

Friends of the Earth flag up Edinburgh's worst streets

Air pollution in Edinburgh is among the worst say Friends of the Earth.

Edinburgh is home to some of Scotland's most polluted streets, prompting calls for the Council to accelerate plans for a Low Emission Zone for the capital.

Environmental campaign group Friends of the Earth Scotland have analysed official Scottish Government data and today publish two lists of all streets with illegal and unsafe levels of pollution.

There are two readings – nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) for which the limit is 40 micrograms per cubic metre and particulate matter (PM₁₀) for which the Scottish annual statutory standard is 18 micrograms per cubic metre,.



Magdalena Jednorowicz with 6 year-old
Ossian

St John's Road and Queensferry Road were declared the second and sixth worst polluted streets in Scotland for NO₂, with annual readings of 50 and 41 micrograms per cubic metre respectively. Salamander Street, Queensferry Road, and Glasgow Road were the worst, second worst, and fifth worst streets for PM₁₀, with annual readings of 23, 23, and 19 microgrammes per cubic metre respectively.

FoE say that Edinburgh has six designated "Pollution Zones" across the city, with one spanning the entirety of the city centre, due to regular breaches of Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) and Particulate Matter (PM₁₀) standards.

Nitrogen Dioxide

**Top 6 most polluted streets for Nitrogen Dioxide in 2017:
Figures in microgrammes per cubic metre (µg/m³).**

Glasgow Hope Street – 58

Edinburgh St John's Road – 50

Glasgow Dumbarton Road – 43

Dundee Seagate – 43

Dundee Lochee Road – 42

Edinburgh Queensferry Road – 41

The European Ambient Air Quality Directive set a limit for NO₂ of 40 microgrammes per cubic metre, so all these sites are breaking the legal limit. The deadline for compliance was 1 January 2010.

Particulate Matter (PM₁₀)

**Top 6 most polluted streets for Particulate Matter in 2017
Figures in microgrammes per cubic metre (µg/m³).**

Edinburgh Salamander St – 23

Edinburgh Queensferry Road – 23

Perth Atholl Street – 21

Glasgow Clarence Drive – 19

Edinburgh Glasgow Road – 19

Glasgow Dumbarton Road – 19

The Scottish annual statutory standard for PM₁₀ is 18 micrograms per cubic metre, so all these sites are breaking the standard. The deadline for this standard to have been met was 31st December 2010

Hairdresser Magdalena Jednorowicz, 37, lives in Edinburgh and has a six year old son, Ossian. When Ossian was two and a half he caught a viral infection which resulted in post-viral lung disease. Jednorowicz considers air pollution to be like “passive smoking” for children and is calling for more sustainable transport for the capital.

She said: “Ossian has a lower lung capacity and permanent

wheeze, I have to be very careful about where we go. I have noticed that on polluted days he struggles much more and gets easily out of breath.

“I avoid crossing junctions where lines of cars stop at lights because those areas are much more noticeably polluted. Fumes seem to be stronger on the levels of small people’s height.

“Try waiting at a bus stop – it is like passive smoking. I noticed it even more when he was younger, in a pram. It is unfair that pedestrian children have to be exposed to the toxins while out and about in our beautiful city.

“To tackle air pollution, we need improved cycle paths to encourage more of us to cycle, and we need more warnings for drivers, because many are still not aware enough of cyclists. We need more eco friendly buses too.”

Emilia Hanna, Air Pollution Campaigner for Friends of the Earth Scotland said: “Once again, Edinburgh shamefully finds itself in the list of Scotland’s most polluted streets, with dangerous levels of toxic air pollution which are breaking legal limits.

“It’s good news that Edinburgh City Council will implement a Low Emission Zone by 2020 to tackle our toxic fumes, but it must develop these plans more quickly, and ensure that its LEZ is bold and ambitious enough to do the job of delivering clean air.

“Air pollution from traffic fumes has a devastating impact on health, especially on children and people with existing health problems. Air pollution has been linked with heart attacks, strokes, and cancers and can also inhibit children’s lung development. It is unacceptable to have continued levels of pollution on our streets that are harming our children’s prospects in life.

“Our society is far too car dependent. The Scottish Government

and Edinburgh City Council should work together to promote sustainable transport alternatives like walking, cycling, and public transport. Only then will we see the step change we need to improve our health and adequately tackle the devastating silent killer that is air pollution. The sun needs to set on petrol and diesel cars, and fast, if there is to be an end to air pollution."

Photo courtesy of Streetfoto Edinburgh