

Introduction

Air pollution is the single largest environmental threat to public health. Breathing poor air increases the risk of developing conditions such as cancer, heart disease, chronic respiratory conditions and dementia, and is estimated to cause at least [29,000 deaths each year in the UK](#). Air pollution also damages and degrades the natural environment. While trends in outdoor air quality are generally improving, recent progress has been slow and the government is not on track to meet the majority of its emissions reduction targets.

There are some emission sources that are lagging significantly behind and need urgent action. Indoor air quality has been historically neglected, despite many of us spending [around 90% of our amount of our time indoors](#). The IAQM has been working to raise the profile of indoor air quality and produced [leading guidance](#) for air quality, construction and planning professionals in 2021. Emissions from agriculture and domestic burning also need urgent attention, having seen a significant increase over the last decade.

Healthy air should be the public health mission of the next UK government. Improving air quality will have disproportionate benefits for deprived communities, who are more likely to live close to pollution sources and have existing health vulnerabilities. Many actions taken to improve air quality can also tackle climate emissions, improve biodiversity and reduce noise pollution. Government must work with local authorities and local communities, as well as the environmental science and air quality profession, to deliver an evidence-informed, just transition to healthy air.

Asks for the next UK Government

- 1. Secure a world-leading governance framework for air quality, raising the ambition of existing strategies and targets, and addressing governance gaps**
 1. Raise the ambition of the UK's air quality targets, setting out a credible plan for achieving World Health Organisation 2021 Air Quality Guidelines (WHO) as soon as possible, including meeting an interim 2030 target of an annual mean concentration of 10 micrograms per cubic metre for PM2.5.
 2. Introduce a right to clean air into UK law.
 3. Commit to a regular review of the Air Quality Strategy, to take place at least every three years with a consultation period of at least two months.
 4. Introduce a statutory requirement for local authorities to produce local air quality strategies for all [key pollutants](#), and to consider PM2.5 in annual status reports.
- 2. Raise the profile of indoor air quality in the UK's approach to public health and take immediate action to tackle the sources of indoor air quality**
 1. Close evidence and monitoring gaps identified by the Air Quality Expert Group's 2022 [Indoor Air Quality](#) report.
 2. Deliver a single clear national public health campaign to raise awareness of the health impacts of solid fuel burning in the home, building on the work of the London Wood Burning Project.
 3. Set out an action plan for phasing out non-essential solid fuel burning in the home.
- 3. Produce ambitious strategies for highly polluting industries and novel contaminants**
 1. Tackle agricultural emissions by publishing a strategy to reduce ammonia, identifying the organisations responsible for delivering improvements and setting ambitious targets for 2030, 2040 and 2050.

2. Publish the updated Clean Maritime Plan, which was due to be published in 2022, with ambitious policies to tackle air pollution in ports, as set out by [Transport & Environment's 2024 report](#).
3. Publish the long-awaited Chemicals Strategy, to include regulation on novel contaminants and 'forever chemicals' such as PFAS.

4. Back local authorities to deliver on clean air, through increased powers, funding and clear guidance

1. Clarify and strengthen the powers of local authorities to tackle air pollution, including on idling, wood burning and public transport.
2. Provide clear guidance and unambiguous political support for an evidence-based, community-led dialogue on air quality interventions, such as clean air zones and low traffic neighbourhoods.
3. Deliver long-term funding to local authorities for air quality management, including urgently reinstating the air quality grant scheme.

5. Expand air quality monitoring and alert networks, using high-quality equipment and best practice to provide robust data to inform decision making

1. Expand and join-up the air quality monitoring and alerts network, including increased monitoring of black carbon and ultra fine particulate matter.
2. Work with the scientific community to set standards, ensuring that monitoring equipment, especially new low-cost sensors, are robust and used appropriately, including by citizen scientists.

About the Institute of Air Quality Management (IAQM)

The Institution of Environmental Sciences (the IES) is at the forefront of uniting this interdisciplinary field around a shared goal: to work with speed, vision and expertise to solve the world's most pressing environmental challenges, together. As the global professional membership body for environmental scientists, we support a diverse network of professionals all over the world – and at every stage of their education and careers – to connect, develop, progress and inspire.

The IAQM is the professional body for air quality professionals in the UK, acting as the voice for air quality by producing useful and timely guidance on matters affecting air quality professionals and by responding to Government consultations. The IAQM is committed to maintaining, enhancing and promoting the highest standards of working practices in the field and supports the development of professionals working in the sector.