# Air Quality Management Areas Frequently Asked Questions

Guildford Borough Council have put together some further information that we hope will answer any questions or concerns you may have regarding the Air Quality Management Areas.

## What is the air pollution like in Guildford?

The National Air Quality Strategy sets air quality objectives for England and Wales. These air quality objectives have been set with health effects in mind. The aim is to ensure that everyone is able to enjoy acceptable levels of air quality that meet these objectives, posing no significant risk to human health or quality of life.

Generally, the air quality within the borough is good. Guildford Borough Council has now declared 3 Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) in Compton, Shalford and most recently in Guildford Town Centre. All the three AQMAs were declared due to the exceedance of Nitrogen dioxide (NO2) annual air quality objective of 40µg/m3 at the relevant exposure location (residential building façade). The exceedance of annual air quality objective within these is attributed to a combination of road traffic flow, proximity of residential façade to the road and poor dispersal of air pollutants.

## How is air quality monitored?

Guildford Borough Council currently have a network of 48 NO2 diffusion tubes located throughout the district, which are changed over every month, with the old tubes sent off for analysis. Monitoring is carried out alongside busy roads, or on narrow congested streets, where air pollution is likely to be worse. We also monitor at several 'background' locations, for example, away from busy roads, or in rural areas.

Annually, progress reports are produced annually using the results from the monitoring. If the diffusion tube results indicate a likelihood of exceedance of air quality objective, detailed air quality assessment is undertaken.

## Where does nitrogen dioxide come from?

In Guildford, the main source of nitrogen dioxide is the emissions from combustion of petrol and diesel in vehicles.

## What are the health effects associated with high NO2 Levels?

Nitrogen Dioxide can have both long and short term health effects on humans. Short-term effects include irritation of the eyes and throat and can lead to the increase of symptoms of respiratory conditions including asthma, and bronchitis. The long-term health effects will increase the susceptibility to respiratory conditions among healthy individuals, and lead to gradual deterioration in health of people already suffering from respiratory problems, particularly in elderly people

## What is an Air Quality Management Area?

An Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) is declared in the area/s where the local air quality is unlikely to meet the Government’s national objectives.

## What are the implications of an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA)?

An AQMA means that, within that area, the levels of a certain pollutant are above those required by legislation for health reasons. Any declaration, in summary, means that further monitoring of that pollutant has to be undertaken and a plan has to be put in place to improve the air quality within it. Therefore, the implications of an AQMA are all to encourage positive steps.

## Have other local authorities declared AQMA’s?

There are currently 734 AQMAs for exceedances of NO2 in England only. The [data and information on other AQMAs can be obtained from the DEFRA website.](https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/aqma/list?la=all&country=england&pollutant=no2.)

## What steps are the council taking to resolve the matter?

The AQMA has been declared and consequently an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) has to be produced within 18 months. The AQAP is produced between different organisations, including Surrey County Council, and Highways Agency, and will identify steps, which can be implemented for long term air quality improvements.

## Do I have to declare an AQMA against my property on the land registry?

No, there is no legal requirement for the AQMA to be placed on the land registry against properties

located within the AQMA, however, the designation of an AQMA is a legislative requirement and is not an optional

process. Therefore, the information has to be made available to the public and will be placed on a national website by Defra, and locally on Guildford Borough Council’s website.

## Does the AQMA stay in place forever?

No, the Council will continue to monitor the levels of NO2 and should the annual average level fall below the national objective, the AQMA can be removed.

## Where can I find copies of Guildford Borough Councils air quality reports and details of the AQMA?

The annual air quality reports undertaken by Guildford Borough Council dating back to 2010 and the [AQMA declaration can be found on the Councils website](https://www.guildford.gov.uk/article/19807/Find-out-how-we-monitor-air-quality-and-pollution).