

# £7 million fund for local action to cut air pollution

The government is today inviting local councils across England to bid for funding from a £7 million pot to find innovative ways to improve the air quality in their areas.

The government's [Air Quality Grant](#) helps councils develop and implement measures to benefit schools, businesses and communities and reduce the impact of air pollution on people's health.

The grant will encourage and support projects that deal with improving air quality as well as improving knowledge about the health risks.

Local authorities across the country can bid for a portion of the fund for a wide range of projects to improve air quality and create cleaner and healthier environments. The criteria for this year's grant period will prioritise three areas:

- Projects that reduce air pollution where there are nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) exceedances;
- Projects focusing on improving public knowledge and information about air quality, including steps individuals can take to reduce their exposure to air pollution; and
- Projects that include measures to deal with particulate matter, which is the pollutant most harmful to human health.

Since it was established, the Air Quality Grant scheme has awarded more than £81 million to a variety of innovative projects. These have included a digital education package to teach children and parents about the health impacts of particulate matter and nitrogen dioxide, and the development of a community website to share air quality information and raise awareness with local residents and visitors.

These projects and many others funded by the grant scheme have contributed to the significant improvement in air quality seen in the UK in recent decades. Since 2010, levels of fine particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) – particles or liquid droplets in the air which present the greatest risk to public health – have reduced by 11% while emissions of nitrogen oxides have fallen by 32% and are at their lowest level since records began.

## **Environment Minister Steve Double said:**

“Air quality has improved significantly since 2010 but we know that it remains the biggest environmental risk to public health.

“This is why we have today opened applications for millions of pounds worth of additional funding for local authorities so they can take the action needed to cut air pollution and improve air quality awareness in their areas.

“Local authorities know their areas best, and we are excited to receive their ideas for innovative measures which will reduce the impact of air pollution on the health of their communities.”

Applications for the grant open from **Tuesday 26 July** and close on **Friday 23 September**.

The Air Quality Grant forms part of the wider [UK plan for tackling roadside nitrogen dioxide concentrations](#), which includes a £3.5 billion investment into air quality and cleaner transport. The plan is supporting the uptake of low emissions vehicles, getting more people to cycle and walk, and encouraging cleaner public transport.

Later this year we will be bringing forward two new ambitious air quality targets under our Environment Act to reduce the level of harmful fine particulate matter (PM2.5) in the air, the most harmful air pollutant for human health. In addition to this the Act has made it easier for local authorities to use their existing powers to tackle sources of air pollution in their areas, as well as for the Government to mandate recalls of vehicles when they do not meet legal emission standards.

The government has also taken action to cut pollution from household burning – a significant source of the particulate matter. A ban on the sale of coal and wet wood for domestic burning came into force in May last year.

Local Authorities in England are invited to apply via Bravo. Further details on how to apply are available on the [Air Quality Grants GOV.UK page](#).