

global action plan

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**Clean Air Public
Insight Tracker -
December 2020**

Wider world context

We must consider the results in the wider world context. The survey was undertaken 11th - 14th December 2020.

- England entered a COVID-19 lockdown 5 November – 5 December 2020.
- Wales entered a COVID-19 lockdown 23 October – 9 November 2020
- A coroner ruled that air pollution was the cause of the asthma attacks that killed Ella Adoo Kissi-Debrah following an inquest from 30 November to 11 December 2020
- A COVID-19 vaccine is approved in the UK 2 December 2020.

Impact of leaving the EU on air pollution

HEADLINE: Impact of leaving the EU polarised within groups

1/3 of people (35%) are concerned that air pollution that air pollution will get worse following the UK's exit from the EU

- Among 18 – 34 this increases to 50%
- In London this increases to 56%
- Among parents with children under 18 this increases to 50%
- Those who have heard of Clean Air Day or the Clean Air Hub are more likely to agree with this statement than those who haven't.

1/5 of people (20%) think air pollution will improve following the UK's exit from the EU

- Among 18 – 34 this increases to 29%
- In London this increases to 35%
- Among parents with children under 18 this increases to 37%
- Those who have heard of Clean Air Day or the Clean Air Hub are more likely to agree with this statement than those who haven't.

This illustrates that certain groups are very polarised in their opinions of the impact of leaving the EU on air pollution.

However, the largest proportion of people neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement "I am concerned that pollution will get worse after Brexit" – 43%. Similarly the largest proportion of people neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement "Air pollution standards will improve after Brexit" – 56%.

HEADLINE: Opinions on the impact of leaving the EU on air pollution in the UK is split down party lines.

- Labour, Liberal Democrat and Green Party voters are more likely to think that air pollution will get worse following the UK's exit from the EU
- UKIP and Conservative Party voters are more likely to think that air pollution will improve following the UK's exit from the EU.

Changing travel habits

HEADLINE: 27% of people have swapped public transport for private car or taxi

In the last three months, a quarter (27%) of UK adults have changed their travelling behaviour and travelled by car or taxi where previously they would have used public transport.

Over half (55%) of these UK adults use this new method of transport at least once a week. This increases to:

- 74% in Bristol
- 68% in Birmingham
- 67% in London

HEADLINE: Fewer people are working from home, but more people are cycling and walking to work

The number of people who reported frequently working from home decreased from 41% in November 2020 to 32% in December 2020. It should be noted that 32% of people reported frequently working from home in September 2020 – therefore this may reflect the impact of national lockdowns that were implemented in England on 5 November and were relaxed on Dec 2.

In December 2020 25% of people report cycling to work /when making other journeys. Up from 18% in November.

In December 2020 49% of people report walking to work/when making other journeys. Up from 47% in November.

Changes in behaviour and knowledge need sustained information to stick

HEADLINE: Knowledge of effective ways to reduce air pollution has dropped since Clean Air Day

When asked; “which of the following, if any, do you think are effective ways to reduce the level of outdoor air pollution in your area or community?” the number of respondents who felt behaviours were effective decreased, despite increases from Clean Air Day. For example:

- In September 2020 (ahead of Clean Air Day) 57% of respondents thought cycling or walking instead of driving was effective, this increased to 63% in November 2020 (following Clean Air Day) but dropped down to 50% in December 2020.
- Similarly, in September 2020 48% of respondent thought switching off the engine of a vehicle when stationary was effective, this increased to 51% in November 2020, but dropped down to 44% in December 2020.
- Consequently, the number of people actively doing any of these behaviours to reduce air pollution also reduced.

The same trend was identified when participants were asked; “which of the following, if any, do you think are effective ways to reduce the level of indoor air pollution in your area or community?”

- In September 2020 56% of respondents thought opening the window was effective, this increased to 62% in November 2020 but dropped to 53% in December 2020.
- Again, the number of people actively doing these behaviours also reduced.

HEADLINE: Concern about health impacts of air pollution rises

In contrast to awareness of solutions, the number of respondents who indicated they were concerned about the impact of indoor and outdoor air pollution on their health has increased. This may, or may not, be connected to the inquest into the death of Ella Kissi-Debrah which was prominently in the news around the time of the survey. A coroner ruled that air pollution caused the asthma attacks which resulted in Ella’s death the week after the survey.

When asked; “to what extent do you feel your health is impacted by indoor air pollution” 42% said they thought it had a moderate or major impact, compared to 33% in November 2020.

When asked; “to what extent do you feel your health is impacted by outdoor air pollution” 53% said they thought it had a moderate or major impact, compared to 45% in November 2020.

HEADLINE: 3/5 of people think air pollution should be the focus of a national campaign to raise awareness

This call for a national campaign to raise awareness about air pollution is echoed consistently across population demographics, including gender, age, ethnicity, parenthood and car ownership – where over 50% in every group believe air pollution should be the focus of a national campaign.

Government should create action on air pollution in organisations and institutions

- 67% of those surveyed agree that improving air quality at schools to protect children should be a priority.
- 72% of those surveyed agree that building standards should be updated to help meet pollution targets

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