



TUCAN Newsletter

Autumn 2023: No. 5

What is TUCAN?

The **Trade Union Clean Air Network** was established in 2019 by the **Hazards Campaign** and the **Greener Jobs Alliance**.

We provide a source of information and practical support for unions campaigning for better air quality.

With the increasing risks posed by the combination of toxic substances and the impacts of climate change it is vital that the union voice is heard.

If you would like regular updates please contact us via the details at the end of the newsletter.

2023 developments so far...

Workplace and community monitoring

We assisted union reps and community activists in carrying out air pollution measurements at a range of workplaces. For example, in August we carried out monitoring of 2 indoor markets where workers and the public were exposed to pollution levels over **50 times** the WHO standard for PM2.5. We are now working with the local authority to arrange an urgent meeting with the market owners to discuss control measures. If you have concerns about standards where you work, then contact us to seek advice on options for further action.

Training and information

We have provided presentations at union and community events around the UK. Hazards Campaign runs workshops and supports safety reps on monitoring and action on cleaning the air, including demonstrations of DIY Corsi-Rosenthal filters and regularly updates detailed resource on 'Cleaning the air at work' bit.ly/45oEEBw. On Clean Air Day in June, we hosted an online meeting highlighting the importance of Toxic Use Reduction techniques.

Lobbying for better national and regional standards

There has been an understandable public health focus on transport and outdoor air pollution, but not enough on occupational health and indoor pollution. We have been pushing for much more recognition of this and other organisations are now starting to speak up. In August, scientists at the University of York stressed the need for pollution control in buildings, heating plants and many other industrial sources. ULEZ is just the start and similar scheme needed for buildings, experts warn. bit.ly/47sqjWD.

This follows the latest Chief Medical Officer Report from Chris Whitty, that states that 'indoor air pollution is becoming an increasing proportion of the overall problem as outdoor air pollution improves.'

The ULEZ controversy

Measures to reduce traffic pollution have been in the political spotlight because of the London zone extension in August. We condemn the Governments attempts to undermine efforts to clean up the air in London and elsewhere. TUCAN has always argued that changes need to be introduced in a just way but that does not detract from the need to get highly polluting vehicles off the streets. It is a failure of central government that insufficient support is being provided to local and regional authorities to ensure that low paid workers and other vulnerable groups are not penalised.

Workers rights

TUCAN continues to make the case for improving legal rights. In Wales we were disappointed that the *Clean Air Wales Bill White Paper* proposal for statutory guidance on 'empowering workforces to tackle air pollution' has been dropped. We need to use the period between now and the next election to make the case for statutory duties and rights.

Local authorities

TUCAN supporters have called for engagement in policy developments in the air quality plans of councils. For example, in the LB Wandsworth, we were represented on the *Oversight Panel* of the *Air Pollution Citizens Assembly*. We provided a presentation to the assembly members and this is reflected in the final report published in May. One of the recommendations calls for Wandsworth to '*acknowledge air pollution in businesses as a workers rights issue and collaborate with relevant organisations for change.*'

Standards update

The British Standards Institute has published a new '*Code of Practice*' for '*Health and well-being and indoor environmental quality in buildings*' that aligns to the World Health Organisation's new air quality guidelines for all non-domestic buildings. The BSI has included all the key air pollutants - particulate matter (PM2.5 and PM10), nitrogen dioxide (NO2), carbon monoxide (CO), ozone (O3), formaldehyde etc. bit.ly/45oH3w0

Research

TUCAN has circulated reports that increasingly highlight the dangers of toxic substances and their impact on health. In June the *National Centre for Atmospheric Science* issued a report further highlighting the scale of the problem. Five factors affecting future air pollution in the UK - NCAS bit.ly/3QB48HG

One of the factors is '*Indoor air quality is a growing part of the problem for health. As a nation, we spend nearly 90% of our time indoors on average – yet our understanding of indoor air pollutants, and how to reduce exposure to them, is highly uncertain compared to our understanding of outdoor pollution.*'



TUCAN Resources

We have published a range of resources that are hosted on the GJA web site greenerjobsalliance.co.uk/air-pollution including:

Newsletters

Helping you to keep up to date with trade union action on air pollution.

Find all of our newsletters here:
bit.ly/45BfJLj

Courses

Why not try our free online course, *'Air quality a trade union issue'*.

Access our courses here:
bit.ly/3DZBEQn

Air pollution - All in a day's work

The TUCAN presentation, *'Air pollution - all in days work'* is available here: bit.ly/3s7F6FY

TUCAN Charter

This sets out 6 demands on the Government and has been signed by 13 trade unions: bit.ly/4430I3H

TUCAN Guidance for union reps

Guidance on Air Pollution for Union Reps: bit.ly/3Oz7atl

Contact Us

If you are interested in receiving updates then join our mailing list. To register contact Janet Newsham at janet@gmhazards.org.uk

Photo: The GJA server team raising money for TUCAN at Glastonbury Festival in June 2023