



Michael Ryan
Whatdotheyknow.com

Our Ref FOI 1633

If you telephone Eileen O'Meara
please ask for 0151 511 6848

Your ref

Date 29th April 2014

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Dear Michael,

Freedom of Information Act 2000

I write with reference to your Freedom of Information request regarding health and mortality data. I have consulted Dr Alex Stewart from Public Health England as the lead expert on environmental hazards, please find our reply below.

Your question asked: What health and mortality data at electoral ward or any other level will be scrutinised by Halton Unitary Authority or their expert advisers to demonstrate beyond any reasonable doubt that emissions from Viridor's incinerator are not harming health?

In response we can state the following: Routine public health statistics are reviewed and scrutinised at electoral ward level by a number of health agencies, including the Department of Health and Public Health England as well as Halton Unitary Authority's Public Health team. Nevertheless, there is no easy way for Halton Unitary Authority or their expert advisers to demonstrate beyond reasonable doubt what is a negative, that is, that health and mortality data at whatever geographical level is used are not being affected by emissions from Viridor's incinerator, because:

- (a) any health effects will be very small, as noted above, and therefore will be difficult to count at the Halton level and
- (b) there are many other sources of emissions in and around Halton that affect the local air quality and could have an effect on health

This means that distinguishing any effects that might occur will be very difficult, if not impossible.

Nationally, health and incinerators has been reviewed every few years and the Committee on Carcinogenicity has advised that this will continue. As a general comment the updated Health Protection Agency Report (2010) on incinerators concludes that

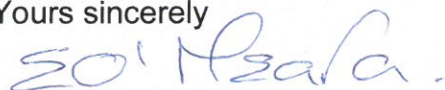
It's all happening IN HALTON

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"Well managed, modern incinerators are likely to have only a very small effect on health". (HPA. The impact on health of emissions to air from municipal waste incinerators. 2010.

I hope this response answers you questions.

Yours sincerely



Eileen O'Meara
Director of Public Health