



HM Government

Environmental Improvement Plan 2023

First revision of the
25 Year Environment Plan



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Goal 2

Clean air

Challenge councils to improve air quality more quickly while supporting them with clear guidance, funding, and tools

Consider extending environmental permit conditions to dairy and intensive beef farms to help reduce ammonia emissions

Continue to tackle domestic emissions by reducing maximum emissions for domestic burning appliances

Review and improve how the government communicates air quality information to make sure the public know the impacts of air quality and how to protect themselves

Support drivers to make the transition to zero emission vehicles through grants and generous tax rates



Air quality in the UK has improved significantly in recent decades. We have seen a decrease in all five major air pollutants: for instance, emissions of fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}), the most damaging pollutant to human health, decreased by 18% between 2010 and 2020. Reductions in these pollutants have produced significant benefits for our health and environment.

In recent years we have broadly maintained this trajectory. However, air pollution continues to be the biggest environmental risk to human health, with particular hotspots in some urban areas.

It also harms the natural environment, affecting our biodiversity, waterways and crop yields. In particular, emissions of ammonia have reduced more slowly than the other key pollutants and continue to damage sensitive natural habitats, adding to our existing challenges around house building with nutrient neutrality.

Therefore, to make further progress we are setting out an ambitious plan which tackles both overall concentrations and specific hotspots. In particular, we are taking further action on PM_{2.5} as the pollutant which is most harmful to humans, and on ammonia, which we must reduce to achieve our apex target to halt species decline by 2030.

Our 25 Year Environment Plan goal

We will achieve clean air.

Since 2018, we have:

- Published our **Clean Air Strategy** in 2019, setting out plans to make our air healthier to breathe, protect nature and boost the economy.
- Reduced pollution from domestic burning, the biggest source of emissions of PM_{2.5}, by banning the sale of smoky coal and restricting the sale of wet wood.
- Tackled NO₂ hotspots by funding councils with £883 million to implement local NO₂ reduction plans, including the introduction of Clean Air Zones (CAZs) in cities across the country.
- Consulted and established UK Best Available Techniques (UK BAT) regime so our largest industry uses the most up-to-date techniques to minimise emissions.



- Supported farmers in reducing ammonia emissions by providing grants for emission-reducing equipment and targeted, locally informed on-farm advice through the Catchment Sensitive Farming programme.
- Published our **Transport Decarbonisation Plan**, which will help to improve air quality as well as decarbonising the entire transport system in the UK.

We have the following targets and commitments:

- A legal target to reduce population exposure to $PM_{2.5}$ by 35% in 2040 compared to 2018 levels, with a new interim target to reduce by 22% by the end of January 2028.
- Legal concentration limits for a number of other key pollutants. We already meet the majority of these limits including for sulphur dioxide and coarse particulate matter. We are working towards meeting compliance with a $40\mu g/m^3$ limit for nitrogen dioxide.
- A legal target to require a maximum annual mean concentration of 10 micrograms of $PM_{2.5}$ per cubic metre ($\mu g/m^3$) by 2040, with a new interim target of $12\mu g/m^3$ by the end of January 2028.
- Legal emission reduction targets for five damaging pollutants by 2030 relative to 2005 levels:
 - Reduce emissions of nitrogen oxides by 73%.
 - Reduce emissions of sulphur dioxide by 88%.
 - Reduce emission of $PM_{2.5}$ by 46%.
 - Reduce emissions of ammonia by 16%.
 - Reduce emissions of non-methane volatile organic compounds by 39%.



To deliver these, we will:

- Continue to tackle domestic emissions by reducing the maximum emissions for domestic burning appliances in Smoke Control Areas and by promoting best practice in use of stoves and fireplaces.
- Challenge local authorities to improve air quality more quickly by assessing their performance and use of existing powers, while supporting them with clear guidance, funding, and tools.
- Facilitate the rollout of further Clean Air Zones by local councils in areas which are in breach of air quality statutory limits, with further zones and other non-clean air zone measures as required.
- Re-align regional air quality zones in line with local government boundaries to drive effective coordinated action.
- Reduce ammonia emissions by using incentives in our new farming schemes, while considering expanding environmental permitting conditions to dairy and intensive beef farms.
- Continue to support the move away from petrol and diesel cars and consult on an extension to the existing North Sea Emission Control Area to cover the Irish Sea, reducing emissions from shipping.