

Emma Hardy MP
Parliamentary Under-Secretary (Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs)



31st October 2025

Dear Emma,

It is exactly one year since myself and my two children met with you in your office at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). I'm sure you will remember the meeting formed part of the settlement of a civil claim brought on behalf of my late daughter Ella's estate, against three Government Departments for breaches of Ella's rights under the Human Rights Act, including her right to life. You read the statement issued on behalf of those Government Departments namely DEFRA, the Department for Transport (DoT) and the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC). You expressed your condolences and thanked me for my continued advocacy for improvements to air quality for everyone in the UK.

I had high hopes after that meeting that the (then) new Labour Government were going to act on improving air quality, where previous Governments had woefully failed. Both you and the Secretary of State at DHSC, Wes Streeting MP when I met him, pledged your commitment to work with me on this issue. Yet, one year on from our meeting there has been no progress from this Labour Government on the biggest environmental health threat to society today.

Let us not forget that the poorest and most marginalised communities bear the brunt of the air pollution burden. They contribute the least to the problem, and yet suffer the devastating health impacts the most. Who is protecting those children?

So, I wanted to write to you today to remind you of our meeting last year, to make you aware that it is 365 days since we sat in your office and talked about the need for this Government to deliver a public health campaign on air pollution. How it is one year since we discussed how secondary legislation could be a quicker route to bring our air quality targets in line with World Health Organisation (WHO) Guidelines. And the urgent necessity for this given the current 'legal limits' for air quality within the UK are far higher than our EU counterparts, and the health-informed guidelines recommended by the WHO.

500 people are dying every week in the UK because of air pollution. It is directly within your gift and your fellow Government Ministers to do something about it. The British public deserve better, everyone has a right to breathe safe, clean air. It is no different from our human right to have access to clean water to drink. When I met you, I thought that you agreed with that sentiment.

I look forward to hearing the progress your government intends to make to protect our health from toxic air pollution, as we discussed one year ago today.

With best wishes,

Rosamund Adoo-Kissi-Debrah CBE
Founder & Director, Ella Roberta Foundation