

DRAFT AIR QUALITY STRATEGY SUMMARY

Air pollution affects everyone's health. It can be especially harmful for children, older people, and people who already have health problems. Hertfordshire County Council wants to make the air cleaner and healthier whether you're inside or outside.

OUR VISION AND GOALS

Vision: Working together to create healthier air for all.

Our Main Goals:

- Help people understand where pollution comes from and how it can harm health.
- Give people a way to share ideas that help the council make decisions to improve our air.
- Work with other organisations to find better ways to improve air quality.
- Use the best information to make good choices.
- To reduce air pollution across Hertfordshire, with extra help for people most at risk, such as children and older people.

WHAT WE PLAN TO DO

Healthier Standards – We want to meet the World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines for nitrogen dioxide, a gas that can harm people's health. These limits are lower than the UK law.

Better Awareness – We will run campaigns like Clean Air Day. We will share easy-to-understand information about air quality.

Support for People Most at Risk – We will send [air quality alerts](#) to people when air pollution is high. This helps them to stay safe.

Cleaner Transport – We will reduce traffic and help people to switch to electric vehicles. We want walking and cycling to be easier and safer. We will work to improve buses and trains. We will work with airports to help reduce pollution.

Healthier Places - We will help farms and factories follow clean and safe rules. For new buildings, we will advise that schools and care homes should not be placed in areas with high pollution. We may use healthy street scores to check if new streets are safe and easy for people to walk and cycle on.

Healthier Indoor Air - We will ask local councils to review Smoke Control Areas. These are places where people cannot create smoke from their chimneys. We will use clean, low pollution heating and energy.

Working together – We will work with universities, national organisations, and local communities.

WHAT IS AIR POLLUTION

Air pollution means there are harmful substances in the air. These can affect people's health, the environment and the climate.

The three main pollutants we will focus on are:

- Particulate matter (PM_{2.5}): small particles in the air that we cannot see. They come from brake and tyre wear, wood burning at home and smoke from factories.
- Nitrogen dioxide (NO₂): a gas made when things burn at high temperatures. It comes from road traffic and gas cooking.
- Ammonia (NH₃) a gas that can mix with other chemicals in the air to make more particulate pollution. It can fall onto land and water and harm nature. Most ammonia in the UK comes from farming.

These pollutants come from many places, including transport, homes, factories, building work and farming. (Figure 1)

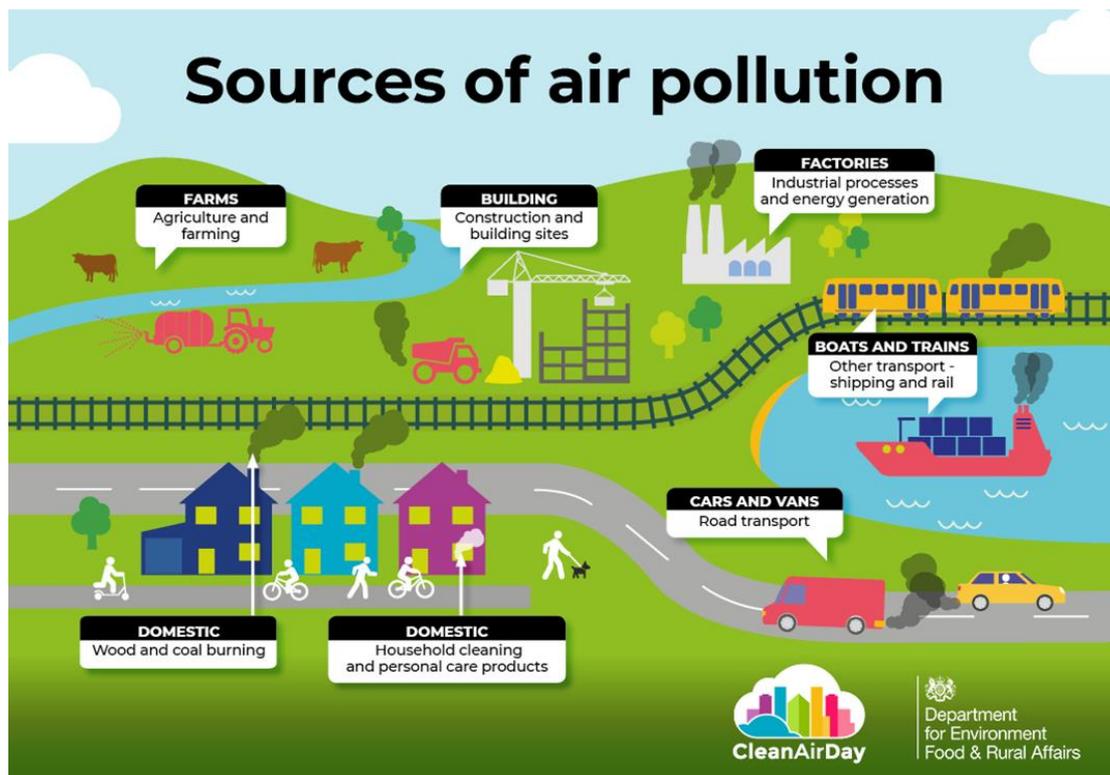


Figure 1 – Sources of air pollution

WHO DOES AIR POLLUTION AFFECT?

Air pollution can harm everyone, but some people are more at risk. These include, younger children, older adults, pregnant women, people who already have health problems and people who live in more deprived areas. For these groups, breathing polluted air can cause more serious health problems. (Figure 2)

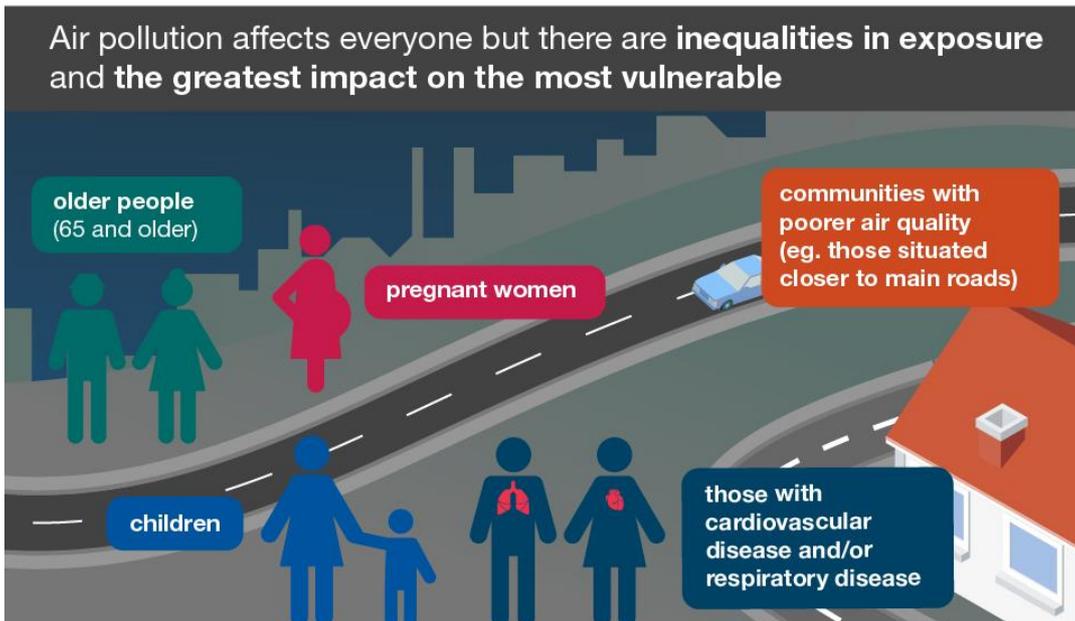


Figure 2 – Those most affected by air pollution

WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF AIR POLLUTION?

Air pollution can harm every part of the body. It is linked to serious long-term illnesses like cancer, diabetes and dementia. Breathing polluted air can make existing health problems worse. It can also cause new illnesses that might not have happened otherwise. (Figure 3) There is no safe level of air pollution.

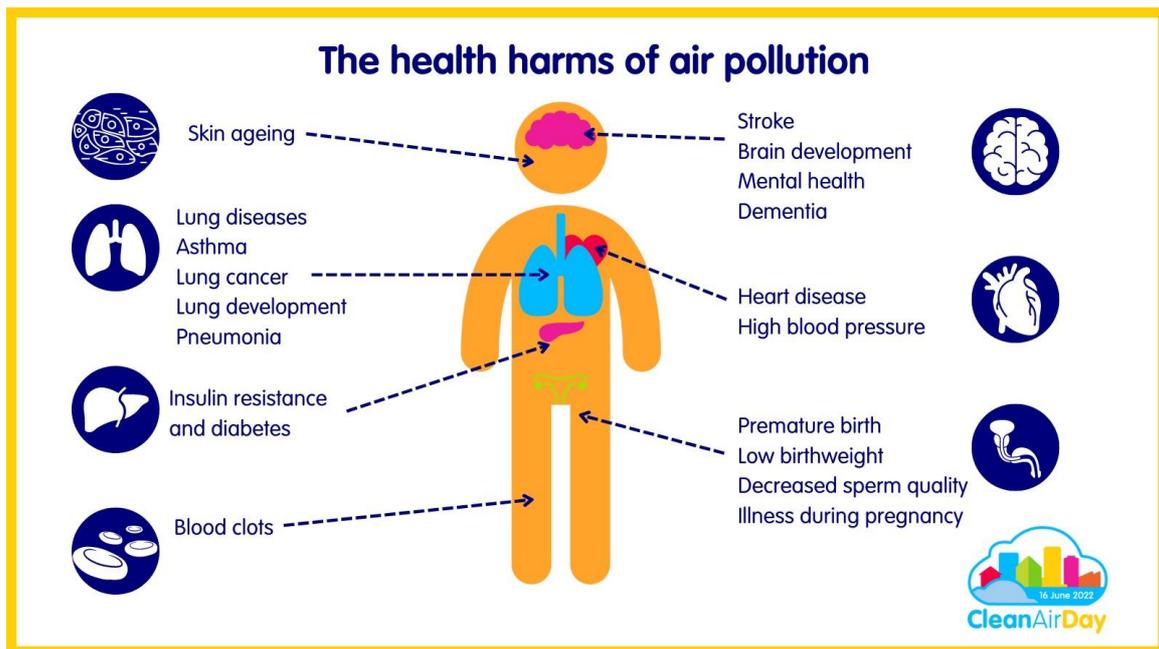


Figure 3 – The health harms of air pollution