



Royal College  
of Nursing

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RCN POSITIONS AEMEN

## Introduction

We are entering a period of unprecedented environmental breakdown. Human activity is changing the planet's biosphere bringing disruption to planetary health through climate change, air pollution, ocean acidification, deforestation, and loss of biodiversity.

As a UK-wide organisation, the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) recognises that climate change undermines the very foundations of our health. We are already experiencing the negative consequences on people's wellbeing, this is growing and is set to be catastrophic if we do not act now. The World Health Organisation has described climate change as "the defining health challenge of the 21st century".

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- <sup>2</sup> Scottish Government news (2019) <https://www.gov.scot/news/action-to-address-climate-emergency/> (accessed 23 September 2019)
- <sup>3</sup> Welsh Government announcement on climate change <https://gov.wales/welsh-government-makes-climate-emergency-declaration> (accessed 23 September 2019)
- <sup>4</sup> Committee on Climate Change (2019) <https://www.theccc.org.uk/2019/06/11/response-to-government-plan-to-legislate-for-net-zero-emissions-target/>
- <sup>5</sup> Kings Fund (2013) Overview of the health and social care workforce <https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/projects/time-think-differently/trends-workforce-overview>
- <sup>6</sup> Health Care's Climate Footprint: Health Care Without Harm, ARUP Sept 2019
- <sup>7</sup> Clean Air Hospital Framework <https://www.globalactionplan.org.uk/clean-air-hospital-framework/> (accessed 23 September 2019)
- <sup>8</sup> Royal College of Nursing Glove Awareness Campaign [www.rcn.org.uk/get-involved/campaign-with-us/glove-awareness](http://www.rcn.org.uk/get-involved/campaign-with-us/glove-awareness) (accessed 23 September 2019)
- <sup>9</sup> Davies, SC (2019) Annual Report of the Chief Medical Officer, 2019 HM t, , O