

All Members Newsletter

4th January 2021



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Indoor air quality coverage

As many members will have seen, just before Christmas there were a number of newspaper articles reporting on the impact of wood burning stoves on indoor air quality.

These were based on a report published by Atmosphere on 7th December 2020 by the Universities of Sheffield and Nottingham entitled: *Indoor Air Pollution from Residential Stoves: Examining the Flooding of Particulate Matter into Home during Real-World Use*.

More recently the British Lung Foundation and Asthma UK (now a combined organisation) added their voice to the mix and Dr Nick Hopkinson, medical director at the Asthma UK and British Lung Foundation Partnership, was quoted in articles run by both the Guardian and the Daily Mail as saying: "To protect yourself and others, especially children who are particularly vulnerable as their lungs are smaller and still developing, avoid buying a wood-burning stove or using an open fire if you have another source of fuel to cook and heat your home with."

Today the SIA has taken steps to try and combat these latest negative press reports by issuing a [press release](#) to the journalists that have covered the story.

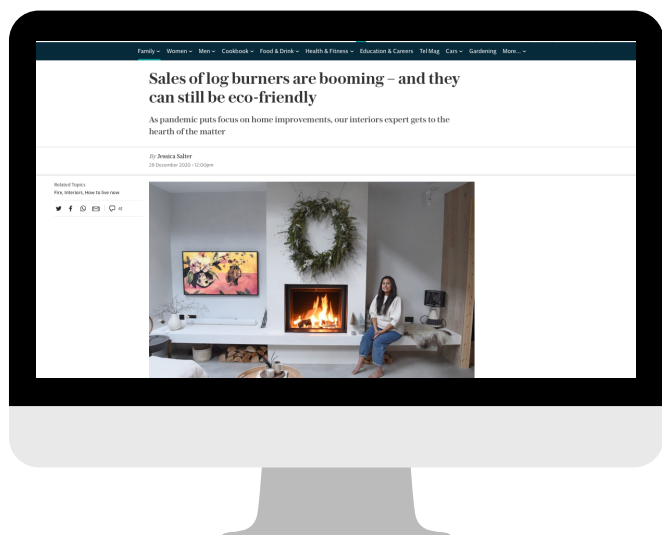
We have also written to the CEO of Asthma UK and the British Lung Foundation. [You can read this letter in full here.](#)

Please read on over the page for further details on what the SIA is doing to try and counter this story.

Positive press

Despite the Telegraph being among the newspapers that published a negative article, on 28th December it published an article online entitled *Sales of log burners are booming – and they can still be eco-friendly* by Jessica Salter. Jessica had contacted the SIA in late November for comment and we were able to provide her with a quote and a variety of information for her article. (Click on the image below to view full article).

We are pleased to see that this has been used, as well as a link to the SIA website and to the clearSkies website too. Furthermore, in addition to the article appearing online, it was also published in full in print in the Sunday Telegraph on 3rd January.



In addition to this article, the Guardian also recently ran a letter from a reader which puts a much more positive attitude towards wood burning stoves across.

The letter, from Peter Perry in Cornwall, makes the very valid point that we must look at the bigger picture when reporting. Peter writes: "Undoubtedly, if we look closely enough, there are negatives in using wood stoves for domestic heating, but there are also many positives, and we need to hear the whole story. So I'm hoping that, in due course, a second study will carefully assess and quantify the benefits, both physical and emotional, and that these will be duly reported by the Guardian."

In order to make a further positive point, the SIA has developed a new infographic (see right) which will be shared via its social media channels explaining how homeowners can minimise indoor air pollution by following a few simple tips. This graphic is available in the members' area of the SIA website for members to download and use on their own channels too.

Further research

The SIA welcomes research into indoor air pollution but is very concerned at the limitations of the Universities of Sheffield and Nottingham's research and the fact that reputable media outlets and, it seems, Asthma UK and British Lung Foundation are taking their conclusions as fact, when there is considerable doubt on the conclusions they have drawn.

The SIA is therefore intending to commission some further research into indoor air pollution, and, as we have indicated in our letter to them, is open to discussing this research with Asthma UK and British Lung Foundation.

We are in the process of putting together a formal research brief which will be shared with members in due course.

A modern wood burning stove is a sustainable & low carbon way to heat your home.

Follow these simple & effective tips to minimise indoor air pollution when using your wood burning stove.

Look for SIA Ecodesign Ready & clearSkies labels

Where possible install an SIA Ecodesign Ready compliant stove or, even better, one with a certified clearSkies label.

woodsure READY TO BURN

Only burn dry wood

Always ensure that you only burn dry wood with a moisture content of 20% or below. Look for the Woodsure Ready to Burn label when you buy your fuel.

Refuelling know-how

Only refuel your stove when the logs have been fully burnt and the fire bed is down to just embers. Open the door by just a small amount and pause, allowing the air pressure to adjust to the room, before slowly opening the door and refuelling. Don't overload the stove.

Always follow the instructions

The manufacturer's instructions will contain specific advice on fuel, maintenance and installation relevant to your stove model. Always read these instructions carefully and ensure that your room is properly ventilated in accordance with Building Regulations.

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