

UK Health Forum Comment
28th July, 2017

UK Health Forum welcomes the UK Government's plan for tackling roadside nitrogen dioxide concentrations

The UK plan for tackling roadside nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) concentrations was released on Wednesday (26 July 2017).

The UK Health Forum (UKHF) supports the plan and is pleased the Government¹ has identified air pollution as a major public health issue that must be addressed.

The new plan is based on compliance with EU NO₂ levels but the UK needs an enduring strategy for all air pollutants, not an incremental or roadside only approach.

Air pollution is the largest environmental cause of early death - contributing to the equivalent of 5% of all annual deaths as well as a substantial amount of morbidity².

By tackling traffic related air pollution, not only is human health improved but also the health of flora and fauna. Carbon emissions are reduced, accidents are prevented, active travel is increased, public transport is improved and better integrated, noise pollution is reduced and the urban landscape is improved leading to better mental and physical health and wellbeing for all.

Commenting on the launch of the plan, Professor Paul Lincoln, Chief Executive of the UKHF said:

"We are pleased that the Government intends to mandate the quickest possible action and independently quality assured plans should be implemented as soon as possible. We believe this will inevitably lead to charging clean air zones.

We also support the review of taxation to support the Government's air pollution reduction measures on diesel vehicles, especially on new cars and hope that this will be brought in swiftly after the next budget.

A comprehensive review by Public Health England (PHE) on all forms of air pollution which will inform the Government's overall plans on air quality in 2018 is also welcomed."

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¹ See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/air-quality-plan-for-nitrogen-dioxide-no2-in-uk-2017>

² See <https://www.healthyair.org.uk/the-problem/>