

Toxic air fact-file: Greater Manchester

Across Greater Manchester's 10 local authorities there are unsafe and illegal levels of air pollution, and the area has some of the worst lung disease outcomes in England.

1.6 million life years lost

King's College London estimate that 1.6 million life years could be lost in Greater Manchester in the coming century due to its poisonous air.ⁱ

1,200 early deaths a year linked to dirty air

It's estimated the equivalent of 1,200 early deaths every year in Greater Manchester can be linked to air pollution exposure.ⁱⁱ

152 stretches of road breaching legal limits beyond 2020

Greater Manchester Combined Authority have identified 250 points on 152 stretches of road likely to have levels of nitrogen dioxide in breach of legal limits beyond 2020 if no action is taken. This includes busy stretches of roads in all ten local authority areas.ⁱⁱⁱ

£1 billion annual cost to the Greater Manchester economy

A King's College London study found that air pollution is costing between £1 billion and £1.2 billion to the Greater Manchester economy with every single local authority area affected – a huge cost to the local economy.^{iv}

Cars are responsible for 80% of miles driven

In 2016, cars were responsible for 10,696 million kilometres (driven on motorways, A and B roads) from a total of 13,285 million kilometres driven by all vehicles – that works out at as 80%.^{viii}

Higher levels of lung disease than national average

According to British Lung Foundation research, people in parts of Greater Manchester are on average at higher relative risk of some lung diseases compared to the national average. For example, people in Oldham are 81% more likely to be admitted to hospital with asthma and 85% more likely to be admitted to hospital with COPD compared to the average.^{vi}

In 2015 around 163,000 people in Greater Manchester have asthma, and 58,000 have COPD.^{vii} Many factors are behind these numbers, but air pollution is likely to have played a role.

The health burden is felt across all local areas

Public Health England estimate the following proportion of deaths can be linked to fine particulate matter exposure.^v

Local authority	Percentage of deaths (%)	Local authority	Percentage of deaths (%)
Salford	4.51	Bury	4.26
Manchester	4.47	Trafford	4.23
Tameside	4.40	Rochdale	4.19
Bolton	4.34	Stockport	4.19
Oldham	4.32	Wigan	4.10



What progress has been made?

The Greater Manchester Combined Authority and the ten local authorities are taking a joint approach to tackling air pollution across the city region. They published their new air quality proposals in 2019. These proposals include a charging clean air zone across the whole area for many of the most polluting vehicles – but sadly they don't include private cars. The timeline for implementation is also too slow and there are few plans to protect and engage vulnerable groups.^{ix}

Promising progress has been made on cycling and walking with new investment in infrastructure and promotion.^x Similarly, respiratory disease has been prioritised in Greater Manchester's five-year health and social care plan.^{xi} These plans are very welcome, but now they need to be properly integrated across the region to protect the most vulnerable from toxic air.

What more needs to happen?

These plans need to go further and faster to protect everyone from the dangerous effects of air pollution. We want Greater Manchester Combined Authority to:

- 1) **Include private cars in their Clean Air Zone plans** and set out more ambitious timescales. People cannot wait until 2024 for the dirty air they are breathing to be cleaned up.
- 2) **Roll out a Clean Air for Children programme.** Children are the most vulnerable to toxic air, so it's essential that a region-wide programme is put in place to protect them. This should include audits of polluted schools and nurseries to identify which tailored solutions best solve local challenges.
- 3) **Set out a regional Healthy Air Strategy** across health, environment, education, planning and transport teams. It should include ambitious measures to provide financial incentives for vulnerable people to upgrade their vehicles, to improve air pollution alerts and engagement with health care professionals.

You can read more in our response to Manchester's consultation on [blf.org.uk/policy](https://www.blf.org.uk/policy).

Get in touch

To find out more about statistics and campaigns in your local area drop us an email at campaigns@blf.org

ⁱⁱ IPPR (2018) Atmosphere – towards a proper strategy for tackling Manchester's air pollution crisis, <https://www.ippr.org/research/publications/atmosphere>

ⁱⁱⁱ Greater Manchester Combined Authority (2019) Greater Manchester tells Government: "Play fair on clean air" <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/news/greater-manchester-tells-government-play-fair-on-clean-air/>

^{iv} Transport for Greater Manchester (2019) Which roads are affected?, <https://cleanairgm.com/which-roads-are-affected>.

^v IPPR (2018) Atmosphere – towards a proper strategy for tackling Manchester's air pollution crisis, <https://www.ippr.org/research/publications/atmosphere>

^{vi} Public Health Outcomes Framework (2019) Fraction of mortality attributable to particulate air pollution – based on 2017 PM2.5 data <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/public-health-outcomes-framework/data#page/3/gid/1000043/pat/6/par/E12000002/ati/101/are/E07000026/iid/30101/age/230/sex/4>

^{vii} British Lung Foundation (2016) Battle for Breath, <https://www.blf.org.uk/policy/the-battle-for-breath-2016>

^{viii} NHS digital (2015) COPD and Asthma prevalence, analysis by BLF of 2015 stats. <https://qof.digital.nhs.uk/>

^{ix} Transport for Greater Manchester (2018) Transport Statistics Greater Manchester Public Transport Section, available at: <https://data.gov.uk/dataset/16bb4b09-f69c-42f0-9e3e-9bcf6dc4f886/transport-statistics-greater-manchester-public-transport-section>

^x Greater Manchester Combined Authority (2019) Greater Manchester Clean Air Plan proposals <https://cleanairgm.com/clean-air-plan>

^{xi} Greater Manchester Combined Authority (2019) Greater Manchester's cycling and walking infrastructure proposal <https://assets.ctfassets.net/nv7y93idf4jq/340OjdbQmsImel4AQQM8My/e8dee4819e6bc8c13036af620d81259f/Beelines.pdf>

^{xii} Greater Manchester Combined Authority (2015) Taking charge of health and social care in Greater Manchester, <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/media/1120/taking-charge-of-our-health-and-social-care-plan.pdf>