

## BWTUC Press Statement

### LB Wandsworth still failing on air quality

***“Air pollution in Wandsworth is still at dangerous levels. The borough is one of the 278 local authorities where air quality targets have not been met” says Graham Petersen from Battersea and Wandsworth Trades Union Council.***

New government statistics show that there has been an increase in the number of local authorities missing their targets. This week it emerged that the Government is being taken to the courts yet again by Client Earth.<sup>1</sup> The previous legal action forced the Government to produce a new air quality plan in July, 2017. BWTUC was one of many organisations to point out that the plan was totally inadequate to deal with the scale of the public health emergency that we face. The Government spent £370,000 of taxpayer’s money fighting the case. Money that could have been used to fight air pollution.

It comes off the back of a poll in September that shows that nearly half of Londoners feel that poor air quality has had a negative impact on their health.<sup>2</sup> Last month it emerged that as well as illegal levels of diesel pollution, every person in the capital is breathing air that exceeds global guidelines for dangerous tiny toxic particles known as PM2.5.

Graham Petersen states “BWTUC calls upon Wandsworth Council to do far more to alert residents of these dangers. There are 6 monitoring stations in the borough. 4 of them show that currently people working or living near these areas are exposed to dangerous levels of pollution<sup>3</sup>. “The council need to be much more vocal on this issue. They need to add their voice to the growing demands for the government to show leadership and not pass the buck on something that requires strong national interventions. We want the council to go on record to say that the Government’s Air Quality Plan is inadequate.”

In Tooting High St levels of nitrogen dioxide have been consistently over the legal levels according to the council’s own monitoring station. This has been confirmed by BWTUCs own tests. BWTUC and the Greener Jobs Alliance are determined to shine a light on this, which is why we have funded testing across Wandsworth with London Sustainability Exchange. The annualised results of our citizen science monitoring indicate levels can be as high as over 3 times the legal limit right outside the Town Hall!

We also believe that employers need to do far more to reduce emissions. Air pollution is an occupational health issue and that is why we are organising regional training courses around the country with the Hazards Campaign, starting with Manchester on December 1st.<sup>2</sup>

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#### Notes to editors

<sup>1</sup> Client Earth launches new legal action <https://www.clientearth.org/clientearth-launches-new-air-pollution-legal-action/>

<sup>2</sup> Poll carried out by London Councils in September, 2017 <http://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/our-key-themes/environment/air-quality-london/air-quality-research>

<sup>3</sup> 2017 statistics for LB Wandsworth monitoring [http://www.londonair.org.uk/london/asp/publicstats.asp?region=0&site=&bulletin=hourly&la\\_id=32&statyear=2017&postcode=&MapType=Google&VenueCode=](http://www.londonair.org.uk/london/asp/publicstats.asp?region=0&site=&bulletin=hourly&la_id=32&statyear=2017&postcode=&MapType=Google&VenueCode=)

<sup>4</sup> Greener Jobs Alliance [http://www.greenerjobsalliance.co.uk/?page\\_id=31](http://www.greenerjobsalliance.co.uk/?page_id=31)