



# Air Quality in Scotland

Welcome to the 25<sup>th</sup> Scottish Air Quality Database (SAQD) stakeholder's newsletter. This newsletter is produced on behalf of the Scottish Government by Ricardo and is designed to provide regular updates and news regarding the SAQD and local air quality matters to all stakeholders. This may include; updates to the network; new information on air quality issues; updates on changes in policy and procedures; new initiatives and events; technical reports; and how to access data using the Air Quality in Scotland website.

If you have any information which you think would be beneficial to include in a future newsletter, please email us at [aq-monitoring-scotland@ricardo.com](mailto:aq-monitoring-scotland@ricardo.com).

## NEWS

### **The 2026 Scottish Air Quality Seminar**

The Scottish Air Quality Annual Seminar 2026, run by the Scottish Government as part of the Scottish Air Quality Database and Website project, will take place in-person in Glasgow.

Date: 17th March 2026

Time: 10:00 – 16:00

Location: [The Social Hub](#) (Candleriggs Square, Glasgow, G1 1TQ, Scotland).

A number of speakers have been secured and the agenda is being finalised. Talks will include:

- Prof David Carslaw - University of York - A New Measurement Technique for Quantifying Vehicle Emissions and Concentration Source Apportionment presentation
- Dr Abigail Whitehouse - Queen Mary University of London - Translating Air Quality Research into Better Children's Health
- Niamh Connolly – Irish EPA - Irish EPA Network and the implementation of the EU regulations
- Dr Nicola Masey – Ricardo - Innovative International Modelling work
- Dom Callaghan – Glasgow City Council – Glasgow city Council journey to no Air Quality Standard Exceedances
- Dr Rachel Whitty – WSP - Nitrosamine assessment methodology; implications for planning and permitting

- Prof. Jo Barnes - professor of clean air, university of the west of England - Differentials in Air Pollution Exposure Across Communities and Regions in the UK
- Toby Gregory – The Arctic Challenge

Lunch and refreshments will be provide along with a Certificate of Personal Development. If you haven't already registered, please register before COP on the 10th March so we can make the relevant catering and seating arrangements.

[Please register for this FREE event here.](#)

### **Publication of the Scottish Air Quality Database Annual Report for 2024**

The Scottish Air Quality Database Annual Report for 2024 has now been published. It provides a summary of ratified air quality monitoring results for Scotland in 2024 - together with an update on project progress including QA/QC, Pollution trend analysis, Air pollution mapping, and pollution emissions data. View the report [here](#).

### **Publication of the Air pollution in the UK annual report for 2024**

This report is the latest in a series of annual reports first published in 2003, this year's report summarises the results of the UK's ambient air quality assessment for 2024, presenting measurements from the various UK air pollution monitoring networks and air quality modelling

data. It provides a comprehensive analytical view of the UK's air pollution. View the report [here](#).

### **Clean air night**

Clean Air Night took place on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of January this year, the counterpart to Clean Air Day this again focuses on what actions can be undertaken to improve local air quality matters. In this instance messages were shared across Net Zero Scotland Social Media channels putting actions to reduce pollution from solid fuel burning stoves into the spotlight.

Suggestions included:

- Choosing cleaner fuels like dry wood instead of traditional house coal,
- Switching to a more efficient appliance, such as such an Ecodesign stove,
- Keeping chimneys swept to prevent harmful pollutants from entering the atmosphere.

More information can be found about impacts of solid fuel burning on the Cleanairhub website [here](#).

### **Launch of the UK Local Air Quality Dashboard**

Defra, Greater London Authority, and the Devolved Governments have launched a new interactive dashboard designed to make local air quality information more accessible to the public.

Utilising data provided through the latest annual report submissions the dashboard tool enables users to search for a wide range air quality data information by postcode including:

- Local monitoring data from both automatic and passive monitoring stations,
- Smoke Control Areas,
- Air Quality Management Areas,
- Actions undertaken by Local Authorities

Visit the dashboard [here](#).

### **DEFRA Domestic Solid Fuel Burning Consultation**

On 22 January 2026, Defra, working with the devolved governments, launched a UK wide public consultation on pollution control measures related to domestic solid fuel burning.

The consultation covers proposals on:

- New emission limits for solid fuel appliances, including wood burning stoves
- New mandatory labelling for solid fuel appliances and fuels, including health impact information
- Stronger enforcement and higher penalties for non compliance with domestic solid fuels regulations

The consultation runs from the 22<sup>nd</sup> of January, to the 19<sup>th</sup> of March 2026. Responses can be submitted via Citizen Space [here](#).

### **Solid Fuel Burning Report Published**

Following our lunchtime seminar at the end of last year, the Solid Fuel Burning Report, undertaken by Eiko Nemitz and colleagues at the UKCEH (UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology), has now been published. A link to the report is provided below.

<https://nora.nerc.ac.uk/id/eprint/540833/>

### **Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) Round-up 2025 – Written by SEPA**

SEPA has recently collated information relating to local authority Annual Progress Reporting (APR) and Air Quality Action Planning (AQAP) which took place in 2025. Local authority performance has steadily increased since the Covid-19 pandemic and 2025 represents the best to date since this point. SEPA can also report there were no instances where the available enforcement provisions were required to be used during the reporting year.

### APRs

APRs are required to be submitted by 30 June each year, and where necessary local authorities may request an extension from the Scottish Government and SEPA. In 2025, 19 local authorities submitted their APR by 30 June, and 13 local authorities had agreed extensions where the revised submission date for the APR was achieved. All APRs were submitted by the end of October and have been agreed by the Scottish Government and SEPA. Reports are available on the Air Quality in Scotland website.

### AQAPs

The revised Scottish Government LAQM Policy Guidance in 2024 required all AQAPs to be reviewed no later than March 2024 or move towards revocation of the associated Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs). There was a requirement to also publish and implement the AQAPs by this time, but it was recognised that different processes (some of which are very lengthy) exist within each local authority for consultation and approval of these documents.

A further three AQAPs were published during 2025. Currently two AQAPs are still at draft status due to significant changes to local circumstances during the review period resulting in further amendments being required or where still going through internal approval processes. One local authority published an Air Quality Strategy after revocation of its AQMAs. Published action plans and strategies are available on the Air Quality in Scotland website.

### AQMAs

At the start of 2026 there are 13 AQMAs in place with four in the process of being revoked or amended (down from 21 at the start of 2025). This represents a further reduction from the 43 AQMAs declared in total since the LAQM system has been in place. Details of all AQMAs can be found on the Air Quality in Scotland and UK-AIR websites.

SEPA would like to thank local authorities for their LAQM work over the reporting year. The APR reporting cycle for 2026 will start shortly and the updated reporting requirements, templates and information related to SEPA-regulated activities will be communicated through the Scottish Pollution Control

Coordinating Committee (SPCCC). SEPA will also write to local authorities at the start of May. Should a local authority have any queries in relation to APRs, AQAPs, AQMAs or any aspect of their LAQM duties, they can contact SEPA at [airquality@sepa.org.uk](mailto:airquality@sepa.org.uk).

### SAQD QAQC ACTIVITIES

Ricardo have carried out the Winter 2025/26 audits of the SAQD monitoring sites. Auditors will have contacted you after the audit to provide a summary of results and advice on what to do next.

If an audit summary has not been provided after the visit has been completed, or you are unclear on any of the recommended actions, please contact either the auditor who undertook the visit or [aq-monitoring-scotland@ricardo.com](mailto:aq-monitoring-scotland@ricardo.com). Can you please then pass these on audit information to your ESU's in advance of the service so that any issues can be investigated.

Ratified data for the second half of 2025 will be available on the Air Quality in Scotland website for all SAQD automatic monitoring sites in the coming months.

### QUESTION AND ANSWERS SECTION

This section will provide answers to frequently asked questions that relate to different aspects of LAQM ranging from Local Site Operator (LSO) duties to advanced data analysis queries. If you have a question you would like to be answered in this section, please contact [aq-monitoring-scotland@ricardo.com](mailto:aq-monitoring-scotland@ricardo.com).

*Q: I have received my winter Audit Summary for my sites, what do I need to do now?*

*A: The QA/QC Audit Summary sheet is a highly informative document, and it is important that you read through it thoroughly and action any comments addressed to yourself, as well as passing it on to your Equipment Support Unit prior to their service visit. The summary sheet will state whether each of the audit tests passed or failed as well as provide recommendations on any actions that need to be taken. Issues usually fall within three categories: -*

- *Issues with the instrument performance, such as failed converter or leak tests, might require immediate actions from the ESU, or might be able to wait until the service is carried out.*
- *Issues with LSO procedures – occasionally it is identified that an instruments response time falls significantly outside of the LSO manual recommended 10 minute wait time. In order to collect accurate calibration data it might be recommended that an LSO waits longer for the instrument to truly stabilise.*
- *Issue with the site infrastructure, when visiting the site the auditor might identify signs of water ingress into the hut, or overgrown vegetation that needs cutting back.*

## STAY CONNECTED

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