

A clean bill of health: how councils' environmental protection work improves health

Pollution is a significant factor in ill health – it reduces life expectancy and it perpetuates health inequalities. Councils and their partners play a crucial role in reducing pollution, but further progress is needed to protect communities. A new publication for councillors from LACORS, "A clean bill of health", builds on these points. Evidence shows, for example, that air pollution can shorten a person's life by about 10 years, which is as hazardous as being severely obese or smoking for a lifetime. Research also shows that around 35,000 people in the UK died prematurely in 2005 as a result of exposure to air pollution – comparable to the annual number of deaths obesity contributes to. Chemicals and other pollutants in industrial land can also seriously harm adults, children and unborn babies.

The publication makes the point that tackling pollution should be considered alongside other important local health issues such as reducing smoking, healthy eating and exercise. It summarises, for councillors and other local decision makers, the health effects of pollution and what councils and their partners can do to improve the health of their communities. It also gives examples of councils that have put pollution reduction to improve health into practice and what else can be done. The document is available here:

<http://www.lacors.gov.uk/lacors/ViewDocument.aspx?docID=23824&docType=C>