

'Bittersweet' honour for air quality champion

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Air quality and child health campaigner Rosamund Adoo-Kissi-Debrah has been made a CBE for services to public health in the King's New Year Honours.

She described the award as "bittersweet" because her campaigning was prompted by the death of her nine-year-old daughter Ella, who is the first person in the UK to have air pollution stated on her death certificate.

"It is an absolute honour and recognition for the campaign [but] children are still dying, and my ambition is to keep on campaigning so that no other parent has to experience what I went through," she said.

MPs are currently debating her proposed Clean Air (Human Rights) Bill – also known as 'Ella's Law' – which has already received approval from the House of Lords and the London Assembly.

The new law would introduce specific responsibilities for building operators to meet indoor air quality (IAQ) targets in line with World Health Organisation (WHO) guidance and Kissi-Debrah has become a prominent voice in the push to improve standards of ventilation in buildings through her work with the [Building Engineering Services Association](#) (BESA).

Waiting lists

"The NHS will not be able to reduce its waiting lists until we clean up our air," she told a BESA webinar marking the first ever [World Ventilation Day](#) on November 8 last year. "It is also much easier to control the indoor air than the outdoor – so tackling IAQ is a great way to give people back power over their own environment and save lives."

The WHO has established that 3.8 million premature deaths worldwide are linked to poor indoor air every year out of a total of 8.7 million from general air pollution. “We have to be clear about this...bad IAQ leads directly to deaths,” said Kissi-Debrah.

BESA said it was delighted to hear of her “richly deserved honour”.

“Ros is an amazing campaigner and a force of nature,” said Nathan Wood, chair of the Association’s [Health & Well-being in Buildings group](#) of which she is Honorary President. “She completely understands the importance of improving ventilation to help protect children and the most vulnerable, in particular, from airborne pollutants and to reduce the risk of disease transmission.

“Everyone at BESA and anyone in our industry who has had the privilege of attending a meeting with Ros or hearing her speak will be delighted that she has received this recognition. It should inspire us all to redouble our efforts and work even more closely with her to clean up our air – both indoor and out.”