

# Revisiting Beveridge's 'Five Giants' in Scotland



## Sustainable Health and Social Care: Climate Change and COVID-19

### Academy Provocation Paper September 2020

#### Introduction and background

In 2018, the RSA explored public service reform and Fellows identified the following five new 'Giants' based on Beveridge's original 'Giant Evils': inequality, disempowerment, isolation, intolerance, and climate change.<sup>1</sup>

The Health and Social Care Academy, a programme of the Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland (the ALLIANCE) has developed a partnership programme with RSA Scotland to explore these new 'Giants'. 'Revisiting Beveridge's Five Giants in Scotland' brings together a wide spectrum of Fellows and guests to help consolidate the RSA Scotland Health Network. Our aim is to attract participants from within and outwith the health and social care sectors, to encourage new voices, prompt debate, and share views on how to mitigate and prevent some of the key health and care issues facing Scotland today.

Partnership activity to date includes a 2019 provocation paper on mental health<sup>2</sup> and associated RSA Scotland Health Network event,<sup>3</sup> and a second event on the role of leadership in transformational change.<sup>4</sup> The partnership programme and activity of the RSA Scotland Health Network continues, with this provocation paper and an associated event focused on climate change and sustainable health and care in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.thersa.org/discover/britains-new-giants](http://www.thersa.org/discover/britains-new-giants). Beveridge's original five Giant Evils, that led to the creation of social services, were: squalor, ignorance, want, idleness and disease.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.alliance-scotland.org.uk/blog/resources/mind-the-gap-an-academy-provocation-paper/alliance-academy-rsa-scotland-provocation-paper-on-mental-health/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.alliance-scotland.org.uk/blog/news/whats-needed-to-achieve-transformational-change-in-mental-health/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.alliance-scotland.org.uk/blog/events/revisiting-beveridges-five-giants-in-scotland-leadership-2/>

## About this provocation paper

This is the second provocation paper produced for the ‘Revisiting Beveridge’s Five Giants in Scotland’ initiative, which seeks to stimulate thought and discussion. It has been written by the Health and Social Care Academy, a programme of the ALLIANCE that works with people who use health and social care services to inform and influence positive and significant change across Scotland.

Climate change is an area in which radical change is needed – especially when much of the attention that had previously been centred on greener action has been rapidly (and understandably) redirected to emergency responses to COVID-19. The aim of this paper is to consider the need for radical environmental change in health and social care, discuss the opportunities for this change, and explore some steps that could be taken.

## Climate change and COVID-19: the global context

Between 2030 and 2050, the World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that climate change will cause approximately 250,000 additional deaths every year – a figure that does not include indirect deaths (e.g. lung disease and pollution) – and that the economic cost will be between 2 and 4 billion USD per year.<sup>5</sup> They also state that countries with “weak health infrastructure” will be less able to respond to these challenges, and that there is an urgent need to reduce emissions of harmful greenhouse gasses via improved transport networks and more sustainable sources of food and energy.

This information will come as no surprise to anyone alert to or involved in the waves of global climate change protests that took place in 2019 – a period when many commentators identified a critical mass of public awareness and support for the need for action on climate change.<sup>6</sup> Although much of the publicity around climate change has paused during COVID-19, key studies have been tracking the impact of lockdown measures implemented during the pandemic on carbon emissions.

Climate change specialist Professor Corinne Le Quéré and her international team of co-researchers estimate that the impact of COVID-19 lockdowns have “drastically altered patterns of energy demand around the world”, with an average of a 17% decrease in daily global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions during the peak of forced confinement

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.who.int/health-topics/climate-change>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/sep/27/climate-crisis-6-million-people-join-latest-wave-of-worldwide-protests>; <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-49777279>

compared to mean 2019 levels.<sup>7</sup> Similarly, the International Energy Agency (IEA) reported that global energy demand fell by 3.8% in the first quarter of 2020, with renewables the only area that saw increased demand. Assessing the likely impact of a global recession and restricted social and economic activity, with a gradual recovery that includes a “substantial permanent loss in economic activity”, the IEA estimates that energy demand will reduce by 6% in 2020. Such a reduction would be “the largest in 70 years in percentage terms and the largest ever in absolute terms”. The IEA also estimate that low-carbon sources will outstrip coal-fired generation in 2020, and global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions will decline by 8% – to the levels of 2010. However, they conclude with the following caution:

“As after previous crises, however, the rebound in emissions may be larger than the decline, unless the wave of investment to restart the economy is dedicated to cleaner and more resilient energy infrastructure.”<sup>8</sup>

Similarly, Professor Le Quéré and her team state that:

“Most changes observed in 2020 are likely to be temporary as they do not reflect structural changes in the economic, transport or energy systems [...] social responses alone, as shown here, would not drive the deep and sustained reductions needed to reach net-zero emissions. [...] Still, opportunities exist to set structural changes in motion by implementing economic stimuli aligned with low carbon pathways.”<sup>9</sup>

Such warnings are evidenced by past precedent; the Global Carbon Project estimate that the 2009 emissions drop following the 2007/2008 recession was followed by a rise of 5.9% in 2010.<sup>10</sup> It is imperative that the lessons learned from this previous drop and subsequent rise in emissions are built on in the recovery from COVID-19

## **Climate change and COVID-19: Scotland**

Scotland has rich access to renewable sources of energy. From 2009 to 2019 Scotland’s capacity for renewable energy production increased threefold, and Scottish Renewables estimate that in 2019 renewable electricity generation accounted for approximately 90% of Scotland’s electricity use.<sup>11</sup> In keeping with

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41558-020-0797-x>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.iea.org/reports/global-energy-review-2020>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41558-020-0797-x>

<sup>10</sup> [https://www.globalcarbonproject.org/global/pdf/pep/Peters\\_2011\\_Budget2010.pdf](https://www.globalcarbonproject.org/global/pdf/pep/Peters_2011_Budget2010.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.scottishrenewables.com/our-industry/statistics>

these figures, the Scottish Government reported that greenhouse gas emissions in Scotland had reduced by 50% between 1990 and 2018. However, this included a 1.5% increase between 2017 and 2018, and was short of the 54% target specified by the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019.<sup>12</sup> This legislation sets targets to reduce Scottish emissions of all greenhouse gases to net-zero by 2045 at the latest, with interim targets for reductions of at least 56% by 2020, 75% by 2030, and 90% by 2040.<sup>13</sup> Actions proposed to meet these goals include:

- Decarbonisation in the public sector
- Working with business and industry on decarbonisation
- Encouragement of low carbon living among the general public
- Participation in interactional action on climate change (including supporting The Climate Group's States and Regions Future Fund and Zero Emissions Vehicles Initiative)<sup>14</sup>
- Support of the Climate Challenge Fund for community action on climate change<sup>15</sup>

Published during the ongoing pandemic, the Scottish Government's 2020-21 Programme for Government (PfG) notes that the "commitment to addressing the twin challenges of biodiversity loss and climate change remains unwavering throughout, and delivering a green recovery is at the heart of our response."<sup>16</sup> A raft of measures are proposed as part of this 'Green New Deal'<sup>17</sup>.

Meanwhile, Friends of the Earth Scotland and over 80 other civil society organisations launched a campaign during COVID-19 in support of a 'Just and Green Recovery for Scotland'.<sup>18</sup> This calls for a pandemic recovery plan that "puts people and planet first" and follows five key delivery steps:

- Provide essential services for people, not profit
- Provide an adequate income for everyone by redistributing wealth
- New funds to act on climate and restore nature
- Strengthen democracy and human rights

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<sup>12</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/news/scottish-greenhouse-gas-emissions-2018/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/policies/climate-change/reducing-emissions/>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/policies/climate-change/international-action-on-climate-change/>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/policies/climate-change/>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/protecting-scotland-renewing-scotland-governments-programme-scotland-2020-2021/>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/news/scotlands-green-recovery/>

<sup>18</sup> <https://foe.scot/campaign/just-green-recovery-for-scotland/>

- Support international efforts on coronavirus and climate change<sup>19</sup>

Although interrupted by the pandemic, Scotland’s National Taskforce on Human Rights has picked up its work to develop a statutory framework to bring international human rights into Scots law, which is expected to include environmental rights.<sup>20</sup> This work is based on the recommendations of the First Minister’s Advisory Group on Human Rights Leadership, which includes a call for a ‘right to a healthy environment’:

“This overall right will include the right of everyone to benefit from healthy ecosystems which sustain human well-being as well the rights of access to information, participation in decision-making and access to justice. The content of this right will be outlined within a schedule in the Act with reference to international standards, such as the Framework Principles on Human Rights and Environment developed by the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and the Environment, and the Aarhus Convention.”<sup>21</sup>

## **COVID-19 and sustainable health and social care**

It is clear that the changes brought about by COVID-19 offer simultaneous challenges and opportunities to react to climate change – both in Scotland and internationally.

The current (2012) Sustainable Development Strategy for NHS Scotland requires each NHS body to produce action plans that consider the effects of climate change on facilities.<sup>22</sup> There is a commitment to publish a new five-year NHS Scotland Sustainability Strategy this year, which is expected to incorporate six high-level commitments:

- NHS Scotland will be a ‘net-zero’ greenhouse gas emissions organisation by 2045 at the latest
- All NHS Scotland new buildings and major refurbishments will be designed to have net-zero greenhouse emissions from April 2020
- Each NHS Board should undertake a Climate Change Risk Assessment covering all operational areas and produce a Climate Change Adaptation Plan to ensure resilience of service under changing climate conditions

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<sup>19</sup> <https://foe.scot/resource/just-green-recovery-letter-first-minister/>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/groups/national-taskforce-for-human-rights-leadership/>

<sup>21</sup> <https://humanrightsladership.scot/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/First-Ministers-Advisory-Group-on-Human-Rights-Leadership-Final-report-for-publication.pdf>

<sup>22</sup> [https://www.sehd.scot.nhs.uk/mels/CEL2012\\_02.pdf](https://www.sehd.scot.nhs.uk/mels/CEL2012_02.pdf)

- NHS Scotland transport GHG emissions from its owned fleet (small/ medium vehicles) will be net-zero by 2032
- The NHS supply chain will be reviewed to determine the extent of associated greenhouse gas emissions and environmental impacts
- Each NHS Scotland Board should establish a Climate Change/ Sustainability Governance group to oversee their transition to a net-zero emissions service<sup>23</sup>

It was recently reported<sup>24</sup> that three NHS Boards – Ayrshire and Arran, Shetland and NHS Education for Scotland – have been selected to be part of a pilot scheme plotting a route to net zero carbon emissions by 2045, and at the local level there are a range of grassroots proposals to improve climate change action. To give just one example, when Glasgow’s Queen Elizabeth University Hospital (QUEH) was opened in 2015 (costing £842 million), no systems were put in place to enable staff to recycle the tonnes of recyclable packaging used on site. However, a recent campaign to install and improve recycling measures at the hospital, led by Dr Evelyn Jiménez, Clinical Fellow in Medicine at the QUEH, has gathered over 700 signatories and is due to be submitted to the Oversight Board in 2020. This local activism is welcome but clearly demonstrates the need for sustainable environmental concerns to be embedded in health and care facility and service design from the outset.

The ALLIANCE has the following initial proposals for health and social care, that respond to the dual concerns raised by climate change and the impact of COVID-19:

- Create a £25m social care climate change innovation fund
- Invest in clinically and environmentally safe PPE
- Develop sustainable and accessible travel for people who access and deliver health and care services

### **£25m fund for innovative work in sustainable social care**

Understanding and planning for climate related risks must be applied as much to Scotland’s social care sector as to healthcare. For example, it is not clear whether the existing or planned NHS Scotland sustainability commitments extend to social care.

Given the mixed economy of social care provision in Scotland, the impact of climate change will need to be acted upon by a range of different bodies, including local

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<sup>23</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/nhs-chief-executives-minutes-june-2019>

<sup>24</sup> <https://healthandcare.scot/default.asp?page=story&story=1905>

authorities, health and social care partnerships and care providers – all sorely stretched by the demands of COVID-19.

Planning for the impacts of climate change will be necessary in the delivery of care itself (Care at Home) as well as in understanding the extent of the risk for social care facilities and the sector’s dependencies on different areas of infrastructure, particularly transport and telecommunications. It will also need to be resourced – third and independent sector providers cannot develop sustainable solutions without financial support from the public bodies that commission their expertise and services.

The challenges of COVID-19 have been many and varied; however, other countries are proposing increased commitments to green cities and climate change in the light of significant reduction in pollution during periods of lockdown. The Advisory Group on Economic Recovery has recommended the “prioritisation and delivery of green investments”,<sup>25</sup> and the Scottish Government has committed to a range of activity in response.<sup>26</sup> It is essential that this extends to social care.

**The Scottish Government should create a £25m fund for social care organisations to take innovative climate change action during the next Scottish Parliament five-year term.**

### **Invest in clinically and environmentally safe PPE**

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) grabbed the headlines during the pandemic for a range of reasons – inadequate stockpiles and provision of equipment, the health risks posed to female users by poor design, the relative de-prioritisation of unpaid carers and social care workers’ access to PPE, and the communication difficulties caused by face masks for Deaf people and the hard of hearing.

In August 2020, the Scottish Government agreed a £53million contract with Alpha Solway for the manufacture and supply of 232 million surgical masks and two million visors for NHS Scotland.<sup>27</sup> With PPE and protection measures around COVID-19 likely to be an ongoing issue, the environmental impact must be considered. At present, a significant proportion of PPE used in health and social care settings is single use and disposable – to ensure clinical standards of hygiene are adhered to and reduce infection risk – but most is neither recyclable nor biodegradable, which

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<sup>25</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/towards-robust-resilient-wellbeing-economy-scotland-report-advisory-group-economic-recovery/>

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/blueprint-scotlands-wellbeing-economy/>

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.healtheuropa.eu/nhs-scotland-53m-vital-ppe-deal-to-create-200-jobs/102164/>

poses a serious threat to the environment.<sup>28</sup> However, we know that more sustainable options – including plastic-free and reusable stock – are available.<sup>29</sup>

Pre-pandemic, Scottish Care indicated its support for a UK-wide campaign against single-use plastic. Chief Executive, Donald Macaskill, noted:

“Together we provide social care for more than one million people. In order to do so, we procure a huge amount of products and resources. If we change the ways in which we do this, we can impact the environment as positively as we do the lives of the people we care for.”<sup>30</sup>

**Further research and national investment is urgently needed into the environmental impact of disposable plastic PPE and the development of clinically safe, reusable equipment that is designed for different body shapes and genders.**

### **Develop sustainable travel for people who deliver and access health and care services**

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) estimates that the most significant factor slowing reduction in Scotland’s emissions is transport – not including international travel. The transport sector was the largest contributor to greenhouse emissions in 2018 and had demonstrated only a 4.9% decrease since 1990.<sup>31</sup> If – as some people predict – increased home working is a long term consequence of COVID-19, then the reduction in work-related travel could offer a clear opportunity to reduce transport-related emissions.

The Scottish Government’s National Transport Strategy (NTS2) is currently being revised (following a consultation process in October 2019).<sup>32</sup> It contains discussion of possible actions to reduce the impact of transport on climate change and – like wider post-COVID-19 recovery plans – encourages more people to walk and cycle instead of driving or taking public transport. The 2020-21 PfG sets out a commitment to

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<sup>28</sup> <https://theconversation.com/coronavirus-face-masks-an-environmental-disaster-that-might-last-generations-144328>

<sup>29</sup> <https://theconversation.com/healthcare-is-still-hooked-on-single-use-plastic-ppe-but-there-are-more-sustainable-options-143940>

<sup>30</sup> Scottish Care is the representative body for independent social care providers in Scotland. <https://scottishcare.org/news-release-scottish-care-supports-uk-wide-campaign/>

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-greenhouse-gas-emissions-2018/>

<sup>32</sup> <https://www.transport.gov.scot/our-approach/national-transport-strategy/>



“provide over £500 million over five years for large scale, transformational active travel infrastructure projects, access to bikes and behaviour change schemes.”<sup>33</sup>

However, reduced travel is not possible for everyone – for example, for those who deliver or access health and social care services – and not everyone is able to walk or cycle (either at all, or without adverse effects on their health). People who use wheelchairs or assistive walking devices frequently report problems caused by obstructions like cars parked on pavements, forcing them to share the road with vehicles. Blind and partially sighted people report that street clutter is a major concern for them when walking.

Amongst the many recommendations in the 2020 Climate Assembly UK report are investment in public transport to make it accessible and affordable, new bus routes and more frequent services, and free bus travel.<sup>34</sup> Innovative solutions are required that prioritise the rights of disabled people, people living with long term conditions, and unpaid carers to equal access to transport and freedom of movement as environmentally-friendly transport strategies are developed in the aftermath of COVID-19. Ensuring that these solutions are co-produced with disabled people will help avoid repeating the discrimination groups faced as a consequence of pandemic traffic schemes.<sup>35</sup>

**It is important that pandemic recovery plans prioritise improvements to people’s health and wellbeing, and the need to reduce carbon emissions, but planners and policy makers should consider people’s rights and needs, and develop sustainable and accessible travel for people who access and deliver health and care services.**

### **Key questions for transformational and sustainable change in health and social care:**

This provocation paper seeks to stimulate thought and discussion about our approach to climate change and sustainable health and social care in Scotland. We close with the following questions:

- What should climate change action in a post-COVID-19 world look like?

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<sup>33</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/protecting-scotland-renewing-scotland-governments-programme-scotland-2020-2021/>

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.climateassembly.uk/report/read/executive-summary.html#executive-summary>

<sup>35</sup> <https://www.disabilitynewsservice.com/coronavirus-disabled-people-face-discrimination-from-covid-traffic-schemes/>

- What policy changes are needed to provide eco-friendly health and social care?
- What are the barriers to transformational change, and how can they be mitigated or overcome?
- What would greener health and social care settings look like? Are there existing national and international examples that demonstrate useful pathways for sustainable, environmentally responsible health and social care?
- What responsibility and resources do individuals, public bodies, and third and independent sector service providers have – and need – to assess the environmental impact of their work in health and social care?
- What can be done to support people and organisations to monitor their progress towards stopping climate change?
- How should the rights and needs of disabled people, people living with long term conditions, and unpaid carers be considered within the wider context of action on climate change?

## About the ALLIANCE

The Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland (the ALLIANCE) is the national third sector intermediary for a range of health and social care organisations. We have a growing membership of nearly 3,000 national and local third sector organisations, associates in the statutory and private sectors, disabled people, people living with long term conditions and unpaid carers. Many NHS Boards, Health and Social Care Partnerships, Medical Practices, Third Sector Interfaces, Libraries and Access Panels are also members.

The ALLIANCE is a strategic partner of the Scottish Government and has close working relationships, several of which are underpinned by Memorandum of Understanding, with many national NHS Boards, academic institutions and key organisations spanning health, social care, housing and digital technology.

Our vision is for a Scotland where people of all ages who are disabled or living with long term conditions, and unpaid carers, have a strong voice and enjoy their right to live well, as equal and active citizens, free from discrimination, with support and services that put them at the centre.

The ALLIANCE has three core aims; we seek to:

- Ensure people are at the centre, that their voices, expertise and rights drive policy and sit at the heart of design, delivery and improvement of support and services.

- Support transformational change, towards approaches that work with individual and community assets, helping people to stay well, supporting human rights, self management, co-production and independent living.
- Champion and support the third sector as a vital strategic and delivery partner and foster better cross-sector understanding and partnership.

## About the Academy

The Health and Social Care Academy is an ALLIANCE programme that helps drive positive, radical change in Scotland's health and social care, through the voice of people that live with long term conditions, disabled people and unpaid carers. The Academy's 'Five Provocations for the Future of Health and Social Care'<sup>36</sup> was created based on the vision of a 2015 think tank of Scottish senior leaders from across the public sector, third and independent sector leaders, and people who use health and social care services.

## Contact

If you would like to discuss any of the topics raised in this provocation paper, or to request any further information, please contact:

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<sup>36</sup> [www.alliance-scotland.org.uk/people-and-networks/health-and-social-care-academy/five-provocations/](http://www.alliance-scotland.org.uk/people-and-networks/health-and-social-care-academy/five-provocations/)