



Launch of 'Trade Union Clean Air Network' (TUCAN) Event International Transport Workers Federation - 6th. February 2019

Air Pollution is a trade union issue and decent work means decent air but workers exposed to polluted air at work and in society but there is little acknowledgement of this in most government and LA clean air policies. Trade unions must be take a leading part in the debate on this issue and the adoption of a charter will provide a set of demands which unions can prioritise in campaigns at local, regional, national and international level (1).

At the introduction it was made clear that the CWU have major concerns over air pollution, primarily because we have many thousands of postal staff and telecom engineers who are out on the street for several hours as part of their normal working day. We do understand our environmental footprint though; BT has around 6,800 buildings, RGM similar, whilst both have huge fleets of vehicles on the road 24/7.

Fifty thousand people die each year from health issues, many preventable and we need collective solutions, several unions have clean air policies but we need to bring things together and present a united lobby to maximise (and lead) the issue. It is disappointing that when international targets were set, the government passed them down to LA's whilst taking money and resources off them. We also need to introduce indoor air targets as this is not included in legislation but many workers get through polluted air into their workplace which draws unfiltered air into it.



There are small kits available to measure air quality and these can build evidence-based arguments on specific workplaces, this is being done by a university on selected taxi cabs in London and the three month trail data will be collated shortly. Unions should be doing similar so we all have statics for the future discussions that we can share to demonstrate the cause to the widest possible audience.

The Government quietly produced its Clean Air Strategy document on 14 January 2019 (2), this is over 100 pages and we have not yet critically reviewed it. In Parliament the draft Environment (Principles and Governance) Bill deals with environmental standards post Brexit and the 25 Year Environment Plan. The HSE deal with workplace exposure limits for use with the COSHH Regs. EH40 and new workplace exposure limits for 31 substances were introduced in 2018 following the 4th. Indicative Occupational Exposure Limit Values Directive; however there are concerns that this needs to include enforcing companies to take and publish air quality measurements.

Organisations represented included

CWU, Unite, TUC, Friends of the Earth, NEU, Labour Research, NAS, BAFWU, UCU, ASLEF, Hazards, GLA, Client Earth, Green Party, BLF and LSE.

Questions for CWU

1. Can TUCAN add the CWU LOGO to documentation?
2. Are there any alterations to the Charter such as – 4 on consultation, should be expanded to a duty to measure and reduce not to just consult; return by 28th. February for collation.
3. Do the CWU want to volunteer / nominate to one of the smaller working parties namely, Policy, Organising and Communications; it is intended for these to report back to larger committee to speed up development of the Charter.

References:

1. D.Joyce. (21 Jan 2019). *CWU LTB 035/2019*. Available: Launch of 'Trade Union Clean Air Network' (TUCAN) Event.
2. DEFRA. (14 January 2019). *HM Government Clean Air Strategy*. Available: <https://bit.ly/2AJ8kNZ>. Last accessed 8 February 2019.
3. DEFRA. (2018). *Draft Environment (Principles and Governance) Bill 2018*. Available: <https://bit.ly/2BxezUm>. Last accessed 8 February 2019.

Derek Maylor 8 February 2019
safety@cwumswl.org