

May 2022 Newsletter

AIR POLLUTION THEME OF THE MONTH: SMOKE CONTROL AREA

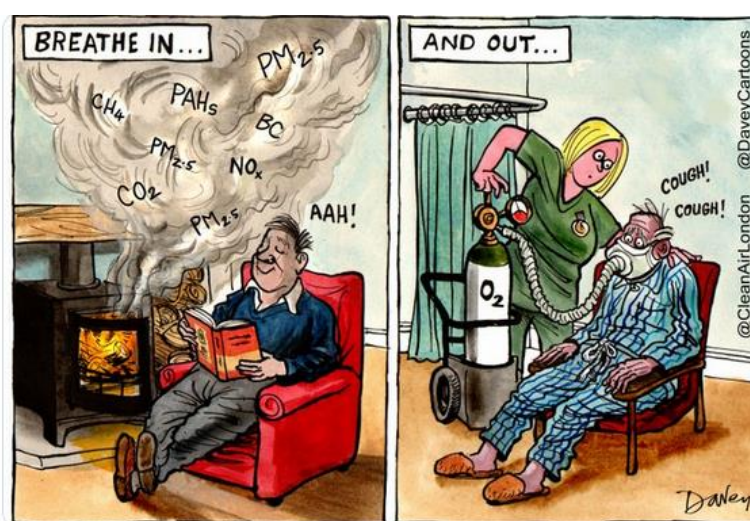


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Are wood burning stoves and open fireplaces harmful to your health?

The emission of fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) from wood and coal burning stoves and open fireplaces is of serious health concern, as these particles are so small they can enter the bloodstream and damage every organ in the body. **The impact can be particularly harmful to children and young people as PM_{2.5} can aggravate and cause conditions such as asthma as well as stunting lung growth and cognitive development.**



Many people who would never dream of smoking a cigarette choose to burn wood. Yet wood smoke contains many of the same toxic and carcinogenic substances as cigarette smoke, including benzene, benzo(a)pyrene, and dibenzo(a,h)anthracene. Wood smoke also produces far more particulate matter air pollution than cigarette smoke does.

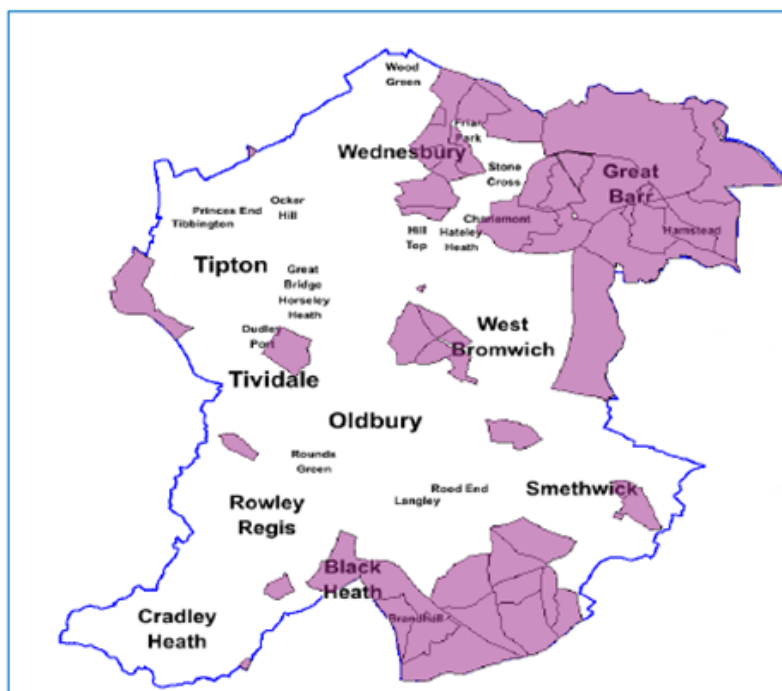
What is a Smoke Control Area and how can it help?

- A Smoke Control Area is designed to help protect people from poor air quality. They are commonly used in urban areas to combat the negative health effects from chimney smoke. Originally introduced to tackle problems associated with burning of coal, they also apply to the harmful smoke produced by wood burning stoves and open fireplaces.
- In urban areas like Sandwell, 25% of man-made particulate matter is from domestic burning, whilst 16% comes from industry and 13% from road transport e.g. cars, vans, buses and lorries.
- In a smoke control area, smoke emissions are reduced by only allowing the burning of authorised 'smokeless fuels' or the use of Defra exempt appliances. No authorised fuels can be sold unless they are to be used in an exempt appliance and fines can be given to those breaking the rules.
- Only certain types of wood that have a moisture content of less than 20% can be burned. If buying wood or other fuel for your fire, the supplier must have an orange "Ready to Burn" logo on the packaging, or else it is not authorised fuel.
- As the popularity of wood burning stoves and open fireplaces increase, it is more important than ever to stop the harmful impacts on health. Approximately 1 in 12 homes in England now have a wood burning stove.




Is Sandwell a Smoke Control Area?

Sandwell already has 51 separate smoke control areas where you cannot emit smoke from a chimney unless you're burning an authorised fuel or using 'exempt appliances', for example burners or stoves. These are shown on the map below.



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 Existing Declared Smoke Control Area

Should the whole of Sandwell become a Smoke Control Area?

- As part of a wider effort to improve air quality and protect health, Sandwell Council is proposing to remove the existing 51 separate Smoke Control Areas and replace them with a single boroughwide Smoke Control Area. Sandwell Council are holding a public consultation from 9th May 2022 until 20th June 2022 to see if people who live and work in Sandwell
- Boroughwide Smoke Control Areas are not uncommon in the West Midlands, Birmingham and Dudley already have them in place.
- To have your say respond to the public consultation on whether you think Sandwell should become a boroughwide Smoke Control Area takes just 2 minutes. To find out more and complete the consultation go to www.sandwell.gov.uk/SmokeControlArea

IMPROVING LOCAL AIR QUALITY
HAVE YOUR SAY
SMOKE CONTROL AREA CONSULTATION

What do you think about Sandwell Council's proposal to create a boroughwide Smoke Control Area?

A Smoke Control Area could help improve local air quality by reducing the amount of harmful air pollution that can be emitted from wood and coal burning stoves and fireplaces in homes and businesses.

Find out more and have your say at:
www.sandwell.gov.uk/SmokeControlArea

Consultation starts 9 May, ends 20 June 2022


Sandwell
Metropolitan Borough Council

A copy of the proposed Smoke Control Order and the accompanying plan may be inspected free of charge 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday from 9 May 2022 until 20 June 2022 at:
Sandwell Council House, Freeth Street, Oldbury, B69 3DB
OR online at: www.sandwell.gov.uk/SmokeControlArea

Upcoming Clean Air Day

Mark the date in your diaries! **Clean Air Day is 16th June 2022**. What are you and your faith centre planning to do to show support? There are lots of ideas and free resources available: <https://www.actionforcleanair.org.uk/campaigns/clean-air-day>. If you would like some more support with your plans, then please contact a member of the Air Quality team at pollution_control@sandwell.gov.uk



A poster for Clean Air Day 2022. The background is orange. On the left, there are white line-art illustrations of a woman walking with a child, and another child on a scooter. A large green tree is in the center. On the right, there is a logo for Clean Air Day 16 June 2022, featuring a stylized city skyline with a red house, a green house, a yellow house, and a purple house, all under a white cloud. Below the logo, the text 'CleanAirDay' is written in white and yellow. At the bottom right, the hashtag #CleanAirDay and the website cleanairday.org.uk are listed. At the bottom left, the text 'Take steps to improve your health and the planet this #CleanAirDay' is written in white.

Air pollution dirties every organ in the body.

Walk those short distance trips where you can.

16 June 2022

CleanAirDay

#CleanAirDay
cleanairday.org.uk

Take steps to improve your health and the planet this #CleanAirDay

Sandwell Council's Climate Change Grants

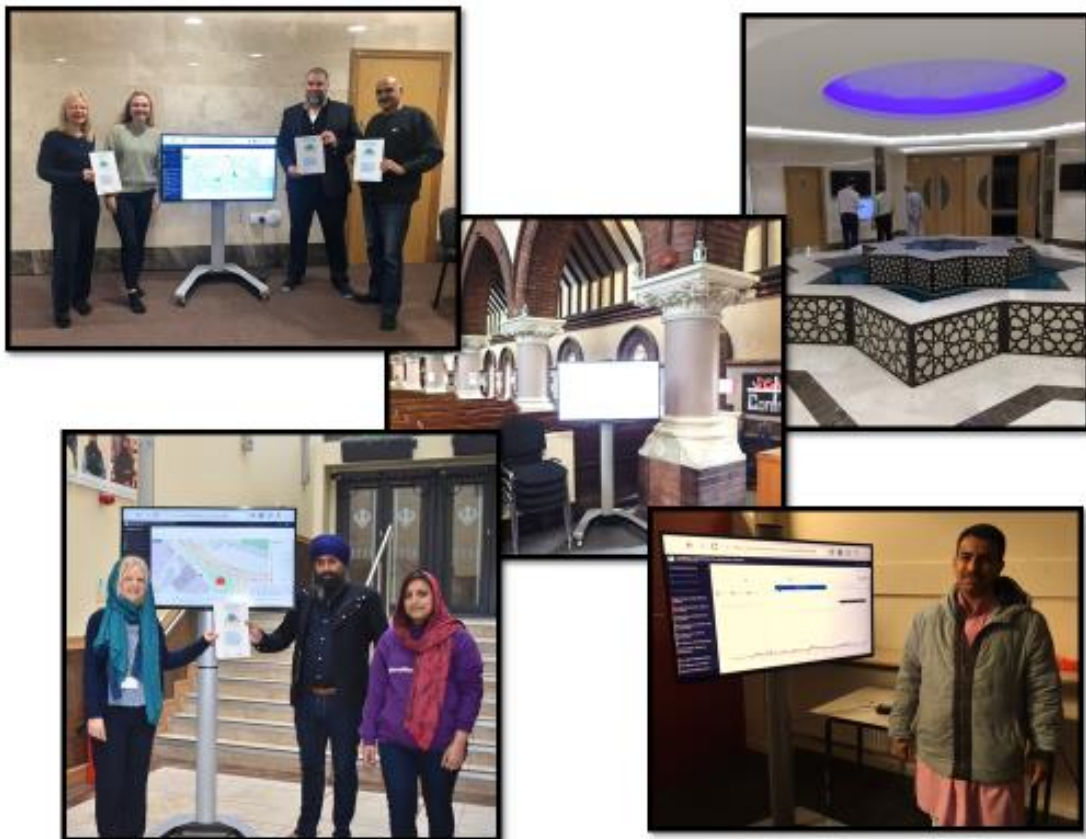
New grants for community groups are available for climate change projects from April 2022. Free training sessions about what climate change is, and how to have climate change conversations, is available as part of the grants as well. Find out more about these grants from Sandwell Community Voluntary Organisation (SCVO) <https://www.scvo.info/>.



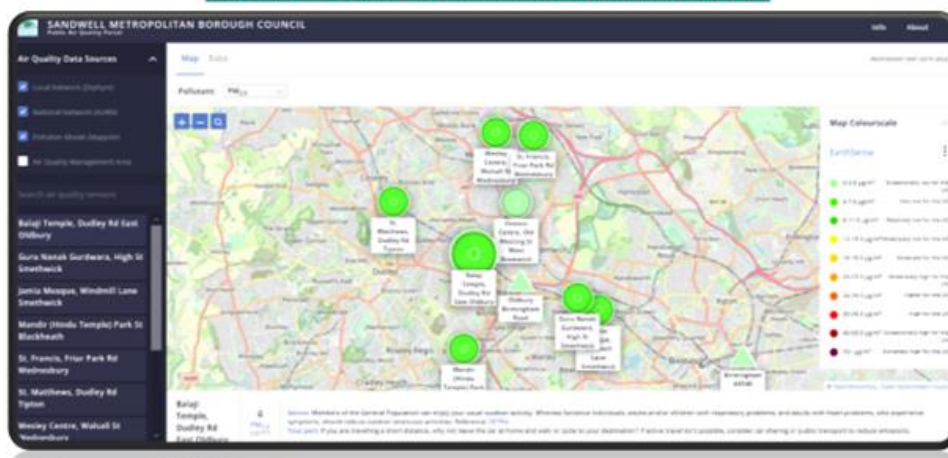
Sandwell's Air Quality Dashboard is showing real-time air pollution data from a Faith Centre near you!

You can access this dashboard yourself by going to:

<https://portal.earthsense.co.uk/SandwellPublic>. The link is also available on Sandwell's Faith Centre Air Quality [project webpage](#). Each faith centre also has a TV screen to display the dashboard for everyone to see when entering their building, just a few are shown below.



<https://portal.earthsense.co.uk/SandwellPublic>



If you have any questions about the content of this newsletter, please contact a member of the Air Quality team via pollution_control@sandwell.gov.uk. The content of this email is correct at time of circulation.