



UK Health Alliance
on Climate Change

FAO: Many Goodridge
Head of the Direct Communications Unit
10 Downing Street, London SW1A 2AA

27 January 2025

Dear Mandy Goodridge,

Thank you for replying to my letter congratulating the Prime Minister on his election victory. We are pleased to hear that the Prime Minister supports the vision and aims of the UK Health Alliance on Climate Change, and we hope that he will have the courage and determination to take the difficult decisions that are necessary for the UK to reach net-zero and to resist pressure to backpedal on targets.

As the World Health Organisation has made clear, the climate and nature crisis is the major threat to global health, and we regret that health issues are not more prominent in the debate on the climate and nature crisis.

We have five specific asks of the UK government:

- End fossil fuel dependency
- Ensure a healthy environment
- Transform the food system
- Meet international commitments
- Transform health and care services

It's pleasing that the Prime Minister has recognised the crucial role that civil society has to play in achieving net-zero and in advancing Britain generally. We support the Civil Society Covenant and repeat that we are willing to help in every way we can.

The Prime Minister and his team will have thought about the best way to work with civil society, but together with a colleague, Dr Pritpal S Tamber, a researcher and advisor on community power and a Policy Associate of the Future Governance Forum, who has thought deeply about how government, public authorities, and civil society can best work together, we want to emphasise the following:

- It's important not to conflate civil society and civil society organisations, especially as many under-resourced communities have not been in positions to establish such organisations and are often at the sharp end of many challenges, including climate change and the destruction of nature
- With this in mind, while the proposed Covenant is moving in the right direction, we encourage the government to go further and think about its role in fostering and working with civil society more broadly
- To have a sense of control, civil society needs to be supported by the government to come together, meet people of different backgrounds, and find common cause

- Once this is achieved, there must be democratic processes that make it possible for communities not only to express their views but also to hold local government and NHS bodies accountable for climate-enhancing changes that also benefit growth and social cohesion
- Indeed, it is increasingly recognised that “belonging” is a deeper idea than inclusion; it includes the right to shape the thing that you belong to, including the NHS
- All of this is key not only to tackling the environmental and health challenges of our time but also to doing so in an equitable and just manner

We look forward to hearing more and to opportunities to work in partnership.

Best wishes

Dr Richard Smith CBE FMedSci
Chair, UK Health Alliance on Climate Change