

HEALTHY AIR CYMRU MANIFESTO 2026

In 2021 all parties supported groundbreaking legislation to clean our air. For 2026, we have one ask – deliver on this promise by implementing the Environment (Air Quality and Soundscapes) (Wales) Act 2024.

Implementing this act would:

1. Reduce vehicle pollution
 - Ensure all Welsh residents have access to regular, affordable and accessible public transport.
 - Implement a national roll out of the school streets initiative, ensuring adequate access for disabled students and those needing to travel by taxi.
 - Improve infrastructure to facilitate active travel to school where school streets are not feasible.
 - Implement Clean Air Zones with careful consideration to economically disadvantaged groups and disabled people.
 - Introduce sufficient penalties for vehicle idling.
2. Reduce industrial and rural pollution
 - Develop industrial and rural strategies that seek to reduce the impact of air pollution.
 - Ensure that industries and businesses consider sustainable transport for staff.
 - Introduce a Workplace Parking Levy to discourage people driving to work.
 - Introduce scrappage schemes to help businesses and farmers decarbonise vehicles.
3. Tackle domestic burning
 - Ban the installation of new stoves in homes except in special circumstances.
 - Phase out domestic wood burning in urban areas, assist rural residents to transition away from wood as a primary heating source, and support those in fuel poverty with fuel cost assistance.
 - Roll out Smoke Control Areas (SCAs) nationwide with exemptions only for rural communities.
4. Increase awareness of air pollution
 - Develop a series of behaviour change campaigns on sustainable transport, vehicle idling, domestic burning and the overall health dangers of indoor and outdoor air pollution and evaluate the impact.
 - Use public health alerts so that people living in every part of Wales are aware of local pollution levels and how to minimise the impact on their health.
 - The Welsh public sector should lead by example, supporting staff to make positive changes and reducing air pollution in vehicles and buildings.
5. Improve monitoring
 - Establish a monitoring network utilising all local and national modelled and monitored data.
 - Enable air pollution data to be open source and accessible to all.
 - Fund the roll out of PM2.5 and NO2 monitors at all schools and NHS buildings and grant local authorities the power to close or divert roads when air pollution near schools exceeds limits.

Who we are

Healthy Air Cymru (HAC) brings together organisations that share a common vision for a cleaner and greener Wales. We want our nation to be a better place, where people have the right to breathe clean air and do not have to suffer from the harmful effects of air pollution.

We raise awareness of the impact of poor air quality on our everyday lives. We aim to shape the conversation in Wales about how we tackle these problems and influence policy decisions; to make the case for practical local solutions to reduce air pollution.

Our members are Asthma + Lung UK Cymru, British Heart Foundation Cymru, Chartered Institute for Environmental Health, Children in Wales, Clean Air Programme, Client Earth, Cycling UK Cymru, Friends of the Earth Cymru, Living Streets Cymru, Ramblers Cymru, Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health Wales, Royal College of Physicians Wales, Royal College of Psychiatrists Wales, Sustrans Cymru, Transport Action Network Cymru.

Creating a Healthier Wales

Air pollution contributes to almost 2,000 early deaths and costs the Welsh NHS almost £1billion every year. Families across Wales see the impact of air pollution on their daily lives. We are seeing more and more children developing asthma, their lungs are not developing as they should be, and people's existing health conditions are getting worse.

For vulnerable people, even a short term spike in air pollution can affect their health, which leaves many people needing emergency hospital treatment. Long term exposure also increases your risk of developing conditions such as heart disease, dementia, lung cancer, diabetes and more. People's mental health suffers too, with research showing that poor air quality is linked to higher levels of depression, bipolar disorder, and schizophrenia. Improving public health must be at the forefront of our fight to reduce air pollution and create a healthier, sustainable future for all.

A Cleaner and Greener Future

Climate change is the single biggest issue our generation faces. The decisions we make now will have long-lasting effects on our planet and our health – so it's vital we prioritise a green and fair recovery. Cleaner air will ensure improved health and well-being for current and future generations. Our environment gives us the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the food we eat. We are committed to tackling air pollution so we can safeguard these vital resources and protect people's health.

Supporting Active Travel

Never before has it been so clear that the way we travel directly impacts the lives of those around us. For the sake of our health and our planet, we cannot let the car continue to dominate our roads. As we look to the future, our towns and cities need to become cleaner, greener and more sustainable places to live. This includes prioritising safe, accessible and inclusive active travel routes to school for children and ensuring that transport planning reflects the needs of those who may be underserved by current transport infrastructure, including disabled people and families on low incomes.

Creating Fairer Communities

Everyone has the right to breathe clean and healthy air. We are all affected by air pollution, but some individuals and communities are more affected than others. Children, for example, are especially vulnerable because they inhale more air than adults in proportion to their body weight and breathe closer to ground-level sources of air pollution. Targeted action is needed to address these inequalities, protect people's health and enable people and businesses to reduce their contribution to the problem. Together, we can make the changes necessary to build a fairer future for all.