

Advocacy for Climate & Health: what works and what skills are needed, a summary from scoping across literature and peer learning

1. Intro & background

Anna Brook, Emily Loud & Iona Lyell (working with the wider advocacy group as part of the implementation of the FPH's Climate & Health Strategy) have undertaken some scoping work to support the FPH's aims. The purpose of this document is to create a report to wrap up the work, capturing information in one place for future reference, and to share recommendations with the SIG for discussion and approval, then feed through to the FPH Climate & Health committee.

1.1 Relevant extracts from the FPH Climate & Health strategy.

Our vision for climate and health

Better health for all – leaving no one behind, now and for future generations

The Faculty of Public Health becomes a credible and respected voice on climate, environment and health impacts, and supports the public health workforce to lead on strategies to protect health and wellbeing for current and future generations.

Our mission for climate and health

As the professional membership body for public health, we will work to promote and protect health for everyone and will:

- Ensure that the public health workforce has the knowledge, skills and capability to work on mitigation and adaptation to the climate emergency and environmental breakdown, including access to resources and the confidence to make the case for the health co-benefits of action on climate change
- Advocate for inequalities to be essential to all work on climate, the environment and health, recognising that climate injustice creates health inequalities locally and globally
- Demonstrate leadership by becoming a net-zero organisation

Advocacy

We will deliver an ambitious advocacy agenda with clear priorities and a strong evidence base to drive positive changes in addressing the climate, environment and health emergency at a global, national and local level

Our priorities to 2025

- Coordinate and collaborate with other organisations on key advocacy messages, at global, national and local levels, e.g. collaborate with others to proactively advocate on issues which are related to climate, environment and health
- Ensure that our members have the skills for advocating on climate change, environment, and health, specifically ensuring that they are able to advocate for those most affected by climate change and environmental breakdown, e.g. develop an "advocates" or "spokesperson" scheme for members to be able to advocate on key issues
- Develop a theory of change in order to inform our advocacy on climate change, the environment and health, e.g. workshops to develop our theory of change and consider how best to influence action in this field, ensuring that this includes a review of how to effectively advocate and learn from historical mistakes
- Prioritise advocacy where the outcomes will have the most impact such as high impact topic areas or where the opportunity to influence is greatest.

1.2 Summary of work completed

Beginning in May 2022, the advocacy working group has

1. Held workshops led by Sue Atkinson & Nick Cavill (including development of Theories of Change for the overall strategy and a draft for the advocacy work)
2. Agreed a plan for advocacy implementation, summarised below:

Advocacy working group aims:

- a. To contribute to skills & support for members (who are better able to advocate and doing more advocacy as a result)
- b. A focus on inequalities
- c. Some success (measures to be agreed) on proactive & reactive advocacy by the Faculty & the SIG

Advocacy workstreams:

- a. Some **scoping**, reviewing & learning from others & the past
- b. Develop focused **proactive advocacy** on a very small number of issues
- c. Develop mechanisms for **reactive advocacy**
- d. **Skills** programme & networks & other support for members & SIGs doing advocacy
- e. Developing our **Theory of Change** for advocacy

The focus of this report is the scoping & skills work. A brief update on progress for the other workstreams is included next:

- It was agreed to begin proactive advocacy with one or two priority areas and a focus on the prevention of fossil fuel expansion has been chosen. A working group has been established and planning is well underway.
- a process for reactive advocacy was drafted and agreed at the SIG and is in process of being agreed by the FPH
- A Theory of Change (ToC) was drafted to inform the advocacy work & work-plan and could be updated if helpful in future, and a ToC was also drafted for the C&H strategy as a whole

The draft theory of change diagram specifically focused on advocacy is below. A summarised version of the critical paths for the scoping & skills work follows to explain why we have done this work:

If we review the literature

we can learn what has and hasn't worked

this can inform what skills are needed - improving skills programme

this can inform proactive & reactive advocacy - improving effectiveness

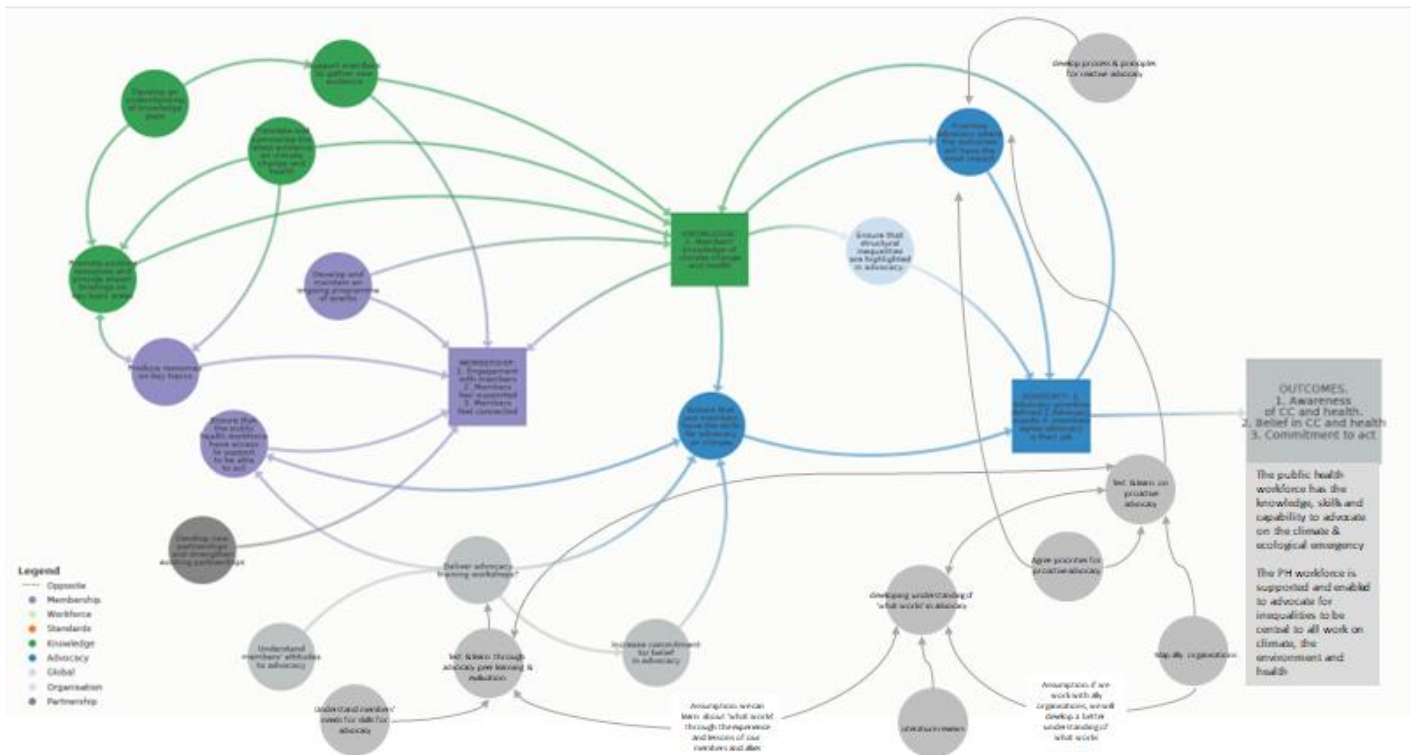
If we test and learn through skills workshops

we will increase members' skills, knowledge, networks and confidence

we can learn from others' experience (not just what is captured in literature)

this learning can inform proactive & reactive advocacy

As can be seen from the double-ended arrows, we also expect to learn about skills and 'what works' through doing proactive & reactive advocacy (test & learn approach).



1.3 Summary of scoping & skills work

We have undertaken the following pieces of work:

- General ally mapping. More specific ally mapping and partnership work is being undertaken for the proactive advocacy strand and through the separate partnership working group.
- Literature review (see below)
- Survey of membership to inform skills work (see below)
- 4 webinars planned (3 complete so far) - see below for notes of sessions already run
 - Presidents' session
 - External communications
 - Advocacy scoping summary
 - Internal communication & influencing (planned for September)
- Write up and synthesis - this document and its attachments are the basis for this work
- Informing proactive advocacy work (in progress)

2. Lessons from literature review

We have completed a 'quick and dirty' review to summarise the literature on advocacy. The purpose of this review was to inform the FPH's advocacy workstrand within the Climate & Health Strategy. The outputs of this review are:

- A **reading list** comprising the full set of papers that we included from our purposive search - this **can be searched for in-depth information** and **added to** over time. It is structured against the themes for the synthesis:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1oWi6WaCxMwbKiCpgWhviYHQWU3MSsL8pyAuJX8nFNw/edit?usp=sharing>



FPH C&H Advocacy

synthesis to share 31.

- A **slideset summary**:
- As a group, we can also **help with providing more detailed input** to the proactive advocacy & skills strands as requested (capacity permitting), for example presenting an overview of ingredients for success or suggesting tools or frameworks to use in planning campaigns. We are currently doing this for the planning of the proactive campaign to prevent fossil fuel expansion.

Key findings are shown below, there is a theme heading followed by a short explanation of what the evidence showed and then a key snippet to whet your appetite and give a single example of what you can find if you read more:

Theme heading	Short explanation of the evidence	Snippet to whet your appetite
The case for advocacy	Advocacy is effective in achieving improvements in population & planetary health	Changes in social norms are critical for mitigation and often start with pilot experiments led by dedicated individuals and niche groups
Historical mistakes / lessons we need to learn from	Analysis of what has and has not worked - from very strategic to very tactical	11 commandments for Public Health Advocacy
'Ingredients' for successful advocacy	The 'ingredients' include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional training • Policy • A focal point • Networks • Framing • Cross-party-political work • Identification of 18 factors that drive political commitment • Campaigns using more strategies and involving more groups involved = more effective • Tools based on experience & success for use 	Evidence that it is possible to create and strengthen political commitment over time through concerted strategic action through 18 key factors including: effective networks, strong leadership, civil society mobilisation, supportive political administrations, societal change and focusing events, cohesive and resonant framing, robust data systems and available evidence.

Theme heading	Short explanation of the evidence	Snippet to whet your appetite
Types of advocacy	Analysis of different types of advocacy and when they are most useful including theories, systems approaches, and ecosystems of social change	A framework to analyse which advocacy theory suits your goals and then point to which advocacy strategies and tactics to use.
Advocacy skills	<p>Summarises the key skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content knowledge in three key areas: organisational and behavioural change, communications, and social movement theory • theories of social change • critical analysis • strategic framing • the ability to collaborate with a diverse set of stakeholders on complex problems • understanding the underlying tussle for values, • winning the definition, • importance of resonant communication 	<p><i>'advocacy often requires its practitioners to be unpopular vanguards.'</i></p> <p>Helpful tools and toolkits on advocacy in general and some communications specific work on climate & justice</p>
Things that are missing from the literature	An assessment of important aspects that might be missing from the advocacy evidence base or discourse.	A review examining the lack of local and indigenous knowledge in climate advocacy, and another considering how the mental health needs of those advocating for climate and health transformations are not currently accounted for in advocacy literature.

3. Lessons from surveys of the membership and peer learning webinars

3.1 Initial survey

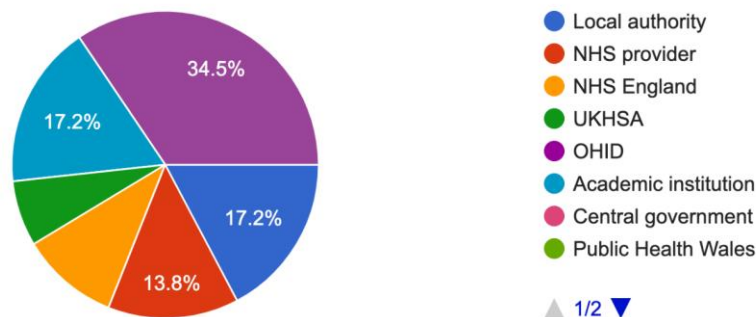
In late November / early December 2022, we circulated a survey to all Sustainable Development SIG members and all FPH members via the faculty newsletter in December. We got 30 responses. A summary of responses is shown below.

A fuller analysis is available from the SIG and will be useful in understanding the nuance of what people wanted. This detail was used in identifying speakers, developing the plans for session and the briefings for speakers to ensure they were focusing on what had been requested.

In which public health setting do you work?

In which public health setting do you work?

29 responses



What would you say your main barriers are to acting on climate change and health in a professional context?

- Perceptions of role - climate change not seen as a PH issue
- High workload /lack of time
- Lack of detailed knowledge (+ feeling the need to have it)
- Lack of buy-in or prioritisation
- Not knowing where to start or what the priority actions might be
- Knowing who the key players are / having the opportunity to influence them
- Climate change being perceived as a political and/or subjective issue

What would you say your main key skills gaps are in terms of climate and health advocacy?

- Communication skills (this included internal and external comms, 'perfecting the pitch' for different stakeholders, instilling hope and addressing denial).
- Knowledge gaps (how to on advocacy, making specific case for change, evidence base)
- Networks & relationships (this was identified as a skills gap - ie how to do this well - as well as a gap in itself ie a lack of networks through which to undertake advocacy)
- Achieving and maintaining change (influencing change in practice and policy makers & keeping it on the agenda)

We are planning to run a series of peer learning seminars where people can share their experiences of advocacy. Do you have any specific issues, skills or experiences you'd like to see covered, or any suggestions of people we could approach?

- Example of successful negotiation of more time/resources dedicated to climate and health / How to move from words to action, How to achieve cultural shift
- What are the top issues that we should be advocating for within this space?
- Behavioural science input, Systems thinking,
- Working with stakeholders and how to work with them
- Climate movement ecology in the UK
- NHS approach
- How to integrate sustainability into all areas of PH
- How messages should be framed, Engaging communities in the agenda
- Advocacy at different levels e.g. Faculty level, PH and non-PH colleagues, public

3.2 Key areas for seminars

On review of the feedback from the survey we identified the following priorities:

- Comms (both internal and external)
- Capacity and resources (how to argue / negotiate for)
- Knowledge and evidence
- Networks and relationships
- Achieving and maintaining change

We felt we had capacity to run 3 sessions and so we prioritised

- 1 session with current and former presidents (to focus on achieving and maintaining change in general, topic specific advocacy and advocacy from an FPH perspective)
- 1 session on external communication (to focus on topic specific evidence and framing)
- 1 session on internal communication (to include making the case for change and capacity and resources)

We also ran a webinar to summarise the findings of the scoping work. This covered some frameworks and theory of social change in a limited way.

There were other groups working on related pieces of strategy implementation so we de-prioritised knowledge and evidence (as the resources group work would address this to a great extent). Future sessions, if there is capacity, could focus on:

- Networks & relationships
- Achieving & maintaining change

Based on the scoping work, it would also seem helpful to consider sessions / learning on:

- Social change / social movement theory
- Critical analysis
- Systems thinking

3.3 Presidents' session

Advocacy stories from 3 FPH Presidents						
What they did	Successes	Key lessons learned	Advice to themselves	What worked & didn't	FPH's role	Skills needed
<p>Policy work</p> <p>prioritised</p> <p>Visible leadership from FPH</p>	<p>64 health organisations supported the 'do no harm' amendment</p> <p>Climate change declared as public health emergency</p> <p>Strategy and concrete action plans</p>	<p>Don't expect too much of the legislative process</p> <p>Using the political cycle can be tough</p> <p>it's key to build global partnerships, ensuring impact at home and abroad.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Celebrate achievements Media training & constant practise Address our naivety <p>Thinking through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What do you want to achieve? With whom? What collaborations can you get? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the evidence Plan, plan, plan Partners Implementation pathway Bring the public along with you 	<p>The first law of politics – be there,</p> <p>Work on public opinion- often politicians are guided by this</p> <p>Try being nice first, but accept you may need to escalate</p>	<p>A unique voice in policy space (population health), ready made policy engine (members)</p> <p>If the FPH doesn't do workforce development, capacity building, curriculum, side of things, nobody else will.</p> <p>Lead by example</p>	<p>advocacy, influencing, data, planning, skills are equally important at local, national and global levels</p> <p>Coalition building is also an essential skill – how to build and maintain effective partnerships, active listening, keeping people within that coalition committed.</p> <p>Resilience</p> <p>Comms training including media. Ok to be nervous! Important to get experience and training</p>

There is a slightly more detailed set of three slides that draws out the lessons in a little more detail. We also plan to ask whether the recording could be used for future learning sessions restricted to faculty members.

3.4 External Communications

Top tips for climate and public health messaging to external audiences

<p>In the UK the majority of people accept climate change is a problem, but don't see how it can be fixed, so:</p> <p>Make it doable (balance urgency with storytelling that points to solutions) </p> <p>Normalise action not inaction (acknowledge what has already changed, and that 8/10 people are concerned, while calling for further action) </p> <p>Connect the planet's health with our health (use concrete examples and metaphor where relevant) </p> <p>Keep it down to earth (use accessible language, bringing everyone in, avoid jargon and beware that net zero is not well understood) </p> <p style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">- Kate Llewellyn, Head of Training and Engagement at Heard</p>	<p>Climate change is often considered an environmental issue, but connecting it to health can boost understanding + engagement if you:</p> <p>Use simple, clear messages, delivered by trusted voices (e.g. health workers) and repeat them often </p> <p>Show health impacts (air pollution, extreme weather, which can see local results quickly) </p> <p>Identify policy solutions (e.g. clean energy, improved community design/resilience) </p> <p>Affirm helpful social norms (e.g. that caring about climate change puts you in the majority) </p> <p>Call out opponents (e.g. fossil fuel companies) </p> <p>Make the problem personal</p> <p style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">- Professor Ed Maibach, Director of Climate Change Communications</p>	<p>When talking to the media, use your expertise and the common desire for accuracy and professionalism, and be sure to:</p> <p>Speak from the heart – don't be afraid to acknowledge your own fears, use the heart and the head in your storytelling </p> <p>Lead with a personal angle – 'I'm a health professional and this is why I care' </p> <p>Use a concrete example of how health is harmed – one person's story may be more powerful than numbers, 'numbers numb, stories sell' </p> <p>When discussing health harms/ greenwashing, take the opportunity to also showcase solutions (for example, talk about true solution, then debunk, then reiterate the fact) </p> <p style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">- Matthew Green, journalist and global investigations editor at DeSmog.com</p>
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[Watch the full session here](#)





3.5 Advocacy webinar

In this session we:

- Summarised what we had done in the scoping workstream – and introduced people to the outputs for their use
- Introduced people to the proactive advocacy campaign
- Had a go at applying some outputs from the scoping work to the proactive advocacy campaign

The slideset summary and reading list were circulated to attendees afterwards and we plan to write a blog to engage more members in hopefully making use of the materials.

3.6 Internal comms

Top tips for climate and public health messaging to internal audiences	
<h4>Influencing public health employers</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand employer's perspective and find right lever to engage with them • Find and build power within organisation using professionals as advocates (trusted voices) embedding a group within organisational structures means that it could act via direct development as well as critiquing and advocacy • It can look to start narrow – you can build broader public health approach over time • Draw on assets and partners, using usual public health stakeholder engagement approaches  <p><i>Marc Davies, Public Health Wales</i></p>	<h4>Influencing policy makers</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make your research/reporting relevant and readable • Understand policy processes, constant key actors • Be accessible to policy makers - engage routinely, flexibly and humbly • Decide if you want to be an issu advocate or an honest broker • Reflect continuously who should you talk to, what's working and what isn't • Framing is really important what do they care about  <p><i>Phil Mackie, NHS Grampian</i></p>
<h4>Influencing on air quality issues</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be emotive and use plain language, avoiding complex statistics • Politicians perceive public opinion trumps everything – don't always want to know what works they want to know what's popular • People don't trust politicians however do believe that people will be protected from harm – they think if things were really harmful why would we be allowed to continue with them  <p><i>Eleanor Roaf, FPH</i></p>	<h4>Influencing local action</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate change is emotional topic • Legacy really matters, before we start it's important to take time to think things through • Weave climate into work that matters to organisation • Climate is now the context use your skills being it into everything • Get traction by highlighting the connection to whatever hot button topics • Make it seem fright, normal and doable by action at all levels  <p><i>Caroline Tomes, UKHSA</i></p>

[Watch the full session here](#) 

4. Recommendations

- Look for more opportunities to **incorporate advocacy into curriculum**
- **Continue to develop and offer advocacy training & learning opportunities to cover different skills and applying them in different contexts.** Some suggested next steps are below.
- **Build support and networks - this recommendation needs more thought and work and, if it is supported, a small time-limited group could consider next steps and bring back specific recommendations.** We know that:
 - People need opportunities to practise and work together
 - Networks that function well are critical to successful advocacy

More detailed recommendations on advocacy training and learning offer

We recommend that **three types of CPD** are developed and offered:

- Resources for people to do independent CPD

- Work across SIGs for an FPH training offer on advocacy
- Continue climate & biodiversity specific CPD opportunities

Based on the scoping work, we recommend that these three types of CPD offer **all need to meet the following requirements:**

- Provide opportunities to practise applying generic skills to specific topics and situations
- Provide opportunities both to learn about different skills (knows how / knowledge & understanding) and practise and become competent (shows how / application)
- Address the needs identified in scoping work and ongoing FPH members' CPD needs. This includes:
 - Responses to member surveys
 - What the literature review has identified as important skills
 - Responses to FPH members' survey question 2023
- Meet standards that have been set for public health advocacy competencies:
 - the ASPHER competencies that FPH has endorsed
https://www.aspher.org/download/882/25-10-2021-final_aspher-climate-and-health-competencies-for-public-health-professionals-in-europe.pdf
 - In future, we recommend that FPH also endorse the planetary health education framework <https://www.planetaryhealthalliance.org/education-framework> which has more on movement building & advocacy than the ASPHER standards
- To remain relevant, we should maintain awareness of developing standards for future public health workforce around climate & health
- As consensus builds around the recommended public health competencies for addressing the commercial determinants of health, we should review the offer to ensure it meets these - as a starting point, this review makes some recommendations:
<https://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/10.2105/AJPH.2021.306491>
- Learn from other parts of the world eg Canada and Australia both have Public Health advocacy programmes which include training and toolkits
- Learn from other professions and groups - eg community organisations, campaigning organisations - we could link up to deliver skills programmes

As a starting point, we have reviewed the key gaps in needs identified across the members' survey, the ASPHER competencies and the literature review that we have not yet sufficiently addressed and we recommend the following, depending on capacity.

- Work with the resources group to develop a programme of learning on using the climate & health evidence base. This could connect with specific skill areas identified including:
 - Using evidence for internal communications & influencing
 - Using evidence in critical analysis for advocacy planning
 - Using evidence in achieving and maintaining change
- Develop and offer training sessions ('know how' sessions) on the following content areas - a mixture of SIG wide and climate & health specific:
 - Networks and relationships
 - Achieving and maintaining change
 - Social change / social movement theory
 - Critical analysis
 - Systems thinking
 - gaining political commitment, policy support and social acceptance for climate action.
- Develop and offer support for people to practise application (shows how), starting with a trial on

- Internal and external communication and influencing (where we have offered the 'knows how' sessions already).
- Evaluate training and practise CPD offers and continue to develop practise opportunities as we build the knowledge base so people can easily move on from knowledge and understanding to application.