



Climate and Nature Bill Parliamentary Briefing

Issued: 19/04/2024



Headline

The purpose of this briefing is to:

- Highlight CIEH's support for the Climate and Nature Bill as it enters its second reading on May 17th, showcasing the intersections between the bill's recommendations and our manifesto policy asks.
- Raise awareness of the essential contribution of environmental health professions to achieve the bill's targets and suggest specific considerations to implement upon passage.

CIEH's Support for the Climate and Nature Bill

CIEH are seeking to join over 1,300 organisations, politicians, and scientists in support of the Climate and Nature Bill. This includes over 130 MPs, 350 local councils and 600 organisations. As one of the world's leading environmental and public health organisations, a key part of our work is to advocate and campaign on key environmental health issues and we fully recognise the threats and challenges that climate change presents

Key Points

- *The climate emergency is the single greatest risk to environmental and public health and requires urgent and ambitious action.*

The climate emergency is an unprecedented issue, of utmost importance to environmental health professionals as the long-standing guardians of public health. However, current climate policies and subsequent action haven't gone far enough.

Despite attaining overall progress in reduction GHG emissions by 53% including 5.4% in 2023¹, this has largely been unrelated to direct climate action and the UK remains projected to fail meet 2030 net zero targets to reduce GHG emissions by at least 68%².

The economic case for rapid action upon net zero is clear. Accelerated efforts would safeguard the economy against climate risks³, create over a 1.8 million new jobs⁴ and tackle

¹ Department for Net Zero, Energy and Security, 2023 UK greenhouse gas emissions, provisional figures, Source: [2023 UK greenhouse gas emissions, provisional figures \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

² CCC assessment of recent announcements and developments on Net Zero, Source: <https://www.theccc.org.uk/2023/10/12/ccc-assessment-of-recent-announcements-and-developments-on-net-zero/>

³ World Economic Forum, The Global Risks Report 2024, Source: [WEF The Global Risks Report 2024.pdf \(weforum.org\)](https://www.weforum.org/reports/global-risks-report-2024)

⁴ Local Government Association, Local green jobs – accelerating a sustainable economic recovery, Source: [Local-green-jobs-accelerating-a-sustainable-economic-recovery final-1.pdf \(gemserv.com\)](https://www.local.gov.uk/media/10000000/Local-green-jobs-accelerating-a-sustainable-economic-recovery-final-1.pdf)



levelling up priorities through addressing health inequalities⁵, all at a cost of less than 1% of GDP⁶. The increased risks associated with failing to do so are extensive, covering health and recreation, air quality, flood alleviation and biodiversity⁵.

The CAN Bill provides the UK the crucial opportunity to become a world leader in the fight against the climate emergency.

- *The Climate and Nature Bill aligns with CIEH's continuous calls for an ambitious and integrated approach to climate adaptation and mitigation, a key strategic objective of our Environmental Protection Advisory Panel.*

CIEH have continued to advocate for new legislation to establish an overarching goal to consider climate change, sustainability, and carbon reduction as part of all central and local government decisions. CIEH support the viewpoint that there should be UK-wide measures to reduce emissions.

CIEH has continuously advocated for an integrated approach to climate adaptation and mitigation, a key strategic objective of our Environmental Protection Advisory Panel. When considered in isolation, climate policies risk causing unintended negative consequences to environmental health. Hydroelectric power has the potential to impact water quality and wetland habitats, and low carbon hydrogen strategies often involve complex trade-offs for air quality⁷⁸.

Bringing environmental health perspectives to the forefront of the Climate and Nature Bill.

CIEH recommend the following considerations to implement within the Climate and Nature Act as it develops.

- 1. For key sponsors to work closely with the CIEH and other key environmental and public health stakeholders, to inform the details of the Climate and Nature Act.**

Environmental health is uniquely positioned to tackle the integrated extent of the climate emergency and our members serve as an essential part of the infrastructure necessary to address environmental and health-related targets laid out in this bill, from enforcing legislation to regulating the environmental permitting regime which regulates industrial emissions. Therefore, the voice of environmental health will be critical to flesh out the further details within the Climate and Nature Act.

⁵ UK 100, Yes we CANZ, Source: [UK100 | Publications | Yes we CANZ! | UK100](#)

⁶ Climate Change Committee, The Sixth Carbon Budget, Source: [The-Sixth-Carbon-Budget-The-UKs-path-to-Net-Zero.pdf \(theccc.org.uk\)](#)

⁷ The Royal Society, Effects of net-zero policies and climate change on air quality. Source: [Effects of Net Zero Policies and Climate Change on Air Quality \(royalsociety.org\)](#)

⁸ Health Effects of Climate Change (HECC) in the UK: 2023 report, Chapter 14. Net zero: health impacts of policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, Source: [HECC 2023 report chapter 14. Net zero: health impacts of policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)



2. For the Climate and Nature Strategy to explicitly include ambitious air quality targets and a clear coordinated approach for reducing all major pollutants to limit global heating to 1.5°C.

Reducing the UK's emissions of carbon dioxide, methane, and other greenhouse gases, at rates consistent with the last chance of limiting global heating to 1.5°C requires adopting more ambitious air quality targets.

Clean air and net-zero GHG emissions are twin goals. Air quality remains one of the greatest risks to public health, contributing to over 40,000 deaths⁹ and costing the UK economy £22.6 billion every year¹⁰. While the CAN bill will enhance the UK's target of net zero GHGs, there remains no equivalent pathway of air pollutant emission targets.

CIEH have therefore argued that government must adopt more ambitious air quality targets, particularly concerning PM2.5 and NO2 emissions, including a target of 10µg/m³ PM2.5 by 2030, aligning with the Clean Air Bill¹¹. Beyond safeguarding public health, the CBI estimates a £1.6 billion annual economic benefit to the UK from meeting the World Health Organisation's guidelines¹². In addition, CIEH have called upon the government to instil key measures to tackle air pollution, including regulating the sale and use of domestic solid fuel burners in urban areas where there are on-grid heating alternatives, which remain the second biggest source of small particle air pollution in the UK¹³ and releases more CO₂ per unit of energy than gas¹⁴.

CIEH are lobbying government to introduce a Nitrogen Strategy, and ultimately a clearly coordinated approach to reduce all major pollutants. The current Clean Air Bill has showcased the appetite for this type of action, through calling for NO₂ to be less than or equal to 20 µg/m³ by 2030¹¹.

3. For the Government to work with environmental and public health professionals in the development of the Climate and Nature Strategy, particularly in the transition to 'low carbon' alternatives to meet climate and nature targets.

Environmental health professionals provide an invaluable resource to highlight the best course of action to ensure a smooth transition to the CAN Bill's climate and nature targets,

⁹ Public Health England, Health matters: air pollution, Source: [Health matters: air pollution - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/health-matters/air-pollution)

¹⁰ Royal College of Physicians, Every breath we take: the lifelong impact of air pollution, Source: [Every breath we take: the lifelong impact of air pollution | RCP London](https://www.rcplondon.ac.uk/resources/every-breath-we-take-the-lifelong-impact-of-air-pollution)

¹¹ Clean Air (Human Rights) Bill. Source: <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/58-03/0210/220210.pdf>

¹² As of September 2020.

¹³ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Emissions of air pollutants in the UK – Summary, Source: [Emissions of air pollutants in the UK - Summary - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/444444/Emissions_of_air_pollutants_in_the_UK_-_Summary.pdf)

¹⁴ [Clean Air Night | Global Action Plan \(actionforcleanair.org.uk\)](https://www.actionforcleanair.org.uk/clean-air-night)



that minimises damage and prevents, rather than offsets, the adverse impacts upon the UK ecosystems, food and water availability, and human health. Environmental health professionals' expertise is key in any transition to low carbon alternatives to ensure that any environmental progress does not negatively impact health outcomes.

4. For the Climate and Nature Strategy to include environmental health professionals as expert voices within any Climate & Nature Assembly.

As previously outlined, environmental health professionals are at the forefront of tackling the climate emergency and in particular, will be one of the major sectors who will be affected by the proposed measures.

Importantly, Environmental health professionals also play a key role as a trusted professional voice. The climate emergency is not just an environmental emergency, it's a public health emergency, and environmental health is critical to communicating the impact and proposed solutions of the CAN bill to both policy makers and the wider public.

How you can help

- Elevate our messaging surrounding the essential contribution of environmental health professionals and the need to implement ambitious air quality targets at the Climate and Nature Bill's second reading.
- Engage constructively with CIEH to discuss the wider role of public health in achieving comprehensive climate mitigation policies.

About the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health

The Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) is the professional body for environmental health representing over 7,000 members in the public, private and third sectors. Building on its rich heritage, CIEH ensures the highest standards of professional competence in its members, in the belief that through environmental health people's health can be improved.

Our members who work around the world, improving lives and demonstrating excellence across all areas of environmental health including food, public health, housing, environmental protection, and health and safety.

For more information on the Climate and Nature Bill, see [here](#).