

The Rt. Hon. Sir Lindsay Hoyle
Speaker of the House of Commons
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Dear Sir Lindsay Hoyle,

Open Letter to Members of Parliament

We, the Climate Minds Coalition, are writing to you, Mr. Speaker, and all elected Members of Parliament in the UK with a call to work with psychological professionals to address the rising concern of climate distress and the mental health and psychological impacts of floods, storms, heatwaves, pollution, and stress on food systems.

In the UK, climate change will result in hotter drier summers.¹ Each degree of increase in mean temperature above 18 degrees C was associated with a significant rise in suicide and violent suicide respectively². The number of people in the UK significantly at risk of flooding is projected to increase 61% by 2050 under a modest warming scenario (2°C) and 118% in a high warming scenario (4°C)³. In England, most of the health burden linked to flooding comes from effects on people's mental health and wellbeing.⁴

Climate change is also affecting people who have not been directly impacted by its effects. An Office for National Statistics survey⁵ conducted in 2022 found that almost three in four UK adults are worried about climate change, ranking second only to cost of living as a major concern. These impacts are felt even more acutely by young people: the Planetary Health Study⁶ of over

¹ Met Office. [Effects of Climate Change](#).

² Page, L.A., Hajat, S., Kovats, R.S. (2007) Relationship between daily suicide counts and temperature in England and Wales. *Br J Psychiatry*; 191:106–12.

³ UKHSA (2023). [Health Effects of Climate Change \(HECC\) in the UK: 2023 report](#)

⁴ UKHSA (2024) [Flooding and health: advice for the public](#)

⁵ Office for National Statistics (2022): [Worries about climate change, Great Britain: September to October 2022](#)

⁶ Hickman C et al (2021): [Climate anxiety in children and young people and their beliefs about government responses to climate change: a global survey](#). *The Lancet Planetary Health*. 5(12) e863-e873.

10,000 young people across 10 countries published in the Lancet in 2021 showed that 75% of UK respondents aged 16-25 felt that climate change was frightening and this directly impacted their views on the future. Furthermore, the study reported a correlation between climate anxiety and distress, and perceived inadequate government response.

A number of factors have been shown to increase vulnerability to the psychological impacts of extreme weather including, older age, pre-existing medical conditions, inadequate insurance cover and social deprivation. However, awareness of climate and ecological breakdown affects the mental wellbeing of the majority. Climate distress can take many forms: anxiety, grief, fear, anger, sense of powerlessness, despair, denial, and more.

Despite widespread acknowledgement of the mental health impacts of the climate and ecological crisis, support and training for healthcare professionals working with people experiencing climate distress in all its forms, from anxiety and trauma right through to denial, remains difficult to access.

For this reason, the signatories below have joined forces to launch a sector-wide taskforce to promote awareness of mental health issues arising from these environmental challenges, and spotlight the support that's needed. This taskforce is the Climate Minds Coalition.

As a coalition of leading UK mental health practitioners and professional support organisations, we have the benefit of a great deal of experience, credible data and informed expertise. We've seen firsthand how and why individuals react to the climate crisis, ranging from denial and eco-anxiety to long-term traumatic impacts after suffering direct harm or loss through climate-related events such as flooding, overheating and coastal erosion.

The continually deteriorating climate will bring about increasing psychological distress, with knock-on effects on the ability of that person, or their entire community, to function effectively. But we also know that with the right therapeutic support and effective visible action from credible political leaders climate distress can be tackled.

We therefore call on the government to:

1. Work with the mental health sector to ensure that there is sufficient resource to support people experiencing climate distress and build the psychological resilience of our nation in the face of the greatest challenge the living world has ever faced.
2. Ensure that all policies aimed at mitigating and managing the impacts of climate change embed mental health as a core area of focus.
3. Ensure climate, biodiversity and the future needs of society are effectively tackled in political decision-making.

We are confident that with the right leadership, supported where needed by expert psychological and mental health care, we can help the British public to better adapt to the impacts of climate change and build positive, community-focused members of society who are hopeful for the future and determined to provide a better world for the next generation.

We call upon all Members of Parliament to engage with this conversation, supporting the Climate Minds Coalition and the professional members of its organisations to understand, identify and address all the psychological and mental health impacts of climate and ecological crisis, and to support the mental health of those working on mitigation, adaptation and regeneration, for the benefit of all society.

Yours the Undersigned....

Climate Minds Coalition

Association of Christians in Counselling and Linked Professions

British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy

British Association for Music Therapy

British Association of Art Therapists

British Psychological Society

Centre for Mental Health

Children and Young People's Mental Health Coalition

Climate Cares

Climate Psychology Alliance

EMDR Association UK

Mind

Muslim Counsellor and Psychotherapist Network

National Counselling and Psychotherapy Society

New School of Psychotherapy and Counselling

Student Minds

Thrive LDN

UK Association of Humanistic Psychology Practitioners

UK Council for Psychotherapy

www.climatemindscoalition.com