

National Clean Air Day 2017



The Scottish Government says that Scotland is making progress tackling air pollution, according to a new report launched today.

In the last 18 months 40 key actions have been progressed as part of the Clean Air for Scotland (CAFS) strategy involving the Scottish Government, local authorities, the NHS, Transport Scotland and Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA).

The government is concentrating on these key activities :

- working with local authorities to introduce the country's first Low Emission Zone by 2018, including on-going engagement with the bus and freight sectors
- Scotland becoming the first country in Europe to adopt in law the World Health Organisation's guidelines on fine particulate matter and funding for 13 new monitoring stations (adding to the 16 already in place)
- the creation of four new Air Quality Management Areas, bringing the total to 38 in Scotland, all in locations designed to give the best insight into pollution country wide
- the development of an app which advises people about alternative routes to help reduce exposure to pollution, and a permanent exhibition at the Glasgow Science Centre dedicated to air quality
- encouraging alternative methods of travel through the launch of the [National Walking Action Plan](#) and an updated [Cycling Action Plan](#)

Friends of the Earth Scotland are urging all levels of Government to tackle air pollution by adopting better transport policies. They explain that transport accounts for about 80% of urban nitrogen dioxide pollution and 28% of

Scotland's total carbon emissions, and that air pollution causes 2,500 deaths each year and an estimated 40,000 deaths throughout the UK each year.

Friends of the Earth Scotland Air Pollution Campaigner Emilia Hanna said,

"Clean Air Day is an opportunity for the Scottish Government and local councils to demonstrate they are committed to tackling this health crisis by putting proper transport policies on the table which will tackle the scourge of dirty air on our streets.

"To give us the clean air we need, the Scottish Government must commit to Low Emission Zones in all our main cities, re-regulate bus companies to increase passenger numbers, and increase walking and cycling by making 20mph the default speed limit in cities whilst investing more in active travel infrastructure."

Speaking on a visit to Sciennes Primary School, Edinburgh for National Clean Air Day, Environment Secretary Roseanna Cunningham said:

"A year on and the package of actions set out in Scotland's first clean air strategy is clearly helping people and encouraging them to think about ways of improving the quality of air in our communities. But we can't be complacent and recognise much more needs to be done.

"National Clean Air Day is an opportunity to think about the small actions we can take, such as choosing to leave the car at home more often or avoiding leaving the engine idling when in the car. Employers should also be encouraging staff to travel in a more sustainable way.

"There are many challenges ahead, but by working together we can realise the vision of cleaner air in Scotland to create a better environment and healthier society for kids like those

at Sciennes Primary.”

The CAFS Partnership update coincided with research published by the organisers of National Clean Air Day which shows that 81% of Scots believe it is important to tackle air pollution, yet only 28% have taken steps to reduce the air pollution they create.

Half of those 28% are replacing their car journeys with walking, cycling or public transport, while the rest are making sure vehicles are well maintained and don't idle in traffic.

Chris Large, of Global Action Plan, which organised National Clean Air Day, said: “Polluted air is undoubtedly bad for human health, but it is especially bad for the young, elderly and people who already have chronic heart and lung conditions, affecting their ability to lead a normal active health life.

“We make choices every day that affect how much pollution we personally breathe in, or put in to the air. National Clear Air Day aims to help everyone understand what they can do to help reduce the problem. It's great to see the Scottish Government support the campaign as we can achieve clean air most swiftly if government, business and the public work together.”