

Proposal for Public Health and Environmental Law Working Group

Proposed convenor:

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Terms of reference:

1. To provide a critical analysis of whether public health issues are addressed or referred to in environmental legislation and if so, how legal procedures such as impact assessments and public consultations, could be improved. To analyse case law, such as nuisance, and to provide guidance about how environmental law might be optimised so it is "fit for purpose" to respond appropriately and effectively to the evolution of scientific knowledge regarding environmentally related pathology and its adverse impact on public health.
2. To provide a forum to discuss the role of public health in environmental law and in doing so, create a platform that broadens the narrative about the socio-economic advantages of environmental protection.
3. To forge connections between medicine and environmental law, encompassing a wide range of adverse health effects including physical, psychological and psychiatric. The Working Group will explore the health impacts of environmental harm not only on the present generation but also, on future generations, for example, through teratogens. The scope will include many areas of environmental law such as air and water pollution, urban planning, and development, as well as including overarching themes of social justice and economics.
4. To target practitioners with the aim of providing independent, evidence-based guidance about the public health facets of environmental law and in doing so, shape their daily practice in such a way that it is up to date, and accurately mirrors any legislative changes so that they can continue to provide first class advice to their client base.
5. To work collaboratively with external non legal, non political organisations to forge long term symbiotic links with them to increase the profile of UKELA, and to open up the discussion about public health and environmental law to a wider, academically curious community with the overall aim of exchanging ideas, research findings, and legal and non legal solutions to environmentally related adverse health outcomes.
6. To provide independent, evidence-based advice to government and its representatives, about if/how present and future legislation and policy impacts on public health, and to provide guidance about what legal processes/amendments could be implemented to mitigate these effects.

7. To work collaboratively with the devolved administrations to exchange ideas about how public health can evolve into being part of the DNA of the political discourse about the socio-economic advantages of environmental protection.
8. To develop a strategy of communication with a wide range of organisations such as local authorities, public information bodies such as Citizens Advice Bureau, Public Health England, the Confederation of British Industry, Parliamentary committees, Faculty of Public Health, in order to provide a programme of education about the synergy between public health and environmental law, and that economic progress, safe guarding public health, and environmental protection are mutually dependent.
9. Being mindful that the environment is complex, multilayered and yet to be fully explained or understood, to foster links with academic institutions such as universities and colleges to deepen the discussion about the public health implications of environmental protection, and to increase the profile of UKELA amongst a wider range of students.
10. The terms of reference will be subject to regular review to ensure continuing relevance, and adherence to the core aims of UKELA. Regular review will also provide an opportunity to identify any expertise or resource issues that may impact on the terms of reference and if so, how/if these could be addressed.

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