Reducing Road Traffic Air Pollution in Wales

Outdoor air pollution is the biggest environmental threat to health

Parts of Wales regularly experience poor air quality

Two thirds of urban air pollution is due to road traffic emissions

Road traffic emissions contain pollutants including particulate matter (PM) and nitrogen dioxide (NO₂)

Impact and cost of air pollution in Wales

Health impact
Air pollution is linked with conditions including heart diseases, stroke, lung diseases and lung cancer

Some people are at more at risk than others e.g. children, older people, those with existing health problems

Cost to society
The cost to society from air pollution is around £1 bn per year in Wales

1 NO₂ is an irritant gas produced by combustion processes, PM refers to tiny particles of varying chemical composition less than 2.5µm (PM₂.₅) or 10µm (PM₁₀) in diameter that can be inhaled deep into the lungs
The Solutions
Reducing road traffic air pollution in Wales

Everyone can play a role in reducing air pollution
A number of joined up actions at local, regional and national level together can produce significant change

Planning our communities
Take account of air pollution problems and solutions in planning decisions

Active Travel and Sustainable Transport
For shorter journeys such as trips to shops or schools, walking and cycling has a return of £8 for £1 invested. For longer journeys use public transport, together with walking and cycling

- £1
- £8

Promoting zero emission transport for the final mile of business deliveries returns £5 for every £1 invested

- £1
- £5

Linking places where people live and work through walking and cycling infrastructure has a return of £10 for every £1 invested

- £1
- £10

Corporate low emission travel plans like cycle to work schemes return £6 for every £1 invested

- £1
- £6

Reducing vehicle emissions
Car clubs can help reduce the number of vehicles on the road and encourage use of public and active transport, with £13 returned for £1 invested

- £1
- £13

Low emission zones in populated areas can return £27 for every £1 invested

- £1
- £27

Reducing urban speed limits from 30mph to 20mph would reduce PM emissions, crash casualties and fatalities, as well as increase community cohesion

- £1
- 20

Note: This infographic is part of the ‘Making a Difference: Investing in Sustainable Health and Well-being for the People of Wales’ report. The methods and sources of information are available in the ‘Supporting Evidence’ document on the Public Health Wales website. Where possible, latest figures for Wales are presented. Where unavailable, figures for Wales have been estimated from the latest UK/England/other data on unadjusted per capita basis.