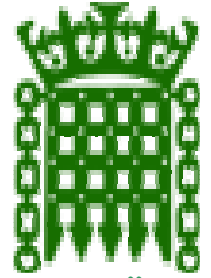




All Party Parliamentary Light Rail Group

House of Commons
London SW1A 0AA
Light Rail & Trams, Affordable & Sustainable Transport

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London mayor issues pollution warnings at bus stops and tube stations



Photograph: Aslu/Getty Images

UK capital experiences high pollution levels on Thursday with warnings telling people to avoid strenuous exercise

The alerts will notify Londoners of high pollution levels during their commute home from work.

These meetings are by invitation only, where MPs, Stakeholders etc., within the Light Rail industry and invited members of the Public will have a chance to discuss debate and raise questions concerning Light Rail.

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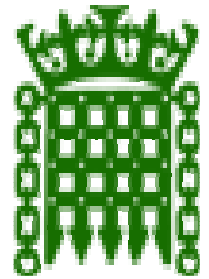
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Air quality alerts have been issued at bus stops, tube stations and roadsides across London because of high pollution levels, said a spokeswoman for the mayor of London, Sadiq Khan. The alerts will notify Londoners on Thursday evening during their commute home from work.

People in London who suffer from lung or heart problems have been warned to avoid strenuous exercise. The risks from heightened levels of air pollution enveloping the city have been exacerbated by settled and cold conditions, which have prevented pollutants from being dispersed.

Individuals at risk have been warned to particularly avoid outdoor exercise, while those with asthma may need to use their inhaler more often, according to the London Air Quality Network, based at King's College University.

Anyone from the wider population who experiences sore eyes, a cough or sore throat should also consider reducing their physical activity, particularly outdoors, the pollution monitoring service said.

Air pollution campaigners called on the government and city authorities to restrict traffic during smog episodes.

"When pollution episodes are high, the mayor should introduce emergency traffic restrictions to bring pollution levels down quickly," said a spokeswoman for Friends of the Earth.

"The solutions proposed for dealing with the latest smog have things backwards: the first step should be restricting traffic not people.

"It's outrageous that those with vulnerable lungs, including children and the elderly, are told to stay at home when the air is bad. Everyone should be able to go about their business, without being afraid of the air they breathe."

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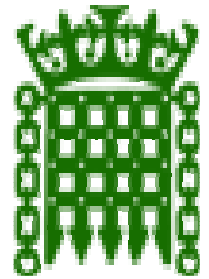
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According to the London Air Quality Network, winter smogs are formed when pollutants from traffic and industry are trapped at ground level because of a temperature inversion.

The pollution is a mix of ultra-fine particulates of unburned carbon, known as PM2.5s, and the toxic gas nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) which is largely created by diesel cars, lorries and buses.

Thursday's pollution episode took place on the same day as Nice, the government's independent health advisers, proposed that councils in England should be given powers to set up clean-air zones.

This would allow them to restrict certain vehicles entering some areas.

About 9,500 people die early each year in London due to long-term exposure to air pollution, more than twice as many as previously thought, according to new research. Air pollution is now Britain's most lethal environmental risk, killing about 40,000 people prematurely each year.

Air pollution monitors showed high or very high pollution along all major London roads, with extremely high pollution recorded in the city centre.

On Thursday, a Defra pollution monitor on Marylebone Road also registered very high levels.

Khan made tackling London's air pollution a priority issue in his election campaign. This summer he announced his intention to issue alerts for high pollution. However, there have been no incidents of particularly high pollution until now.

Khan said: "Londoners need to know when the city is suffering from high pollution levels so they can take any necessary appropriate measures to protect themselves from poor air quality. This is particularly crucial for Londoners who are vulnerable, such as asthma sufferers."

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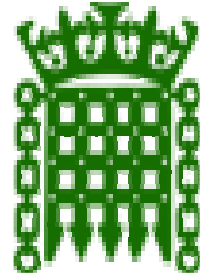
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"It is only a matter of time before cities and towns such Leeds, Warrington, Leicester, Bristol and many more who are actively pursuing only bus based city centre solutions end up with the same results"

Courtesy: The Guardian

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By

Damien Gayle and John Vidal

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