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[Office for Health
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Guidance

Air pollution: applying All Our Health

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The Public Health England team leading this policy transitioned into the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) on 1 October 2021.

Introduction

This guide is part of 'All Our Health', a resource which helps health and care professionals prevent ill health and promote wellbeing as part of their everyday practice. This information will help frontline health and care staff use their trusted relationships with patients, families, and communities to take action on the health effects of air pollution.

We also recommend important actions that managers and staff holding strategic roles can take. View the full range of [All Our Health](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/all-our-health-personalised-care-and-population-health) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/all-our-health-personalised-care-and-population-health>) topics.

Access the air pollution e-learning session

An interactive [e-learning version of this topic](https://portal.e-lfh.org.uk/Component/Details/603166) (<https://portal.e-lfh.org.uk/Component/Details/603166>) is now available to use.

The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) and Health Education England's 'e-Learning for Healthcare' have developed this content to increase the confidence and skills of health and care professionals, to embed prevention in their day-to-day practice.

Why we focus on the health effects of air pollution in your professional practice

In the UK, air pollution is the largest environmental risk to public health.

The annual mortality of human-made air pollution in the UK is roughly equivalent to between 28,000 and 36,000 deaths every year. It is estimated that between 2017 and 2025 the total cost to the NHS and social care system of air pollutants (fine particulate matter and nitrogen dioxide), for which there is more robust evidence for an association, will be £1.6 billion.

Air pollution can cause and worsen health effects in all individuals, particularly society's most vulnerable populations. Long-term exposure to air pollution can cause chronic conditions such as cardiovascular and respiratory diseases as well as lung cancer, leading to reduced life expectancy. Short-term increases in levels of air pollution can also cause a range of health impacts, including effects on lung function, exacerbation of asthma, increases in respiratory and cardiovascular hospital admissions and mortality.