

# Trade Union Clean Air Network Charter

**Trade Unions need a response to what has been described as a public health emergency.** Over 40,000 people die each year in the UK where the air that they breathe is a major contributory factor. A significant cause is pollution arising from work and travel to work. It is an occupational health issue that employers take little responsibility for. There is very little recognition of this in national and local authority strategies. This charter provides a framework for unions to campaign for the health and environmental concerns of workers.

1. **New Clean Air Act** – We support legislation that enshrines the right to breathe clean air into domestic law. It should set new, more stringent legal limits for ambient air quality, which reflect WHO guidelines. There should be a recognition within it of air pollution as an occupational health issue but with the impact felt from birth, with air pollution stunting the growth of babies and children.
2. **Establish a new Environmental Protection Agency** – The legislation needs to be backed up by a watchdog body that has the teeth to take public bodies and employers to court. In relation to membership there should be places allocated to representatives of the trade union movement.
3. **Update Health and Safety Law** - The COSHH Regulations should be updated to reflect new research on indoor and outdoor air pollution. Workplace Exposure Limits should place duties on employers to monitor and adopt control measures for diesel and other toxic emissions. Risk assessment should include environmental impacts caused by or related to work, with an obligation to present strategies for minimising and eradicating pollutants within the workplace and in the wider community.
4. **Consult with the workforce** – Air quality measures for indoor and outdoor occupational air pollution must be subject to the consultation requirements of the SRSC Regulations. They should cover both employees and the needs of vulnerable occupants of buildings, including in particular children, considered.
5. **Skills, Training and information** –. Employers should be required to raise awareness and support workforce training on risks and control measures. Workers may need access to independent advice on exposure levels.
6. **Protecting jobs** – Government and employer clean air strategies will have implications for jobs and employment. The application of Just Transition principles must be adopted to ensure positive impacts for workers. Full equality impact assessments, including sex, race and class, must be implemented to ensure positive and fair impacts for workers.
7. **Rapid expansion of clean, inexpensive public transport systems** – Cleaning up air in the UK will require significant expenditure. It is crucial that those least able to afford it are not expected to pick up the bill. Taxation policy must require fossil fuel companies to subsidise measures for less polluting forms of energy and transport.