



# Health Co-benefits of Climate Action Government Stakeholder Workshop: November 2024

## Summary Report

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## Introduction and Background

The UK has committed to reaching net zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2050. Actions to reduce GHG emissions can benefit health by averting some of the anticipated adverse health impacts from climate change and these actions will also have other positive impacts on health (known as health co-benefits).

In 2023, the Health Effects of Climate Change (HECC) report Chapter 14 “Net zero: health impacts of policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions” , was delivered by the UK Health Security Agency under the Environmental Change and Health HPRU (ECH HPRU). The HPRU also conducted a public involvement and engagement workshop (with the HPRU PPI group - known as PLANET (Public Led & Knowledge Engagement Team)), to explore public perceptions of the health co-benefits of climate change. This workshop was based on the main themes presented in the HECC Net Zero chapter. PLANET members were asked about different areas for action to respond to meet our net zero goals and where the responsibility of these actions lie, along with potential barriers to these actions and communication methods of these issues to the public.

General feedback from the PLANET panel was that this area is heavily policy focussed and although these actions are good to communicate to the public, there is also an element of needing to communicate the health benefits of these actions better to stakeholders as there are lots of questions for stakeholder organisations around this.

Therefore, a series of work was carried out towards a stakeholder facing audience including a webinar on the health co-benefits of climate action and a stakeholder workshop. This summary report will focus on the stakeholder workshop.

Action to reduce GHG emissions and improve and protect health are not limited within one sector or organisation. Given this cross-cutting nature of the UK’s GHG emissions goals, it is vital to work together to increase awareness of the potential health co-benefits of climate action, and maximise these health co-benefits of decarbonisation for the UK population.

A one-hour cross-government stakeholder discussion session was held by the UKHSA and ECH HPRU on the 4<sup>th</sup> November 2024 to open the dialogue between organisations and identify key areas of work underway and future research priorities in relation to health co-benefits of climate action.

The workshop aimed to provide participants with an opportunity to:

- Increase their understanding of work underway across other government organisations on the health co-benefits of climate action
- Discuss key barriers or facilitators to ensuring health co-benefits are integrated into strategies/policies

- Develop cross-organisational relationships to share best practice, knowledge and future work priorities with colleagues across England

## Workshop Methods

### Participants

A number of national government stakeholder organisations in England were represented at the workshop including:

UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA)  
Defra  
Environment Agency (EA)  
Natural England (NE)  
Department for Transport (DfT)  
Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID)  
Foreign Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO)  
Met Office (MO)

A number of additional organisations were invited but unable to be in attendance.

The one-hour workshop was held online via MS Teams, following on from the health co-benefits of climate action webinar earlier in the day. The session was facilitated by UKHSA members working on the ECH HPRU.

### Workshop Questions

The workshop followed a series of questions in relation to work around the health co-benefits of climate action within organisations as follows:

1. Reflection and current understanding - What awareness did you have around the health co-benefits of climate action before today?
2. What is currently being done across organisations - Are health considerations incorporated into policy making across your team/organisation/department? If so, how?
3. What is needed - What evidence would be useful/what are your evidence needs when designing climate mitigation policies?

Participants were encouraged to verbally discuss between them the answers to these questions, as well as using the MS Teams chat function and a Teams whiteboard to add post-it notes, comments and react to each other's points.

## Analysis

Four note-takers were present during the session to capture the main points and key findings. The session was not recorded. Any points made by participants were anonymised in line with Chatham House rules.

Key points and findings have been collated from qualitative analysis of the data, pulling out key themes and priorities.

## Key Findings

- Overall, participants were all positive about including the health co-benefits of climate action in organisation strategies and policies and generally this is being regularly incorporated across organisations in current work, including multiple cross-organisational working groups and collaborations in key documents
- Public health language is not always understood by the public and similarly outside of the profession in other roles, more consistent terminology could be a simple amendment to increase understanding
- There was a clear consensus that the economics of health co-benefits is a big priority for future research and will help to make the case for funding for certain programmes/interventions. However, integrating health economics and topic specific economics (e.g. transport) will be tricky
- Similarly, there was also a strong consensus that more qualitative research is needed including lived experiences and increased understanding of cultural practices/perceptions in order to maximise buy in from certain population groups and tailor messaging appropriately
- It was noted that co-benefits that are more difficult to quantify often do not get prioritised, and therefore it will be important to make sure that both quantitative and qualitative elements are included in decision-making

- A need to quantify the co-benefits not just in terms of health and cost-effectiveness, but also in terms of environmental benefits to aid decision making
- There is also a need for more research into the impacts of actions/interventions on morbidity, not just mortality.
- The effects on more vulnerable populations need to be better understood and disentangled from social impacts
- Many participants agreed that a local, place based approach would be required when implementing interventions with health co-benefits along with effective citizen engagement and communication
- There was overall consensus that there is a need for a prioritisation framework of interventions in terms of which have the greatest health co-benefits but are also cost-effective, to help decision making around implementation of actions/interventions at the local level
- Participants agreed a strong need for a manageable set of indicators for risk measurement and also monitoring and evaluation

## Limitations

Overall, the workshop was positive with key discussion points raised and a number of organisations in attendance, though organisations that were represented weren't exhaustive and valuable viewpoints from different organisations perspectives may not have been captured. This may be due to a number of factors including the timing of the workshop (being immediately after a webinar on the health co-benefits of climate action, very early on in the week and in the run up to COP29) which may have affected stakeholder capacity and availability. Options to improve participation in future could include more time in between events to allow for digestion of information and reducing pressure to participate for a long part of one day.

# About the UK Health Security Agency

UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) prevents, prepares for and responds to infectious diseases, and environmental hazards, to keep all our communities safe, save lives and protect livelihoods. We provide scientific and operational leadership, working with local, national and international partners to protect the public's health and build the nation's health security capability.

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