

National Assembly for Wales
Petitions Committee
Cardiff Bay
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Divisional Director
Jane Lassey

Date: 16th May 2019

Dear Janet Finch-Saunders AM/AC (Chair/Cadeirydd)

**PETITION P-05-825 – PROTECT CHILDREN'S LUNGS FROM HARMFUL POLLUTION
WHILST AT SCHOOL**

Thank you for your letter to Dr David Snowball, HSE's Acting Chief Executive, dated 18th April 2019, seeking HSE's views on the petition submitted in respect of the above matter. I have been asked to respond on HSE's behalf as the Head of Operations for HSE's Field Operations Division covering Wales.

I thought it would be helpful if I set out the role of HSE in respect of reducing ill-health arising from work activities before commenting on the petition itself.

HSE role in reducing ill-health

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is an enforcing authority responsible for the regulation of health and safety at work in Great Britain and was established by the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 (HSWA). HSE is a non-departmental public body with Crown status, sponsored by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and accountable to its ministers. HSE investigates incidents and concerns about health and safety practices and develops new or revised health and safety legislation and codes of practice. HSE regulates health and safety across a range of sectors and industries including major hazard sites such as offshore gas, oil installations and onshore chemical plants through to more conventional sites, quarries, farms, factories, waste management sites, local authorities and hospitals.

In order to reduce ill-health arising out of work activities, HSE has three health priorities which are occupational lung disease, musculoskeletal disorders and work-

related stress. How we aim to reduce the prevalence of these health priorities is set out in our ['Health Priority Plans'](#).

In respect of lung disease, our focus is on workers in the industry sectors where the risk of developing occupational lung disease will be the highest and will be achieved through prioritising interventions, inspection activity and enforcement. It involves working with others in partnership to raise awareness and develop initiatives.

Air pollution at schools in Wales

As mentioned above, HSE is a workplace regulator and its remit is to prevent ill-health from work activities. Therefore, we do not have a role in relation to general environmental levels of pollution and would look to other better placed regulators responsible for environmental policy development and regulation.

HSE view on the petition

General air pollution is outside our remit, so it is not appropriate for us to comment on the petition.

I hope this letter helps to set out our position and I hope that you are able to agree a way forward to improve the situation and reduce children's exposure to harmful levels of air pollution. We will consider the matter you have raised and consider whether HSE can impact on general air pollution from workplaces in other ways.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Siân Clayton". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'S'.

Mrs Siân Clayton
Pennaeth Gweithrediadau / Head of Operations
Cymru a'r Gororau