Basingstoke and Deane

Pollution

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How air pollution affects our health

An air pollutant is any substance in the atmosphere that can harm human health or the environment. These pollutants can take the form of solid particles, liquid droplets, or gases, and may originate from both natural processes and human activities.

Common air pollutants include:

- Particulate matter (PM)
- Carbon dioxide (CO_2)
- Nitrogen dioxide (NO_2)
- Ozone (O_3)

Air pollution levels are typically higher in towns and cities, where sources such as road traffic, industry, and other human activities are more concentrated.

You can:

- check current air pollution levels in the South East region (https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/latest/currentlevels)
- learn about the health effects of air pollution (https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/air-pollution/effects)
- explore information on indoor air pollution and allergies (https://www.asthmaandlung.org.uk/living-with/indoor-air-pollution)

Further detailed information can also be found in policy papers published on the (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/air-quality-explaining-air-pollution/air-quality-explaining-air-pollution-at-a-glance)GOV.UK (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/air-quality-explaining-air-pollution/air-quality-explaining-air-pollution-at-a-glance) website (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/air-quality-explaining-air-pollution/air-quality-explaining-air-pollution-at-a-glance).

Bonfires and Fireworks

There is no law that completely bans domestic bonfires. However, you must ensure that your bonfire does not cause a **statutory nuisance** to others.

Smoke from bonfires is one of the most common complaints received each year. While occasional bonfires may be acceptable, they can become a nuisance if they are:

- frequent or prolonged
- poorly managed
- burning unsuitable materials that create excessive smoke

Bonfires can be particularly distressing for neighbours. Smoke, ash, and odours may:

- prevent neighbours from enjoying their gardens
- force them to keep windows closed
- stop them from hanging out washing

In addition, poorly controlled bonfires or strong winds can cause smoke to drift across roads, reducing visibility and creating a potential hazard.

It is an offence to burn commercial or trade waste without a Waste Exemption Certificate (https://www.gov.uk/guidance/register-your-waste-exemptions) from the Environment Agency.
It is also illegal for industrial or commercial premises to produce and emit dark smoke from fires.

Information on fireworks (/fireworks)

Alternative methods

Food waste and home composting (#)

Instead of burning garden waste or disposing of raw vegetable waste in your general rubbish bin, consider more environmentally friendly options:

- use a weekly food waste collection service (https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/food-waste)
- set up a compost bin (https://www.recyclenow.com/how-to-recycle/home-composting), which can easily be purchased online or from garden centres

Composting your waste creates a valuable soil conditioner, helping improve garden soil while reducing the need to buy commercial products.

Bulky garden materials can also be reused effectively:

- vegetation can be shredded to make it suitable for composting or mulching
- garden shredders can be bought or hired
- some allotment societies may provide access to shredding equipment for members

Green waste collection service (#)

We provides a kerbside garden waste collection service (https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/gardenwaste), which is an easy and responsible way to dispose of garden materials.

This service accepts:

- grass cuttings
- cut flowers
- hedge clippings
- weeds
- leaves
- twigs
- prunings
- fallen fruit

Using this service helps reduce the need for bonfires and supports environmentally friendly waste management.

Waste Recycling Centre (#)

You can take green garden waste to the Household Waste Recycling Centre at Wade Road in Basingstoke (https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/hwrc). It is turned into compost over about 20 weeks by being regularly mixed so it breaks down properly.

The finished compost is called **Pro-Grow** . It's a good-quality soil conditioner and you can buy it at all recycling centres.

For small amounts, visit the Pro-Grow website (https://www.pro-grow.com/). For larger orders or questions, use the Contact Us page on their website (https://www.pro-grow.com/contact-us).

Advice if you do have a bonfire

Bonfires can be dangerous. Fires can spread to fences or buildings and damage trees and plants. Items like bottles and cans can explode if burned. Always think carefully about what you burn and where you place your bonfire.

- never leave a fire unattended. Make sure it is fully out, using water if needed
- do not burn man-made materials like plastics or rubber, as they can give off harmful smoke
- do not use petrol, oil or other accelerants to start or fuel the fire
- avoid lighting a bonfire when air pollution levels are high
- check weather forecasts or the UK Air (DEFRA) website (http://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/)

- only burn dry garden waste, as damp material creates a lot of smoke
- choose a calm day so smoke rises straight up instead of drifting
- let your neighbours know and agree a suitable time
- place the bonfire away from trees, fences and buildings
- burn small amounts at a time to reduce smoke and keep the fire under control

What to do if you are suffering due to a neighbour's bonfire

We would advise to speak to your neighbour first, explaining the problem calmly as they may not be aware of the distress they are causing. It might make them more considerate in the future.

If you don't get a positive response, are not happy to speak to your neighbour or the problem persists and is regular, please report it to us:

Inform us about pollution (/report-nuisance)

We will look into this and take action if we can, otherwise you might want to consider taking legal action yourself:

How to take your own private action against nuisances (/advice-noisy-neighbours)

It is an offence under the Highways (Amendment) Act 1986 to light a fire and allow smoke to drift across the road. If you have a problem with anyone lighting a fire and allowing the smoke to drift across the road, please contact the police on 101.

Barbecues

Barbecues can also cause a smoke problem, especially if you use lighter fuel. To reduce the environmental impact you might consider switching to electric BBQs. Be considerate of your neighbours. It is advisable not to light it when the washing is out or when it's windy, check that smoke won't blow straight into neighbouring properties.

For more information check GOV.UK webpage Reducing air pollution from outdoor burning (https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/library/assets/documents/OutdoorBurning.pdf)

Odour pollution

From time to time, smells and odours occur in the areas that we live that we would rather be without. Some odours are part and parcel of the environments we live in, other are not. When odour is significant and is regularly and persistently affecting people in their homes and workplaces, it can be considered an odour nuisance.

Odours from industrial or commercial activities as well as from some (The Environment Agency are the primary regulator for the Chineham sewage treatment works, and Thames Water operate under a permit issued to them by the Environment Agency) sewage treatment works are an example of this and can be reported:

Report an odour issue (/report-nuisance)

Complaints regarding odour from the Chineham Sewage Treatment works should initially be directed to Thames Water by reporting it online (https://www.thameswater.co.uk/help/report-a-problem#/view-and-report-problems) or by calling their customer contact centre on 0800 316 9800 so they can investigate the issue.

Alternatively, if the issue persists report it online to the Environment Agency (https://www.gov.uk/report-smell) or by calling their customer contact centre on 0800 80 70 60.

You may find that the smell coming from a sewage treatment works, for example will vary according to the weather – warmth and a change in wind direction can have unwanted but not unexpected effects.

Light pollution

Artificial light is essential and we all use it for many different things including:

- to light streets and roads at night
- as a security measure to protect homes and businesses
- to increase the hours we can play sports outdoors

However, increased use of lighting has resulted in problems. Light in the wrong place at the wrong time can be intrusive and there have been more complaints about light pollution in recent years.

What is light pollution? (#)

Light pollution can be described as artificial light allowed to illuminate, or pollute, areas not intended to be lit. It consists of several elements:

- light trespass – light spilling beyond the boundary of the property on which a light is located, sometimes shining through windows and curtains
- glare – the uncomfortable brightness of a light source when viewed against a darker background
- sky glow – the pink or orange glow we see for miles around towns and cities caused by a scattering of artificial light by airborne dust and water droplets

To view light pollution and dark skies map visit CPRE website. (https://www.cpre.org.uk/what-we-care-about/nature-and-landscapes/dark-skies/englands-light-pollution-dark-skies-map/)

Sources of light pollution (#)

- security lights that light up buildings and their surroundings
- floodlights used to illuminate games pitches, places of entertainment and buildings
- street lighting
- advertising and display lighting

The impact of light pollution (#)

- harm people's quality of life, for example, it can disturb sleep when it shines into homes
- interfere with our view of the night sky
- waste energy and is therefore a waste of resources and money
- have an impact on the ecology and wildlife of an area, affecting the behavioural patterns of mammals, birds, insects and fsh

Tackling light pollution (#)

The extent of light pollution can be dramatically reduced by a number of simple inexpensive measures:

- switch off necessary lighting
- fence or screen the area
- switched off the lights at night
- install a timer switch

Make sure that outdoor lights are not wasteful (#)

- Use minimum wattage lamps. For domestic security lights a 150W lamp is adequate. High power lamps (300/500W) create too much glare, reducing security. A 9W lamp is adequate for an all night porch in most situations.
- Angle your lights downwards, so they only illuminate the surface intended and do not throw light onto a neighbouring property. Main beam angles of all lights should be below 70 degrees, to reduce the effects of glare.
- Security lights should be correctly adjusted, to only pick up the movement of people in the area intended and not beyond.
- Direct lights downwards. If uplighting has to be used, install hoods or shields above the light, to reduce the amount of wasted upward light.
- Do not install equipment that spreads light above the horizontal.

What can you do if you are experiencing light pollution? (#)

If you are bothered by a light source, approach the person responsible for it and explain your concerns politely and calmly. They might not be aware of the distress being caused and talking to them about it may result in a solution. A minor adjustment may be all that is required or an agreement about when the lights should be on.

An alternative solution could be to consider mediation. For further information visit UK Mediation website. (https://ukmediation.net/)

New developments (#)

The best method of dealing with light pollution is at the planning stage of new developments. This is an ideal time to influence the design or installation of lighting schemes. However, only developments involving building engineering or making material changes to existing buildings or land require planning consent.

If you have concerns about proposals that may contribute to light pollution, please contact the council's planning and development team:

Planning development enquiry (/planning-enquiry-form)

Making a complaint to the council (#)

Under the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 and Environmental Protection Act 1990, some types of light pollution can now be designated a statutory nuisance, if it is proved to be prejudicial to health or a 'nuisance'. This includes 'light trespass' where particularly bad

lighting from a property affects a neighbour. It excludes light from sources such as airports, railway and bus stations, goods vehicle depots, lighthouses, defence premises and prisons.

Inform us about pollution (/report-nuisance)

Private action (#)

You may be able to take private action for nuisance regarding a lighting problem, if you can show to a court that you are being unreasonably disturbed. A nuisance can be described as ‘a substantial interference with an individual’s use and enjoyment of his or her property’. If you wish to follow this route, we advise you to contact the Citizens’ Advice Bureau or a solicitor, to find out what action may be appropriate to deal with your complaint.

How to take your own private action against nuisances (/advice-noisy-neighbours)

Useful links (#)

The following organisations provide information on light pollution:

The Office for Environmental Protection (https://www.theoep.org.uk/)

Institution of Lighting Professionals (https://theilp.org.uk/)

Campaign to Protect Rural England (https://www.cpre.org.uk/)

Water pollution

The Environment Agency is responsible for monitoring river water quality, controlling discharges into watercourses and for dealing with pollution incidents.

Report water pollution online (https://www.gov.uk/report-water-pollution)

or call the Environment Agency incident hotline by telephoning 0800 80 70 60 (24 hour service).

Please see the following general advice on ways to avoid water pollution:

- **Use less detergent.** The amount of detergent (with or without phosphate) you need to use depends on the hardness of the water in your area and how dirty your laundry is. You can help the environment by using the minimum amount recommended on the pack.
- **Choose environmentally friendly brands with no phosphate, also knowns as sodium tripolyphosphate (STPP) at all.** Aim for less than 5% if you can.

- **Try to buy liquids or powders instead of tablets.** Laundry liquids tend to contain less phosphate where laundry tablets tend to contain the most phosphate.
- Wait until you **have a full load before using a washing machine.**
- Ensure, if applicable, that your **private sewage treatment plant is well maintained and working effectively.**

[Water companies such as Southern Water, set out Water Resource Management Plan how they will create a resilient water future for customers in the South East and keep taps flowing during droughts. (https://www.southernwater.co.uk/about-us/our-plans/water-resources-management-plan/)

Reducing air pollution in the home

We spend much of our time indoors. Indoor air quality also impacts on our exposure to pollutants.

Here are just some of sources of air pollution in your home:

- Heating and cooking
- Mould
- Burning items in the home, such as wood-burning stoves or open fires and candles
- Chemicals found in items such as paints, varnishes, chipboard furniture, carpets and sofas
- Fumes from cleaning and personal care products

Tips to reduce pollutants in your home

Open windows when you're cooking or using cleaning products	Good ventilation will help to avoid air pollution in your home. It will also help stop the up of moulds too. Keep dust levels low, by using fragrance-free or naturally-scented products, switch to cleaning products and avoid aerosols.

Conserve energy at home to reduce pollution (and your bills) created by gas and electricity	• Switch off your lights • Only fill the kettle with what you need • Try running your washing machine and dishwasher when you have a full load • Consider switching to green energy supplier by visiting the Green Energy UK webs (http://www.greenenergyuk.com) • Find out more about energy efficiency grants on our website (https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/energy-efficiency-loans-and-grants)

Tips to reduce pollutants in your home

Get your boiler serviced regularly	Carbon Monoxide from faulty boilers and heaters can be fatal so make sure you get y boiler serviced regularly. If you're thinking of replacing your boiler consider installing an ultra-low Nox model.
Recycle your compostable	• Rather than burning your garden waste, compost it and turn it into food for your vegetable patch • Order a compost bin by visiting Hampshire County Council's website (https://www.hants.gov.uk/wasteandrecycling/smartliving/inthegarden/compostbins 0)
Burn smokeless fuels or dry, well-seasoned wood on your barbecue or stove	Wood-burning stoves have grown in popularity. Domestic burning contributes 38% of particulate matter pollution, compared with 16% from industrial combustion and only from road transport. If you're installing a new wood burning stove, buy a Defra-approv stove (https://www.gov.uk/smoke-control-area-rules), only burn dry wood and only lig when really needed. If you are thinking of, or are currently burning wood in a wood burning stove or open visit our domestic biomass and solid fuel heating appliances page (/domestic-biomas Find out more about using your stoves properly by visiting the Burn Right website (http://www.burnright.co.uk/).

Smoking in public places

Almost all enclosed public places and workplaces in England are now smoke free. This ensures a healthier environment, so everyone can socialise, relax, travel, shop and work without exposure to second hand smoke. You can find more information on Smoke Free Hampshire (https://www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/publichealth/smokefreehampshire) on Hampshire County Council's website.

The smoke free law:

- recognises a person's right to be protected from the harm of secondhand smoke and to breathe smoke free air
- helps people trying to give up smoking by providing supportive smoke free environments
- reduces illness and the number of deaths from medical conditions caused by secondhand smoke inhalation
- improves life expectancy because less people will take up smoking in the first place

Smoking is illegal within public places and workplaces if they are partly or completely enclosed. The law affects most public premises, including workplaces and work vehicles, and applies to staff, customers and visitors. Failure to comply with the law is an offence:

- if a business fails to display a 'no smoking' sign in premises covered by the law they could receive a fixed penalty of £200 (discounted to £150 if paid within 15 days from the issue of a notice) or a fine of up to £1000 if taken to court;
- if someone is found smoking in a smoke free place they may get a fixed penalty notice of £50 (discounted to £30 if paid within 15 days from the issue of a notice) or a fine of up to £200 if taken to court;
- if a business fails to prevent smoking in a smoke free place or vehicle they could get fined up to £2500 if they are taken to court.

Please visit our planning application process page for planning and general guidance for smoking shelters. (/plan-app-process)

Contact details

Environmental Health team

If you have an enquiry, send a message to the Environmental Health team

Related

Contaminated land

Drainage

Chimney height approval and installing a furnace

Domestic biomass and solid fuel heating appliances

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