



AIR POLLUTION CAMPAIGN TOOLKIT

A guide to help local groups and campaigners
tackle filthy air in their area

Friends of the Earth Scotland is:

- Scotland's leading environmental campaigning organisation
- An independent Scottish charity with a network of thousands of supporters and active local groups across Scotland
- Part of the largest grassroots environmental network in the world, uniting over 2 million supporters, 75 national member groups and 5,000 local activists

Our vision is of a world where everyone can enjoy a healthy environment and a fair share of the earth's resources.



Friends of the Earth Scotland
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August 2019
Printed on recycled paper

This toolkit was design by **boonstudio**
www.boonstudio.co.uk

Contents

- 4 Introduction**
- 6 The issue**
- 8 Our health**
- 9 Why campaign for clean air**
- 10 Campaign plans**
- 14 Event plan**
- 16 Contact your local MSP**
- 18 Meeting your MSP**
- 20 Writing a press release**

Introduction

What is this for?

If you want to tackle pollution and improve the air quality in your area, this toolkit can help.

**What you need to know,
who you need to speak to,
how to make change happen.**

It's all in here.

Friends of the Earth Scotland campaigns for clean air across Scotland, pushing for change at Parliament, in local councils, and with communities.

We'd love to help you and your campaign.

Get in touch with us at:

info@foe.scot

PEOPLE POWER PLANET



The issue

Most people know that air pollution is bad for us, but few of us realise just how damaging it is to our health. Often, we also don't realise that it is preventable.

Traffic is the main cause of the air pollution that is most harmful to us in Scotland.


If we want to improve the air we breathe, we need to change how we move around and we need fewer vehicles on the road.


This means:

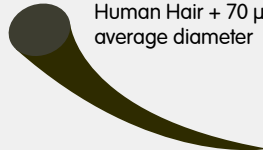
- Improving conditions for walking and cycling
- Better public transport
- Stopping engine idling



There are many kinds of air pollutants, but there are 3 kinds we focus on:

 PM, 2.5 μm diameter

 PM, 10 μm diameter

 Human Hair + 70 μm average diameter



Particulate Matter (PM)

PM is tiny particles suspended in the air. They are often referred to by their size. "PM10" means all particles under 10 micrometers (μm) in diameter (0.01 mm). "PM2.5" is under 2.5 micrometers in diameter.

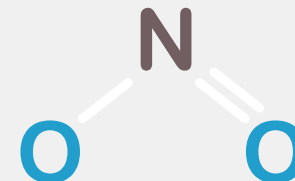
The particles can come from a variety of source, but in Scotland we are facing a public health crisis because of the particles produced by transport. These are created through the exhaust, by tyres, brakes and grit thrown up from the road.

What is engine idling?

Vehicles leaving their engines on while stationary creates air pollution that is completely avoidable.

The Highway Code states "You must not leave a parked vehicle unattended with the engine running or leave a vehicle engine running unnecessarily while that vehicle is stationary on a public road".

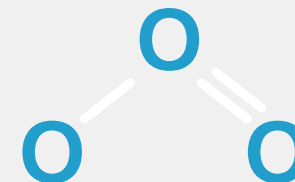
It is punishable by a fine from the local authority.



Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂)

NO₂ is a gas that is mainly produced from diesel vehicles. The more diesel vehicles on the roads around us, the higher the levels of NO₂.

If they are older diesel vehicles, this means the emissions will be higher.



Ozone (O₃)

Ozone has different meanings depending on where in the atmosphere it is. But Ozone at ground level is dangerous to human health.

It is created by a reaction between different chemicals that can come from industrial processes, transport and agriculture.



Our health

Air pollution has a range of long and short term health impacts.

Short term impacts can include mild symptoms such as irritation of the airways, sore throats and headaches, to severe impacts such as asthma and heart attacks.

Long-term impacts of air pollution mean children's lungs don't grow to their full potential. It can cause cardiovascular disease and respiratory illnesses such as asthma, and early death.

Air pollution causes dementia, reduces the weight of newborn babies, and there is emerging evidence linking it with diabetes.

The most vulnerable in our communities are the worst affected by air pollution.

Children, the elderly, those with existing health problems and lower-income communities are disproportionately harmed by pollution from traffic.

Find more information about the health impacts of air pollution here:
foe.scot/air-pollution

Why campaign for clean air?

Cutting air pollution will better protect your health, your family and your community. Everyone has a right to breathe safe and clean air and we need to fight to ensure that authorities are fulfilling their responsibility.

There is lots you could do to tackle air pollution in your area, reduce Scotland's emissions and make our streets safer.

Winning campaigns to reduce air pollution from traffic has many other benefits as well as removing the health risk to local people, such as:

- **Reducing traffic means cutting climate wrecking emissions**
- **Reducing noisy, polluting traffic is also great for improving a sense of community and tackling social isolation**
- **More cycle lanes bring more visitors to an area, boosting local business**
- **More walking and cycling makes streets safe and healthier**
- **Children can play in the street**

Where to access local air pollution info

The main source for information on air pollution in Scotland is:

www.scottishairquality.scot/

This site will tell you what the air pollution levels are at the moment, past levels, and what they are forecast to be.

Pollution in many areas is so bad that the local council has an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA).

This means the council recognises the high levels of pollution and are supposed to come up for a plan for improving the air.

But in our experiences, many councils with AQMAs don't do enough to tackle the problem.



Campaign plans

Campaign ideas

1. Raise awareness of the link between air pollution, health and climate change.
2. Encourage local people to use public transport and active travel.
3. Stop cars idling outside a local school or hospital.
4. Push your council to bring in stronger traffic regulations, such as lower speed limits.
5. Help others imagine what streets could look like if they were designed for people, not cars.
6. Improve cycle provisions in your area - demand a full segregated cycle lane network.
7. Campaign for better bus services in your area.
8. Push your council to properly enforce parking restrictions or speed limits.

Find some allies

1. Speak to your neighbours, friends, parents at your local school etc. Collect contact details to build your campaign list.
2. Put up posters with a contact email.
3. Organise a meeting in your local area to find interested people that you can organise with.
4. Email your local school. Are they concerned about pedestrian safety and engine idling around the school?
5. Map out and contact supportive organisations e.g. cycle groups, transport organisations, health organisations.
6. Research and contact groups in other areas who have run similar campaigns.
7. Hold a street stall/public meeting to engage with members of the public.
8. Attend your local residents group or community council meeting. Ask if they have ever worked on traffic and air quality?
9. Check the social media of your MP/ MSP/councillor. Have they ever shown interest in air pollution?



Get more information

1. Follow @FoEScot on twitter to get the latest updates.
2. Check out the information at: foe.scot/air-pollution
3. Monitor current levels of air pollution in Scotland at: scottishairquality.scot
4. Read about possible solutions to air pollution: bit.ly/2CgXNtU
5. Invite people to speak to your campaign group.
6. Get in touch with the FoE air pollution campaigner, contact health experts and active travel organisations.

Campaign plans

Make some noise

1. Set up a page for your campaign on social media.
2. Ask your allies who have a big reach to share your campaign.
3. Share articles and information on social media.
4. If you see a bus or a delivery vehicle with their engine idling, contact the company. Tell them it's not legal or acceptable.
5. Tell friends, family and neighbours when the air pollution levels are high. scottishairquality.scot
6. Write a letter to your local newspaper.
7. Many radio phone-in discussions will focus on traffic and travel. These are great opportunities for reaching lots of people. Phone in, explain your views.
8. Set up a stunt somewhere public, for example a crowd standing with gas masks outside council offices. Speak to people passing by about the need to reduce pollution.
9. Host a party in your street! Many councils allow you to close a road to traffic certain weekends during the year. Invite organisation and businesses to hold street stalls. These events are great for showing how our streets can better be used!



Build the pressure

1. Send an email to your target, introducing your campaign and what you want to change.
2. Start a petition aimed at your target. Try [38 degrees](http://38degrees.org), change.org or through your local council.
3. Organise a meeting with local councillors or other targets.
4. If your request for a meeting with your target is declined, make it public.
5. Post updates on social media. Did your target refuse to meet you? Or did they promise to take action?
6. Write a joint letter to your target. Can you get other organisations to sign it as well?
7. Hold a rally somewhere your target will see. Make a placard or banner that says what you want to achieve.
8. If you still experience resistance, check out our 'action guide' for more ideas!

Event plan

Why hold a public meeting?

If you are concerned about air pollution in your local area, other people probably are as well! A public meeting could be a good way to get people who are interested in working on the issue in the same room.

It may also be that people need more information to make up their minds on air quality and what they want to do about it. Inviting health experts, environmental campaigners or policy makers can build knowledge in the community and make more informed campaign choices.

If you think your community is well informed and passionate, it might make most sense to invite decision makers and use the opportunity to ask them questions!

What could it look like?

- **Panel discussion**
- **Keynote speaker**
- **Community campaign planning**
- **Film screening and discussion**



On the day:

- Collect people's names and contact details. To be compliant with Data Protection law make sure you state on the form how people's data will be stored and used.
- Post some photos and quotes on social media.
- Have a great event!

Follow up:

- Schedule a follow up campaign meeting in advance and promote it on the night.
- Send an email to all the people who signed up, reminding them to come along.

Planning checklist

- Find a venue that people with mobility issues will be able to access. Some community centres, religious institutions or local libraries will give rooms free to community groups.
- Invite speakers. This could be Friends of the Earth campaigners, health specialists, cycle groups, impacted residents, etc.
- Promote your event on social media. Make a Facebook event and ask all your allies to share it.
- Put up posters in the local area.
- Personally invite other groups and people you know are interested
- Consider inviting local councillors or decision makers - either to speak or to listen to the community's concerns!
- Can you provide refreshments to bring people in and make it a friendly atmosphere?
- Could you show a short film, a short play by local kids on the theme, or another form of entertainment?
- Think about the structure of the event and how to include people in the discussions. Could you put questions on each table so people can discuss them?
- Divide up roles so everyone knows what they are doing on the day!
- Send a reminder to those who have said they will come. This could be emailing people you know personally or have collected their details through Eventbrite, or posting in a Facebook event.



Writing to your MSP or local councillor

Why do it?

Sometimes it might not be possible to arrange a meeting with your MSP or councillor, for whatever reason – such as your own personal time. In these instances, it's useful to send a letter to them setting out your concerns.

MSPs get thousands of pieces of communication a day – on top of everything else they do. Sometimes a letter can stand out more, as emails risk being drowned out or added to a long list of emails elected representatives need to respond to.

What to include?

Set out clearly and concisely why you are writing to them – making clear at the start of the letter that you're concerned about air pollution. Why are you concerned about air pollution locally? What do you think should be done? What action or policy change would you like from your elected representative?

It's good to propose some answers to these questions, as well as including arguments and evidence to back up what you're asking your councillor/MSP to do.

Try not to make the letter too long – if you can keep it to one page that's ideal. Finish with an invitation to meet with them, or invite them to an event. This way if they're interested you can get them further involved in your campaign.

How to send it

Once you've written your letter, you can post it to:

MSP name
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

Find your councillors using your local council website or head to:
www.gov.uk/find-your-local-councillors and type in your postcode.

To find your MSP, visit:
www.parliament.scot/mspfinder/index.html and type in your postcode.

Date

MSP Name/Address:
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

Dear [MSP's NAME]

As a resident of your constituency, [CONSTITUENCY NAME], I am writing to express my concern that not enough action is being taken on air pollution.

I/my group would like to see the following...

We would like to invite you to attend our public meeting.

I care about this because...

Yours sincerely,

Your Name/Address

Meeting a councillor or MSP

Why do it?

The easiest way to influence your Councillor or MSP is to meet them face to face. It allows you to have a more detailed and persuasive conversation – and just taking time to meet with an elected representative is a clear indicator of how much you care about air pollution in your area.

We repeatedly hear from MSPs that the communications that have the most impact on them are the face to face conversations they have with constituents.

How to plan

When you find your councillors and your MSPs, research what roles they have within the Council/Parliament. Do they sit on a committee that might be relevant to pollution – such as health, environment, transport, or planning? Have they spoken out on issues related to pollution?

A lot of this information will be held on the council, parliament or 'they work for you' website, but it's also worth searching for their name to see if you find relevant news articles or other sources. Equally, people in any networks you're involved in might have previous interactions with the councillor/MSP, so could give some insights.

If your local councillor is in the Council administration, or if your MSPs are in the Scottish Government, that's great. That means they might have a lot of ability to influence what happens. However, keep in mind it does mean that they will be quite busy, and you might need to be a little persistent in getting a meeting.

What to do at the meeting

Set out clearly and concisely why you have come to see them. Why are you concerned about air pollution locally? What do you think should be done? What would you like from your elected representative? It's good to arrive with your answers to these questions, as well as arguments and evidence to back up what you're asking your councillor/MSP to do.

Get a photo of you meeting your councillor/MSP. Ask them if they are ok with you sharing the photo on social media.

You might also want to send a press release to the local paper after your meeting. [See page 20]

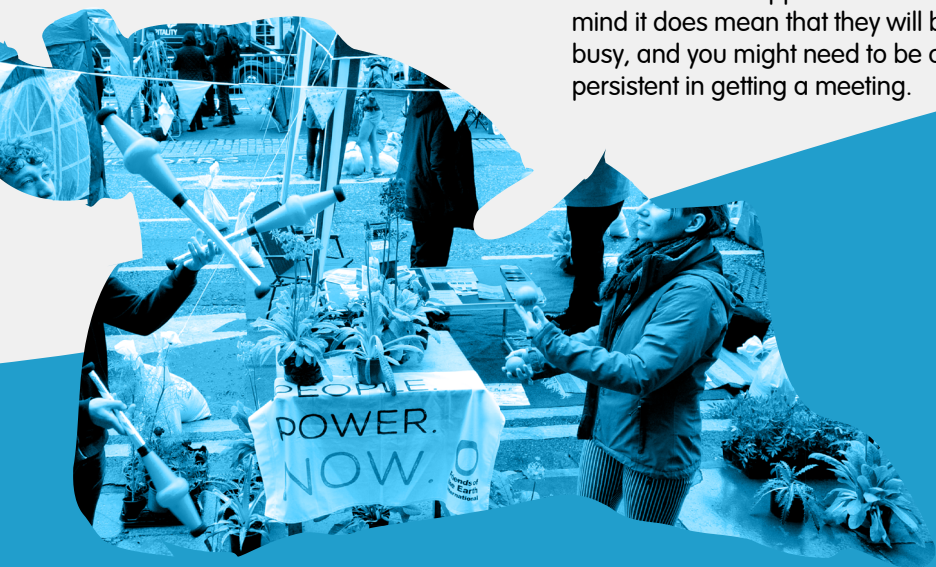
What to do after?

It's important that the conversation doesn't stop at the meeting.

After the meeting, it's worth sending your Councillor/MSP a follow up email.

In this you should:

- Thank them for meeting with you
- Highlight the key issues you covered in the meeting, and the main points you took away
- Send any additional evidence
- Highlight key upcoming opportunities



Writing a press release

Why send a press release?

A Press Release is a statement that your group sends to journalists to give them information about a piece of news. They are the best and simplest way of getting media coverage for your campaign.

Who to send it to?

Usually your main target will be your local newspaper.

Somewhere on the newspaper's website will be a general email address that you can send it to.

However, you might try to make it more targeted. Read previous editions of the paper, and look for stories that are related to what your group is working on. You could email your press release to the journalist who wrote the related articles.

What does it need to say?

It needs to have news. Something that's just happened or is about to happen.

It should have a quote from someone you are working with. That could be a resident concerned about air pollution, someone from your campaign group, or an organisation you are working alongside.

Ensure the quote explains why this matters to people and is clear about what you want to happen now.

Think about phrases like,

"The councils needs to....",

"The Scottish Government can...."

"To improve air quality / tackle air pollution in our area, ..."

[TITLE]

[DATE]: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Residents of [TOWN/COUNTY] have organised / demanded / staged a protest / are planning to

Air pollution in [XYZ] is impacting residents say local campaigners.

[COUNCIL NAME] has declared an Air Quality Management Area, which means air pollution within the region exceeds safe legal limits. Concerned residents have set up a Healthy Air Campaign event, to be attended by [MP name, Councillor Name etc] to find out what is being done to tackle air pollution in the area.

[YOUR NAME], "2,500 early deaths are caused by air pollution in Scotland every year. The pollution made by the traffic on our streets is causing a public health crisis. It's an invisible killer."

The campaign group was set up in 2019 to push for action from the council to tackle the dangerous levels of air pollution in the town. The campaign is calling for a number of initiatives such as a Low Emission Zone to keep the most polluting vehicles out of the town.

[YOUR NAME] said, "We hope this event will raise awareness of the impact air pollution is having in the town. If enough people realise air pollution is a big problem here, the more likely our politicians will take action to cut it."

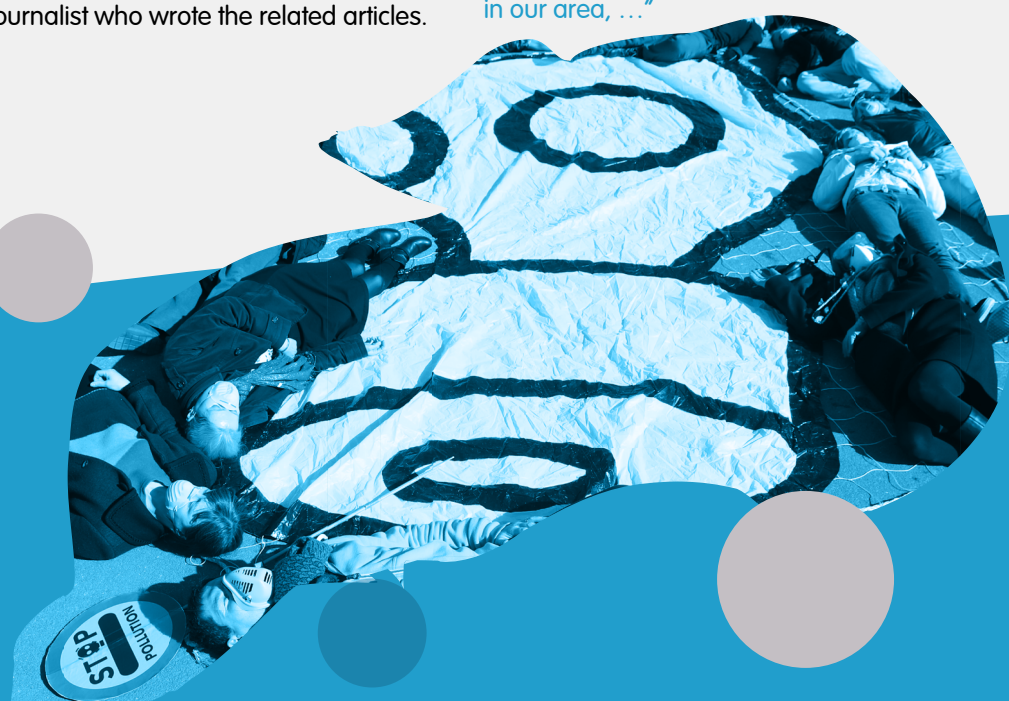
The event will take place at [TIME + PLACE]

ENDS

More information: [YOUR CONTACT DETAILS]

Notes to editors:

- 1.
2. [ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR LOCAL CAMPAIGN]



PEOPLE POWER PLANET

Be part of the solution.

JOIN TODAY.

Local groups:
foe.scot/localgroups

Join as a member:
foe.scot/donate

Join our mailing list:
foe.scot/mailling-list



@foescotland



@FoeScot



**Friends of
the Earth
Scotland**