

Discussion notes for Healthy Air presentation

This note supports the template presentation which has been developed to help community groups start a discussion on air quality in their area. Healthy Air London are available to advise and support at any stage of the process – please contact Hannah Smith – hsmith@clientearth.org or 0203 030 5978.

1. Title slide

Add any relevant details such as your name, date and where you're speaking.

2. Healthy Air Film

This contains a link to the Healthy Air film which is about three minutes long and covers the basic facts around air quality. Please note, you will need a live internet link to use this slide.

3. Health impacts

The key fact is that 4,300 premature deaths are caused by poor air quality in London each year. The report showing this is [here](#). This figure is 29,000 for the UK. The report showing this is [here](#).

These deaths are related to PM2.5 (the smallest of the particles making up particulate matter), and are largely cardiovascular (e.g. heart attacks and strokes). There is also strong evidence that air pollution is linked to respiratory disease including asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, low birthweight in newborn babies, and that children who grow up near busy roads can enter adulthood with [underdeveloped lungs](#).

4. Facts

In London, the legal air quality limits are broken every year. Nitrogen dioxide is the main problem, and some roads such as Brixton Road and Putney High Street, experience levels three times the legal limit.

The main cause is road traffic, and diesel is the biggest culprit, emitting far more particulate matter than petrol engines. The World Health Organisation has classified diesel exhaust as [carcinogenic for humans](#).

But it's not all doom and gloom. The Supreme Court recently declared that the Government is [failing in its legal duty](#) to protect people from the harmful effects of air pollution. The science is really robust and more and public awareness is growing - We need to demonstrate that we know and we care.

The rest of the presentation focuses on what you can do to help raise awareness further, reduce your own exposure and contribution, and help achieve action to improve our air.

5. Know where and when air pollution is particularly bad

You can cut your exposure drastically by taking a road with less traffic.

- Try walkit.com for low pollution routes.
- Find out when air pollution is moderate or high with alerts from airtext.info
- Londonair.org.uk shows current, past and predicted pollution levels and where legal limits are being broken. Download their app and access this information wherever you are.

6. Your area

To fill this slide with local information you should look at www.londonair.org.uk.

Choose your local authority from the list [here](#) and then look on the map for the one closest to you. Click on the circle representing the monitor, then click 'view statistics' and change the date in the drop down menu to the last full year. It should then display which objectives have been achieved and which have not.

7. Know how to reduce your own contribution

You're not protected by being inside a car. If you walk or cycle you can choose a less polluted route whilst improving your health by taking exercise, safe in the knowledge that you're not adding to air pollution.

For more ideas see the [website](#).

8. Visit healthyair.org.uk for info and support

There is more information, resources and news on the website – have a look.

9. Discussion

For the discussion we have set out a number of questions that might be good to start with, if you want to think about how to get more involved.

A) What is our local situation?

As well as looking at londonair.org.uk, you could also try the following:

See where Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) have been declared.

Each local authority in the UK reviews air quality in their area, and where it is not meeting legal limits for one or more pollutants, they must declare it as an AQMA, and then develop a Local Air Quality Action Plan (LAQAP) which sets out how they 'work towards' achieving the limits.

Most of London is covered by an AQMA so unfortunately you may not need to look far. You can search for your local borough and action plan [here](#).

Local mortality figures

The Department of Health has produced figures for the **mortality** (death) impacts of one kind of pollution (PM2.5) for London boroughs. These figures show the percentage of deaths that can be attributed to this kind of pollution. You can see these figures and full definitions on the Public Health Outcomes Framework [website](#).

B) Are there other groups we could link with?

If you are a member of a local group then see if you can gain their support in raising awareness of this issue. To build support, you could also link up with others in the area. Some to try are your local: Older people's forum, Living Streets Group, Friends of the Earth group, [transport group](#), environment forum, parenting groups, faith groups, other local societies and interest groups.

C) Who should we ask about what's being done?

Ask your local air quality officer about what is being planned for the area's air quality, you should be able to find their details on your local borough website.

Other people to ask are your local councillor, MP and MEP. It's fairly well accepted that the relatively low public awareness of air pollution as a health issue means there is not enough pressure on government to take action. Constructively using your voice to ask your elected representatives to support action for healthy air is one of the most important things you can do to help reverse this pattern.

You could also try to contact your local Healthwatch organisation, which have been formed to represent the views of the local population on the 'Health and Wellbeing Boards' which have been set up to co-ordinate action to improve public health. Find your local healthwatch [here](#).

D) How can we help spread awareness?

There are a number of ways you could try to do this. Just talking about it to people you know and meet can help to build interest and momentum and social media can help you to reach more people.

Developing a local version of the Healthy Air leaflet could provide you with a handy summary of the facts to pass on to interested people.

Media coverage is a good way to reach a broader audience, and we can advise as to important things to include in a press release.

Mapping the air pollution in your area can also be a good way to involve people in this issue, and we might be able to help you run a project to do this.

10. Healthy Air London support local groups to make sure you are heard by the right people

Let us know how we can help. We can come to meet with you and help you to talk these ideas through more fully, and look at what approaches would suit you.

11. Contact details

Get in touch with Hannah Smith on hsmith@clientearth.org or 0203 030 5978.