

Breathing life into West Yorkshire

**Taking action
on toxic air**

November 2023



**In West Yorkshire,
millions of people
are breathing in
harmful toxins
every day.**



**66% of parents
with children under
18 are concerned
about the impact
of air pollution on
their health.**

Despite legal deadlines to reduce air pollution set by the UK government over a decade ago, an alarming **800,000 people** across West Yorkshire are living in areas with illegal levels air pollution, including **200,000 people** with lung conditions and **56,000 children** under the age of six.

Despite some progress, there has been no overarching plan for the region since 2021.

What's the problem?



Recorded levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO²) across the region are exceeding World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines by more than four times.



People are exposed to life-limiting toxic air just by going about their everyday lives.



In West Yorkshire hospital admissions of childhood asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) are above the national average.

What have we found?

In January 2023, we commissioned representative polling from YouGov to gain insight into attitudes across West Yorkshire about air pollution and how to tackle it. We found that communities across the region are worried about breathing in toxic air and want to see bold action that will protect their health and enable them to use cleaner modes of transport.

66%

of parents with children under 18 are concerned about the impact of air pollution on their health.

100%

of parents aged 18-24 with young children reported being concerned about the impact of air pollution on their children's health.

91%

of people in West Yorkshire were in support of cheaper public transport.

45%

of people, across all those surveyed, were in support of a clean air zone in their area.

75%

were also in favour of financial support, like scrappage schemes, to facilitate the transition towards cleaner modes of transport.

Councils in West Yorkshire have already adopted diverse approaches to reduce air pollution, like community-led initiatives, the promotion of sustainable travel options and the shift towards clean transportation methods. However, we know that more can be done at a local level, and resource is required from central government to enable local and regional authorities to take further action.



This is why at Asthma + Lung UK, we are calling for a Cleaner Travel Access Fund (CTAF) to provide the necessary assistance to transition to cleaner modes of transport to those who need it the most.

Our recommendations

We're calling on the West Yorkshire Combined Authority to continue to demonstrate leadership in this area by:

1

Implementing a new Low Emissions Strategy for the next five years that:

- **sets out** action across all local authorities with the aim of achieving WHO guidelines, learning from best practice across the country
- **targets** action to the most polluted areas and encourages the development of clean air zones in the most polluted areas
- **develops** a public transport plan that seeks to increase access and affordability for the communities that need it most
- **works closely** with communities to develop local travel interventions, especially people on lower incomes and people with lung conditions
- **is integrated** with the West Yorkshire Integrated Care System's plans for improving respiratory health.

2

Developing school streets and air monitoring programmes

with all councils in West Yorkshire, prioritising the worst affected areas. This should include live air quality monitoring of NO₂ and PM_{2.5} at all schools. All data should be made available so that school communities can use it to protect their health and improve transport infrastructure in those areas.

3

Improving monitoring across the region

with a particular focus on areas of deprivation and where pollution is worst.

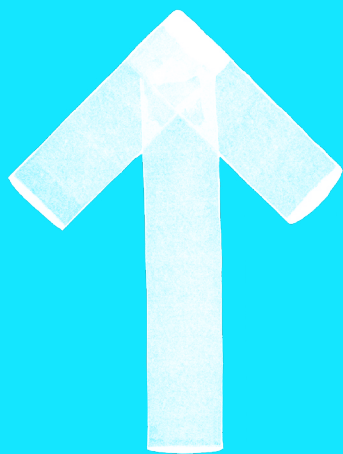
4

Developing an air quality alert system

that provides timely information about high air pollution episodes, targeted to communities who need it most with the advice they need to protect their health.

How you can help

We're keen to work with councillors, Council Leaders, MPs and the Mayor of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority to help realise these ambitious plans to reduce air pollution. Improving the air quality in West Yorkshire can save lives and create healthier communities so that everyone can breathe the same clean air. It's time to take bold action on toxic air and protect everyone's lungs.



For more information about the report and our campaign in West Yorkshire, please contact:

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Improving the air quality in West Yorkshire can save lives and create healthier communities.



Funded by

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