

AQS 04a Professor Enda Hayes on behalf of staff at the Air Quality Management Resource Centre, University of the West of England

Senedd Cymru | Welsh Parliament

Pwyllgor Newid Hinsawdd, yr Amgylchedd a Seilwaith | Climate Change, Environment, and Infrastructure Committee

Bil yr Amgylchedd (Ansawdd Aer a Seinweddau) (Cymru) | The Environment (Air Quality and Soundscapes) (Wales) Bill

Gwybodaeth ychwanegol gan Yr Athro Enda Hayes | Additional evidence from Professor Enda Hayes

I have reviewed the evidence put forward by the Cross Part Group on the Active Travel Act and I support their submission that the Bill is a suitable legislative vehicle to strengthen and promote active travel. We use a simple equation to calculate air quality emissions: Emissions = Emission Factor x Activity. Air quality management solutions over the last two decades have been focussed on the “Emission Factor” side of the equation which results in policy often being orientated towards technical solutions (e.g. cleaner vehicles and fuel). This has resulted in emission reductions but to get beyond compliance with air quality standards and maximise public health gains, as I believe is the ambition of this Bill, then greater powers need to be given to the “Activity” side of the equation and to encourage modal shift from private vehicles to active travel resulting in less cars and less mile travelled (i.e. less activity resulting in pollution).

Regarding Section 8 (promote awareness), I have revisited at the Bill and the Explanatory Memorandum. As I stated in my evidence, my worry is that the wording of the Bill is quite passive and uni-directional, consequently compliance with the Bill as it currently stands may be limited to putting information on websites and promoting occasional events such as the National Clean Air Day. We already do this, and it is proven to have a limited impact on awareness and action. I would like to offer evidence of some work that we did for the Scottish Government back in 2020 for a report called “Cleaner Air for Scotland – air quality public attitudes and behaviour”. Within it we provided a 15-point plan for a public engagement strategy on air pollution. Based on our evidence review, we believe that this creates a more inclusive approach to public engagement and a greater impact in encouraging behaviour change. I am not an expert on how to word legislation, but I would like to see a more proactive wording within the Bill that encourages greater public participation and as a consequence, greater public

ownership of the problem and the solutions. I think this is supported and illustrated in the 15-point plan:

1. Consider a holistic approach that reflects citizens' lived experiences rather than focusing exclusively on air quality.
 2. Use a range of pre-piloted engagement approaches, informed by communications and subject experts.
 3. Ensure engagement approaches are inclusive of all sectors of society and appropriately communicated.
 4. Target specific groups separately, e.g. vulnerable groups, user groups.
 5. Gain support from and include a range of actors, e.g. national and local government, public health agencies, public transport providers, businesses and schools.
 6. Research the affected communities and actively engage with them to understand the socio-cultural contexts and complexities of their needs.
 7. Co-create solutions that work for the affected communities, through citizens' panels, and 'living labs', ensuring participants are demographically representative.
 8. Support citizen-led engagement events and activities, e.g. community / citizen science projects.
 9. Ensure promoted behavioural changes are easier, more convenient and preferably cheaper than the status quo.
 10. Raise awareness responsibly, ensuring that risk perceptions and data interpretation are managed and achievable behavioural responses are provided.
 11. Focus communication on health impacts, rather than concentrations or emissions.
 12. Use change agents, influencers and middle actors to help raise awareness and promote behaviour change to affect normative behaviours.
 13. Use social media to spread awareness through wider social connections and families.
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14. Plan longitudinal monitoring and evaluation, coupled with citizen feedback, into the public engagement design.
15. Ensure materials and evaluation are made available to benefit other public engagement strategies.