

'Extremely encouraging' Government response recognises the 'vital' role of the cleaning sector and its staff

8 months ago



[The British Cleaning Council \(BCC\)](#) has hailed 'an extremely encouraging' response from the Government to its campaign to put cleaning and hygiene at the heart of the national agenda.

The BCC has recently received confirmation that the Embedding Effective Hygiene for a Resilient UK report is being considered as evidence by the Government in the ongoing review of national resilience.

As part of the long-running lobbying campaign in support of the report, the BCC wrote to Cabinet Secretary Pat McFadden last autumn to offer to contribute to the review of national resilience taking place in response to Baroness Hallett's report of the first stage of the Covid Inquiry.

A recently received response from Parliamentary Secretary for the Cabinet Office Abena Opong-Asare MP not only agreed with key recommendations in the report but also included important recognition from the Government for the 'vital' role of the sector.

Ms Opong-Asare wrote: "I appreciate the British Cleaning Council's continued interest and engagement in both national resilience and public health preparedness. Please note that the recommendations from the report have been recorded and are being considered as part of our ongoing evidence gathering for the resilience review."

She went on to say: "The Government recognises the vital role that the cleaning and hygiene sector plays in ensuring public health and mitigating key risks, both in its routine work and during public health emergencies."

Ms Opong-Asare added: "The emphasis in your letter on joint industry-Government planning mechanisms, clear hygiene standards for public spaces, and public education on hygiene aligns with our broader efforts

to support all actors in society to help us strengthen our national resilience.”

The BCC’s Immediate Past Chairman, Jim Melvin, who leads on the lobbying campaign, said: “I was delighted with this extremely encouraging response.

“We have been seeking recognition from the Government for the essential role of the sector and its staff for several years, so to read that this is finally being acknowledged is very welcome indeed.

“We have made encouraging progress since last summer with our lobbying campaign.

“Though processes move slowly and we have not yet secured the firm adoption of the Embedding Effective Hygiene for a Resilient UK report’s recommendations, we have achieved some clear indications that the wind may be shifting in our favour. We are now finally being listened to.

“We have responded and hope to meet to further discuss the synergies between our views and to investigate any potential opportunity in which the BCC, and therefore the industry, can assist.”

In recent months, there have been other encouraging developments.

The Government’s new National Risk Register 2025 cited the need for ‘a national communications plan to increase awareness and encourage good hygiene’ which relates strongly to one of the APPG report’s key recommendations.

The BCC also made a submission to the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee inquiry into how the Government is dealing with the risk posed by antimicrobial resistance (AMR).

The results of this were encouraging. During the committee session, it was clear that there was wide agreement with the APPG report’s recommendations regarding hygiene standards in public places. The need for hand hygiene was discussed several times, the need for education around public health was highlighted and the key role of cleaning staff in helping tackle AMR was also flagged up.

The UK Health Security Agency’s (UKHSA) Deputy Director for Pandemic Preparedness has recently been in touch with the BCC to arrange a meeting. The BCC has continued to try to engage with a number of individual politicians such as the Secretary of State for Health Wes Streeting, and a wide range of MPs.

The BCC is also working to bolster its case by engaging with a very eminent physician who was significantly involved throughout the pandemic, who has been extremely helpful in advising on gathering hard evidence about the health impacts of improved cleaning and hygiene in specific venues.

It is also investigating whether a new APPG for the sector can be established (all UK APPGs were dissolved ahead of the last General Election) and is approaching other organisations with aligned agendas to create momentum.

The Embedding Effective Hygiene for a Resilient UK report was produced with BCC support in late 2022 by the former All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for the Cleaning and Hygiene Industry.

It contained key recommendations regarding cleaning and hygiene that will ensure the UK is better prepared for any future pandemic and also reduce the impact of current common infections such as flu.