

Greens call on Defra to improve air pollution alerts



23 January 2017

Jenny Jones, Green member of the House of Lords, has responded to the latest air pollution episode which saw some areas of the country hit Defra's highest warning level [1].

The London Mayor issued a health warning to millions of Londoners – but the government continues to do nothing to alert people except tweet from its specialist @DefraUKAir account.

The official Defra alert page says that there are no alerts at this time, despite pollution being high or very high in the south and east of the country.

Jenny Jones said:

“The Mayor of London clearly cares about the health impacts of bad air on people living and working in the capital, but this government is letting everyone else suffer without any warning what's so ever. When air pollution episodes are capable of triggering an extra 300 deaths as well as hundreds of emergency admissions to hospitals around the country, I think that we have to consider emergency measures to discourage driving, encourage a switch away from diesel and promote less polluting alternatives.

“The government's sole aim is to downplay the whole thing. No press release. It doesn't even make the main DEFRA twitter feed, or use the NHS to reach out to vulnerable people. They want to tick the smallest of boxes by putting out the minimum of information. It is then up to those who are vulnerable to respiratory diseases and heart conditions to find that information. It is criminal neglect by a government that has lost two court cases over its inadequate plans.”

Notes:

1. <https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/latest/>

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