



The Mayor of Bristol
Bristol City Hall
College Green
Bristol
BS1 5TR

12 August 2019

Dear Mayor Rees

Re: Bristol's young lungs need bold action to tackle illegal and harmful air pollution

We are writing to you as parents, carers, medical and education professionals concerned about the public health crisis caused by our city's illegal levels of air pollution to say that Bristol's most vulnerable citizens cannot wait until 2028 to breathe clean air.

We believe that illegal and harmful levels of air pollution are one of the most important issues facing you as Mayor. Bristol's toxic air means children growing up in our city are not being given the best start in life. Air pollution affects children even before they are born and is linked to premature births and low birth weights. As they grow up it can cause asthma attacks, increasing the risk of hospitalisation or worse, and stunt their lung growth leading to long-term health problems. Some studies even suggest that dirty air can affect their ability to learn.

This is not something that our children should have to put up with as an inevitable part of living in a city, particularly one that takes pride in having been a European Green Capital.

It is incomprehensible that a city like Bristol could end up suffering illegal levels of air pollution longer than cities like London or Birmingham. We need you to match the ambition shown by these cities that are prepared to take action on all of the most polluting vehicles - from cars through to lorries.

Research, including studies by the University of the West of England, has consistently shown that people from low income backgrounds suffer the most from air pollution while at the same time often being the ones who contribute the least to the problem. So, in addition to more ambitious plans to protect people's health, we need you to work with the UK Government to make sure that they have help and support to move onto cleaner forms of transport. It should not be a case of having to choose between one or the other.

We are also disappointed not only by the proposals that you have put forward for consultation but by the lack of information that you have provided. This is a serious public health crisis that requires ambition and transparency so we can trust that you are doing the best for our city.

We, therefore, urge you to be bold for the sake of our health and our children and bring forward measures that will help our children breathe cleaner air now, not in 10 years' time. This could include stricter restrictions on the most polluting vehicles, including cars. You have previously considered bigger and better Clean Air Zones, for example, but have then failed to ask the people for our view on these more ambitious options.

We want you to stand up for those on low incomes, children and other vulnerable members of our communities, who are suffering the most from Bristol's dirty air, by getting to grips with the problem, not finding excuses to water proposals down. The air quality plan that you have been asked to develop by the UK Government is an opportunity that you can't afford to waste if you are to show real leadership on this issue.

Bristol is a world class city and it deserves world class policies that will protect our health and our environment. Please rethink your proposals and stand up for the health of our young people in Bristol.

Yours sincerely,

Signed by the following parents/carers, grandparents and health and education professionals living and working in Bristol



The Clean Air Parents' Network is supported by the British Lung Foundation and ClientEarth. We are calling on all levels of government to take action to tackle illegal and harmful levels of air pollution to protect the health of people across the UK www.cleanairparents.org.uk