

P-05-839 Adopt WHO guidelines for air pollution into Welsh law and introduce a new Clean Air Act for Wales

This petition was submitted by the British Heart Foundation Cymru, having collected 688 signatures.

Text of Petition

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to adopt WHO guidelines for air pollution into Welsh law, and to introduce a new Clean Air Act for Wales.

Current legal air quality limits for Wales do not protect health. The EU limits which are observed by UK and Welsh Governments are the same as the World Health Organisation's recommended upper guideline limits for nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), but are less stringent than the WHO's threshold for other health-harmful pollutants such as fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}).

British Heart Foundation Cymru is calling on the Welsh Government to adopt WHO guidelines into Welsh law, introducing a new Clean Air Act for Wales which will tackle the major sources of air pollution and ensure that everyone from government and local government, to business and the general public are working together to tackle this urgent health crisis.

Additional Information

BHF funded research first proved that short and long-term exposure to poor air quality can aggravate and cause serious cardiovascular problems. Our research established a clear link between cardiovascular disease and exposure to PM_{2.5} and ultrafine particles; and that inhalation of fine particles can increase the risk of a heart attack or stroke in vulnerable groups within 24 hours.

Public Health Wales estimated that, in 2017, air pollution contributed to 2,000 early deaths in Wales. Whilst the Welsh Government has been ordered to tackle illegal levels of nitrogen dioxide, there is still no plan to tackle particulate matter and very little detail on how the Government will improve monitoring of pollutants across Wales.

A new Clean Air Act for Wales will:

- Ensure that WHO guidelines on air pollution are observed by Welsh law;
- Introduce charging Clean Air Zones in areas which are in breach or close to the limits for nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter and ring-fence the funds for further improvements to air quality;
- Ensure that infrastructure and technology is in place to facilitate increased uptake of Ultra Low Emissions Vehicles and public transport;
- Invest in improved monitoring of pollution across Wales, and ensure that information on the risks to health is available to vulnerable groups;
- Increase public awareness of the impact of domestic woodburning and the steps which can be taken to minimise this.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Cardiff Central
- South Wales Central