



Chartered Institute of  
Environmental  
Health

Sefydliad Siartredig  
Iechyd yr  
Amgylchedd

# Damage to Human Health and the Environment from Incineration of Waste

Response to Prosiect Gwrydd Joint Scrutiny Panel: Call  
for Evidence

November 2011

## Sefydliad Siartredig Iechyd yr Amgylchedd

Fel **corff proffesiynol**, rydym yn gosod safonau ac yn achredu cyrsiau a chymwysterau ar gyfer addysg ein haelodau proffesiynol ac ymarferwyr iechyd yr amgylchedd eraill.

Fel **canolfan wybodaeth**, rydym yn darparu gwybodaeth, tystiolaeth a chynghor ar bolisiâu i lywodraethau lleol a chenedlaethol, ymarferwyr iechyd yr amgylchedd ac iechyd y cyhoedd, diwydiant a rhanddeiliaid eraill. Rydym yn cyhoeddi llyfrau a chylchgronau, yn cynnal digwyddiadau addysgol ac yn comisiynu ymchwil.

Fel **corff dyfarnu**, rydym yn darparu cymwysterau, digwyddiadau a deunyddiau cefnogol i hyfforddwyr ac ymgeiswyr am bynciau sy'n berthnasol i iechyd, lles a diogelwch er mwyn datblygu arfer gorau a sgiliau yn y gweithle ar gyfer gwirfoddolwyr, gweithwyr, rheolwyr busnesau a pherchnogion busnesau.

Fel **mudiad ymgyrchu**, rydym yn gweithio i wthio iechyd yr amgylchedd yn uwch ar yr agenda cyhoeddus a hyrwyddo gwelliannau mewn polisi iechyd yr amgylchedd ac iechyd y cyhoedd.

Rydym yn **elusen gofrestredig** gyda dros 10,500 o aelodau ledled Cymru, Lloegr a Gogledd Iwerddon.

## The Chartered Institute of Environmental Health

As a **professional body**, we set standards and accredit courses and qualifications for the education of our professional members and other environmental health practitioners.

As a **knowledge centre**, we provide information, evidence and policy advice to local and national government, environmental and public health practitioners, industry and other stakeholders. We publish books and magazines, run educational events and commission research.

As an **awarding body**, we provide qualifications, events, and trainer and candidate support materials on topics relevant to health, wellbeing and safety to develop workplace skills and best practice in volunteers, employees, business managers and business owners.

As a **campaigning organisation**, we work to push environmental health further up the public agenda and to promote improvements in environmental and public health policy.

We are a **registered charity** with over 10,500 members across England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

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The Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) is pleased to be able to assist the Joint Scrutiny Committee in its consideration of the potential impact of waste incineration plant emissions on human health and the environment.

Our response will answer the two specific questions constituting the Terms of Reference of the Committee, thereafter we will make more general points which we hope will assist the committee in its consideration of this issue.

c. *Is there any validated scientific evidence that an energy from waste incineration plant operating within the UK's current statutory framework causes harm to Health and Environmental damage?*

In our view there is no credible scientific evidence that a well run waste incineration plant poses any significant risk to either human health or to the environment. The CIEH endorses the view expressed in the Health Protection Agency paper 'The Impact to Health of Emissions to Air from Municipal Waste Incinerators' (2009)<sup>i</sup> which in its conclusion states that 'Modern, well managed incinerators make only a small contribution to local concentrations of air pollutants. It is possible that such small additions could have an impact on health but such effects, if they exist, are likely to be very small and not detectable'.

We consider that the regime of emission limits and monitoring required by the Environmental Permitting (EP) (England and Wales) Regulations 2007 is sufficiently rigorous to protect both human health and the environment from harm from such emissions to atmosphere as are generated by modern well run incinerators.

d. *If there are examples(s) of validated scientific evidence, what are the causes of/effects on human health and the environment?*

None of which the CIEH is aware. There are large numbers of credible, peer reviewed studies looking at potential damage to health and to the environment from particles emitted from waste incinerators and from various specified chemicals, including known carcinogens<sup>ii</sup>

None of the studies however can point to a credible risk being posed by such emissions.

### General comments

It is generally accepted that in the past old style waste incinerators did generate pollution problems through emission of particulates to air and through the emission of chemicals that had an adverse impact on human health and on the environment within the vicinity of the incinerator.

The CIEH is however of the view that the combination of the control put in place by the Environmental Permitting (EP) (England and Wales) Regulations 2007 and advances in emission control and screening technology in modern incineration facilities are such that no significant risk is posed with either to human health or to the environment through the operation of such facilities.

We trust that the foregoing will assist the Joint Scrutiny Committee in its deliberations and would be happy to provide such other information or assistance as may be considered to be necessary.

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<sup>i</sup> Health Protection Agency 2009 'The Impact of Health on Emissions to Air from Municipal Waste Incinerators'

<sup>ii</sup> Ibid