Dear xxx,

I am writing to you as I am very concerned about the health impacts of air pollution from wood burning stoves and open fires. I would like to ask you to use all available channels to inform residents of *(insert locality)* about the considerable amount of air pollution emitted when wood and smokeless fuels are burnt, and the subsequent health effects.

Domestic wood burning is a major contributor to local air pollution and even the newest Defra-approved Ecodesign wood burning stoves [emit high levels](https://eeb.org/library/where-theres-fire-theres-smoke-emissions-from-domestic-heating-with-wood/) of particulate matter (PM2.5). According to the [Chief Medical Officer’s 2022 report on air pollution](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1124738/chief-medical-officers-annual-report-air-pollution-dec-2022.pdf), Ecodesign stoves give off 450 times more PM2.5 pollution than a gas boiler.

PM2.5 is one of the most [problematic pollutants](https://www.ippr.org/files/2018-10/1539184665_lethal-but-legal-october18.pdf) across the UK today, and most homes in the UK exceed the limits recommended by the World Health Organization. PM2.5 has been [associated with](https://www.blf.org.uk/sites/default/files/BLF%20Response%20Air%20quality%20using%20cleaner%20fuels%20for%20domestic%20burning.pdf) a range of conditions, including decreased lung development and function, exacerbation of asthma, allergies, COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder), pulmonary fibrosis and an increased risk of lung cancer.

PM2.5 emissions from domestic wood burning [increased by 124 per cent between 2011 and 2021](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/emissions-of-air-pollutants/emissions-of-air-pollutants-in-the-uk-particulate-matter-pm10-and-pm25#major-emission-sources-for-pm10-and-pm25-in-the-uk). With a recent [40% increase in wood burning stove sales](https://www.energylivenews.com/2022/10/03/britons-turn-to-wood-burning-to-tackle-soaring-energy-bills/), it is clear that domestic wood burning emissions will continue to rise, even in smoke control zones. The pollution and health impacts of this are huge: burning in a stove triples indoor air pollution, while burning in an open fire emits even higher levels of PM2.5 into our living rooms and often into our neighbours’ houses too.

We are in the midst of a cost-of-living and energy crisis and burning indoors is often considered a cheaper way of heating. But nobody should need to resort to damaging the health of themselves, their families and their neighbours in order to stay warm.

As a local authority, you have a responsibility to protect public health. I urge you to follow [Oxford City Council](https://www.oxford.gov.uk/news/article/2293/do_you_fuel_good_new_campaign_to_tackle_harmful_emissions_from_domestic_wood_burning), [Lambeth Council](https://www.lambeth.gov.uk/environmental-services/air-quality-pollution/wood-burning-home) and [Hackney Council’s](https://hackney.gov.uk/smoke-control-and-solid-fuel) lead and use all your available channels (including social and print media) to inform and discourage domestic wood burning amongst residents, unless it is their only source of heat. Many people [are simply not aware](https://airqualitynews.com/2020/11/11/the-public-are-unaware-of-the-health-impacts-of-indoor-fires/) what a significant contribution wood burning makes to air pollution and the subsequent impact on respiratory health. I believe your residents need to be advised that any kind of burning results in high local pollution levels, and that when they burn they are polluting both themselves and their neighbours, leading to potentially serious health effects.

There are lots of resources available that might be useful, for example have a look at [Mums for Lungs](https://www.mumsforlungs.org/resources-and-downloads)’ wood burning flyers and the [Doctors + Scientists Against Wood Smoke Pollution](https://woodsmokepollution.org/) website.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

*(Full name and postcode)*