



Dr Philip Barlow
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Chief Executive
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17th June 2021

Dear Dr Barlow

On behalf of the London Borough of Lewisham, I would like to extend our condolences once again to the family of Ella, our thoughts remain with all of those affected by her tragic death. The inquest into this was a watershed moment for many in public service - from the highest levels of Government, to the Mayor of London and Greater London Authority (GLA), all the way down to the local authority level. The Inquest itself drew to the attention of the country, through fair and accurate media reporting, the health risks of air pollution. Mrs Adoo Kissi-Debrah, a resident of our Borough, has been a dignified, passionate and powerful voice for change and we are confident that all those involved in air quality, public health and health education have learnt important lessons as a result of the Inquest and its conclusions.

You have asked the London Borough of Lewisham to address one of three matters of concern that were raised in your Prevention of Future Deaths Report, focusing on public awareness of the sources of information about national and local pollution levels. The London Borough of Lewisham notes that in your reasons you observed that: "Leaving this as a local issue is clearly not resulting in people accessing relevant information, and it is therefore a concern that needs to be brought to the attention of central government". We agree with and support this observation. However, we are determined to do what we can at a local level to improve awareness for our residents and hopefully set in process a domino effect which may lead to improvements in neighbouring Boroughs, across London and nationally.

With this in mind, I can confirm that the key actions that we have and are taking on the issue of public awareness are as follows:

- **An expansion of monitoring capacity:** at the time of Ella's tragic death there were diffusion tubes monitoring NO₂ levels at 47 sites and 4 automatic monitoring stations measuring, variously NO₂, PM₁₀ and SO₂ levels. The most significant addition shortly after Ella's death was the creation of the Honor Oak Park 'supersite' automatic monitoring station which opened on 1 January 2019 and which monitors PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}. Further, by the end of 2020 the number of diffusion tube sites more than doubled to 106. Since the Inquest, capacity has grown even further and we are introducing important new technology as we are

in the process of adding several new monitors to monitor PM_{2.5}, particularly in areas of high traffic. Due to technological advances, the measurement of PM_{2.5} no longer requires a large automatic monitoring station and more flexible monitors can now be placed around the Borough. These will feed into a London wide network of sensors providing greater data and coverage and will help to contribute to improved public awareness of air pollution levels across the capital. We are also in the process of adding yet more diffusion tubes, with up to another 75 monitors in total (both diffusion tubes and the new PM_{2.5} monitors) planned for installation by October this year.

- **WHO-specific reporting:** Like the Coroner and Ella's family (and, we understand, the Mayor of London), we are concerned about the discrepancy between the national limits which are set by central Government and the WHO guidelines. Whilst we understand that central Government has been asked to address this as a separate concern, as part of our commitment to provide additional and meaningful information around air quality levels, the London Borough of Lewisham will commit to identifying the WHO recommended levels alongside the current UK limits when publishing air quality data. We hope that this draws to greater public attention the difference between the limits, acts as a catalyst for other local authorities to do the same, and puts pressure on central government to take a more ambitious approach to limit values. This change in reporting will commence in documents and communication from 1st July 2021.
- **Raising awareness:** As the London Borough of Lewisham highlighted during the Inquest, the raising of awareness of air quality issues has improved significantly since Ella's death. This is partly as a result of the transfer of the public health functions from the NHS to the Borough in April 2013, which led to a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for Air Quality in 2018, which will be refreshed again in 2022 (and which has a target audience of those who commission, provide or use health, social or children's services in Lewisham). It has also improved due to technology and social media, so that the London Borough of Lewisham is able to promote airTEXT, the Imperial College London Air webpage, the GLA air quality web page/alerts, and even its own air quality App. However, there is more work that can and will be done. Our Head of Communications is currently formulating a plan which will include a multi-media approach: promoting air quality monitoring tools via social media and local advertising; ensuring information about air quality is positioned prominently on the London Borough of Lewisham and South East London Clinical Commissioning Group's websites; and sharing information via social media and our residents' newsletter for Clean Air Day on 17 June 2021.

Finally, the London Borough of Lewisham will continue to work collaboratively and in partnership with the GLA, other local authorities and organisations who are committed to raising awareness of air quality issues. The important collaboration with the GLA includes 'Breathe London' which the Mayor of London has agreed to support until 2024. We have recently been in close discussion with counterparts at the GLA and are eager to support their important work in this field.

I trust that the above has provided an insight into work that has been and is being undertaken to improve public awareness of the sources of information about national and local pollution levels. The London Borough of Lewisham remains committed to continuing to raise these important issues, and maintain this essential dialogue and to see what else can be done at a local level to help address this national, and global, concern.

Yours sincerely,

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Chief Executive
London Borough of Lewisham