

# **Delivering for Climate & Health: insights from UK decision- makers**

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Dr Nicole Cowell, Dr Caterina Brandmayr



# Schedule

- 12pm Introduction
- 12:05pm Overview of the research and recommendations (Dr Neil Jennings)
- 12:15pm Reflections on the recommendations (Cvetina Yocheva, Yogita Popat, Dr Simon Opher MP, chaired by Dr Alice Bell)
- 12:40pm Discussion and Q&A
- 1pm Close



Dr Alice Bell (Chair)  
Wellcome Trust



Cvetina Yocheva  
National Audit Office



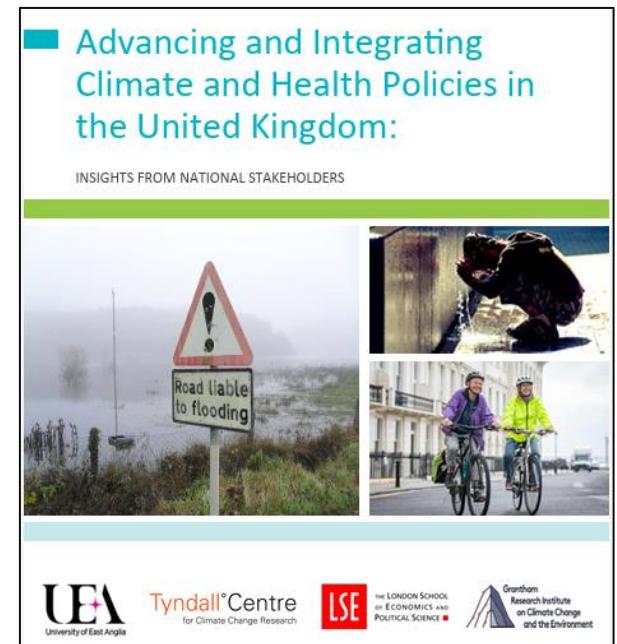
Yogita Popat  
Barnet Council



Dr Simon Opher MP  
MP for Stroud

# Context

- 2025 Tyndall Centre (UEA) and Grantham Institute LSE report: ‘Advancing and Integrating Climate and Health Policies in the UK’



- Our research: ‘Delivering for Climate & Health: insights from UK decision-makers’
- Grantham Institute & Centre for Environmental Policy, Imperial
- Focus on research gaps identified in the Tyndall report



# Overview

## Research questions

Research aimed to better understand:

- how health-related benefits are assessed and considered in the decision-making process for climate-related policies
- whether health-related benefits of non-health policies make a difference to the overall decisions that gets made
- how things work in practice when potential benefits of a policy cross different departmental remits

# Overview

## Methods

- 23 interviews, senior representatives from UK government (10 interviewees), Devolved Nations (5), combined and local authorities (8)
- Dec 2024 - Jun 2025, 1 hour average, transcribed, analysed qualitatively
- May – June 2025, workshops to sense-check and refine insights and recommendations with key stakeholders
- Climate-related policies considered in broadest sense – e.g. actions in transport, housing, land use that reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- More focused on mitigation actions

## Recommendations

1. Improve the monitoring and evaluation of existing and future policies to better capture health-related outcomes
2. Implement policy frameworks that integrate health in climate-related decision-making and support collaboration and coordination between departments
3. Build awareness and raise the salience of the health benefits of climate action amongst political leaders

## Cross-cutting findings

- Siloed nature of departmental responsibilities and funding
- The tight fiscal situation
- Recommendations aren't necessarily unique to climate-related policies – they also apply to how decision-making more generally could better consider health impacts.

## **Recommendation #1: Improve the monitoring and evaluation of existing and future policies to better capture health-related outcomes**

### **Findings:**

- Lack of high quality causal data makes it harder to make the case to Treasury for the inclusion of health impacts in cost-benefit calculations
- National Audit Office and UK100 – similar calls for improvement in the monitoring and evaluation of interventions
- But the pursuit of more causal evidence should not come at the expense of timely policy action (Whitmee et al., 2024).

# Recommendation #1: Improve the monitoring and evaluation of existing and future policies to better capture health-related outcomes

## Findings:

- Departments are trying to address this but difficult to secure necessary data (e.g. Dept for Energy Security and Net Zero trying to access hospital admission data to assess healthcare benefits of domestic retrofit)
- Support provided by Public Health Wales/Scotland in Devolved Nations, Office of Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) and UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA).
- Case study: Public Health Intervention Responsive Studies Teams – connecting local authorities with public health researchers

*“Sometimes you’ll get something which shows a very strong causal link in this particular situation, set of circumstances and then you go, that’s all great, but our policy is slightly different or we can’t use those impacts for something that’s larger scale. I think it’s the applicability (that is a barrier).”*

Department for Energy Security and Net Zero senior official

## Recommendation #2: Implement policy frameworks that integrate health in climate-related decision-making and support collaboration and coordination between departments

### Findings:

- Welsh Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (2015)
- Scotland's Population Health Framework (2025) – Scottish Government and Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) = cross-scale collaboration
- Health-in-all policies approaches
- HM Treasury's Green Book, support from Healthy Places team of Office for Health Improvement and Disparities.

*“[regarding the Future Generations Act], if you take an approach that is long term, is preventative, if you've been collaborative in the approach, you integrate outcomes and you involve people about whom decisions are being made, you get better decisions”*

Former Welsh Minister

## Recommendation #2: Implement policy frameworks that integrate health in climate-related decision-making and support collaboration and coordination between departments

### Findings:

- Health Mission, Darzi review, NHS 10-year plan, focus on health prevention
- Positive examples of cross-departmental collaboration - E.g. Treasury's Shared Outcomes Fund
- Local level collaboration and budget sharing – E.g. Hammersmith & Fulham
- Need for senior level buy-in

*“when we first started out with this team there wasn't a willingness amongst other government departments to consider health evidence at all... I think that was just due to a lack of understanding... we've made great strides in the relationships and being able to sell health as being important.... there's a real appetite for it, whereas five or six years ago, we couldn't even get our foot in the door for a meeting.”*

Department of Health and Social Care senior official

## Recommendation #3: Build awareness and raise the salience of the health benefits of climate action amongst political leaders

### Supporting findings:

- Recognition of the importance of leaders who are able to understand and articulate the health (and associated socioeconomic) benefits of climate action
- Packaging qualitative and quantitative insights together, real-world stories

*“I would say the lack of evidence per se is not the main obstacle. It's not even possibly among the most important obstacles, because I strongly believe there is medical public health evidence, enough evidence that to make a case for certain decisions, but it is often, it's often a political decision where health related evidence is not considered as it should be”*

Local authority, Director of Public Health

# Conclusions

- Increasing recognition of need to focus more on prevention rather than just treatment
- Areas for improvement around evidence base, collaboration and political leadership
- Excellent examples already exist
- Opportunities remain to improve lives and save costs to the NHS while tackling climate change