



Ein cyf/Our ref MA(P)/RE/0454/17

Mark Reckless
Chair of the Climate Change, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee

23 February 2017

Dear Mark,

Thank you for your letter dated 31 January 2017 regarding air quality in Wales. I was pleased to learn that your committee discussed this important issue on 18 January, as exposure to air pollution is a significant determinant of health.

As you are aware, policy responsibility for air quality sits with the Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs. However, tackling air quality requires a multi-pronged approach, and action covers a wide range of areas - including local air quality management, industry regulation, matters relating to the planning regime, and the promotion of active travel. As such, my officials within Public Health Division, with support from Public Health Wales, work with their Environment and Rural Affairs counterparts on air quality issues which require public health input.

You will know that the Welsh Government recently undertook a public consultation on how local air quality and noise management can be improved. My officials are engaged in considering the consultation responses, and will assist in developing proposals regarding what more can be done, with the aim of reducing health risks and inequalities arising from exposure to air pollution. Actions my officials will be taking forward include:

- an awareness raising campaign on air quality for health professionals and the public; and
- the development of guidance for Local Health Board Directors of Public Health, Local Authority Directors of Public Protection, and Public Health Wales, to encourage integration to support a more effective and joined-up implementation of local air quality management work. It is intended that this guidance will reiterate the need for a dual approach to local air quality management, outlining actions that reduce risks for all *and* targeted interventions to reduce risks and inequalities in areas with the poorest air quality and greatest public health needs.

Given that Public Health Wales is undertaking research that seeks to enhance the Local Air Quality Management regime in Wales to maximise public health integration, collaboration, and impact, my officials will work closely with them on both workstreams.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

In discussions with Public Health Wales and local authorities through the Welsh Air Quality Forum, my officials are also involved in efforts to:

- improve national planning policy and guidance for local authorities in regards to air quality; and
- develop ideas for more substantive proposals for improving the way local air quality management works in Wales.

This response highlights some of key pieces of work which I am taking forward on air quality. If you require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rebecca Evans". The script is cursive and fluid.

Rebecca Evans AC/AM

Gweinidog Iechyd y Cyhoedd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Social Services and Public Health