



## British Heart Foundation Cymru Petition

P-05-839 Adopt WHO Guidelines and Introduce a Clean Air Act for Wales  
Response to Minister's Letter to the Petitions Committee 4 February 2020

14 February 2020

Dear Committee,

Thank you once again for your attention to our petition and the thorough investigation you have taken into the need for our petition. We are pleased to hear from the Minister on the robustness of the preparation she and her team are undertaking to look into A Clean Air Act for Wales, and we are pleased to be able to work alongside her officials to look into what will go into the White Paper.

However, we do feel that whilst robust legislation is the best way forward, there is a huge risk in not bringing forth a Clean Air Act before the end of the Assembly Term. It cannot be assumed that a new government would continue with the White Paper, and even at the earliest point in the Sixth Assembly, no Act would be on the statute books before the beginning of 2022.

Adoption of WHO guidelines is a stepping-stone to achieving far better air quality. In England, through the Environment Bill, the Healthy Air Campaign is asking for WHO limits to be met by 2030; it is recognised that it is not as simple as passing legislation to comply with limits, but what legislation will bring is a method for all stakeholders to work towards compliance. However, in order to do this, the legislative framework must be in place to encourage change.

We also recognise that there are concerns about the adoption of WHO limits which are focused on health outcomes. The Government has stated clearly in the Senedd and in their Clean Air Plan that the limits do not consider the technical feasibility or the economic, political and social aspects of the achievement of these levels, however, we do not feel that these are reasons to reject WHO guidelines; in fact, it is perhaps an argument for enshrining the guidelines in Welsh Law. Laws are used to encourage as well as enforce; without limits, industry has little reason to make changes, and surely the population living in and around areas of industry deserve the chance to breathe clean air as much as anyone else in Wales.

We urge the committee to bring this petition to the attention of the whole Assembly; the most recent opposition debate of this important subject unfortunately took place one day before the receipt of this letter, and I am sure that Members would wish to participate in this debate.

I would be happy to answer any questions the Committee has.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Emma Henwood'.

Emma Henwood  
Policy and Public Affairs Manager  
BHF Cymru