



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

T: 08459 33 55 77
helpline@defra.gsi.gov.uk
www.defra.gov.uk

Your ref:
Our ref: RFI 6518
Date: 6 May 2014

Dear

Request for Information: Air Pollution Related Deaths

Thank you for your email, which we received in April. We have handled your request under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

In answer to your questions on the number of deaths in Stoke-on-Trent caused by illness directly linked to air pollution, and the measures taken by Defra to ensure the air is clean and that the potential risks associated with air pollution are communicated effectively to the public, I have provided some information below.

Number of deaths linked to air pollution in Stoke-on-Trent

I have established that this information is not held by Defra. Public Health England (PHE) recently carried out a study to look at deaths from particulate air pollution by each UK Borough and has published a report. The report presents estimates of the size of the effect on mortality in local authority areas in the UK. The PHE report can be viewed at:
<http://www.hpa.org.uk/Publications/Environment/PHECRCEReportSeries/PHECRCE010/>

The PHE report has built on the air pollution indicator adopted by the Department of Health in the public health outcomes framework for England. The indicator is represented as the fraction of all-cause adult mortality attributable to long term exposure to levels of anthropogenic particulate air pollution. Further information is available from <http://www.phoutcomes.info/>

Air quality improvement

Defra operates a national air quality monitoring network to provide information about air quality in the UK, and supports a number of research networks that gather data about air pollutants and investigate the effects of air pollution on vegetation and ecosystems. Defra makes information on health effects and current levels of pollution available through its UK-AIR website (<http://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/>), Twitter and free telephone helpline **0800 55 66 77**

Defra also provide leadership, guidance and practical support to local authorities in their role, managing air quality at the local level. Local authorities have an obligation to manage local air quality and a responsibility to declare air quality management areas (AQMA) where the national air quality objectives are not met, and to put in place plans to improve air quality in the AQMA. Further information is available from <http://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/>



INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE

Communicating the potential health risks of air pollution

Defra are the lead Government Department with responsibility for air quality. Defra works with Public Health England, the Department of Health and other Government departments to maintain and develop methodologies for assessing air quality impacts on health and the environment, and to develop measures to ensure air quality is appropriately prioritised and integrated into local strategies.

It is important that people are informed when air pollution is high and Defra provide an air quality forecast to inform the public about levels of pollution. 5 day forecasts are provided together with associated health advice to enable people to understand the levels of pollution they are likely to experience and to take appropriate action if they are affected.

The new forecast system provides a 5 day forecast to give greater warning of pollution episodes, more detailed maps and can be searched by place name, postcode or favourite location. Defra provide the air quality forecast on the UK air website <http://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/forecast> as well as providing a Freephone line (0800 556677) for those that do not have internet access. Forecasts are tweeted on a daily basis (@defraukair); in the morning for today's forecast and in the afternoon for tomorrow's. Further alerts are issued on twitter whenever pollution levels are forecast to be high. News bulletins are issued at the beginning of such episodes and links to the episode are tweeted by UK Air (@defraukair) as well as Defra's central twitter account (@defragovuk).

Please be aware that in keeping with the spirit and effect of the Environmental Information Regulations and in keeping with the government's Transparency Agenda, all information is assumed to be releasable to the public unless exempt. Therefore, the above information released to you will now be published on www.gov.uk together with any related information that will provide a key to its wider context. This will not include your personal data.

I attach Annex A, which explains the copyright that applies to the information being released to you.

I also attach Annex B giving contact details should you be unhappy with the service you have received. If you have any queries about this letter, please contact me.

Yours sincerely

Annex A

Copyright

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Copyright in other documents may rest with a third party. For information about obtaining permission from a third party see the Intellectual Property Office's website.

Annex B

Complaints

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request you may make a complaint or appeal against our decision under section 17(7) of the FOIA or under regulation 18 of the EIRs, as applicable, within 40 working days of the date of this letter. Please write to Mike Kaye, Head of Information Standards, Area 4D, Nobel House, 17 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3JR (email: requestforinfo@defra.gsi.gov.uk) and he will arrange for an internal review of your case. Details of Defra's complaints procedure are on our website.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, section 50 of the FOIA and regulation 18 of the EIRs gives you the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Please note that generally the Information Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have first exhausted Defra's own complaints procedure. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

