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Welsh Government

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Smoke Control and Domestic Burning



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Domestic Burning

Statistics from the Census 2021

- 1,347m households in Wales.
- Less than 1% of households in Wales rely on solid fuel to heat their homes, that's around 12,000 homes.
- 82% of households in Wales are on the gas grid.
- 124,065 or 9% of households used 'Two or more types of central heating (not including renewable energy)', which could be bottled gas, solid fuel, wood, oil, district systems or other'.



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Domestic Burning

- The latest evidence points to around 30%* of all PM_{2.5} emissions in Wales coming from the domestic burning sector.
- Likely to see year on year variation of domestic wood burning during the energy and cost-of-living crises.
 - Reduce emissions from domestic burning.
 - Raise awareness of the health issues associated with domestic burning.
 - Focus action to ensure people switch to cleaner burning fuels and appliances, whilst protecting them from fuel poverty.



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Domestic Burning

Reducing emissions from domestic burning of solid fuels consultation

- Consultation sought views on restricting the most polluting solid fuels:
 - wet wood
 - traditional house coal
 - manufactured solid fuel with a high sulphur content.
- An initial response to the domestic burning consultation is due to be published by the summer.



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Domestic Burning

Headline outcomes:

- The majority of responses agreed with the approach to ban traditional/bituminous house coal.
- The majority of respondents favoured either some limit on wet wood sales, or the ban on sales of wet wood in its entirety.
- Rural households should not be treated differently to urban households for the sale of wet wood.



Domestic Burning

Headline outcomes continued:

- A standard for all manufactured mineral solid fuels should be introduced throughout Wales.
- Consistency with England to allow industry to keep one set of packaging and messaging.
- Overwhelming support for an information campaign for both retailers and households on how best to store both wet and dry wood to ensure it is seasoned properly.



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Domestic Burning

- Developing proposals for the Minister.
- We will use our existing legislative powers to tackle domestic burning.
- Strong Ministerial focus on education and public awareness on the impact of poor burning practices.



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Domestic Burning

- Further evidence needed to support policy direction.
- Defra assessing the impact of its Domestic Solid Fuels Standards Regulations 2020 on PM_{2.5} emissions.
- Defra's Domestic Burning Core Activity Survey (includes a 5% sample of households in Wales).
- We will draw on early insights from these projects.



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Domestic Burning

Other evidence?

- Survey
- Sector workshops
- Indoor/outdoor monitoring
- Citizen-led projects
- Focus groups with industry or members of the public
- Commission research, academic / private sector
- Any current projects in Wales?



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Domestic Burning

Next Steps:

- Advice to Minister, shortly
- Publish summary of responses, by summer 2023
- Gather further evidence, ongoing
- Develop regulations & impact assessment 2023-24
- Consult on regulations 2024
- Bring into force 2025



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Contact details:

AirQualityPolicy@gov.wales



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Environment (Air Quality and Soundscapes) (Wales) Bill

Smoke Control

- The Bill introduces changes to the Clean Air Act 1993 for smoke control.
- A civil sanctions regime will replace the current offence of emitting smoke in a smoke control area.
- The Bill introduces civil monetary penalties which can be levied by local authorities.



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Environment (Air Quality and Soundscapes) (Wales) Bill

Smoke Control

- Comprehensive guidance for local authorities to reinforce our intended advice-led approach.
- Local authority officers can immediately address the issue and provide guidance to households and businesses to encourage them to adopt better burning practices.
- The guidance will be available to all local authorities, not just those who have smoke control areas.
- We will encourage local authorities to consider the role of smoke control areas as part of a holistic approach to local air quality management.
- They can also inform their communities of the dangers of poor burning practices and the harm this can do to the health and wellbeing of them and their neighbours.
- It is hoped that this advice-led approach will lead to compliance without the need for a financial penalty, though this option will be available to local authorities if advice is not followed.