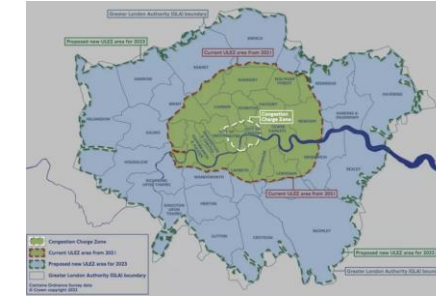


# The ULEZ Expansion - a note for DsPH in London

Figure 1. Current and expanded ULEZ zone



**Aim:** This two page note aims to briefly set out:

- Key background information on Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ)
- Key contextual information on air pollution in London
- The health and health inequalities case for the ULEZ expansion
- Information surrounding community engagement.

## Executive summary

- The ULEZ and its expansion sits within a wider suite of interventions, including taking the Healthy Streets Approach and improving public transport services, which help tackle air pollution and increase sustainable transport trips across London. These interventions work together to make London a healthier, fairer and more sustainable city.
- [NO<sub>2</sub> levels are 46% lower in central London and 21% lower in inner London than they would have been without the current ULEZ](#) (green zone in figure 1).
- Whilst more than four out of five vehicles seen driving in outer London already meet the ULEZ standards; [modelling suggests the expanded ULEZ \(blue zone in figure 1\) will deliver a 10% reduction of NO<sub>x</sub> emissions from cars in outer London and a 16% reduction in PM<sub>2.5</sub> exhaust emissions](#).
- [Communities which have higher levels of deprivation, or a higher proportion of people from a non-white ethnic background, are more likely to be exposed to higher levels of air pollution](#), despite being less likely to own a car. [The ULEZ is recognised by independent experts as one of the most effective and speedy interventions for improving air quality whilst reducing health inequalities](#).
- A [representative YouGov poll commissioned by City Hall](#) found the majority (51%) of Londoners support the roll-out saying they believe the proposed expansion of the ULEZ should be implemented compared with 27% who think it shouldn't.
- Public Health teams operating in London should seek to effectively communicate the health benefits and practical implications of the ULEZ expansion as well as flagging available support, such as the [scrappage scheme, discounts and exemptions](#) and [ULEZ support offers](#).

**What is the ULEZ?** The ULEZ is a type of road user charging scheme which aims to cut pollution levels across London by charging drivers of vehicles that do not meet minimum emissions standards £12.50 a day to drive within the zone.

**Where does the current ULEZ cover?** The current ULEZ covers all areas within the North and South Circular Roads. The North Circular (A406) and South Circular (A205) roads are not in the zone.

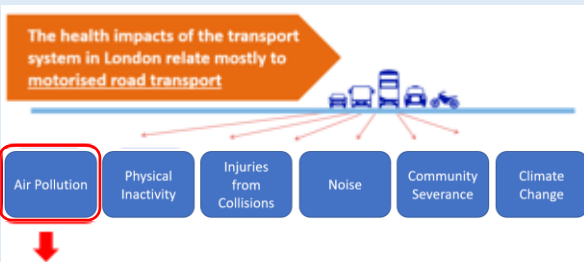
**What is the ULEZ expansion?** To help address the triple challenges of air pollution, congestion and climate change, the ULEZ is expanding across all London boroughs from August 29 2023. Whilst most vehicles are already ULEZ compliant, support is available for those who need it most, for example low-income and certain disabled Londoners.

**Does it mean everyone will need to buy a brand new or electric car to avoid the charge?** For those who choose to replace their vehicles for one that meets the emissions standards, they do not need to buy a brand new or electric vehicle. Most petrol vehicles under 16 years old or diesel vehicles under 6 years old already meet the emissions standards.

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## Background context

Figure 1. How road transport harms our health



### Road vehicles are the single biggest cause of London's air pollution

- Road vehicles produce nearly half of all nitrogen oxides (NO<sub>x</sub>) and emit tiny particles of rubber and metal (PM) - too small to see with the naked eye - into the air we breathe.
- Air pollution increases the risk of developing lung cancer, heart disease and lung disease and it reduces life expectancy. There is also growing evidence linking air pollution to dementia and cognitive decline in older people as well as early life effects such as low birth weight and premature birth.\* (see notes)

### ULEZ is part of a wider approach to increase sustainable transport in London

A number of approaches work in combination to tackle air pollution, traffic congestion and climate change, as well as reducing the other health impacts listed in figure 1, including:

- Taking the [Healthy Streets Approach](#) to encourage walking, cycling and public transport.
- Providing low emission public transport services to provide attractive and accessible alternatives to car use. The expanded ULEZ will be complemented by the biggest ever expansion of the bus network in outer London.
- The implementation of road user charging schemes, such as [the ULEZ](#). Please find [ADPH London's \(ADPHL\) consultation response to Expansion of the \(ULEZ\) London-wide from August 2023](#).

## The health case for the ULEZ expansion

London has the largest number of deaths attributable to poor air quality out of any English region

[It's estimated that in 2019 in London](#), 61,800 to 70,200 life years lost (the equivalent of around 4,000 deaths) were attributable to long-term exposure to air pollution. (1)

Poor air quality directly causes and exacerbates health inequalities

[The ULEZ is recognised by independent experts as one of the most effective and speedy interventions for improving air quality whilst reducing health inequalities.](#) (3) This is because poor air quality:

**Directly causes health inequalities** – [Low-income Londoners and minority communities are more likely to be exposed and impacted by poor air quality](#) (4), [despite being less likely to own a car](#). (5) However, due to air quality policies implemented since 2016, the most and least deprived areas for [exposure to nitrogen dioxide \(NO<sub>2</sub>\) has narrowed by up to 50%](#).(3)

**Directly exacerbates health inequalities-** poor air quality can directly exacerbate underlying health conditions, such as COPD, which are more prevalent [in certain communities](#), such as those with higher levels of deprivation (6)

[The current ULEZ has been very successful at getting the most polluting vehicles off our streets](#) leading to:

**Almost 50%** reduction in toxic Nitrogen Dioxide pollution in central London. (5)

**5 times** faster reduction of pollution in London than the rest of the UK, between 2016 and 2020. (7)

**Over 1 million** hospital admissions averted by 2050. (8)

**Modelling suggests that expanding the ULEZ London-wide will be effective in improving air quality leading to a:**

- **10% reduction** of NO<sub>x</sub> emissions from cars in outer London
- **16% reduction** in PM<sub>2.5</sub> exhaust emissions. (9)

It is also important to consider that any money received from the ULEZ is reinvested into improving London's transport network, such as expanding bus routes in outer London. This will further encourage more sustainable travel and therefore improve health.

Without action, the cost to the health and care system in London is estimated to be **£5.49 billion** by 2050. (2)

**Despite recent improvements in air quality, largely down to the current ULEZ, a renewed focus on outer London is now required**

- [Outer London has the greatest number of premature deaths from air pollution](#) due to being home to a higher proportion of older adults who are more vulnerable to air pollution. (1)
- According to the World Health Organization guidance, [every outer London borough exceeds the safe limit for PM<sub>2.5</sub>](#). (9)
- [Outer London is also home to over half of the 500,000 Londoners who live with asthma and are more vulnerable to the impacts of air pollution.](#) (9)

## Community engagement

- TfL and the GLA engaged with communities and organisations across London during the consultation period, and have a broad marketing and engagement programme to help ensure Londoners are prepared for the London-wide expansion and aware of the support available.
- [A representative YouGov poll commissioned by City Hall](#) found the majority (51%) of Londoners support the roll-out saying they believe the proposed expansion of the ULEZ should be implemented compared with 27% who think it shouldn't. Furthermore, the same percentage of Londoners as last year see the ULEZ as positive (54 per cent), suggesting that support has not been affected by the cost-of-living crisis. (10)
- In July 2022 The Health Foundation published a communications toolkit for public health professionals entitled '[How to talk about the building blocks of health](#)' which could be considered by public health communication teams when developing communications around ULEZ and other sustainable transport interventions which benefit health. (11)

### ULEZ scrappage, discounts and exemptions and support offers

- The new [scrappage scheme](#) is providing £110 million to help replace the most polluting vehicles. Londoners on certain low income and disability benefits (including universal credit and child tax credit), sole traders, businesses with 10 or fewer employees and charities can apply for grants to replace their older, more polluting vehicles. Applications for the scrappage scheme are now open and will be available until all funds are allocated.
- [ULEZ discounts and exemptions](#) - some drivers and vehicles qualify for at least a temporary 100% discount from the ULEZ and others are entirely exempt. For example, not-for-profit organisations operating minibuses for community transport and people receiving certain disability benefits or using a wheelchair accessible vehicle can also apply for a temporary exemption from the ULEZ charge.
- [ULEZ support offers](#) are also in place to encourage people to save money and switch to greener forms of transport. For example, TfL are offering money off hire and subscription services for bikes, e-bikes, cargo bikes and e-scooters and discounts on car clubs etc.