

Unhealthy Air

40,000 deaths per year
in the UK and reduced
quality of life.

What you need to know
and what you can do.



**Friends of
the Earth
Manchester**

Is Greater Manchester choking?

Greater Manchester has unhealthy, polluted air. This contributes not only to 2000 premature deaths each year but also to strokes, asthma, chronic and acute respiratory disease, heart disease, cancer, dementia and mental illness.

In Greater Manchester over 70% of air pollution is produced by transport, in particular private cars, with diesel engines making the biggest contribution

These illnesses affect the youngest, oldest and poorest in our communities and the effects stay with children into adulthood. The resulting health impacts have significant cost implications for the NHS and the economy of the region.

UK law, in line with other European countries, sets air pollution limits that are legally-binding. For many years these have been breached in most major cities across the UK and recently the Government has been taken to court on this issue and is facing close scrutiny regarding its actions to respond and clean up our air.

How can I help?

Clean up the way you get around by favouring walking, cycling and public transport.

Find about public transport routes at my.tfgm.com/#/planner/.

If you need to use a car:

- Keep the car well serviced, with tyres correctly inflated, and the engine running as efficiently as possible.
- Minimise idylling. Cut your engine when waiting at train crossings and traffic lights.
- Drive as smoothly as possible to reduce the need to brake excessively. Brake linings and moving car components account for 50% of air pollution traffic. See the Ethical Transport Association (www.eta.co.uk/driving-tips/).
- Think about whether you need your car. Hire cars, taxis and car share schemes are there for when you might need access to one. Try Car Share GM (www.carsharegm.com).

Tell friends, family and colleagues and think about ways you can help to influence others. Could you put in place cycle storage and car sharing at work? Or could you encourage your local school to promote cleaner travel?



How can I protect myself?

Although everyone is exposed to polluted air to some extent, you can reduce how much it affects you.

The key is to stay away from busy congested roads. Use quieter routes if you can and travel in off-peak.

Avoid travelling by car. People in cars can be exposed to more pollution than those cycling and walking.

Face masks can help to reduce exposure to some of the larger pollution particles, but not all of them.

Keep pollution-busting plants indoors. Peace lily, cornstalk dracaena, and broadleaf lady palm are all recommended.

If you have a garden, plant trees that absorb air pollution. Scots pine, common alder, larch, Norway maple, field maple, ash and silver birch remove the most pollutants without contributing to the formation of new pollutants.

Why not volunteer with City of Trees (www.cityoftrees.org.uk/) so that everyone can benefit from there being more trees?



What needs to happen?

Unhealthy air is a public health emergency that requires action now. Manchester Friends of the Earth is calling on TfGM and the 10 local authorities to reduce pollution and protect vulnerable people.

- Implement Clean Air Zones in city and district centres, particularly around schools and nurseries.
- Stop building day nurseries and schools near air pollution hotspots.
- A comprehensive air quality monitoring network for all areas in Greater Manchester.
- A Greater Manchester Active Travel Fund for the development of high quality walking and cycling routes (minimum of £20 per person).
- All new taxis and buses to be zero-emission vehicles by 2018, and the whole fleet zero-emissions by 2025.
- A GM Clean Air Fund to support a public information campaigns about the impacts of air pollution and how people and businesses can help reduce it.
- Appoint a Clean Air Champion to ensure urgent action on unhealthy air.
- Provide an integrated, affordable, frequent and convenient public transport system.



Did you know?

Damage caused by air pollution can start in the womb and impacts on children can stay with them into adult life.

Air pollution can affect cognitive development and lowers IQ. It has also been associated with dementia.

Poorer people tend to live in environments with unhealthy air, whether near busy roads or in low quality housing¹.

Motor traffic is the largest contributor to air pollution in Greater Manchester.

Find out more, watch our animation on healthy air, and get involved in campaigning at www.manchesterfoe.org.uk



[1]Every breathe we take' www.rcplondon.ac.uk/projects/outputs/every-breath-we-take-lifelong-impact-air-pollution)