

Inquiry: Preventing Carbon Monoxide Poisoning 2 **Bringing behavioural insights to poisoning prevention efforts**

About the All-Party Parliamentary Carbon Monoxide Group

The All-Party Parliamentary Carbon Monoxide Group (APPCOG) is a forum for Parliamentarians that exists to discover, discuss and promote ways of tackling carbon monoxide poisoning in the UK. Through a programme of events and research, the APPCOG seeks to push the vital issue of carbon monoxide safety up the political agenda. In doing so, the APPCOG works closely with the Carbon Monoxide All Fuels Action Forum;¹ a coalition of energy industry representatives, medical professionals, researchers, campaigners, and others committed to tackling carbon monoxide poisoning in the UK.

About the Inquiry

The APPCOG is conducting a follow-up to its 2011 inquiry report; 'Preventing Carbon Monoxide Poisoning',² in order to re-focus and improve efforts to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning in the UK. Progress has been made in many of the areas covered in the 2011 report, and the recommendations continue to guide both industry and government efforts. It is proposed that the follow-up inquiry both assess the progress made with regards to the conclusions from the previous report, and present an updated set of recommendations guided by examples and theories of effective behaviour change, to improve the effectiveness of the push towards 'raising awareness'.

The importance of awareness of the dangers of carbon monoxide in helping to prevent poisonings has been widely highlighted, including in previous APPCOG inquiries.³ While awareness-raising activities remain important, their purpose is ultimately to contribute to changes in behaviour, to reduce incidence of poisoning. Additionally, it is increasingly recognised that information provision alone may not be sufficient to bring about desirable changes in behaviour, and so policy-makers and civil society actors are looking to what behavioural science insights can contribute to understanding how the design of policy and campaigns can be improved.⁴

While applied widely to other areas of policy, such as workplace safety and personal finance, behaviour-change led approaches have only very recently been explored in areas relevant to carbon monoxide safety.⁵ The Gas Safe Register provided an example of a relevant project with the first stage of their North-West England campaign in 2013. Thorough audience segmentation revealed high-risk groups, and highlighted the best methods and channels to produce beneficial changes in behaviour.⁶

Carbon monoxide can be produced by the combustion of a number of different fossil fuels, in any number of different environments. As such, poisoning incidents, as well as the response to and prevention of them, can occur in a wide variety of contexts, and incorporate numerous different actors and behaviours. In addition, there are widely-acknowledged limitations related to data on carbon monoxide incidents that present challenges to understanding and preventing poisonings.

¹ For more information, see: <http://www.policyconnect.org.uk/allfuelsforum/home>.

² For more information, see: <http://www.policyconnect.org.uk/appcog/research>.

³ All-Party Parliamentary Gas Safety Group publications: 'Shouting about a silent killer: Raising carbon monoxide awareness' (2006); Raising Medical Professionals' Awareness of 'Preventing Carbon Monoxide Poisoning', a report by the All-Party Parliamentary Gas Safety Group (2011).

⁴ See e.g.: 'Carrots, sticks and sermons: influencing public behaviour for environmental goals: Demons/Green Alliance report produced for Defra' (2003); 'Behavioural Economics: Seven Principles for Policy Makers', HSE (2009); 'MINDSPACE: Influencing behaviour through public policy', Institute for Government/Cabinet Office (2010); 'Bringing it home: using behavioural insights to make green living policy work', Green Alliance (2011); and publications by the Behavioural Insights Team on areas such as health, energy use, debt servicing, and charitable giving (<http://bit.ly/1fIXSal>).

⁵ 'Effectiveness of campaigns on CO awareness among students in private rented accommodation,' University of Warwick/Gas Safety Trust (2011).

⁶ North West England Behaviour Change Pilot: Evaluation Report & Analysis', Gas Safe Register (2013), bit.ly/1eV33BY

Evidence submission

In the first instance, the APPCOG is seeking written submissions of evidence to identify a core set of definable behaviours of relevance to carbon monoxide poisoning, including those related to exposure, detection and prevention. APPCOG is also seeking evidence of progress against recommendations in the 2011 Finlay report.

Please use the questions below to form your response to the call for evidence. This written evidence, guided by a narrow set of initial scoping questions, will help inform later stages of the inquiry, including oral evidence sessions, which will explore a specific set of relevant behaviours in more depth.

Call for evidence

1. Identifying key behaviours;
 - From your / your organisations' perspective, what are the relevant specific or general behaviours that need to be addressed or encouraged as regards carbon monoxide poisoning, either acute or low-level?
 - To whom do these behaviours relate, and in which environments and contexts? Do they relate to carbon monoxide exposure risk, to the detection of carbon monoxide gas and poisoning cases, to preventing carbon monoxide poisoning, or something else? Who or what has influence over these behaviours?
2. Prioritising behaviours and identifying existing data and initiatives;
 - Which of the above behaviours do you consider as the most pertinent to address or encourage, and why? Do you have data or studies to support your decision, and can these be made available to the APPCOG secretariat?
 - Are there existing attempts to address or encourage any of the above behaviours, and if so, what are they?
3. Progress against the 2011 Finlay report
 - Considering the 2011 Finlay report, in what areas have you / your organisation seen or implemented changes, either thematically or with reference to specific recommendations? What further or related action is required to progress these recommendations?

The inquiry will be unable to address all behaviours and all contexts, and as such, at this stage of the inquiry we are seeking written evidence that will assist to identify a core set of priority behaviours to explore related to carbon monoxide poisoning. For example, these behaviours could be those that:

- Contribute to the risk of carbon monoxide exposure,
- Improve the detection of carbon monoxide or of poisoning cases (amongst e.g. householders, medical professionals, or others), or;
- Aid the prevention of poisoning.

The APPCOG welcomes all types of evidence, including data analysis or internal studies your organisation has carried out, and personal or organisational views on these issues. To assist the evidence-gathering process, please keep responses to a manageable length, providing hyperlinks or annexes where necessary. Submissions of evidence will not be published and the APPCOG will seek your permission before quoting from evidence submissions in the final inquiry report. The APPCOG secretariat will also be conducting informal interviews to inform the inquiry – please get in touch if you would like to discuss the topic in more detail.

Deadline

The deadline for submission of written evidence is Friday 16th May 2014. Please submit evidence to the APPCOG secretariat via dominic.gillan@policyconnect.org.uk.

Inquiry Advisory Board

The Inquiry and evidence submission are being guided by an Advisory Board.

Inquiry Co-Chairs

Professor The Baroness Finlay of Llandaff
Crossbench Member, House of Lords
Co-Chair, All-Party Parliamentary Carbon Monoxide Group
Professor of Palliative Medicine at Cardiff University School of Medicine

Dr Rachel McCloy
Director of the Centre for Applied Behavioural Science, University of Reading

Board Members

Barry Sheerman MP
Labour Co-operative MP for Huddersfield
Co-Chair, All-Party Parliamentary Carbon Monoxide Group

David Palferman
Senior Psychologist at the UK Health and Safety Executive Economic & Social Analysis Unit

Mary Benwell
Independent Trustee of the Gas Safety Trust and former Professor and Director of the Business School, Oxford Brookes University

Nick Terry
Marketing and Communications Director at the Gas Safe Register, which conducted a 2012-2013 'behaviour change' campaign in the North West of England

Roland Wessling
Project Director of a Cranfield University study into the impacts of carbon monoxide on the UK population, and Director of the Hazel Woodhams Memorial Fund

Professor Stephen Sutton
Professor of Behavioural Science in the Institute of Public Health, University of Cambridge

Steve Miller
Chair of the CO All Fuels Action Forum, a Chartered Environmental Health Practitioner, and a Fellow and Trustee of the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health