

Cycling & Health -- Pollution

Invisible yet Harmful to Health

Outdoor air pollution kills over 2500 people a year in Scotland. It plays a part in cancer, asthma, strokes, heart disease; even diabetes, obesity and dementia.

Children, the elderly and people in poverty are hit hardest - but everyone is affected to a greater or lesser degree, and air pollution shaves 7-8 months off the average person's life in the UK.

Yet the Scottish Government continues to break binding European legal limits for air pollution, 6 years after a deadline. Air quality safety standards are failing in 32 Pollution Zones across Scotland, including in Glasgow, Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh and smaller towns like Crieff and Linlithgow.

PM ₁₀ : Worst streets in Scotland		NO ₂ : Worst streets in Scotland	
Edinburgh Salamander St	23	Edinburgh St John's Rd	65
Aberdeen Wellington Rd	22	Glasgow Kerbside	60
Perth Atholl Street	20	Dundee Seagate	50
Aberdeen Market Street 2	19	Perth Atholl St	48
Glasgow Dumbarton Rd	19	Dundee Lochee Rd	48
Dundee Lochee Road	19	Aberdeen Union St Roadside	46
Falkirk West Bridge St	18	Edinburgh Queensferry Rd	41
S Lanarkshire Rutherglen	18	Aberdeen Wellington Rd	41

Health standard = 18µgm / m³

Health standard = 40µgm / m³

Road traffic the main source

Road traffic is the main source of Scotland's air pollution, responsible for around 80% of our urban Nitrogen Dioxide pollution.

Road traffic also causes a large - and growing - chunk of Scotland's climate emissions. Whilst other sectors have reduced carbon emissions year on year, transport still pours out almost as much carbon as in 1990. So the changes that would clean our air would also help stop our planet from overheating.

We call on the Scottish Government to..

1. Shift our *car is king* culture to more sustainable transport modes - make 20mph zones the national norm, introduce workplace parking levies for large employers, and investigate urban congestion charges.



2. Roll out a network of *Low Emission Zones* in towns and cities by 2018, where the most polluting vehicles would be banned or have to pay hefty fines

3. Invest 10% of transport funds in walking/cycling.



by **Emilia Hanna**

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See spokes.org.uk/bulletin for a fuller and referenced version of this article

Can pedalling help?

In short, YES. Studies are beginning to show that increased cycling correlates with improved air quality. It's a no brainer - using a bike eliminates a car trip, which in turn means cleaner air.

Sevilla has achieved inspirational cycle use growth, with a hugely impressive mode share increase from 0.5% to 7% between 2006 and 2013, through major infrastructure investment, a big bike-share scheme and measures to reduce motorised traffic. At the same time, Nitrogen Dioxide levels fell from 52 µg/m³ in 2000 to just 25 µg/m³ in 2012, meeting Europe's air quality Nitrogen Dioxide legal limit (40 µg/m³).

What Must the Scottish Government do?

Despite growing enthusiasm for cycling, still less than 2% of all trips are by bike. Roads are skewed in favour of cars and many people feel it is not safe or convenient to cycle. The Scottish Government invests under 2% of its transport budget in walking/cycling.

The Government has promised to meet European air quality standards by 2020, through a new Strategy, *Cleaner Air for Scotland*. Friends of the Earth Scotland is campaigning to ensure that the Government delivers on this promise.

FOE Scotland is tackling air pollution within an overarching Fossil-Free Scotland campaign, which aims for a just transition to a 100% renewable, nuclear-free, zero fossil fuel Scotland.

What you can do..

1. Be part of the solution by using your bike

Choosing a bike and ditching the car means you are cutting down on air pollution, congestion, and climate emissions - and getting fit and healthy in the process.

2. Find out if you live in a **Pollution Zone** - visit www.scottishairquality.co.uk/laqm/aqma

3. Check out the **Scottish Government's Air Quality Website**. If you feel particularly susceptible to everyday air pollution, you can see live pollution readings and subscribe to the Government's "Know and Respond" service to receive alerts when air pollution is high - see www.scottishairquality.co.uk.

4. Contact your **MSPs about cycling & pollution**
The new Parliament is a new opportunity to push for action on transport. You can contact your MSPs using www.writetothem.com. If you feel personally affected and/or if you live or work in a Pollution Zone, say so.

5. Join **Friends of the Earth Scotland as a member ...** and help us fight for clean air every day. Join us today at www.foe-scotland.org.uk/join