

A Framework for Sustainable Engagement with Communities on Climate Risk and Adaptation

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A Framework for Sustainable Community Engagement on Climate Risk and Adaptation

An Inclusive & Participatory Approach is Key...



First LISTEN

Local Focus
Impacts of Incidents
Share Values
Talk with Transparency
Exchange Evidence
Narrow the Scope



Then Ask...

Can You?
Will You?



And Agree

Why action is needed
Who will be doing what
Plans for follow up
How to stay in touch

full guidance available from
<https://www.adph.org.uk/networks/northwest/cumbria-and-lancashire-home-page/>

Glossary.

Adaptation action: Action which anticipates the negative impacts that climate change may have on health and communities; and acts to protect the population from these impacts through the process of adjustment to the actual or expected climate and its effects, to moderate harm or exploit beneficial opportunities.

Adaptive capacity: The ability of systems, institutions, humans, and other organisms to adjust to potential damage, to take advantage of opportunities, or to respond to consequences.

Climate Change: A change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods.

Co-benefits: The positive effects that a policy or measure aimed at one objective might have on other objectives, thereby increasing the total benefits for society or the environment.

Maladaptation: Actions that may lead to increased risk of adverse climate-related outcomes, including via increased greenhouse gas emissions, increased vulnerability to climate change, or diminished welfare, now or in the future.

Mitigation action: Action that reduces the extent to which climate change occurs. This is achieved by reducing or preventing the amount of greenhouse gases that are emitted into our atmosphere.

Background.

The climate and the health of the population are interconnected and concerns about the health impacts of climate change are well documented (1). The [North West Climate Change and Health Narrative | North West](#) report outlines how climate change impacts the health and wellbeing of the population through 3 main pathways; the direct effects of extreme weather events on the mental and physical health of individuals, the direct effects of climate driven changes to vital life support systems such as rising sea levels, crop failures, and rises in zoonotic disease transmission, and the indirect effects to health resulting from a changed climate such as impacts on health care service provision, food supply chains, and forced migration resulting from climate mediated extreme weather events and conflict (2).

Climate change is the result of global warming, driven by the burning of fossil fuels that lead to the emission of greenhouse gases (GHG) (3). To mitigate against the health impacts of climate change it is therefore vital to reduce GHG emissions to limit global warming. Recommended mitigation actions are outlined in the Net Zero Government Initiative (4).

The Local Government Association (LGA) has also produced a report outlining how Local Authorities and Regional Government can support with the delivery of net zero ambitions through local action (5).

However, events over the last few years have shown us the UK climate has already changed. The summer of 2022 has been the warmest on record (6). In the UK, temperatures reached an unprecedented peak of 40 degrees Celsius during a heatwave in July 2022 (7), and the UK Climate Change Committee have advised there will be an 80% chance of annual heatwaves in England by 2050 (8). In addition to heatwaves, concerns have also been raised about the predicted increase in the frequency of other extreme weather events, such as floods (9) and wildfires (10). By 2050, there could be a doubling of days with conditions highly favourable for wildfires in England & Wales, which could have significant implications for fine particulate matter concentrations, negatively impacting air quality (10). Such concerns emphasise the pressing need to engage not only in mitigation action to reduce emissions and the associated warming, but to put measures in place to adapt to an already changed climate. The NHS is legally obliged as per the Health and Care Act 2022 to adapt to any current or predicted impacts of climate change identified in the most recent report under section 56 of the Climate Change Act 2008 (11). To support NHS organisations to adapt to climate change and drawing from a model developed for the public sector in Scotland, the [NHS climate adaptation framework](#) has been made available (12).

Local Authorities are also well placed to support with the development and implementation of adaptation interventions. It is vital any local adaptation action is done in partnership with communities to better understand local adaptive capacity and existing inequalities to reduce the risk of maladaptation. To support Local Authorities in the North West to work with their communities to co-produce adaptation action, a framework for community engagement on climate risk and adaptation has been developed, building on findings from an earlier literature search and evidence synthesis conducted by OHID colleagues from the London region.

The Framework.

This Framework for Sustainable Engagement with Communities on Climate Risk and Adaptation describes 6 steps that can be used to meaningfully connect with community members to support action on climate risk and adaptation.

- Step 1: **Prepare.**
- Step 2: **Be Inclusive.**

- Step 3: Take a **Participatory** Approach.

- Step 4: **LISTEN:**

Local focus.

Impacts of Incidents.

Shared values.

Talk with Transparency.

Exchange Evidence.

Narrow the scope.

- Step 5: **Ask.**
- Step 6: **Agree.**

A table has been constructed below that poses questions and outlines recommended actions to be taken for each step, signposting users of the framework to available resources or examples of good practice where appropriate.

STEP 1: Prepare.

Before getting started, you need to determine the scope of the engagement. Having outlined the scope, you will then have clarity about the aims and objectives to help guide the engagement, you can be realistic about what can and can't be achieved with the time and resource available, and you can appropriately manage expectations for community members, building trust to allow for ongoing engagement.

Question Prompts and Recommended Actions.	Your Response:
Things to consider include: What is the intended outcome of this engagement? What resource is available for the engagement and any identified actions? In what time frame do you need to undertake engagement and have agreed any actions? Who will be responsible for any actions that come out of the engagement?	

STEP 2: Be Inclusive.

The impact of climate risk is not felt equally, with some communities and population groups at greater risk of harm from a changed climate and extreme weather events than others. For example, an equity review and impact assessment of the national adverse weather and health plan found evidence of increased risk to older people and people with long term conditions during adverse weather events, such as heatwaves (13), which will increase in frequency as the climate changes (8). Moreover, a report exploring data on deaths of people with learning disabilities observed an increase in excess deaths in July 2022 during periods of extreme heat, in which authors concluded climate change was a likely contributing factor (14).

In 2022, the IPCC concluded there was strong evidence that risk of harm as a result of climate change is exacerbated by systemic inequalities that marginalise groups, identifying gender inequality, racism, and other structures of inequity, as drivers of increased risk of

harm (15). Moreover, potential co-benefits to adaptation action could include improved health outcomes and the narrowing of health inequalities, particularly if such structural inequities are considered when designing adaptation interventions. Meaningful, inclusive engagement must therefore adopt an intersectional approach, ensuring input is sought from community members most impacted by a changing climate or any proposed climate adaptation actions. This will help to ensure interventions are appropriately designed and implemented to capitalise on all available co-benefits and mitigate the risk of maladaptation.

Question Prompts and Recommended Actions.	Useful Resources.	Your Response:
It is important to adopt an intersectional approach that includes recognising existing systemic and structural inequalities. Things to ask yourself include: Who needs to be involved? • Who is most likely to be harmed and who is most exposed to climate risk? • Who is most likely to be impacted by any climate adaptation actions? You then need to ensure the planned engagement is inclusive and accessible. Things to consider include: • Accessibility of venues for in-person meetings. • Timings of engagement opportunities to avoid systematically excluding some groups. • How to include those who are digitally excluded. • Language used during engagement sessions, make sure this is inclusive and easy to	LCAT: Local Climate Adaptation Tool Local Authority The Met Office climate data portal Climate adaptation toolkit and risk generator local-authority-risk-and-adaptation-toolkit-heat-edition.xlsx Local Authority Risk and Adaptation (LARA) toolkit: Heat Edition: a guide to support local completion UKHSA Health Equity Impacts of Climate Change mapping review Adverse weather and health plan equity review and impact assessment 2024 - GOV.UK	

understand. Also, the need to avoid stigmatising or patronising language; i.e. avoiding labelling people as 'vulnerable' or positioning people as lacking knowledge around climate risk and adaptation. • Readability of any documents or information produced and whether translations into different languages are required. • How to reach seldom heard groups and underserved populations, using a variety of methods including social media, VCSEF group, community champions etc. • Using creative methods of engagement may feel less formal and thus more accessible to a wider audience - consider photovoice, gamification, visual art exhibitions, or other creative methods: Residents' Perceptions of a Community-Led Intervention on Health, Well-Being, and Community Inclusion Through Photovoice - PubMed Participatory arts and affective engagement with climate change: The missing link in achieving climate compatible behaviour change? - ScienceDirect	Health Equity Assessment Tool (HEAT): what it is and how to use it Unpacking Intersectional Approaches to Climate Change Adaptation: Insights from a knowledge co-production workshop Healthwatch: How to coproduce with seldom heard groups Talking about people NICE style guide Guidance NICE NHSE Language Barrier Population Tool Climate action: climate justice, health and social care Local Government Association Best Practice Guide to Consultation and Engagement	
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STEP 3: Take a Participatory Approach.

Community engagement on climate risk and adaptation should not be extractive or directive but should be participatory to be effective and to bring about real change. You also need to be honest with those participating in the engagement about the scope of engagement and the level of power they will have to drive action forwards. This will allow you to build trust and ensure the engagement is sustainable.

Question Prompts and Recommended Actions.	Useful Resources.	Your Response:
To determine which approach is most appropriate, ask yourself: What resource is available for the engagement and any identified actions? What power will those being engaged have to enact recommended changes? If the intended outcome from engagement is to inform recommendations in a plan or report, what power do those recommendations have to drive change?	Do-It-Yourself (DIY) Manual on engaging stakeholders and citizens in climate adaptation, including tools, good practices and experiences Tools Database EU Mission on Adaptation to Climate Change Portal Climate-ADAPT Recommendations Community engagement: improving health and wellbeing and reducing health inequalities Guidance NICE A Greater Manchester Participation Playbook	

STEP 4: LISTEN.

When engaging with communities, the acronym LISTEN can be used to structure and inform the engagement.

Local focus.

- Make sure to discuss issues relevant to participants by identifying the climate risks that are most pertinent the local area.

Impacts of Incidents.

- Draw on the lived experience of participants of actual climate related incidents and the subsequent impacts, such as recent heatwaves or flooding events, rather than discussing what can feel like more abstract concepts such as global warming.

Share values.

- Support participants to share their values and work together to build a list of priorities to help guide decision making.

Talk with Transparency.

- You must be open and honest about the impacts of both climate change and proposed climate adaptation action, specifically with respect to the purported co-benefits or potential draw backs associated with any adaptation interventions.

Exchange Evidence.

- You should use the engagement as an opportunity to open a dialogue between communities, councils, and people with technical expertise to share knowledge that flows both ways. This will enable participants to jointly decide with their local authorities on the most appropriate adaptation action for this community. You are more likely to succeed in driving meaningful sustainable change if communities have felt part of the decision making.

Narrow the scope.

- Use knowledge of participants' shared values, acceptable trade-offs, desirable co-benefits, and evidence of effectiveness and acceptability to appropriately narrow the focus.

Local Focus.		
Question Prompts and Recommended Actions.	Useful Resources.	Your Response:
What climate impacts are most relevant to your communities? Who is most at risk and why? Are any vulnerability or exposure or adaptive capacity risk factors modifiable? What adaptation action has already taken place in the local area, has this been successful? If not, why not?	LCAT: Local Climate Adaptation Tool Local Authority The Met Office climate data portal Climate adaptation	

	toolkit and risk generator local-authority-risk-and-adaptation-toolkit-heat-edition.xlsx Local Authority Risk and Adaptation (LARA) toolkit: Heat Edition: a guide to support local completion	
Impacts of Incidents.		
Questions Prompts and Recommended Actions.		Your Response:
Ask participants to reflect on their lived experience of the climate related incidents that could become more severe or more frequent due to climate change. Questions to ask could include: • What made that experience difficult? • What actions did you / family / friends / wider community / local VCSEF organisations take? • What was good / not so good about those actions? (include both intended and unintended consequences) • What would you or others do differently? • What support was missing?		

• What change would you like to see moving forwards?					
Share Values.					
Questions Prompts and Recommended Actions.	Your Response:				
Use insights gained from discussions around impacts of climate incidents to establish shared values and priorities of the group, grounded in the lived experience of participants. These shared values can be presented back to the group for sense checking and agreement with time built into explore disagreements and non-alignment. Once agreed by the group, these shared values can act as guiding principles for exploring options for adaptation action and help prioritise discussion points to enable decision making.					
Talk with Transparency.					
Question Prompts and Recommended Actions.	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="762 1191 997 1272">Useful Resources.</th> <th data-bbox="997 1191 1401 1272">Your Response.</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="762 1272 997 1966"> Use shared values to consider the co-benefits that would be desirable and potential draw backs that would be acceptable for any proposed adaptation action. Behavioural science tells us if we want to encourage people to act, you should frame actions as Normal, Easy, Attractive and Routine (NEAR), as described by West and Michie (16): Normal - People are more likely to do things that they see being done by others whom they identify with and feel connected to. </td><td data-bbox="997 1272 1401 1966"></td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Useful Resources.	Your Response.	Use shared values to consider the co-benefits that would be desirable and potential draw backs that would be acceptable for any proposed adaptation action. Behavioural science tells us if we want to encourage people to act, you should frame actions as Normal, Easy, Attractive and Routine (NEAR), as described by West and Michie (16): Normal - People are more likely to do things that they see being done by others whom they identify with and feel connected to.	
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Easy - People are more likely to adopt positive climate behaviours if they are simple, require little time or effort, and are within their capabilities. Attractive - People are more likely to do things if they think they will be enjoyable, serve a purpose or avoid something bad happening. Routine - People more likely to do things that are part of their routine, so they don't have to think about them. When discussing potential adaptation action: • Emphasise "NEAR" benefits • Be honest about all the expected impacts to the best of your knowledge to build trust and enable prolonged participation of communities in climate adaptation.		
Exchange Evidence.		
Question Prompts and Recommended Actions.	Useful Resources.	Your Response:
Having identified potentially acceptable adaptation interventions based on shared values and a transparent review of co-benefits and trade-offs, review the available evidence to share findings with participants regarding the effectiveness and acceptability of any potential interventions. Research has shown community groups prefer hearing from people with experience of actually implementing adaptation interventions over technical experts sharing best practice (17). Leave time and space for a knowledge exchange in which participants can share	Climate change and mental health report - GOV.UK UKHSA Health Equity Impacts of Climate Change mapping review Adverse weather and health plan equity review and impact	

their lived experience or any evidence they find around potential interventions, being mindful to appropriately identify misinformation and disinformation. You will also need to proactively consider the impacts of any proposed adaptation action interventions on groups identified as at increased risk from climate change, asking directly for their insights and experiences, and using the HEAT tool.	assessment 2024 - GOV.UK Health Equity Assessment Tool (HEAT): what it is and how to use it	
Narrow the Scope.		
Questions Prompts and Recommended Actions.	Your Response:	
Use the agreed shared values of participants and available evidence to narrow down the options for adaptation action that the group want to review in more detail to discuss the feasibility of implementation. When discussing feasibility consider the following: • Economic feasibility. • Environmental feasibility. • Institutional feasibility. • Technological feasibility.		

STEP 5: Ask.

This step is about establishing the socio-cultural feasibility of any proposed climate adaptation action and to consider some of the practicalities around implementation. This includes an application of behavioural science using the COM-B model and the behaviour change wheel.

Question Prompts and Recommended Actions.	Useful Resources.	Your Response:
Can You? What climate adaptation actions could participants take? Ask participants to use the statements: “We can” to identify interventions for which opportunity and capability exist. “We can’t because...” to identify barriers to suggested action. “We could if...” to identify potential levers for change.	PHW-BSU-Responding-to-the-Climate-Change-Eng-final-2-1.pdf Unlocking Behaviour Change	
Will You? What climate adaptation actions would participants take? Ask participants to use the statements: “We will” to identify interventions for which motivation already exists. “We won’t because...” to identify barriers to suggested action. Ask participants to use the statement “We would if...” to identify potential	PHW-BSU-Responding-to-the-Climate-Change-Eng-final-2-1.pdf Unlocking Behaviour Change	

incentives to encourage suggested action.		
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STEP 6: Agree.

The final step in this framework is to ensure all participants:

- 1) Understand what has been discussed during the engagement.
- 2) Have clarity on the decisions that have been made and why.
- 3) Agree the next steps.

It is important participants know what is going to happen as a result of the engagement they have given their time and energy to and that roles and responsibilities are clearly outlined to build trust and enable ongoing partnership working. Numerous co-benefits to climate action have been identified in the literature, as outlined in evidence brought together in UKHSA's climate change and mental health thematic assessment report that found engaging in climate action can help tackle eco-anxiety and support mental health outcomes (18-20).

Question Prompts and Recommended Actions.	Your Response:
Why this engagement was important. Summarise shared learning from the engagement, bringing it back to the original purpose of the engagement, climate change and, if feels appropriate, the causes of climate change to signal communities to additional mitigation actions that could be taken. Statements that could be used include: • Due to a changing climate, the likelihood of this adverse weather event / climate impact of happening again (in specified timeframe) is.... • The negative impacts associated with this adverse weather event / climate impact are...	

• Therefore, to help protect our community, the following action must be taken to minimise the harms associated with the negative impacts of the adverse weather event / climate impact • We can also use this opportunity to capitalise on co-benefits such as... which are important to us because... Be honest and honour commitments made to build trust and to allow for ongoing engagement with communities.	
Who is doing what. It is important to review the governance arrangements to determine who is responsible for any actions and how those responsible will be held accountable. If an intervention is to be implemented, you will need to agree: • How this intervention is going to be implemented. • How the intervention and implementation will be funded. • How the intervention will be monitored and evaluated. • How we will know whether the intervention has been effective and what will happen if it has / hasn't.	
When and where there will be follow up. This will largely be determined by the original intention of the engagement. If the intention was to empower communities to implement interventions locally with the support of local VCSEF or business groups, then there needs to be agreement on timelines for implementation and evaluation. If the intention was to generate recommendations to inform a report or	

climate adaptation plan, timelines for comments on draft versions and final publication of the report should be shared. Ideally, timelines for any recommended actions made in any reports should also be made clear.	
How to stay in touch and give feedback. Existing guidance suggests this should be the beginning of prolonged and sustainable engagement with communities. Therefore, consideration must be given to how all parties involved in the engagement should stay in touch, with preferred and up to date contact information shared and any boundaries around where and when people are contacted are established. A final feedback session should also be held once the round of engagement has finished to inform communities what has been done as a result of the engagement, i.e. “you said, we did”.	

References.

All Definitions for Glossary taken from [IPCC Glossary](#) and [North West Climate Change and Health Narrative | North West](#).

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