Clean Air Day – June 15th

Clean up our air to look after your mind this Clean Air Day

Breathing clean air at work should be a human right, but many workers are breathing toxic, unsafe air in their working environment and not everyone knows just how unsafe and unhealthy it is. This year TUCAN wants to get the message out to workers everywhere and are recommending some actions for trade union branches, workplace committees and individuals can do:

1. **Collective actions to be taken by your trade union branch or workplace committee:**
   - Audit your workplace on ventilation – each area should be audited and documented on the activity, occupancy and length of time that it is occupied, how it is ventilated and if mechanical ventilation/air filtration units are used, when they were last maintained and any action needed to be taken including CO2 monitoring and purchasing more units. (https://static1.squarespace.com/static/627ceb426c6b961170bb23af/t/63ed2bd5fdb11a75caa523de/1676487637837/Covid-Safety-Pledge-Action-Checklist.pdf)
   - Carry out a clean air inspection. Inspect the workplace for obvious signs about dust and dirt or unhealthy working practices for example in the construction or engineering sector.
   - Monitor air pollution across the entire workplace either purchasing or using borrowed equipment (monitor inside and outside the workplace buildings)
   - Check the local air pollution levels for your workplace and post your findings on social media using #CleanAirDay and #TUCAN hashtags https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/forecasting/index
   - Circulate the chemical survey to all members and encourage them to complete it https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/6C6WWW6
   - most Local Authorities have Air quality action plans which include air monitoring and **reps should go onto their council websites to find out what was happening in their workplace area already**. i.e. Preston Council air quality action can be found at https://www.preston.gov.uk/article/1015/Air-quality

- Check out information that has been circulated:

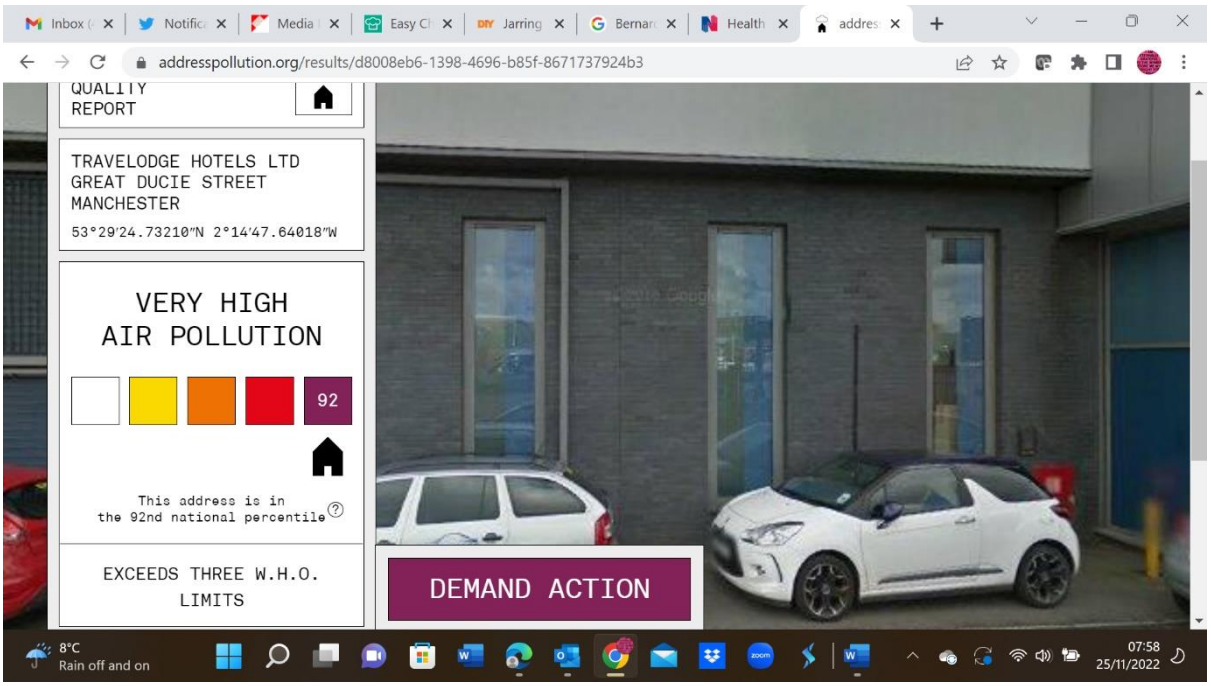
https://www.hazards.org/workandhealth/airforce.htm

2. Individual Actions:

- Check the local air pollution levels for where you live or where your children go to school and post your findings on social media using #CleanAirDay and #TUCAN hashtags https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/forecasting/index
- Check out your council's website on clean air plans / climate action plans to find out what is happening in your Local Authority
- Check out any local campaigns that would impact on air pollution like plans to build local incinerators.

Case Study of action to take:

Try and encourage reps to take up the issue in their workplace If you go onto https://addresspollution.org/ and put your postcode in, you will get a nice picture of your house along with the outdoor airpollution level. I did this for Manchester City Campus but the address for the college doesn't come up – probably because it is new. But the travel lodge on the same road does and this is what it says:



But it is a bit obvious that this would be the case as it is situated in the middle of a busy city centre road junction!

It further says:

LEVELS & HEALTH EFFECTS
Pollutant one: PM2.5

At this address, the annual average of the pollutant PM2.5 is 11.95mcg/m3. The World Health Organization limit is 5mcg/m3.

This study shows 19.9% of strokes were attributed to exposure (for a year or more) of PM2.5 concentrations exceeding 10mcg/m3.

PM2.5 can also cause asthma, jeopardize lung functions and promote cancer.

Pollutant two: PM10

The reading for PM10 at this address is 18.46mcg/m3. The limit is 15mcg/m3.

Cardiovascular mortality increases by 0.76% and respiratory mortality by 0.58% for every 10mcg/m3 increase of PM10.

PM10 can cause wheezing, bronchitis and reduce lung development.

Pollutant three: NO2

The reading for N02 at this address is 32.89mcg/m3. The limit is 10mcg/m3.

Exposure (for a year or more) to 30mcg leads to a 5.5% increased risk of disease related mortality.

So what is important for all the staff and students, is what the indoor air quality is like? You should ask if the employer is monitoring it. There are quite reasonably priced monitors for less than £100 that measure a lot of the pollutants. GM have some equipment if you can get agreement to do some indoor monitoring that you could borrow.
I have also set up a website which you can access from this QR code (just hold your smart phone camera on it and press the address that comes up) There is a case study at GIST that you could look at, also lots of information on air-pollutants. It might be good to do a case study on your workplace. Is there an issue where the workplace has been built? Is it a new build? Was there any consideration to the air pollution that staff are exposed to? No one seems to bother where workplaces, colleges, schools etc are put and the pollution around them. There is more discussion about people walking or taking bike rides rather than what they are breathing when they do.