

Aberdeen LEZ FAQ

Why a Low Emission Zone (LEZ) is needed in Aberdeen

What is a LEZ?	A LEZ is a defined area where the only vehicles that can be driven without penalty are those which meet set standards for exhaust emissions.
Why is Aberdeen introducing a LEZ now?	The Scottish Government committed to the introduction of LEZs in Scotland's four biggest cities (Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh and Glasgow). The Transport (Scotland) Act provides the legislation to make this happen, and the accompanying Regulations and Guidance due to be published by the end of 2020 will provide standards to ensure nationally consistent LEZs.
Why is air pollution a problem?	The higher the levels of pollution and the more time people spend in polluted air, the worse the effects on health can be. Some people notice its effects immediately, but long-term exposure to air pollution can lead to or exacerbate conditions including heart disease, strokes, asthma, lung cancer and damage to other internal organs. The very young and the very old, as well as those with health problems, are particularly affected.
What causes air pollution?	Air pollution is caused by many factors, some natural and some man-made. But the main source of air pollution in Aberdeen (and most UK cities) is road traffic. Nitrogen dioxide (NO ₂) is the main air pollutant of concern in Aberdeen. In some parts of the city where pollution levels are high, 80% of the NO ₂ pollution comes from road traffic.
Is air pollution in Aberdeen very bad?	Air quality is good in most places in Aberdeen, but there are places where monitoring indicates pollution is above, or is close to, set maximum levels.
Who sets limits for air pollution?	Maximum levels of air pollution are set by European and Scottish laws. For NO ₂ the annual average level should not be more than 40 µg/m ³
Where is air pollution in Aberdeen worst?	Aberdeen has declared three Air Quality Management Areas in which pollution exceeds set objective levels: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parts of the city centre (including Union Street, Market Street, King Street, Virginia Street and Guild Street) • Wellington Road • Anderson Drive/ Haudagain Roundabout <p>In 2018, there were 9 monitored locations in Aberdeen at which pollution levels were higher than set objective levels and a further 10 monitored locations where it was close to the limits and at risk of exceeding standards.</p>
What types of traffic cause most pollution?	The proportion of pollution that comes from different types of traffic varies by location. For example, on Union Street which is a major bus corridor, 48% of NO ₂ pollution is caused by buses. But on Market Street, almost half of NO ₂ pollution is caused by lorries and vans, 34% by cars and 19% by buses.
By how much will a LEZ reduce pollution?	This depends on the area that the LEZ would cover and which vehicles are included in it. Technical work shows that:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a LEZ which only includes buses is not enough to achieve set pollution levels everywhere in Aberdeen; • a LEZ which includes all vehicle types lowers pollution levels significantly but pollution levels in some areas remain higher than is legal; • complementary traffic management will be required to improve air quality in all locations.
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How will a LEZ in Aberdeen work?

What is Aberdeen City Council trying to achieve with a LEZ?	<p>Aberdeen City Council’s decisions about a LEZ in Aberdeen will seek to achieve five objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve air quality in Aberdeen by reducing harmful emissions from transport and delivering on the Scottish Government’s statutory air quality objectives; • Protect public health and wellbeing; • Support climate change targets by reducing road transport’s contribution to emissions; • Support local and regional transport strategies by contributing to the development of a vibrant, accessible, and safe city centre, where the volume of non-essential traffic is minimised and active and sustainable transport movements are prioritised; • Contribute to ongoing transformational change in Aberdeen, helping promote the city as a desirable place to live, visit and invest in.
What area will Aberdeen’s LEZ cover?	<p>This has not yet been decided. Aberdeen City Council will decide on the LEZ area based on technical analysis and feedback from public and stakeholder consultation. However initial technical analysis concluded the LEZ will focus on the city centre area.</p>
When would Aberdeen’s LEZ operate?	<p>This has not been formally decided (and will be determined by regulations) but it is expected to be in effect 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.</p>
When will the LEZ come into force?	<p>Plans to implement the LEZ had been paused temporarily due to the COVID-19 outbreak but work has now restarted. A new indicative timeframe from the Scottish Government aims to introduce LEZs by May 2022.</p> <p>The formal declaration of Aberdeen’s LEZ will be followed by a grace period for enforcement of the LEZ restrictions so that people and businesses have time (if necessary) to change their vehicles or their journey patterns.</p> <p>Aberdeen City Council has not yet decided how long any grace period will be, but current guidance states the grace period must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be at least 1 year and up to 4 years for non-residents and commercial vehicles; • have allowance for up to 2 years’ additional grace period for residents of the zone.
Will I still be able to drive into the LEZ area?	<p>This depends on your vehicle and the decisions regarding which vehicles will be affected. Aberdeen City Council will decide on the</p>

	<p>vehicle types, based on technical analysis and consultation feedback. But you might be affected if you drive a:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bus or goods vehicle which does not meet Euro VI standard (generally those registered before 2014); • Diesel car which does not meet Euro 6 standard (generally those registered before 2015); • Petrol car which does not meet Euro 4 standard (generally those registered before 2006). <p>If your vehicle is newer than these, or if you drive an electric or hydrogen vehicle, you should not be affected.</p>
How can I check whether my vehicle will be affected?	The Scottish Government has developed an online vehicle checker available at www.lowemissionzones.scot/get-ready/vehicle-registration-checker to enable drivers to check whether their vehicles are compliant with LEZ restrictions, based on the date of registration.
Isn't banning buses a good idea to reduce pollution?	No. Although buses do cause pollution, they are many people's only way to get to or around Aberdeen and are typically more efficient per person than cars. Emissions have been falling as operators bring in new, cleaner buses (including buses fuelled by hydrogen). Aberdeen City Council considers it essential that the city has a good bus network.
How will the LEZ be enforced?	ANPR (Automatic Number Plate Recognition) cameras will identify the number plate of every passing vehicle and check them against a database of compliant vehicles. The owner of any non-compliant vehicle driven within the zone would be issued with a penalty charge notice.
What will the penalty charge be?	The penalty rates will be set at a national level by the regulations. No details on the penalty levels are known yet but it is expected that different levels will exist for different classes of vehicles and for repeated infringements.
How will the zone boundary be marked?	Clear road signs will mark the boundary of the zone. Drivers of non-compliant vehicles will be able to choose to drive around the zone rather than into it or use alternative means of transport if they wish to avoid incurring a penalty.
Who is paying for the introduction and operation of the LEZ?	The introduction and operation of the LEZ will be the responsibility of Aberdeen City Council. Money received from penalty charges may be used to help cover the costs. Aberdeen City Council is receiving grant funding from the Scottish Government to help with developing its LEZ proposals.
Will anyone be exempt from the regulations?	Anyone driving a compliant vehicle will be exempt. Vehicles belonging to residents of the zone may be exempted for a longer minimum grace period, as described above, but will not be permanently exempted. Other exemptions (for disabled drivers, for example) are being considered at a national level and will be set by the regulations.
Is support available to help me replace a non-compliant vehicle?	The Scottish Government has committed to help individuals and businesses who will have the most difficulty in making the transition by creating a support fund for those affected by the introduction of a LEZ. The fund is currently available for van, HGV and taxi drivers and may be expanded out to households and individuals in the

	future. You can find out details of the support fund at www.lowemissionzones.scot/support-fund .
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Will the LEZ be effective?

How will we know if the LEZ is being effective?	Aberdeen City Council will continue to monitor air pollution levels at locations across the city, both inside and outside the LEZ boundary, and results will continue to be published by the Council in its Air Quality Annual Progress Report, available at www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/services/environment/air-quality-aberdeen/air-quality-reports . The Council will also assess whether the LEZ is meeting its objectives and will amend or remove the LEZ as necessary.
What else is happening to improve air quality?	Aberdeen City Council has an Air Quality Action Plan available at www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/sites/default/files/air_quality_action_plan_2011.pdf which contains measures to improve air quality in Aberdeen. And other organisations are also helping to make improvements, such as the bus companies' investment in new vehicles.
Will the LEZ push traffic and pollution onto other streets?	Aberdeen City Council wishes to avoid this risk if possible. Detailed assessments of traffic routes are being made, and the Council will consider the findings of this before taking any final decision.
What about reducing other sources of pollution?	Aberdeen's Air Quality Action Plan does seek to reduce pollution from all sources, not only road traffic, but traffic is the main source of pollution at those places in Aberdeen where pollution levels are the highest so is a major focus for effort.
How do I find out about air quality close to me?	The Air Quality in Scotland website, www.scottishairquality.scot gives access to the latest data for sites across Scotland. More information on air quality in Aberdeen is available from Aberdeen City Council's website https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/services/environment/air-quality-aberdeen .
Will the LEZ provide any other benefits?	As well as improving health by reducing air pollution, Aberdeen City Council hopes that the LEZ will continue work to make Aberdeen a more pleasant place to live, work and visit, and also encourage more people to make use of healthy and environmentally-friendly transport choices.
What are the next steps?	In late 2020, Aberdeen City Council will consider the findings of technical analysis of the pollution effects of LEZ options and views of members of the public that respond to the consultation. It will then make final decisions about the area of the LEZ and vehicles to be included within it
How can I give my views about a LEZ in Aberdeen?	By visiting https://consultation.aberdeencity.gov.uk/planning/lez . The survey is open from 14th September to 11th October. You can also email us at transportstrategy@aberdeencity.gov.uk .