



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs



Department
for Transport

Gareth Davies

Second Permanent Secretary of the Department for Transport

David Hill

Director General for Environment, Rural and Marine

Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown,
Deputy Chair, Committee of Public Accounts
House of Commons
SW1A 0AA

29 September 2022

Dear Deputy Chair,

Air Quality PAC: Follow-up response regarding the publication of the 2021 Air Quality Annual Compliance Assessment.

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to attend the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) hearing on tackling local air quality breaches which took place on 27 June 2022.

As you requested during the hearing, we promised to inform the Committee upon publication of the 2021 annual compliance assessment when it is available. The UK's Air Quality Standards Regulations 2010 require the UK to undertake air quality assessment to assess legal compliance against air pollutant concentration limit and target values and report the findings and associated data on an annual basis.

We are writing to inform you that today, 29 September, we have published the data of the 2021 compliance assessment and the compliance report titled "*Air Pollution in the UK*".

This assessment found that 10 out of 43 zones in the UK exceeded the limit value for the pollutant nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) in 2021. This is a substantial reduction compared with the number of non-compliant zones in 2019 when 33 of 43 zones

exceeded this limit value. In 2020, 5 zones exceeded the NO₂ limit value. This low number of zones exceeding in 2020 was largely attributed to the Covid-19 lockdown restrictions which substantially reduced traffic levels on many roads. In 2021 overall traffic levels increased compared to 2020 following the easing of Covid-19 restrictions, however some restrictions remained in place at the start of 2021 which likely suppressed roadside NO₂ concentrations in some locations.

We are continuing to take action to achieve compliance with the NO₂ limit value through the implementation of the Government's 2017 UK Plan and the 2018 Supplement for Tackling Roadside Nitrogen Dioxide Concentrations. All exceedances of the NO₂ limit value in England in 2021 are located within Local Authorities that have already been engaged by the Joint Air Quality Unit (JAQU) to develop local plans to deliver compliance in the shortest time possible or are within the jurisdiction of the Greater London Authority (GLA).

The [Air Pollution in the UK](#) report for 2021 is provided with this letter and the detailed results can be viewed and downloaded on the UK-AIR website.

Yours sincerely,



Gareth Davies

**Second Permanent Secretary
Department for Transport**



David Hill

**Director General – Environment, Rural & Marine
Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs**