

# DCP UK Chair's update

Roman Raczka

---



## Climate emergency

**A**S we approach the COP26 summit, scheduled to take place in November in Glasgow, the impact of climate change across our communities is foremost in our thinking. Across the globe communities are already experiencing the health effects of more severe storms, floods, air pollution, wildfires and droughts, whilst food insecurities, extinction events, loss of habitats and an unprecedented loss of biodiversity are drastically changing people's lives. The climate emergency is also a worldwide mental health emergency.

The science of climate change is well established:

- Climate change is real and human activities are the main cause.
- The concentration of greenhouse gases in the earth's atmosphere is directly linked to the average global temperature on Earth.
- The concentration has been rising steadily, and mean global temperatures along with it, since the time of the Industrial Revolution.
- The most abundant greenhouse gas, accounting for about two-thirds of greenhouse gases, carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), is largely the product of burning fossil fuels.
- Methane, the primary component of natural gas, is responsible for more than 25 per cent of the warming we are experiencing today. It is a powerful pollutant with a global warming potential over 80 times greater than CO<sub>2</sub> during the 20 years after it is released into the atmosphere.

In the UK, the main climate-related health threats are summer heat waves and droughts, flooding, the interaction between air pollutants, pollen and higher temperatures and

increases in vector borne diseases. This disruption to life posed by the climate and ecological emergencies presents a significant threat to our health in the UK.

Our mental health is connected to, and dependent upon, the health of our natural world. Climate change has a wide range of potentially damaging effects on the mental health and wellbeing of people. Various research studies have shown that:

- There is a relationship between increased temperature and number of suicides.
- There is evidence of severe distress following extreme weather events.
- People with mental health conditions are more vulnerable to the effects of climate change on physical as well as mental health.
- Climate change exacerbates mental distress (especially amongst younger people) even for those not directly affected, for example eco-anxiety.
- Flooding, which is associated with anxiety, depression and PTSD in survivors, and due to climate change floods are increasing in frequency and severity in the UK.
- Groups already affected by social inequalities, including people with mental health conditions, people with disabilities and people living in areas of high deprivation, marginalised groups including refugees and homeless people and people from Black and Minority Ethnic communities are less likely to have access to support and resources to mitigate against the emotional impacts of climate change and are at a higher risk of negative mental health and wellbeing outcomes.

Our DCP Climate Emergency champion is Alison Robertson supported by clinical and community psychologists and longstanding climate activists Annie Mitchell and Tony Wainwright. They have highlighted a number of important climate campaign initiatives including:

- the Sao Paulo Declaration on Planetary Health
- the petition already signed by over 3000 people calling for psychologically informed leadership at COP26, which Carl Harris will be carrying on his forthcoming cycle ride to Glasgow.

We are currently in the process of bidding for the next BPS Policy Campaign. The DCP, together with the Divisions of Occupational and Health Psychology have developed a cross divisional campaign based on the intersection between three urgent priorities:

- Recovering from the impacts of the pandemic and learning to live with Covid-19
- Addressing the global threat of climate crisis
- Improving wellbeing and quality of life for all

Our campaign proposal is **Emerging Stronger: Living Well, Protecting our Planet.**

Our goal is to adopt ways of living and working differently for the benefit of people, organisations and our planet. We aim to achieve this by:

- collaborating across all domains of psychology to create positive impact on policy and practice
- taking a lead in influencing change at all levels – individual, organisational, community, and national

The global pandemic has had widespread impacts on people and communities. Although the full extent will be unknown for some time, there is real scope now for positive change and recovery as we transition from pandemic to endemic – to living and working with Covid-19.

There has been loss and tragedy, but also an opportunity to take stock of what really

matters. Changes resulting from the pandemic can be a stimulus to address climate change. We have learned that significant environmental benefits can be achieved by altering how we live, work, and engage with community led action. Through remote working and travelling less, the air we breathe has become cleaner, we have connected and helped one another; and lived more simply.

We believe that everyone has the right to live well. By living well, we mean maximising wellbeing and human potential; individually and collectively, in the workplace, the community, our nations, and globally. However, in the UK today, the reality is very different for many, due to inequality and disadvantage, combined with increased stress and uncertainty during the pandemic, and in relation to climate breakdown.

At the core of this campaign is the ambition that psychologists from different backgrounds will come together, as we did during the BPS Covid-19 response, and work collaboratively with Experts by Experience and other stakeholders to deliver environmentally informed guidance and support, so that we can emerge stronger and live well, while protecting our planet now, and for future generations.

Our campaign proposal has been short-listed as one of the top three and a decision will be taken at the BPS senate meeting in November.

The BPS Division of Counselling Psychology have issued a statement, to coincide with COP26, highlighting that the environment has a critical impact on people's physical and psychological wellbeing and they have joined other allied professions in supporting the delegates attending this very important event.

In the DCP we must join the voices of those who are calling for urgent action and support the declaration of a climate and ecological emergency to ensure we all take collective responsibility to avert a health and mental health catastrophe. I am delighted that this edition of *Clinical Psychology Forum* is a Special Edition on Climate Emergency and will be available to everyone free of charge. There are a number of excellent papers providing

a wealth of insight into the impact of climate change and the urgency to address the climate emergency.

### **Prevention and public health update from Tony Wainwright and Richard Pemberton**

The Prevention and Public Health Task and Finish Group have continued to meet regularly with the interim co-Chairs Tony Wainwright and Richard Pemberton. A number of positive developments have been reported by the Group including the following headlines:

- The Group has been considering the impact of climate change and the consequent impact on public health.
- The Group will be producing a special issue of *Clinical Psychology Forum* in the New Year on prevention and public health which will focus on those areas that have not been covered in previous issues with the Covid workstreams.
- The co-Chairs have attended the DCP England chairs meeting and plan also to meet with the DCP Faculty chairs to explore joint actions.
- The Group will be presenting at the Group of Trainers in Clinical Psychology (GTiCP) annual conference in November.
- The Group has recently recruited a new member of the committee representing Scotland and are actively seeking Welsh and Northern Ireland representation.
- The Group has highlighted that Health Education England has included prevention in a recent letter to all England Clinical Doctorate Programmes as an area that needs to be included.
- The group are exploring the development of demonstration projects in different parts of the UK and considering how these could be funded.
- A conceptual paper that gives an account of the key principles in prevention and the related models has been prepared and is being finalised.
- As part of the workplan the Group intend to join up with the work on antiracist practice, poverty and post-Covid lessons

to consider how these key themes may be joined up.

### **DCP Leadership & Management Faculty update from Amra Rao & Patrick Roycroft**

#### ***Embracing leadership in a new context:***

The DCP Leadership & Management Faculty will have its 20th anniversary in 2022. Amra Rao & Patrick Roycroft have recently taken up the co-chair position and will be setting out a programme to consider:

- what kind of leadership is needed within the new contexts
- what we can learn from our journey so far
- how we have led as a profession at a number of levels
- how to further build upon our strengths
- consider what could be better
- what can help to embrace new challenges.

As the pandemic recedes, the strongest organisations are likely to be those which foster critical thinking, creativity, team work, co-production, resilience and a sensitivity to context. This will include leading in a network with attention to inclusion, transparency, fairness and social responsibility.

The Leadership & Management Faculty will be setting out a series of events in 2022 to support our professional leadership network.

### **Professional Practice updates from Professor Tony Lavender DCP Workforce and Training Lead and Practice Board Representative**

#### ***HCPC***

The BPS Practice Board has established an HCPC Working Group to address the issues that have arisen over the years about the working of HCPC for practitioner psychologists. The BPS used to have regular meetings with HCPC and the intention is to re-establish this contact.

The group was previously chaired by Katherine Carpenter who has needed to give up the role because of her responsibilities as the newly elected BPS President. Tony Lavender has agreed to take up the role of chair. We have collated the issues that we have noticed

and that have been drawn to our attention by members (thanks to members who submitted points) and we will be developing plans in relation to those issues.

Issues raised have included:

- who should be the regulator,
- communication from HCPC about re-registering, the misuse and evasion of titles,
- the approval processes for international colleagues,
- the relationship between BPS and HCPC accreditation processes,
- Fitness to Practice Standards and processes.

### ***National Assessors update***

Eric Karas has been in the role of Interim Chief National Assessor for the appointment to Consultant Posts and has, with the help of Hannah Farndon, successfully relaunched the Scheme. The role of the National Assessor is to advise employers on whether applicants meet the standards for appointment to the role of Applied Consultant Psychologists at Band 8C and above. We advise that national assessors are used for all consultant level appointments, An assessor can be identified by contacting the BPS Practice Team on: [nationalassessors@bps.org.uk](mailto:nationalassessors@bps.org.uk)

Guidelines on the appointment of consultant psychologists can be accessed [here](#).

It was always planned that Eric would stand down after the relaunch of the scheme and so we have sent a request to all Lead and National Assessors to apply for the Chief Assessor role. The advert request only went to the Leads and National Assessors because the Chief

role requires someone with a good level of knowledge about the Scheme. We are all very pleased and grateful for the energy, ingenuity and thoughtfulness Eric has put into the role.

### **Event update**

#### ***Fully Human: Soul, Psyche, Skin. Exploring Race in Psychology***

Booking is now open for our special two-day DGP workshop on 2nd and 3rd December, studying the way that society separates us on the basis of race, class, gender, ability, language or accent, and creates a system that places more value on some people over others.

We will explore the lived experience of these forces of separation and judgement, and the dynamics of privilege of power.

This is going to be an active learning event that will allow attendees to bring their thoughts, feelings and experiences to share in our contained learning space.

In recognition of the importance of the 'Fully Human: Soul Psyche Skin' Group Relations workshop to explore experiences of 'Race' in psychology, the Division of Clinical Psychology have offered a significant financial subsidy to reduce the attendance costs to a very affordable rate to ensure as many people as possible will be able to attend and explore these issues.

We want to put these issues at the front and centre of our thinking, and we hope you'll join us. You can [register for the conference now](#).

### **Dr Roman Raczka**

DGP-UK Chair