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Dear Consultee

A Children's Environment and Health Strategy for the UK – Consultation

I am writing to invite you to comment on the Children's Environment and Health Strategy for the United Kingdom. This document provides an overview of the current impact of the environment on children's health in the UK and highlights areas where this could be improved, either through strengthening current activities or by identifying new initiatives. This consultation provides you with an opportunity to give your views on the priority areas identified within this initiative and invites your suggestions on areas which you consider should be included. This strategy aims to meet the needs of children and young people throughout the UK, both today and for generations to come. It is well recognised that the environment can have a substantial impact on the health of children and young people. They can be particularly vulnerable to the harmful effects of environmental hazards and so it is very important for them to grow up in a clean and healthy environment and have good access to green open spaces.

In order to address this, in 2004, the World Health Organization developed the Children's Environment and Health Action Plan for Europe (CEHAPE), which committed countries throughout Europe, including the UK, to develop national Children's Environment and Health Action Plans. The CEHAPE focuses on four main areas:

- water, sanitation and health;
- injuries, obesity and physical activity;
- indoor and outdoor air pollution; and
- chemical, physical and biological hazards.

This approach of linking the environment and the health of children will help drive forward change and this Strategy identifies some important areas where this is required. These include some longstanding concerns such as hygiene in schools, injuries and health inequalities and also areas which are becoming increasingly important such as obesity, skin cancers and the long term chronic effects of the increasing number of chemicals and pollutants in our environment. This forward looking approach will also help ensure that new concerns such as climate change are addressed.

The Aim of the strategy is to build on and complement strategies policies and activities already undertaken by government departments and agencies, devolved administrations, local and regional authorities the National Health Service and the voluntary sector.

The intention is to work in synergy with these existing initiatives, building on an already strong base of action, but also bringing about further sustained improvements in children's health by ensuring a healthy and clean environment conducive to good child health. This will help develop a comprehensive strategic approach to protecting and improving children's health and well-being in the UK.

The Health Protection Agency was commissioned by the Department of Health to take forward CEHAPE activities within the UK, including undertaking a review of current activities and to recommend priority areas for the UK to take forward. This work led to the development of this strategy.

The Strategy and consultation questionnaire can be found on the Health Protection Agency's website at: <http://www.hpa.org.uk/cehape/> and hard copies of the documents are available, on request, from the CEHAPE Consultations Officer (e-mail: cehape@hpa.org.uk; phone: 02920 687252).

We look forward to receiving your comments and feedback. Please direct your responses and any queries to the CEHAPE Consultations Officer at the above e-mail address by 13 June 2008.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pat Troop". The signature is stylized, with a large, sweeping initial "P" and a distinct "Troop" following.

Professor Pat Troop
Chief Executive