

# We need to talk about air pollution



*“The quality of food and water that people consume is highly regulated in many countries, and there is no need for individuals to check the quality, nor is this their responsibility. By contrast, the quality of indoor air, which most people breathe for more than 90% of their lives, is not subject to assessment” (Science Journal, July 2024)*

**Lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic for ventilation & indoor air quality** [www.science.org/doi/10.1126/science.adp2241](https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/science.adp2241)

The **Trade Union Clean Air Network (TUCAN)** is a coalition of trade unions, the **Hazards Campaign** and the **Greener Jobs Alliance**, set up to challenge this.

Air pollution has been in the news, but the focus has mainly been on outdoor air and public health.

To address this, we have:

1. Published a Worker’s Guide to action on indoor workplace air pollution,
2. Distributed a film ‘**Air Pollution: All in a day’s work**’  
TUCAN [greenerjobsalliance.co.uk/air-pollution/](https://greenerjobsalliance.co.uk/air-pollution/)

This leaflet summarises our third project – a briefing paper aimed at politicians and others to campaign for change.

TUCAN has outlined 20 policy asks.  
**Scan the QR code to access the paper.**



Proposed measures include:

### **Updating the law**

Regulations made under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 must be amended to include climate risks for workers. The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regs 1992 and the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regs 2002, need to include enforceable higher health-based standards and duties on employers to conduct and act on indoor air pollution occupational risk assessments.

### **Mayoral, Regional and Local Authorities**

Authorities must be placed under a duty to show how they have addressed indoor air pollution both for workplaces and buildings under their control. Indoor air pollution must also be included in climate adaptation/resilience strategies.

### **Enforcement bodies**

The HSE and Local Authorities who have responsibility for monitoring and enforcing indoor air pollution standards must be adequately resourced to engage effectively with employers, unions, and community organisations. The HSE and local authorities have lost over 50% of funding over the last decade.

### **Worker's rights**

People exposed to the risks are entitled to be consulted on how they are controlled. Unions must be given new legal rights on air pollution and other climate related threats.

### **Research and planning bodies**

Research organisations should develop the evidence that will support government, local authorities and businesses to adopt science-based UK standards for indoor air quality, to reduce emissions, exposure and harms.

### **Build a campaign**

Lobbying the Government and other institutions is only one part of getting the changes we need. Action in workplaces by Union Safety Reps, and communities, will be needed to make sure indoor occupational air pollution becomes part of the clean air conversation.

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