

Air Quality in Tower Hamlets

How GPs can help tackle the health effects of air pollution

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What is the role of Public Health?

We take a population perspective of health:

- What is the relative burden of ill-health, risk factors and their determinants?
- Who is disproportionately affected by these?

We work strategically towards improved health outcomes

We offer upstream intervention to improve health and wellbeing

We build the knowledge base to improve system-wide understanding

Air Quality: the largest environmental risk to public health



Why is Air Quality a public health issue?

- Short term effects:
 - Asthma and COPD exacerbations
 - Deterioration in heart and lung conditions
- Long-term effects:
 - By 8/9yrs, children in most polluted areas have 5-10% less lung capacity
 - 40,000 deaths in the UK attributable to outdoor air pollution
 - Reduced life expectancy – 7-8 months on average in UK
 - Cancer, asthma, stroke, heart disease, diabetes, obesity
 - Low birth weight
 - Neurological health – dementia
- Estimated health costs of up to £20 billion each year
- NHS is a major polluter and should lead by example (RCP report)

How is this distributed across Tower Hamlets?

Ward	Annual deaths attributable to exposure to PM(2.5)	Ward	Annual deaths attributable to exposure to PM(2.5)
Bethnal Green North	5	Mile End East	5
Bethnal Green South	7	Millwall	7
Blackwall and Cubitt Town	9	St Dunstan's and Stepney Green	7
Bow East	5	St Katherine's and Wapping	6
Bow West	5	Shadwell	6
Bromley-by-Bow	6	Spitalfields and Banglatown	4
East India and Lansbury	6	Weavers	5
Limehouse	6	Whitechapel	6
Mile End and Globe Town	7		

Annual mean concentrations, 2011

PM(10)



NO(2)



What are we doing about this in Tower Hamlets?

Air Quality Action Plan

- Pollution monitoring
- Reducing emissions from developments and buildings
- Major infrastructure projects
- Borough servicing and freight
- Vehicle fleet shift
- Cleaner transport
- Lobbying and Partnership
- Public health and awareness raising

What can general practice do?

Annual asthma reviews can provide an opportunity to discuss air pollution:

- Asthma might get worse during air pollution episodes (use reliever if required)
- Sign up for free alert service
- Avoid strenuous exercise at these times
- Walk, scoot or cycle to avoid pollution, reduce emissions and keep healthy

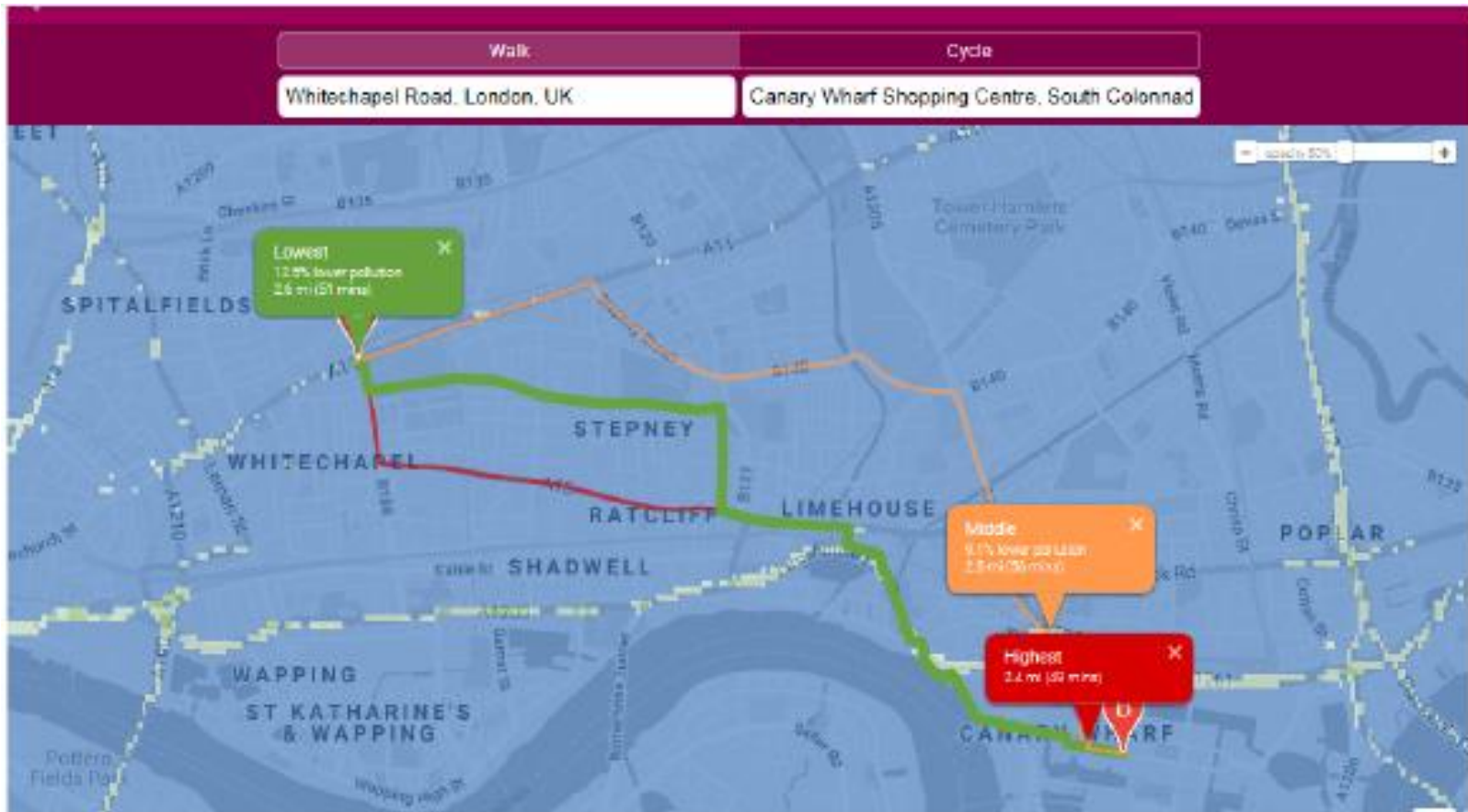
AirTEXT alerts

- Free service for the public
- Provides air quality alerts by SMS text message, email & voicemail
- Gives 3-day forecasts of air quality, pollen, UV & temperature across Greater London
- <http://www.airtext.info/>
- *airTEXT* smartphone apps
- Twitter

Air Pollution Banding	Value	Accompanying health messages for at-risk groups and the general population	
		At-risk individuals*	General population
Low	1-3	Enjoy your usual outdoor activities.	Enjoy your usual outdoor activities.
Moderate	4-6	Adults and children with lung problems, and adults with heart problems, who experience symptoms , should consider reducing strenuous physical activity, particularly outdoors.	Enjoy your usual outdoor activities.
High	7-9	Adults and children with lung problems, and adults with heart problems, should reduce strenuous physical exertion, particularly outdoors, and particularly if they experience symptoms. People with asthma may find they need to use their reliever inhaler more often. Older people should also reduce physical exertion.	Anyone experiencing discomfort such as sore eyes, cough or sore throat should consider reducing activity, particularly outdoors.
Very High	10	Adults and children with lung problems, adults with heart problems, and older people, should avoid strenuous physical activity. People with asthma may find they need to use their reliever inhaler more often.	Reduce physical exertion, particularly outdoors, especially if you experience symptoms such as cough or sore throat.

Clean Air Route Finder

<https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/environment/pollution-and-air-quality/clean-air-route-finder>



Leading by example

- I will walk, cycle or use public transport instead of driving my car
- I will switch off my car engine when stationary, loading or waiting
- I will walk my children to school
- I will sign up to get a daily air pollution text alert:
www.airtext.info
- I will make my next car an electric or a petrol & electricity-fuelled car
- I will use Click and Collect services instead of having items delivered to my home or to work as it reduces congestion and the impact on the air quality