

Press release

Embargo: 00.01am, Monday 7 October

New business coalition joins Defra and campaigners to clean up air pollution

- **For the first time businesses are coming together to speed up progress on air pollution**
- **Environment Minister Rebecca Pow calls for more businesses to join coalition**
- **Leap in numbers of public who want clean air to be a UK priority**
- **More than a third of the public want businesses to enable home working as a way of tackling air pollution**

The UK's first business coalition dedicated to tackling air pollution is launched today.

Eight major businesses (Philips, Uber, Engie, Octopus Electric Vehicles, Blueair, Ricardo, Canary Wharf Group and BP Chargemaster) have joined forces with the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and air pollution campaigners Global Action Plan to create the Business Clean Air Taskforce (BCAT).

The BCAT's mission is to tackle air pollution by speeding up the adoption of the many already existing solutions.

BCAT, which is also backed by the UK's Clean Air Champion Professor Stephen Holgate, is calling for more like-minded businesses to join the initiative.

The taskforce will include Defra officials and aims to help achieve targets set out in the government's 2019 Clean Air Strategy. It comes as new polling shows increasing public concern about air pollution, and what people think businesses can do about the problem.

OUR LIVES. OUR PLANET.

201 Borough High Street, London, SE1 1JA, 0203 817 7636
Charity registered in England and Wales No. 1026148, in Scotland No. SC041260
Registered company in England and Wales No. 2838296, VAT No. 625 994 009

According to Opinium polling commissioned by Global Action Plan, 52% of people think action on air quality is now a major priority for the UK, leaping from just 33% six months previously.

According to the polling, top actions that respondents thought businesses should focus on to improve air quality are:

- enabling employees to work from home (34%)
- improving the air quality in spaces they run, such as offices or shops (30%)
- supporting employees to use public transport more (29%). [1]

Environment Minister Rebecca Pow says:

“We know the impact that air pollution has on communities across the UK, which is why, as we set out in the Clean Air Strategy, the government and all parts of society need to come together to tackle this problem.

“The Business Clean Air Taskforce sets an excellent example of businesses, campaigners, and government working collaboratively to deliver clean air for the future, and I hope that more like-minded businesses will be encouraged to sign up to do their bit to continue to improve air quality across the UK.”

Says Chris Large, Senior Partner at Global Action Plan:

“Businesses already provide many of the solutions to our air pollution problem. We just need to choose to use them. This taskforce will help more people to do the things that will cut air pollution: drive less, switch to electric vehicles and reduce activity that makes pollution inside our homes.”

“The public are increasingly concerned about air pollution, and the founder members of the BCAT are responding by saying, ‘We will help to make the air in your workplaces, homes and communities healthier to breathe.’”

Professor Stephen Holgate, Medical Research Council Clinical Professor at the University of Southampton and the UK's first Clean Air Champion, will advise on BCAT initiatives.

Professor Holgate says:

“To say we are in the middle of a major air pollution crisis is no exaggeration. Pollution is killing tens of thousands of people in the UK each year, it causes heart and lung diseases, and is linked to low birth weight and children’s lung development.

“This coalition that combines the capabilities of business, government and the third sector is exciting and has great potential to make a real difference to the air we all breathe.”

The first BCAT project will call on employers to reduce unnecessary vehicle miles, promote and enable more take-up of electric vehicles, and improve indoor air quality across the country.

If you are a business who wants to get involved with BCAT, please email Charlotte West, Strategic Account Director at:

info@globalactionplan.org.uk

Note to editors

Further press information

For more details about BCAT, interviews and recent polling on air pollution, contact Dominic Murphy on 07943 498239; dominic.murphy@globalactionplan.org.uk

For more information on air pollution, including how to avoid it indoors and outdoors, see cleanairhub.org.uk

More about BCAT

BCAT has four main aims. It aims to:

1. **Set standards** for business action on air pollution
2. **Produce roadmaps and guidance** to help business know what they should be doing to transition us to a low pollution economy
3. **Foster collaborative action** between businesses that aims to shift us to a cleaner air society
4. **Communicate a positive vision** for business involvement in cleaning up our air to government, industry and the public.

About Global Action Plan

Global Action Plan is a charity that's working for a green and thriving planet. We do this by making connections between what's good for people and good for the planet. We're also the people behind the multi-award-winning Clean Air Day, the UK's largest air pollution campaign.

About the Clean Air Strategy

- The Clean Air Strategy was launched by the government in January 2019. It is the most ambitious air quality strategy in a generation and aims to halve the harm to human health from air pollution in the UK by 2030.
- The action set out in the Clean Air Strategy will improve air quality, reduce the incidence of serious illness, improving quality of life for tens of thousands of people, and reduce the costs of air pollution to society by an estimated £1.7 billion every year by 2020, rising to £5.3 billion every year from 2030.
- Key parts of the strategy will soon be given legal force by the Environment Bill.
- The Clean Air Strategy can be found on the Government website.

[1] About the Clean Air Public Insights Tracker (CAPIT)

CAPIT is a regular UK-wide survey of public attitudes, knowledge and action related to air quality. Based on 2,000 adult respondents and conducted by Global Action Plan partner Opinium, CAPIT poses a regular set of questions, repeated each quarter, to track changes over time. Each quarter, the data and summary report is made available for free on the Global Action Plan website.

ENDS