# Brighton and Hove council’s ‘Cosy Killer’ campaign sparks public outrage and ASA warning



# Brighton and Hove Council Faces Backlash Over "Cosy Killer" Campaign

Brighton and Hove City Council has come under fire for its recent "Cosy Killer" campaign, which warns residents about the alleged dangers of wood-burning stoves and open fires. The initiative, launched in December, claims that these domestic heating methods produce harmful air pollutants known as PM2.5, which the council asserts could contribute to the deaths of one in 20 individuals over the age of 30 in the area.

The campaign features stark advertisements stating that wood-burning stoves emit more fine particles than all road traffic in the UK combined. However, the Advertising Standards Agency (ASA) has intervened, cautioning the council that these claims must be substantiated with robust evidence. Following complaints from the public, ASA has advised that objective claims about health risks associated with wood-burning stoves should not be made without adequate supporting data.

Criticism surrounding the campaign has been vocal, particularly among owners of wood-burning stoves. Many have expressed feelings of fear and intimidation, with local residents reporting incidents of being verbally abused in public due to their usage of these heaters. One resident, 68-year-old Molly, shared her experience of feeling shamed, stating, "I was so worried about using my wood burner. I felt I was being shamed by the council, so instead of lighting it, I piled on my woollen clothes."

Moreover, Andy Genovese, who runs Hove Wood Burners, echoed these sentiments, arguing that the campaign has created a divisive atmosphere and has negatively impacted local solid fuel businesses. He pointed out that household items like candles, air fryers, and toasters could be producing more particulates than wood burners, calling the council's claims misleading.

Despite the backlash, Bright and Hove City Council remains resolute in its stance regarding the health risks posed by wood-burning stoves. Council member Tim Rowkins asserted that the statements made during the campaign are backed by references from the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and Public Health England. He emphasized the council’s duty to inform residents of such risks, especially in urban settings.

The health implications of PM2.5 pollution are concerning. Various studies, including recent findings indicating that emissions from wood burning in UK homes have more than doubled over the last decade, corroborate the council’s perspective. Experts describe solid fuel burning as the primary source of PM2.5 pollution, surpassing even road transport and industrial activities. This trend raises alarms about respiratory and cardiovascular health, particularly for vulnerable groups such as children and the elderly.

As part of its campaign to promote air quality awareness, the council has launched a real-time air quality portal, which will allow residents to monitor local pollution levels. This initiative aims to facilitate better understanding of pollution sources and ultimately inform future regulations and public health strategies.

In addition to confronting the challenges associated with wood burners, Brighton and Hove City Council is keen to adhere to broader environmental commitments. This aligns with its goal of achieving net-zero carbon emissions while simultaneously navigating the complexities of public sentiment regarding household heating methods.

In conclusion, the "Cosy Killer" campaign has ignited a heated debate about air pollution, public health, and the role of local authorities in regulating domestic heating appliances. As the council stands firm in its aims to protect community health, the discussion around wood-burning stoves continues to evolve, reflecting a broader societal conflict over environmental responsibility and personal choice.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14691249/Woke-council-anti-wood-burning-stove-ad-campaign.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cvg6ey9gq2do)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14691249/Woke-council-anti-wood-burning-stove-ad-campaign.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[5]](https://www.sussexexpress.co.uk/community/wood-burners-and-open-fires-the-cosy-killer-4907227)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14691249/Woke-council-anti-wood-burning-stove-ad-campaign.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[4]](https://www.brightonandhovenews.org/2024/10/02/council-pledges-crackdown-in-smoke-control-areas/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14691249/Woke-council-anti-wood-burning-stove-ad-campaign.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[3]](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2023/feb/14/wood-burning-air-pollution-uk-doubled-decade)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14691249/Woke-council-anti-wood-burning-stove-ad-campaign.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[6]](https://www.brightonandhovenews.org/2024/12/12/council-aims-to-expose-the-dangers-of-wood-burners/)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14691249/Woke-council-anti-wood-burning-stove-ad-campaign.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[7]](https://www.facilitatemagazine.com/content/news/2025/01/08/brighton-hove-launches-cosy-killer-crusade-latest-step-net-zero-drive)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14691249/Woke-council-anti-wood-burning-stove-ad-campaign.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cvg6ey9gq2do> - Brighton and Hove City Council launched the 'Cosy Killer' campaign to warn residents about the dangers of using wood burners and open fires. The campaign highlights that burning solid fuels contributes to fine particulate pollution (PM2.5), which increases the risk of heart attacks, strokes, and lung diseases. The council estimates that particle pollution is a contributing factor to one in 20 deaths in people over the age of 30 in the area. The initiative also includes the launch of a real-time air quality portal for residents to monitor pollution levels.
3. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2023/feb/14/wood-burning-air-pollution-uk-doubled-decade> - A report reveals that emissions of toxic air pollution from wood burning in UK homes have more than doubled in the past decade. Solid fuel burning is now the single biggest source of PM2.5 pollution, surpassing road transport and industry. Experts suggest that wood burners have become 'middle-class status symbols' and advocate for government regulation of their sale in urban areas. The rise in emissions from wood burners and biomass burning has offset reductions from other sources, raising concerns about public health impacts.
4. <https://www.brightonandhovenews.org/2024/10/02/council-pledges-crackdown-in-smoke-control-areas/> - Brighton and Hove City Council plans to intensify enforcement in smoke control areas due to the increasing popularity of wood burners. Despite most complaints over the past five years being about bonfires or diesel generators, the council aims to raise awareness about the health risks associated with domestic wood burning. The initiative includes setting up a real-time air quality monitoring network across the city to better understand pollution sources and inform enforcement actions.
5. <https://www.sussexexpress.co.uk/community/wood-burners-and-open-fires-the-cosy-killer-4907227> - The 'Cosy Killer' campaign by Brighton and Hove City Council warns residents about the health risks of using wood burners and open fires. The campaign emphasizes that burning solid fuels is a significant source of fine particulate pollution (PM2.5), which can reach the lungs and enter the bloodstream, increasing the risk of heart attacks, strokes, and lung diseases. The council also launched a real-time air quality portal to help residents monitor pollution levels.
6. <https://www.brightonandhovenews.org/2024/12/12/council-aims-to-expose-the-dangers-of-wood-burners/> - Brighton and Hove City Council is intensifying efforts to raise awareness about the dangers of wood burners and open fires. The 'Cosy Killer' campaign highlights that burning solid fuels contributes to fine particulate pollution (PM2.5), which is linked to various health issues, including heart attacks, strokes, and lung diseases. The council has also launched a real-time air quality monitoring network to provide residents with up-to-date information on pollution levels.
7. <https://www.facilitatemagazine.com/content/news/2025/01/08/brighton-hove-launches-cosy-killer-crusade-latest-step-net-zero-drive> - Brighton and Hove City Council has launched the 'Cosy Killer' campaign to raise awareness about the health risks associated with wood burners and open fires. The initiative is part of the council's broader strategy to tackle pollution and promote net-zero goals. The campaign highlights that burning solid fuels is a significant source of fine particulate pollution (PM2.5), which can lead to serious health issues. The council has also implemented a real-time air quality monitoring network across the city.