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**RICHMOND, KINGSTON AND WANDSWORTH CLEAN AIR CAMPAIGNERS JOIN MORE THAN 100 OTHER GROUPS IN CALLING FOR A STRONGER ENVIRONMENT BILL**

**TO TACKLE AIR POLLUTION**

Clean air campaigners from Richmond, Kingston and Wandsworth, together with more than 100 other groups, NGOs and businesses, have written to the Government, calling for legally binding targets for air pollution to be set in line with the World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines.

Make Air Safe & Clean (MASC), The Kew Society, Richmond Cycling Campaign, Wandsworth Living Streets, Kingston Environment Forum and Richmond and Twickenham Friends of the Earth are among the many signatories to a letter, co-ordinated by clean air campaign group Mums for Lungs, sent to The Secretary of State for the Environment, George Eustice MP.

The letter urges the government to set enforceable clean air targets, especially for particulate matter, to tackle the public health crisis caused by air pollution. Critical to efforts will be the Office for Environmental Protection introduced through the Environment Bill. The coalition of campaign groups insists this new environment watchdog should be truly independent and able to hold the government and public bodies to account.

They say the government needs to launch a public health campaign to raise awareness of sources of air pollution and its adverse impact on health.

Melissa Compton-Edwards, co-ordinator of the East Sheen group of Mums for Lungs, said:

“Enshrining WHO guideline levels for fine particulate matter in the Environment Bill is necessary but is not enough by itself. We desperately need national and local action to make our air safer to breathe and a watchdog with teeth to hold authorities to account for illegal breaches.

“It’s disgraceful that the UK has been in breach of legal air quality limits for NO2 for ten years. Richmond, in common with other London boroughs, has been exceeding the government’s air quality objectives. If you go shopping on George Street in Richmond, you’re exposed to nitrogen dioxide levels well over the UK legal limit. That’s been the case for years and cannot be allowed to continue.

“This generation of teenagers has grown up breathing toxic air that causes asthma, stunted lungs and much more. To deliver cleaner air for today’s young children, more investment is needed in walking and cycling and public transport to enable people to become less car dependent. We also need urgent measures introduced that discourage unnecessary motor vehicle trips.

“As many people aren’t aware of how harmful particulate matter emissions from brake, tyre, road wear and woodburning are to their health, the Government and Councils should launch a public health campaign on sources of air pollution and what can be done right now to clean up our air.”

Most of the NOx pollution in town centres such as Richmond and Twickenham comes from motor vehicles and illegal exceedances of NO2 occur in these locations and along main roads and highways.

The campaigners say that simply replacing fossil fuel vehicles with electric ones will not deliver clean air and that there needs to be far fewer as well as cleaner and lighter motor vehicles on the capital’s roads.

This is partly because harmful particles from tyres, brakes and road surface wear, known as non-exhaust emissions, are thought to constitute the majority of primary particulate matter emissions from road transport in the UK [(60% of PM2.5and 73% of PM10)](https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/assets/documents/reports/cat09/1907101151_20190709_Non_Exhaust_Emissions_typeset_Final.pdf).

Even electric vehicles with zero emissions of particles from their exhausts will produce health-damaging non-exhaust emissions.

Non-exhaust emissions are expected to be responsible for the majority of PM emissions from road traffic in future years. Currently they contribute [7.4% and 8.5% of all UK primary PM2.5 and PM10 emissions.](https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/assets/documents/reports/cat09/1907101151_20190709_Non_Exhaust_Emissions_typeset_Final.pdf)

Research by [Emissions Analytics](https://www.emissionsanalytics.com/news/pollution-tyre-wear-worse-exhaust-emissions) has shown that cars can emit 1,000 times more particle pollution from their tyres than their exhausts.

Domestic wood-burning is another important, but relatively little publicised, source of PM10 and PM2.5 particle pollution. Mums for Lungs has written to all London Councils asking them to raise awareness of the dangers of wood burning and to ask all residents not to use their wood burning stoves unless they are their only source of heat.

**In Richmond borough:**

* [6.3%](https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/public-health-outcomes-framework/data#page/0/gid/1000043/pat/6/par/E12000007/ati/102/are/E09000027/cid/4/page-options/ovw-do-0) of deaths in 2018 were attributable to PM2.5 pollution.
* The [monitor](https://richmond.gov.uk/media/19150/air_quality_annual_status_report_2020.pdf) in Bushy Park recording PM2.5 levels showed that although the annual mean of 12 micrograms per cubic metre (μg/m3) recorded in 2019 was within the EU limit of 25 μg/m3, it exceeded the WHO’s stricter guideline limit of 10 μg/m3. As there is no safe level of fine particle pollution, this is concerning.
* In September this year, nitrogen dioxide had returned to similar levels to those recorded before the first lockdown in pollution hotspots such as The Quadrant, Kew Road. [Monitoring](https://www.richmond.gov.uk/media/20127/no2_diffusion_tubes_q1_q2_q3_2020.pdf) showed NO2 concentrations there were 85.05 μg/m3 in September compared to 85.08 μg/m3 in January, (ie more than double the UK objective limit of 40 μg/m3). George Street in Richmond recorded 72.13 for NO2 in January and 72.64 in September; and Red Lion Street in Richmond recorded 65.67 in January and 62.83 in September.

**In Wandsworth borough:**

* 6.7% of deaths in 2018 were attributable to PM2.5 pollution.
* In 2019, [monitoring](https://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/media/7345/air_quality_progress_report_2019.pdf) by the Council revealed the worst places for NO2 pollution in the borough were Battersea Park Road, Putney High Street and Mitcham Road (based on annual mean levels).

**In Kingston borough:**

* 6.2% of deaths in 2018 were attributable to PM2.5 pollution.
* In 2019, monitoring by the Council revealed the worst places for NO2 pollution in the borough were Cromwell Road and Tolworth Roundabout.

**Notes to editors:**

[Mums for Lungs](https://www.mumsforlungs.org) is a grassroots campaign group of parents campaigning for clean air for all.
[Further information](https://www.blf.org.uk/taskforce/data-tracker/air-quality/pm25) on PM2.5 from the Taskforce for Lung Health.
[More information](https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/ambient-%28outdoor%29-air-quality-and-health) on WHO air quality limits.
[Exposure to PM2.5](https://airqualitynews.com/2020/09/14/exposure-to-pm2-5-leads-to-an-increase-in-covid-19-mortality-new-study/) leads to an increase in Covid-19 mortality.
Domestic woodburning [contributed to](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emissions-of-air-pollutants/emissions-of-air-pollutants-in-the-uk-1970-to-2018-particulate-matter-pm10-and-pm25#:~:text=Major%20emission%20sources%20for%20PM10%20and%20PM2.&text=Domestic%20combustion%20is%20a%20major,closed%20stoves%20and%20open%20fires) 38% of PM2.5 emissions in the UK in 2018.

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