anandita Pattnaik (UKHACC)

Apologies for absence: Ranee Thakar (RCOG)

Summary of actions:

- JD to speak to Kamran about BMJ resource capacity for supporting webinars > Discuss with trustees first (on agenda)
- RG to share contact details of contact at RC Midwives > RG has emailed, awaiting response
- Trustees to complete skills audit > In progress
- EM to circulate invite to 22 May political engagement workshop > Done
- Chart of accounts and presentation by Milsted Langdon to be arranged for July meeting > On agenda
- Explore using xero to measure carbon footprint from inputs
- Mid-year budget re-forecast to be completed in July
- Call for nominations to be issued > Done
- Timetable and process for appointing a chair to be produced for October exec committee meeting
- RS to invite Chris Gormley to speak at the council meeting in September > Done
- RS/EM to draft NHS constitution response and key points to circulate to trustees and members > Done
- RS/EM to draft letter to NICE to trustees and health organisations group > Done (on agenda)
- EM to progress delivery of actions as outlined in commitments project plan > Done
- TK to share WONCA questionnaire that may be adapted for assessing UKHACC progress on commitments > Shared
- Discussion on strategic priorities to take place at planning meeting in September
- TK, RS, ERoa, RG review fossil fuel policy report > Done
- Develop a process for trustee approval of policy reports > In progress
- EM/RS to review letter to MPs and recirculate > Done
- Agree to join health bloc at Restore Nature Now > Done
- EM to circulate heat consensus statement to trustees assuming approval if no objections received by Wednesday 15 May > Done
- JK to produce list of suggested questions for trusts/executives for next meeting
- EM to proceed process to joining Eating Better Alliance (no fee confirmed) > Done
- RG to email Chris Carter, FCDO regarding a UK based ATACH meeting > Done, awaiting response

1. Welcome from the Chair

RS welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Minute from the May meeting

The minute from the April meeting was accepted.

Updates on actions from the last meeting:

The following actions we discussed

- David Pencheon has accepted the role of ambassador. RS highlighted that all four of our ambassadors are doctors and we will need to ensure the next one appointed is not. It was agreed David might be a good person for a webinar to pick his brain on what he learned setting up the Sustainable Development Unit.
- We met with Mike Davies, Climate Change Committee on theories of change work to integrate health into mitigation and adaptation sectors to help inform CCC recommendations. The project is funded by Wellcome. We will be invited to participate in co-design workshops and subsequent workshops to help develop this work.
- RCMidwives is being followed up for potential membership. RG will share contact details.
- There may be more opportunities with the BMJ to work with webinars and a conference. JD will speak to Kamran to explore resource capacity for BMJ to deliver the webinars.
- The In Conversation with Simon Stevens on 8 June was attended by 40 in person and 100 online. Simon Stevens was very cautious in approach and the recording will not be shared.
- A skills audit has been circulated for trustees to complete, but issues with submitting the form were identified. RS will resend.
- We have arranged to meet with Climate and Health Scorecard regarding ongoing sustainability of the project and providing support

3. April Director's report

The [April Director's report](#) was shared prior to the meeting. Key points highlighted:

Points noted were:

- A HFTF workshop to equip people with the tools to have effective and impactful conversations and relationships with their local representatives has been set up for 1-2pm on 22 May. Spokesperson network members have been invited but numbers are low. EM will extend invitation to trustees
- We met NHS Providers regarding joining but haven't heard back. RS will follow up
- Following a competitive process, we were selected on the April-September cohort for the [Communicating Climate Programme](#), which is delivered by Media Trust and MG OMD. The programme incorporates a series of workshops, support in developing briefings and campaign messaging, media engagement and social media strategy. The Director and Policy Officer will participate in the programme in a shared way and we will use the workshops to develop messaging and campaign development for existing projects.

4. Budget update

The April budget vs income/expenditure overview was shared for review on the spreadsheet of the accounts. The budget is currently on track with no issues to report.

EM held a meeting with the accountant to update and cross check data on Xero against the bank account to ensure the two balances line up - which they do. Xero has also now been updated with specific budget codes to ensure easier reporting.

EM has asked for the draft set of accounts to be produced and presented to the Executive Committee at our meeting on 11 July to allow time for questions and ensure clarity on the data.

We will also ask the accountant for advice on using Xero to calculate carbon footprint from inputs.

It was agreed we should do a mid year budget forecast in July.

Actions:

- Chart of accounts and presentation by Milsted Langdon to be arranged for July meeting
- Explore using Xero to measure carbon footprint from inputs
- Mid-year budget re-forecast to be completed in July

5. Trustee elections

Following discussion at the previous meeting, it has been confirmed that Rose Gallagher, Terry Kemple and Liz Marder will step down from their role as trustees at the AGM in September. Rose Gallagher expects to stand for re-election.

A paper outlining the Call for Nominations was shared prior to the meeting. The process is the same as that completed in 2023. Three positions are open for nominations.

The call for nominations will be opened on 7 June and will close on 11 July.

It was agreed that we should go through a process of advertising and recruiting a chair when Richard steps down in September 2025. A timetable for this process is to be developed and discussed at the October meeting after the election of new trustees.

Action:

- Call for nominations to be issued
- Timetable for appointing a chair to be produced for October exec committee meeting

6. GMC decision on Sarah Benn

We wrote a letter to the GMC and published a [statement on our website](#) following the decision to suspend Sarah Benn's licence to practise for five months after being charged with contempt of court for protests related to climate action. Our statement was mentioned in a [Guardian article](#) on the case. WONCA also referenced this in their guide to >120 member organisations in 90 countries about how to manage competent doctors who take non-violent action.

It was noted that discussion on this issue has dominated the main GP press in a way that has not happened before with more mainstream people coming out to back Sarah Benn. It

was agreed the statement was useful to share and to have on behalf of UKHACC that was so detailed and helpful.

We wrote to Carrie Macewen asking to do a webinar to explain the position of the GMC but have not had a response. We have also written to the Patients Association to ask if they might be interested in writing about the case.

[Greener Practice](#) and the [BMA](#) have also written to the GMC.

A [petition](#) has also been launched calling on the GMC to reinstate Sarah Benn and 'Let Doctor's Speak Up'.

7. Meeting with Chris Gormley

RS recently met with Chris Gormley, Chief Sustainability Officer at Greener NHS.. A summary of take away points were shared prior to the meeting.

It was agreed Chris would be a good person to invite to the next council meeting. It would give people a chance to question him about what is happening in the NHS and also gives an opportunity to explore some areas Simon Stevens didn't answer on the greener NHS programme.

Actions:

- RS to invite Chris Gormley to speak at the council meeting in September

8. NHS Constitution update

The DHSC has opened its [consultation on proposed changes to the NHS England Constitution](#). The deadline for submissions is 25 June.

The NHS Constitution, last updated in 2015, has to be updated at least every 10 years by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care. The consultation will run for 8 weeks.

As part of these changes the government is proposing to add a new NHS value of 'Environmental responsibilities' which states:

"We play our part in achieving legislative commitments on the environment. We do this by improving our resilience and efficiency, while always prioritising value for money. We will never compromise standards of care or the needs of patients in pursuit of these targets."

Points noted were:

- The commitment should go further, explicitly referencing climate and the environment and the need for the NHS to achieve net zero emissions
- Specific reference to net zero 2040/45 targets and minimising our impact on nature
- Value for money in this context is out of place
- The statement is weak
- It should include something on mitigation and adaptation
- It should be presented as a positive value statement

It was agreed that we should suggest a stronger statement with impact. Key points for members to use in their individual responses should also be developed and circulated.

A number of our members will also be producing their own responses. Comms/policy leads have asked for us to share some key points that they might be able to include to ensure consistency of messaging.

TK shared this guidance on creating a value statement

- Write down the things you value. ...
- Group your values into themes. ...
- Eliminate the least important values. ...
- Write a sentence describing why each value is important to you.

Suggested example: 'Failure to adapt to or mitigate climate change puts the health of our population and the future of the NHS at risk. We will work to ensure we deliver or legal requirements on the environment, in full and as soon as possible'

Actions:

- RS/EM to draft NHS constitution response and key points to circulate to trustees and members

9. Letter to NICE

Following discussion with the health organisations coordination group, it was suggested that we should send a co-signed letter to NICE to ensure sustainability is included when writing their guidelines.

It was agreed we should draft a letter to circulate for feedback and signatures.

Actions:

- RS/EM to draft letter to NICE to trustees and health organisations group

10. Our Commitments project plan and timeline

Following discussion at the Council meeting in March, a number of actions were agreed to take forward in developing our commitments. A paper outlining the actions and a timeline for delivering them was shared prior to the meeting.

Points noted were:

- We need to do more to accelerate action on our members to deliver the commitments.
- We should consider greater resource focus on raising profile and delivery of commitments
- We need people to change behaviour at the professional body level and this can be demonstrated by delivering the commitments.
- It would be good to push this message much more strongly.
- We should explore if there is something we can do to progress this and move this forward.
- Only two organisations have responded/signed up to the RealZero seven acts presented at the dinner

Suggestions for taking this forward

- Providing examples of how organisations delivered specific commitments (e.g. bank switching) would be helpful. This can be addressed through building the case studies.

- We could request an annual update from members, but it is important the questions are easy to answer quickly and we need to ensure that resource is in place to collect and assess the responses.
- A visual thermometer would be helpful
- TK has used the UKHACC commitments to set up a simple questionnaire for the WONCA member organisations, it only takes 10 minutes for each organisation to complete. TK will share this.

There was a discussion about strategic priorities, which influence allocation of resource. For example, focus on policy development over delivering the commitments. It was agreed this should be discussed and reviewed by the trustees. The planning working in September would be an opportunity to do this.

Actions:

- EM to deliver actions as outlined in commitments project plan
- TK to share WONCA questionnaire that may be adapted for assessing UKHACC progress on commitments
- Discussion on strategic priorities to take place at planning meeting in September

11. Fossil fuel policy report

All members of the Fossil Fuel policy working group have now approved the policy report: A just energy transition for the good of health.

Members of the working group are: Royal College of Physicians, Royal College of Psychiatrists, Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, Faculty of Public Health, Planetary Health Report Card. We have also received external feedback/review from Greener NHS and Uplift.

It was agreed that approval of UKHACC trustees should also be secured. Some members of the group have already read the report. TK, RS, JK, ERoa, and RG all offered to read, feedback and approve.

The report is broken into two sections with six recommendations. The first section outlines why fossil fuel dependency is bad for health; the second presents “A cleaner energy system and a better, fairer and healthier society.”

Two panels are also included on the topics of:

- Commercial determinants of health
- Bioenergy (an example of bad practice)

The aim is to publish the report on 5 June (World Environment Day). The working group is meeting next week to discuss launch plans.

Actions:

- TK, RS, ERoa, RG review fossil fuel policy report
- Develop a process for trustee approval of policy reports

12. General Election campaign

Letter to MPs

The letter to MPs was circulated to members on 24 April with a call for signatures by 13 May. To date we have signatures of 20 UKHACC members.

At the comms/policy meeting this week we received feedback from members that the letter lacked a focus on the perspective of us being an alliance of health organisations, and why these things are important from a health perspective. It was agreed the letter could be strengthened by stating our unique selling point of being a collective of health leaders - currently it is too general and could be from any organisation.

We agreed to do a revision and then re-circulate it for signatures with a revised deadline. The current draft of the letter can be viewed [here](#).

The letter will be sent to all current MPs and then to candidates once the election is called. At that point we can review the letter if required.

Ride for their Lives

Registration has open for the UKHACC ride for their lives on Sunday 9 June. Members have been encouraged to join and to help share information about the cycle with their wider membership. [Here is the sign up form](#)

The event is taking place during Great Big Green Week and aims to inspire people to see the benefits of swapping the car for the bike for the good of health and our environment, and to call on our election candidates to step up and play their part. Participants will also be encouraged to bring a book to swap on the day. All health professionals are welcome to join. A [comms pack](#) has been produced with website, newsletter and social media copy and graphics to help spread the word.

Restore Nature Now demonstration

As a partner of the Nature 2030 campaign we are supporting the [Restore Nature Now](#) demonstration on 22 June. This is a legal, peaceful demonstration organised by RSPB, Wildlife Trusts, WWF-UK, Friends of the Earth, Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust, National Trust, Woodland Trust, Wildlife and Countryside Link, Extinction Rebellion and Chris Packham. A very useful [Q&A](#) about the event has been produced for supporting organisations.

A health bloc is being coordinated to bring together all of the health organisations participating in the event. UKHACC has been asked to show its support and to be part of this group. It was agreed it would be good to be involved and that something to distinguish UKHACC at the march would be a good thing to have (banner, lanyard, etc.)

Actions:

- EM/RS to review letter to MPs and recirculate
- Agree to join health bloc at Restore Nature Now

13. Heat consensus statement

Last year The Physiological Society published a report on heat resilience. UKHACC was a member of the steering group for the report. Following this work, TPS has now developed a consensus statement on action that should be taken to improve long term preparedness to extreme heat. EM has had an opportunity to review and feedback on the content. TPS is seeking the support of UKHACC to be named as a partner/endorser of the consensus statement.

The statement will be launched at a lunch reception on the terrace of the House of Parliament on 12 June involving academics, MPs and policy makers. UKHACC trustees are invited to attend. [Registration for the launch is open here](#)

Actions:

- EM to circulate heat consensus statement to trustees assuming approval if no objections received by Wednesday 15 May

14. What to ask from Trust Executives

Following discussion over email prior to the meeting, JK has collated suggestions for consultant groups and individuals to write to trusts and others in leadership roles to ask how they are progressing on green plans. It was also suggested that having a conversation with people in the system to ask what would be the most useful things that UKHACC could do to support at this level. It was agreed that more noise from both clinical and non-clinical staff can make a difference and equipping people with the questions to ask would be a helpful contribution.

Actions:

- JK to produce list of suggested questions for trusts/executives for next meeting

15. Joining Eating Better Alliance

Trustees were asked to consider if UKHACC should join [Eating Better Alliance](#), which already includes some of our members.

Their purpose is to accelerate the transition from producing and eating too much meat and dairy to a fairer, healthier and more sustainable food system that is better for animal welfare and for nature.

It was agreed UKHACC should join. EM confirmed after the meeting that we would join as a 'Partner network' member and there is no fee.

Action:

- EM to proceed process to joining Eating Better Alliance

16. Our role and attendance at ATACH

RG felt there would be benefit to ATACH having another physical meeting in about a year. We have emailed Chris Carter FCDO to explore the potential of hosting it in the UK - from a political perspective it would make the UK look good. UKHACC could bring a healthcare professional development opportunity as much as an ATACH community benefit.

TK has emailed Chris Carter but has not had a response. RG offered to email him separately as she was at the meeting so has that connection.

Actions:

- RG to email Chris Carter, FCDO regarding a UK based ATACH meeting

17. Risk register

The risk register was shared prior to the meeting.

18. Any other business

19. Next meeting

The next meeting will be held online at 14.30-16.30 Thursday 13 June 2024