



HOPE FOR
THE
FUTURE

**HOW CAN YOU SPEAK
TO YOUR MP
ABOUT CLEAN AIR?**



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Air Quality: Why does it matter?

Air Quality is one of the most overlooked aspects of climate change and nature loss, yet one that will most likely directly affect you and your community. When looking on a global level, our minds may go to Oil and Gas drilling or heavy industry, but there are pollutants released every day in the UK that affect us on a daily basis. Since the start of the industrial revolution, and possibly beyond, we've been pumping harmful chemicals into the air that we breathe. As a physical indicator of pollution, poor air quality can be linked to lower life expectancies, higher rates of asthma and lung diseases, as well as making things worse for people in vulnerable situations. In fact, air-quality related disease and vulnerability costs the NHS nearly £10bn every year. Stronger action on air pollution will make the UK, its people, and its economy healthier. In this guide, you can find a quick intro to the topic, some primers for a conversation with your local MP, an exploration of some possible common grounds, and some ideas on how we can all push for cleaner air for the future. Cleaner air is a key area your MP could champion and create a legacy in.

The History of the Movement

The first thing that we need to bear in mind is that we've come a long way. Coal-derived pollution in the Victorian era stained cars, buildings, and clothes black, and it is even said to have influenced the Scouse accent. Over the years, the smogs created in London and other cities were infamous and fatal enough to prompt the Clean Air Acts of 1956 and 1958. This forms the basis of air quality legislation and first gave businesses responsibility over the pollution they create and established the need to separate the population from the sources of pollution. This legislation has been adapted and expanded, mostly through European-wide regulations, provides us today with frameworks for assessing 'problem areas' and with strict reporting requirements. You can find out more information about current air quality reporting for your local area through your local council website or [DEFRA's air quality reporting hub](#).

We've come a long way, but we've got further to go. by reaching out to your MP and asking them to champion this issue, you can turn the page on an aspect of climate change that belongs in the 19th century. By working together with your MP, you can help build a healthier world for the next generation.





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Co-Benefits: Alternative Approaches

If you have an MP that is passionate about Air Quality and the planet, that wants to leave behind a stronger and healthier world for the next generation, fantastic! If not, you could discuss adjacent or linked topics with them that create similar solutions. These topics, Co-Benefits, are the perfect way to discuss topics with politicians that may not be onboard with your particular focus on climate change and nature loss.

Active Travel and Public Transport

Cars are some of the biggest drivers of pollution that many of us will face on a daily basis, therefore actions to create less car-dependant spaces will massively reduce air pollution. You could talk to your local councillor about creating more walkable spaces, or how to promote safer active travel within your community. You could also speak to your MP about the promotion of public transport, buses, trains, and other forms, on a national level.

Schools and Young People

Children, having smaller lungs and being physically closer to the ground (closer to the source of pollution), are at higher risk of air pollution's terrible effects on health and development. Its worth bearing in mind that this also applies to electric vehicles, as small particulates from everyday tyre use make up a significant portion of the pollution, not just exhaust fumes. Concepts like School Streets programs or Low Traffic Neighbourhoods try to reduce car usage within certain areas (like around schools) or at certain times of the day. You could speak to your MP and Local Councillor about plans to trial such schemes or ask your MP about how the government can promote these ideas in city planning.



Remember, get creative! You should always try to research your MP beforehand and then tailor your approach to them. Do they care passionately about the NHS? Maybe they coach school sports in their free time. Or perhaps they just care about the pure economics. Approaching your MP through the issues they care about is the best way to have a constructive conversation about the issues you care about and create common ground.



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What can we do now?

It's clear that air pollution in the UK constitutes both a health and climate/nature emergency and demands strong action. Campaigns such as [Action for Clean Air Day](#), as well as those by [Friends of the Earth](#) and [Asthma + Lung UK](#) build community support in order to advocate for strong change from the government. You could organise an event in line with Clean Air Day and invite your MP, reminding them about the local impacts of air pollution on your community and how you and your community need air quality to be prioritised.

Why not meet with your MP directly, by inviting them to discuss the negative effects of air pollution, such as on public health or the economy, as well as possible solutions.

In particular, parliament desperately needs a new and updated Clean Air Act, one that puts greater emphasis and responsibility on government departments and local authorities to set firmer pollution reduction targets, align the UK with the World Health Organisation's standards, and push decision-making to include strict pollutant management. You could ask your MP about Government plans for a new Clean Air Bill or ask them to support the creation of one in parliament.



Through connected action across the UK, we can build a community that champions tougher government action on issues that matter most for people and the planet. If you want to get involved, reach out to the [Climate Coalition](#) and [Hope for the Future](#) today.

