



improving **air quality**, improving **life quality**



**Your guide to helping
improve air quality.**

Air pollution is bad for our health, and our environment. But we can all make a difference by becoming 'air aware' and making changes to the way we travel and live. And it's easier than you might think.

What causes air pollution?

In the past, the main cause of air pollution was smoke and sulphur dioxide from burning coal. Often this air pollution would be seen as smog in major cities and towns. Today our air is much cleaner – there are fewer coal fires and factory emissions are closely controlled. But motor vehicles also cause air pollution, and the rising numbers of vehicles and congestion on our roads is leading to poorer air quality, particularly in urban areas.

Air pollution levels vary from day to day and area to area. It is worse on busy roads next to high buildings, and at busy road junctions. Calm sunny weather and cold foggy weather can also increase pollution levels.

What impact does air pollution have?

Air pollution can have a serious effect on people's health, causing irritation of the airways and breathing problems. It makes life difficult for people who already have lung or heart problems, such as asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and it particularly affects children and the elderly.

Air pollution also damages vegetation and eco-systems, and contributes towards climate change.

What can I do to make our air fresher?

- Try not to use your car for short journeys – 1.5 miles (2.5 km) or less
- Don't start your car engine until you're ready to move off
- Don't rev the engine unnecessarily – try and drive in the highest gear possible for your speed
- Drive smoothly – heavy braking and rapid acceleration means that you use more fuel
- Keep to the speed limit
- Look after your car – keep the engine properly tuned and the tyres at the right pressure
- Walk, cycle or use public transport whenever you can

Find out more

You can get more information about how you can Be Air Aware by visiting

www.beairaware.org.uk



Useful Contacts

National Rail Enquiries provides information on mainline train travel
www.nationalrail.co.uk Telephone: 08457 48 49 50

Nexus provide information on public transport in Tyne and Wear
www.nexus.org.uk or telephone 0191 203 3333

Smarter Choices provides information on sustainable travel
www.smarterchoices.info

Sustrans provides information about cycling
www.sustrans.org.uk

Traveline provides public transport journey planning in the North East
www.traveline.org.uk

Be Air Aware is a campaign to get people in Tyne and Wear involved in making our air fresher.

