Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Air Pollution in the UK 2015

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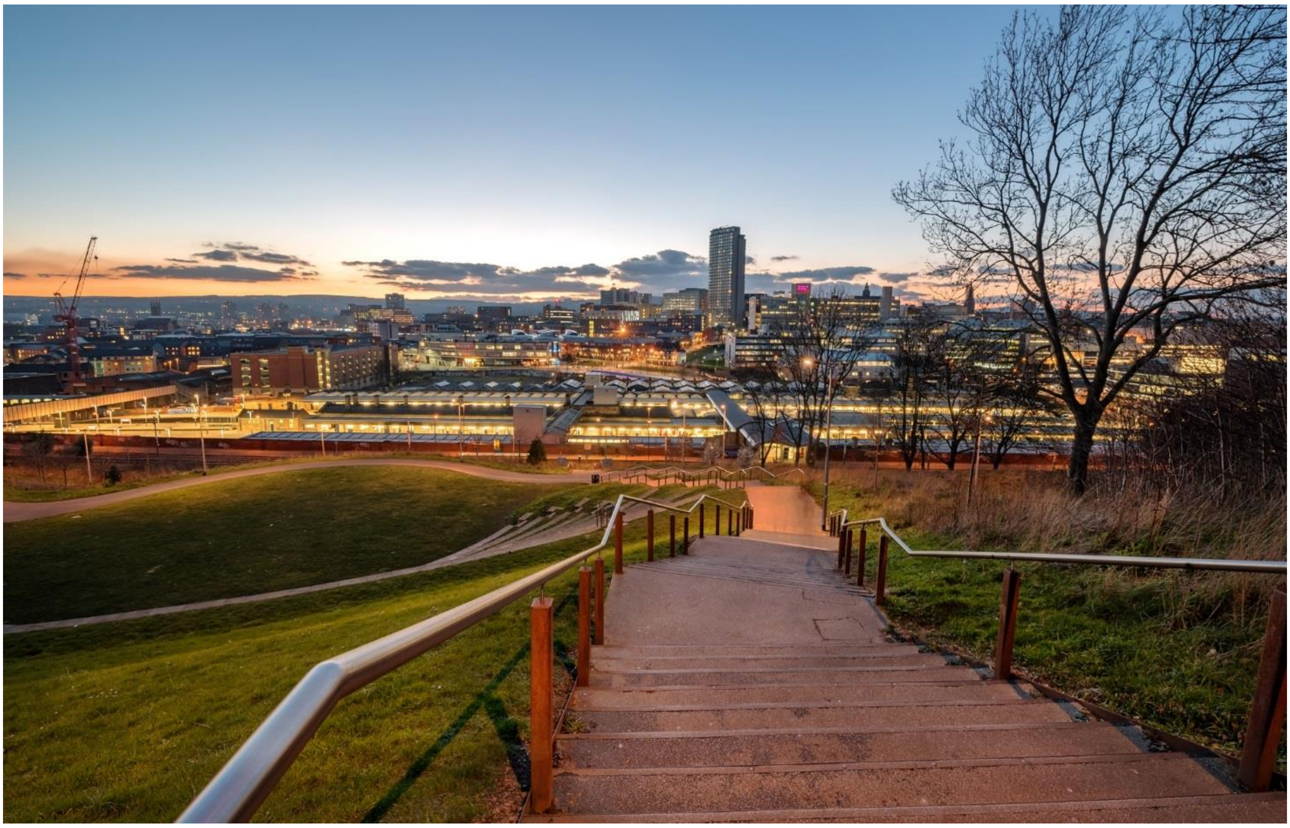

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Executive Summary

The UK is currently required to report air quality data on an annual basis under the following European Directives:

- The Council Directive on ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe (2008/50/EC).
- The Fourth Daughter Directive (2004/107/EC) under the Air Quality Framework Directive (1996/62/EC).

This report provides background information on the pollutants covered by these Directives and the UK's Air Quality Strategy; their sources and effects, the UK's statutory monitoring networks, and the UK's modelling methodology. The report then summarises the UK's 2015 submission on ambient air quality to the European Commission, presenting air quality modelling data and measurements from national air pollution monitoring networks. The pollutants covered in this report are:

- Sulphur dioxide (SO_2)
- Nitrogen oxides (NO_x) comprising NO and NO_2
- PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$ particles
- Benzene
- 1,3-Butadiene
- Carbon Monoxide (CO)
- Metallic Pollutants
- Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH)
- Ozone (O_3)

These data are reported on behalf of Defra (the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) and the Devolved Administrations of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

For the purposes of air quality monitoring, the UK is divided into 43 zones. Overall, the latest data show an improving picture compared to the previous year's data. The 2015 results are detailed in section 4 of this report and summarised below:

- The UK met the limit value for hourly mean nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) in all but two zones.
- Six zones were compliant with the limit value for annual mean NO_2. The remaining 37 exceeded this limit value.
- Five zones exceeded the target value for benzo[a]pyrene in 2015.
- Two zones exceeded the target value for nickel in 2015.
- All zones met both the target values for ozone; the target value based on the maximum daily eight-hour mean, and the target value based on the AOT40 statistic.

- All zones exceeded the long-term objective for ozone, set for the protection of human health. This is based on the maximum daily eight-hour mean.
- One zone exceeded the long-term objective for ozone, set for the protection of vegetation. This is based on the AOT40 statistic.
- After subtraction of the contribution from natural sources all zones met the limit value for daily mean concentration of PM_{10} particulate matter.
- All zones met the limit value for annual mean concentration of PM_{10} particulate matter.
- All zones met the target value for annual mean concentration of $PM_{2.5}$ particulate matter, the Stage 1 limit value, which came into force on 1st January 2015, and the Stage 2 limit value which must be met by 2020.
- All zones met the EU limit values for sulphur dioxide, carbon monoxide, lead and benzene.

A summary of the air quality assessment for 2015 with a comparison of the submissions carried out in the previous years (since 2008 when the Air Quality Directive came into force) can be found in section 4.3 of this report. Copies of those previous annual submissions can be found on the Commission website: http://cdr.eionet.europa.eu/gb/eu/annualair. For more information on air quality in the UK visit the Defra website at www.gov.uk/defra and the UK Air Quality websites at http://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/, www.scottishairquality.co.uk, www.welshairquality.co.uk and www.airqualityni.co.uk.

Glossary

Air Quality Directive. The European Union's Directive 2008/50/EC of 21st May 2008, on Ambient Air Quality and Cleaner Air for Europe is often – as in this report - referred to as 'the Air Quality Directive'.

Air Quality Strategy. The United Kingdom's own National Air Quality Strategy, containing policies for assessment and management of air quality in the UK. This was first published in 1997, as a requirement of The Environment Act 1995.

Air Quality Strategy Objective. The Air Quality Strategy sets objectives for the maximum concentrations of eight pollutants. These are at least as stringent as the limit values of the Air Quality Directive.

Ambient Air. Outdoor air.

Benzene. A chemical compound that is harmful to human health. As an air pollutant, benzene can be emitted from domestic and industrial combustion processes, and road vehicles. Its chemical formula is C_6H_6.

Benzo [a] Pyrene. One of a group of compounds called ***polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs)*** that can be air pollutants. The main sources of B[a]P in the UK are domestic coal and wood burning, fires, and industrial processes such as coke production.

1,3-Butadiene. This is an organic compound emitted into the atmosphere mainly from fuel combustion e.g. petrol and diesel vehicles. 1,3-butadiene is also an important chemical in certain industrial processes, particularly the manufacture of synthetic rubber. 1,3-butadiene is known to cause cancer in humans.

Carbon Monoxide (CO) a pollutant gas found released in road vehicle exhausts. When breathed in, carbon monoxide affects the blood's ability to carry oxygen around the body.

Episode (Air Pollution Episode). An 'air pollution episode' means a period of time (usually a day or several days) when air pollution is high (air quality is poor).

FDMS. This stands for 'Filter Dynamic Measurement System' and refers to a type of instrument for monitoring concentrations of particulate matter. The FDMS is a modified form of ***TEOM***.

Fourth Daughter Directive. The European Union's Directive 2004/107/EC, which covers the four metallic elements cadmium, arsenic, nickel and mercury together with ***polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH)***. (Its name comes from its origin as one of four so-called Daughter Directives set up under an overarching 'framework Directive'.)

Limit value. The Air Quality Directive sets 'limit values' for ambient concentrations of pollutants. Limit values are legally binding and must not be exceeded. All Member States of the EU must make the limit values part of their own air quality legislation.

Long-Term Objectives. As well as limit values and target values, the Air Quality Directive sets 'long-term objectives' for ozone concentration. These are similar to limit values but are not legally mandatory. Member States must take all necessary measures not entailing disproportionate costs to meet the target values and long-term objectives.

Member States. Countries that are part of the European Union.

Microgramme per cubic metre (µg m^{-3}). Unit often used to express concentration of a pollutant in air. 1 µg = 1 millionth of a gramme or 1×10^{-6} g.

Micrometre (µm). Unit of length often used for the size of particulate pollutants. 1 µm = 1 millionth of a metre (1×10^{-6} m) or one thousandth of a millimetre.

Milligramme per cubic metre (mg m^{-3}). Unit often used to express concentration of carbon monoxide in air. 1 mg = 1 thousandth of a gramme or 1×10^{-3} g.

Nickel (Ni) A toxic metallic element found in ambient air as a result of releases from oil and coal combustion, metal processes, manufacturing and other sources

Nitric oxide (NO). One of the oxides of nitrogen formed in combustion processes. NO is not harmful to human health but combines with oxygen to form nitrogen dioxide.

Nitrogen Dioxide (NO_2) One of the oxides of nitrogen formed in combustion processes. At high concentrations NO_2 is an irritant to the airways. NO_2 can also make people more likely to catch respiratory infections (such as flu), and to react to allergens.

Nitrogen Oxides. Compounds formed when nitrogen and oxygen combine. NOx, which comprises nitric oxide (NO) and nitrogen dioxide (NO_2), is emitted from combustion processes. Main sources include power generation, industrial combustion and road transport.

Ozone (O_3). A pollutant gas which is not emitted directly from any source in significant quantities, but is produced by reactions between other pollutants in the presence of sunlight. (This is what is known as a ***'secondary pollutant'***.) Ozone concentrations are greatest in the summer. O_3 can travel long distances and reach high concentrations far away from the original pollutant sources. Ozone is an irritant to the airways of the lungs, throat and eyes: it can also harm vegetation.

Particulate Matter (PM). Small airborne particles. PM may contain many different materials such as soot, wind-blown dust or secondary components, which are formed within the atmosphere as a result of chemical reactions. Some PM is natural and some is man-made. Particulate matter can be harmful to human health when inhaled, and research shows a range of health effects associated with PM. In general, the smaller the particle the deeper it can be inhaled into the lung.

PM_{10}. Particles which pass through a size-selective inlet with a 50 % efficiency cut-off at 10 µm aerodynamic diameter, as defined in ISO 7708:1995, Clause 6. This size fraction is important in the context of human health, as these particles are small enough to be inhaled into the airways of the lung – described as the 'thoracic convention' in the above ISO standard. PM_{10} is often described as '*particles of less than 10 micrometres in diameter*' though this is not strictly correct.

$PM_{2.5}$. Particles which pass through a size-selective inlet with a 50 % efficiency cut-off at 2.5 µm aerodynamic diameter, as defined in ISO 7708:1995, Clause 7.1. This size fraction is important in the context of human health, as these particles are small enough to be inhaled very deep into the lung – described as the 'high risk respirable convention' in the above ISO standard. $PM_{2.5}$ is often described as '*particles of less than 2.5 micrometres in diameter*' though this is not strictly correct.

Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAH). PAHs are a large group of chemical compounds that are toxic and carcinogenic. Once formed, they can remain in the environment for a long time, and can be passed up the food chain. The main sources are domestic coal and wood burning, outdoor fires, and some industrial processes. The pollutant ***benzo [a] pyrene*** is a PAH, and because it is one of the more toxic PAH compounds it is measured as a 'marker' for this group of pollutants.

Secondary pollutant. A pollutant which is formed by chemical reactions from other pollutants in the atmosphere. Ozone, for example, is a secondary pollutant.

Sulphur dioxide (SO_2). An acid gas formed when fuels containing sulphur impurities are burned. SO_2 irritates the airways of the lung.

Target Value. As well as limit values, the ***Air Quality Directive*** and ***Fourth Daughter Directive*** set target values for some pollutants. These are similar to limit values but are not legally mandatory. ***Member States*** must take all necessary measures not entailing disproportionate costs to meet the target values.

TEOM. This stands for 'Tapered Element Oscillating Microbalance'. This is a type of instrument used to monitor concentrations of particulate matter.

TOMPs. This stands for 'Toxic Organic Micropollutants'. These are compounds that are present in the environment at very low concentrations, but are highly toxic and persistent. They include dioxins and dibenzofurans.

Contents

1 Introduction

A cleaner, healthier environment benefits people and the economy. Clean air is vital for people's health and the environment, essential for making sure our cities are welcoming places for people to live and work now and in the future, and to our prosperity. It is therefore important to monitor levels of air pollution. The broad objectives of monitoring air pollution in the UK are:

- To fulfil statutory air quality reporting requirements.
- To provide a sound scientific basis for the development of cost-effective control policies.
- To provide the public with open, reliable and up-to-date information on air pollution, enabling them to take appropriate action to minimise health impacts.
- To evaluate potential impacts on population, ecosystems and our natural environment.

Air quality standards are set in European Union (EU) Directive 2008/50/EC on Ambient Air Quality and Cleaner Air for Europe[1] and the Fourth Daughter Directive[2] (2004/107/EC). These Directives require all Member States to undertake air quality assessment, and to report the findings to the European Commission on an annual basis.

The UK has statutory monitoring networks in place to meet the requirements of these Directives, with air quality modelling used to supplement the monitored data. The results must be submitted to the European Commission each year. As of 2013, the air quality compliance assessment has been submitted to the Commission via e-Reporting (see Section 2.1.2). The UK's annual submission for 2015 can be found on the Commission website at http://cdr.eionet.europa.eu/gb/eu/aqd. All the compliance results are reported under 'Information on the Attainment of Environmental Objectives' in e-Reporting Data Flow G. Submissions for years up to and including 2012 (which were in the form of a standard questionnaire) can be found at http://cdr.eionet.europa.eu/gb/eu/annualair.

As well as reporting air quality data to the European Commission, the UK must also make the information available to the public. One way in which this is done is by the series of annual 'Air Pollution in the UK' reports. 'Air Pollution in the UK 2015' continues this series, and this report has two aims:

- To provide a summary of the UK's 2015 air quality report to the Commission. A separate Compliance Assessment Summary document, based upon Section 4 of this report, accompanies the UK's 2015 data submission to the Commission. This provides a concise summary aimed at the public.

- To act as a State of the Environment report, making information on the ambient air quality evidence base for the year publically available. This includes an assessment of trends and spatial distribution, together with information on pollution events during the year.

This report:

- Outlines the air quality legislative and policy framework in Europe and the UK *(Section 2).*
- Describes the evidence base underpinning the UK's air quality assessment: the pollutants of concern, and where and how air pollution is measured and modelled *(Section 3)*.
- Presents an assessment of the UK's compliance with the limit values, target values and long term objectives set out in the Air Quality Directive and the Fourth Daughter Directive for 2015, and compares this with previous recent years. *(Section 4).*
- Explains the spatial distribution of the main pollutants of concern within the UK during 2015, and looks at how ambient concentrations have changed in recent years (*Section 5).*
- Explains pollution events – 'episodes' of high pollution – that occurred during 2015, (*Section 6*).

Further information on air quality in the UK can be found on Defra's online UK Air Information Resource (UK-AIR), at http://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/.

2 Legislative and Policy Framework

The UK air quality framework is derived from a mixture of domestic, EU and international legislation and consists of three main strands:

1) Legislation regulating total emissions of air pollutants – the UK is bound by both EU law (the National Emission Ceilings Directive) and international law (the Gothenburg Protocol to the UNECE Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution to which both the UK and the EU are parties);

2) Legislation regulating concentrations of pollutants in the air – implementing the EU Air Quality Directive; and

3) Legislation regulating emissions from specific sources such as legislation implementing the Industrial Emissions Directive and the Clean Air Act.

Reducing air pollution requires action to reduce domestic emissions as well as working closely with international partners to reduce transboundary emissions (pollutants blown over from other countries) which, at times, can account for a significant proportion of pollutant concentrations experienced in the UK (for example, it is estimated that sources outside of the UK account for 35-50% of measured ambient particulate matter concentrations).

2.1 European and International Background

European Union (EU) air pollution legislation follows two complementary approaches;

(i) controlling emissions at source, and

(ii) setting of ambient air quality standards and long-term objectives.

All Member States must incorporate - or ‘transpose’ - the provisions of EU Directives into their own national law by a specified date and comply with legally binding implementing rules set out in the Decisions. The main Directives and Decisions are described below.

At the time of publication (September 2016), the UK has voted (in the referendum of 23rd June 2016) to leave the European Union. The UK is preparing to begin the formal process of leaving the European Union. Until that process is complete, all relevant EU Directives and Decisions will continue to apply in the UK, as they have throughout the period covered by the present report, calendar year 2015.

2.1.1 The Air Quality Directive and Fourth Daughter Directive

Directive 2008/50/EC of 21st May 2008, on Ambient Air Quality and Cleaner Air for Europe – referred to in this report as 'the Air Quality Directive'[1] - covers the following pollutants; sulphur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, particulate matter (as PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$), lead, benzene, carbon monoxide and ozone. It revised and consolidated existing EU air quality legislation relating to the above pollutants.

Directive 2004/107/EC of 15th December 2004, relating to arsenic, cadmium, mercury, nickel and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons in ambient air - referred to in this report as 'the Fourth Daughter Directive'[2] - covers the four elements cadmium, arsenic, nickel and mercury, together with polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH).

These two Directives set 'limit values', 'target values' and 'long-term objectives' for ambient concentrations of pollutants.

Limit values are legally binding and must not be exceeded. They are set for individual pollutants and comprise a concentration value, an averaging period for the concentration value, a number of exceedances allowed (per year) and a date by which it must be achieved. Some pollutants have more than one limit value, for example relating to short-term average concentrations (such as the hourly mean) and long-term average concentrations (such as the annual mean).

Target values and long-term objectives are set for some pollutants and are configured in the same way as limit values. Member States must take all necessary measures not entailing disproportionate costs to meet the target values and long-term objectives.

The Air Quality Directive and Fourth Daughter Directive include detailed provisions on monitoring and reporting air quality, including:

- The division of the UK into zones for the purposes of compliance reporting.
- The location and number of sampling points.
- The measurement methods to be used.
- Data quality objectives.
- Criteria each monitoring station must meet.
- Provision for reporting compliance.
- Provision of information to the public.

The Air Quality Directive also made provision for adapting standardised procedures to streamline the data provision, assessment and reporting of air quality, to electronically release information in line with the INSPIRE Directive (2007/2/EC). This led to the adoption of new implementing provisions for reporting (IPR) (Decision

2011/850/EC, referred to in this report as the Air Quality e-Reporting IPR). Section 2.1.2 provides a detailed description of the Air Quality e-Reporting IPR. The report of 2013 was the first in which e-Reporting was used to report emissions.

The provisions of the Air Quality Directive and Fourth Daughter Directive were transposed by the Air Quality Standards Regulations 2010[3] in England, the Air Quality Standards (Scotland) Regulations 2010[4] in Scotland, the Air Quality Standards (Wales) Regulations 2010 in Wales[5] and the Air Quality Standards Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010[6]. All the provisions made by the Directives are therefore incorporated into UK legislation.

2.1.2 Air Quality e-Reporting

Defra is committed to the principles of Open Data. Air Quality e-Reporting is a process, developed by the European Commission, for reporting of compliance and provision of data under the Air Quality Directive. The development has been driven by the requirements of the INSPIRE Directive (which is concerned with the sharing of spatial data across EU Member States in a consistent and computer-readable format). Air Quality e-Reporting is a key tool to help ensure UK air quality data systems comply with the INSPIRE Directive and are available across Europe in a comparable form with other Member States. Operational Air Quality e-Reporting started on 1st January 2014; as of 21st October 2015, newly collected and extensively restructured spatial data sets must be available in INSPIRE conformant formats, and as of 10th December 2015 web based spatial data download services are required to conform to INSPIRE Regulations.

European Commission Implementing Decision 2011/850/EU[7] was introduced on 12th December 2011. This Decision laid down rules for the reciprocal exchange of information, and reporting on ambient air quality, in relation to the Air Quality Directive. The Decision provided an opportunity to modernise data reporting, improve data quality, facilitate information sharing and reduce the administrative burden of reporting. In adapting the procedures, Air Quality e-Reporting has embraced digital formats for reporting, and the internet as the core medium for reporting. Air Quality e-Reporting extends the core requirements of the INSPIRE Directive to meet the particular requirements of regulatory and informative air quality reporting.

The European Commission developed the new procedures with assistance from the European Topic Centre on Air and Climate Change Mitigation and the European Environment Agency (EEA), and in close liaison with the European Environment Information and Observation Network (EIONET) air quality community. The new reporting system covers all regulatory and information reporting agreements set out by the Exchange of Information Decision (EoI) (Council Decision 97/101/EC[8]), the Air Quality Directive and the 4th Daughter Directive. By adopting data modelling approaches prescribed by INSPIRE, the new e-Reporting data model is streamlined, internally consistent and meets modern standards for data encoding and data sharing. The data model is now organised into eight broad air quality data themes that service all reporting and information sharing needs of the air quality community.

2.1.3 The National Emission Ceilings Directive

The National Emission Ceilings Directive[9] (2001/81/EC) came into force in 2001, and has been transposed into UK legislation by the National Emission Ceilings Regulations 2002. The Directive sets national emission limits or 'ceilings' for the four main air pollutants responsible for the acidification and eutrophication (nutrient enrichment) of the natural environment, and the formation of ground level ozone which impacts both human health and the environment. The ceilings had to be met by 2010. They reflect the ceilings agreed internationally in the Gothenburg Protocol to the Convention on Long Range Transboundary Air Pollution (CLRTAP). Emissions of these pollutants can impact either locally or across national borders. The latter is known as transboundary air pollution. The four pollutants for which national emission ceilings are set are:

- sulphur dioxide,
- oxides of nitrogen,
- volatile organic compounds,
- ammonia.

The UK meets all the ceilings set under the National Emission Ceilings Directive for 2010. The National Emission Ceilings Directive report is available at http://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/nec-directive-status-report-2014 .

The Gothenburg Protocol was revised in May 2012 to set ceilings for emissions in 2020 for the same four pollutants and $PM_{2.5}$. The European Commission published a proposal to revise the National Emission Ceilings Directive in December 2013, to implement the new 2020 ceilings in the Protocol, and to set further ceilings for 2030. The proposal must be agreed by the Council and the Parliament before it can become law. It is expected that the new National Emission Ceilings Directive will be agreed and published in autumn 2016.

2.1.4 The Industrial Emissions Directive

The Industrial Emissions Directive (Directive 2010/75/EU) sets stringent provisions to reduce the emissions of pollutants from a diverse range of industrial sources - from intensive pig and poultry farms to chemical manufacturing sites and power stations – with the aim of achieving the environmental and human health benefits associated with a reduction in pollution. Under the Directive, industries must use best available techniques (BAT) to reduce their emissions. These techniques, and the emissions limits associated with the use of those techniques, are set out in best available technique reference documents (known as BREFs). BREFs are reviewed regularly, which will ensure an ongoing process of improvement to EU air quality achieved through the continuous reduction of pollution. In addition, the Directive sets emission limits for the emission of pollutants from particular sectors

2.2 The UK Perspective

Domestic, EU and internationally-driven environmental legislation introduced over the past seventy years has provided a strong impetus to reduce the levels of harmful pollutants in the UK; as a result, current concentrations of many recognised pollutants are now at the lowest they have been since measurements began. Following the UK's Clean Air Act, the city smogs of the 1950s, caused by domestic and industrial coal burning, have now gone for good and significant progress has been made in improving air quality throughout recent decades. Between 2010 and 2014 emissions of nitrogen oxides fell by 17%, while particulate emissions, for both PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$, have reduced by 24% and 19% (respectively) since 2000.

Medical evidence shows that many thousands of people still die prematurely every year because of the effects of air pollution. Air pollution from man-made particles is currently estimated to reduce average UK life expectancy (from birth) by six months[10]. Moreover, it is now firmly established that air pollution (particulate matter, sulphur dioxide and ozone) contributes to thousands of hospital admissions per year[11].

Recently, evidence on the health impact of exposure to nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) has strengthened significantly[12]. It is well established that exposure to high concentrations of NO_2 causes inflammation of the airways, decreased lung function and respiratory symptoms. However more recently evidence has been released directly linking NO_2 exposure to mortality. Applying this evidence to the exposure levels across the UK suggests that exposure to NO_2 is increasing mortality by the equivalent of 23,500 deaths per year (within the range of 9,500 to 38,000 deaths). Additionally, many of the sources of NO_x are also sources of particulate matter (PM). The impact of exposure to particulate matter pollution ($PM_{2.5}$) is estimated to have an effect on mortality equivalent to nearly 29,000 deaths in the UK[13]. There may be overlap between these two estimates of mortality, but the combined impact of these two pollutants is a significant challenge to public health.

2.2.1 The UK Air Quality Strategy

The Environment Act 1995 required that a National Air Quality Strategy be published, containing policies for assessment and management of air quality. The Air Quality Strategy[14] for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland was first published in March 1997. The overall objectives of the Strategy are to:

- Map out future ambient air quality policy in the United Kingdom in the medium term.
- Provide best practicable protection to human health by setting health-based objectives for air pollutants.
- Contribute to the protection of the natural environment through objectives for the protection of vegetation and ecosystems.
- Describe current and future levels of air pollution.
- Establish a framework to help identify what we all can do to improve air quality.

The Strategy has established objectives for eight key air pollutants, based on the best available medical and scientific understanding of their effects on health, as well as taking into account relevant developments in Europe and the World Health Organisation. These Air Quality Objectives[15] are at least as stringent as the limit values of the relevant EU Directives – in some cases, more so. The most recent review of the Strategy was carried out in 2007.

2.2.2 National Air Quality Statistics and Indicators

The UK reports on the following two indicators as National Air Quality Statistics for ambient air:

- **Annual average concentrations of particles and ozone**. These two types of air pollution are believed to have a significant impact on public health.

- **Number of days in the year when air pollution is 'Moderate' or higher**. This may relate to any one of five key air pollutants and is based on the UK's Daily Air Quality Index (see Section 2.2.4). From the 1st January 2012, $PM_{2.5}$ particles replaced carbon monoxide in this suite of pollutants. The thresholds used to define 'Moderate' and higher pollution levels in the air quality index were also revised at the beginning of 2012.

The National Air Quality Statistics summary for 2015 was released on 21st April 2016 and is available from the Defra website[16].

In August 2016, Defra published a revised edition of the England Natural Environment Indicators[17]. Indicator 11 for Environmental Quality and Health relates to air quality. These are:

- The average number of days per site when air pollution is 'Moderate' or higher – for urban and for rural sites,

- Regional mortality due to anthropogenic particulate air pollution, compared to the England national average (5.6% in 2010, which is being taken as the baseline year for this indicator).

The UK Government's Public Health Outcomes Framework for England (published in 2012) recognises the burden of ill-health resulting from poor air quality as well as other public health concerns. This Framework sets out 60 health outcome indicators for England, and includes as an indicator:

- The fraction of annual all-cause adult mortality attributable to long-term exposure to current levels of anthropogenic particulate air pollution (measured as fine particulate matter, $PM_{2.5}$)[18].

This indicator is intended to enable Directors of Public Health to appropriately prioritise action on air quality in their local area. The indicator is calculated for each local authority in England based on modelled concentrations of fine particulate air pollution ($PM_{2.5}$). Estimates of the percentage of mortality attributable to long term exposure to particulate air pollution in local authority areas are available from the Public Health Outcomes Framework data tool at http://www.phoutcomes.info/. Current estimates at the time of writing, which are based on year 2013, range from around 3% in some rural areas to more around 8% in some areas of London where pollution levels are highest.

The Defra document *'Air Quality: Public Health Impacts and Local Actions'* can be found at http://laqm.defra.gov.uk/documents/air_quality_note_v7a-(3).pdf and a toolkit aimed at helping public health professionals appropriately prioritise assessment and action on $PM_{2.5}$ on a local level is available here: http://randd.defra.gov.uk/Default.aspx?Menu=Menu&Module=More&Location=None&Completed=0&ProjectID=18580 .

Northern Ireland has a similar Public Health Strategy: *'Making Life Better – A Whole System Framework for Public Health 2013-2023'*. This document can be found at https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/topics/public-health-policy-and-advice/making-life-better-whole-system-strategic-framework-public, and also includes an air quality indicator.

Wales has a new national indicator under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Welsh Public Health Outcomes Framework, which has now been published on StatsWales at (https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Environment-and-Countryside/Air-Quality).

In 2015 the Scottish Government published '*Cleaner Air for Scotland – The Road to a Healthier Future*', Scotland's first separate air quality strategy. The strategy sets out a comprehensive list of actions, one of which is to develop a Scottish Air Quality Indicator. Work on developing the indicator is underway and is expected to be completed by the end of 2016. Cleaner Air for Scotland is available at: http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0048/00488493.pdf

2.2.3 National Emissions Statistics

The UK reports annual emissions of the following pollutants via an annual National Statistics Release, available at https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/emissions-of-air-pollutants :

- sulphur dioxide,
- oxides of nitrogen,
- non-methane volatile organic compounds (NMVOCs),
- ammonia (NH_3),
- particulate matter (as PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$).

The most recent National Statistics Release covers 1970 to 2014 (the most recent year for which emission statistics are available). The main conclusions are as follows:

- *'There has been a long term decrease in the emissions of all of the air pollutants covered by this statistical release (ammonia, nitrogen oxides, non-methane volatile organic compounds, particulate matter (PM_{10}, $PM_{2.5}$) and sulphur dioxide).*

- *Emissions of sulphur dioxide decreased in 2014 compared to 2013 by 20.3 per cent, dropping to the lowest level in the time series. The rate of reduction has slowed since the large decreases seen in the 1990s and emissions have remained fairly level since 2009, around an average of 0.39 million tonnes.*

- *Emissions of nitrogen oxides decreased in 2014 compared to 2013 by 8.4 per cent, dropping to the lowest level in the time series.*

- *Although emissions of particulate matter (PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$) and non-methane volatile organic compounds are continuing to decline (by 2, 3.1 and 0.4 per* *cent respectively between 2013 and 2014), the rate of decline was most pronounced in the 1990s, and has slowed in recent years.*

- *There was an increase of 3.3 per cent in emissions of ammonia between 2013 and 2014. This goes against the recent trend of reductions.*
- *The UK continues to meet international and EU ceilings for emissions of ammonia, nitrogen oxides, non-methane volatile organic compounds and sulphur dioxide. The Gothenburg Protocol under the UNECE Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution was revised in 2012 to set new emission ceilings to apply from 2020. These new ceilings are indicated in the charts of the results.'*

New emission statistics for 2015 will be available in December 2016.

2.2.4 The Air Pollution Forecasting System

Daily UK air pollution forecasts are produced for five pollutants; nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide, ozone, PM_{10} particles and $PM_{2.5}$ particles. The forecasts are communicated using the Daily Air Quality Index (http://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/air-pollution/daqi) which is a scale of one to ten divided into four bands. This allows the public to see at a glance whether the air pollution is low, moderate, high or very high and to look up any recommended actions to take.

The group of pollutants covered, and the thresholds between the various index bands, were updated by Defra as of 1st January 2012, in the light of recommendations by the Committee on the Medical Effects of Air Pollutants (COMEAP) in their 2011 review of the UK air quality index[19].

The daily forecast is provided by the Met Office and is available from UK-AIR and from the Scottish, Welsh and Northern Ireland air quality websites (see Section 7), and is further disseminated via e-mail, Twitter and RSS feeds. Anyone may subscribe to the free air pollution bulletins at: http://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/subscribe Latest forecasts are issued daily, at: http://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/forecasting/. Defra also provide automated updates on current and forecast air quality via Twitter @DefraUKAIR– see http://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/twitter.

2.2.5 The NO_2 Air Quality Plans

On 17 December 2015, the UK government and the devolved governments published the national air quality plan for nitrogen dioxide.

The plan sets out how the UK will achieve compliance with EU limit values for NO_2 in the shortest possible time. This will be achieved in a number of ways, including through:

- exploiting new, clean technologies, such as electric and ultra low emission vehicles
- spurring innovation by continuing to make our data more openly available, so that the whole country – people, businesses and the public sector – can use them to take better decisions and action
- a new programme of Clean Air Zones to tackle those areas with the most persistent pollution problems.

Compliance is forecast to be achieved in all areas outside London by 2020, and in London by 2025.

The national air quality plan is available at https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/library/no2-consultation-documents-2015 .

2.2.6 Measures to Address Target Value Exceedances of B[a]P and Nickel

EU Directive (2004/107/EC) sets target values for a number of metals and benzo[a]pyrene. During 2015 the UK exceeded target values for two pollutants B[a]P and nickel. These were reported in September 2014 as part of the UK's annual compliance assessment[20].

The UK published reports at the end of 2015, providing details of the assessment of these exceedances and reporting the actions and measures that have already been taken or are planned that will help the UK meet these target values. An overview report will be provided for each pollutant followed by more detailed information on any exceedances by zone. The reports on the 2014 exceedances of the target values for B[a]P and nickel are available at: Fourth Daughter Directive - Reports on Measures - Defra, UK

2.3 Local Authority Air Quality Management

Requirements for local air quality management are set out in Part IV of the Environment Act 1995, and the Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002[21]. Authorities are required to carry out regular 'Review and Assessments' of air quality in their area and take action to improve air quality when the objectives set out in regulation cannot be met by the specified dates.

Local Authorities in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have completed five rounds of review and assessment against the Strategy's objectives prescribed in the Air Quality (England) Regulations 2000[22], Air Quality (Scotland) Regulations 2000[23], Air Quality (Wales) Regulations 2000[24] and Air Quality (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2003[25], together with subsequent amendments[26,27,28,29]. The sixth round began in 2015.

The Review and Assessment process was streamlined in England following a consultation in 2015, and in 2016 a new format, the Assessment Summary Review, has been adopted. Wales launched their consultation in September 2016 and the changes are anticipated to be in place by 2017.

When the Assessment Summary Review process identifies an exceedance of an Air Quality Strategy objective, the Local Authority must declare an 'Air Quality Management Area' (AQMA) and develop an Action Plan to tackle problems in the affected areas. Action Plans formally set out the measures the Local Authority proposes to take to work towards meeting the air quality objectives. They may include a variety of measures such as congestion charging, traffic management, planning and financial incentives. Advice for Local Authorities preparing an Action Plan is available from the Defra LAQM web pages at http://laqm.defra.gov.uk/action-planning/aqap-supporting-guidance.html.

Information on the UK's AQMAs is summarised in **Table 2-1** below. At present, 259 Local Authorities – roughly 66.5% of those in the UK – have one or more AQMAs. Some AQMAs are for more than one pollutant, and many Local Authorities have more than one AQMA. **Table 2-1** shows that a total of 232 Local Authorities have now submitted Action Plans, and that 27 Local Authorities are in the process of preparing them. For these 27 Authorities, it may not be their first Action Plan; they may have already submitted one or more, for a different area or pollutant. In the table below, these Local Authorities are only counted once. Hence these two totals in **Table 2-1** add up to 259 (the total number of Local Authorities with AQMAs).

Table 2-1 Current UK-wide status of Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) and Action Plans (as of September 2016.)

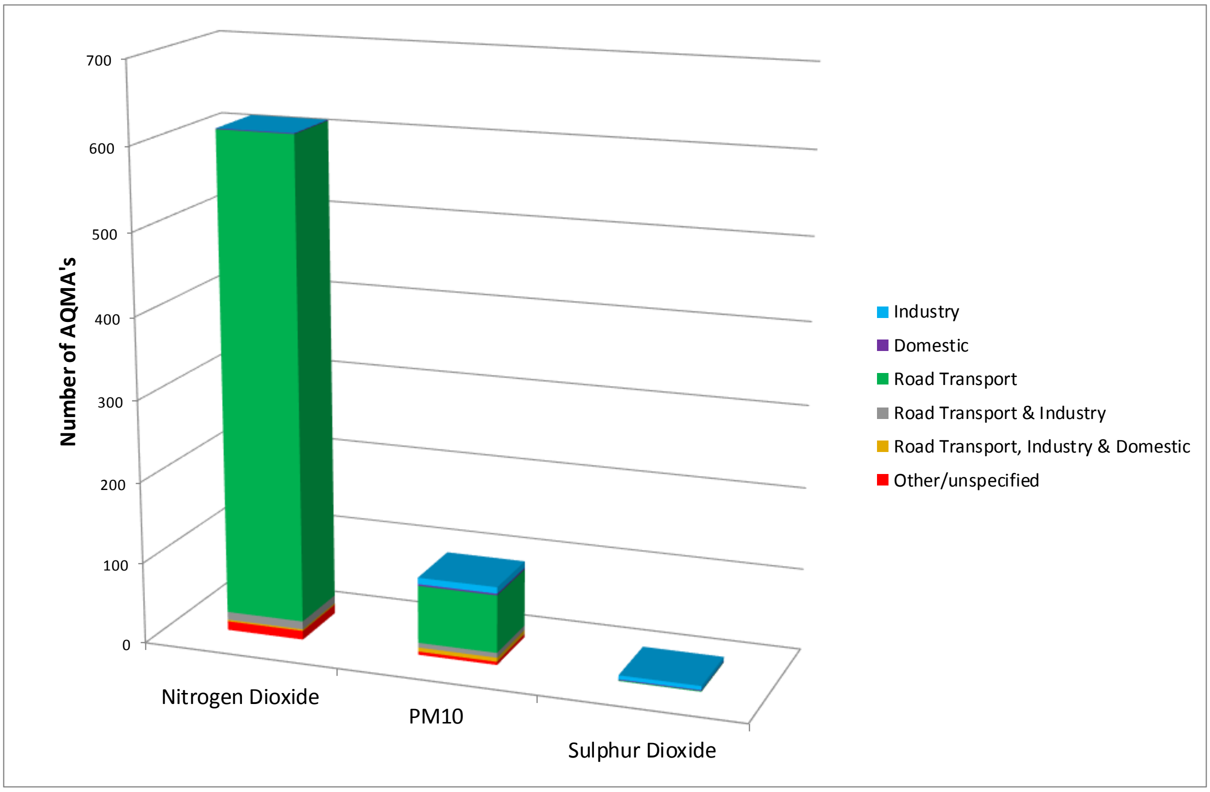
Region	Total LAs	LAs with AQMAs	AQMAs for NO_2	AQMAs for PM_{10}	AQMAs f or SO_2	LA's with Action Plans Submitted	LA's with Action Plans Pending
England (outside London)	291	193	498	38	6	171	22
London	33	33	33	29	0	32	1
Scotland	32	14	25	21	1	12	2
Wales	22	10	37	1	0	8	2
Northern Ireland	11	9	20	7	0	9	0
TOTAL	**389**	**259**	**613**	**96**	**7**	**232**	**27**

(Note: there are no longer any AQMAs for benzene).

Most Air Quality Management Areas in the UK are in urban areas and have been established to address the contribution to air pollution from traffic emissions of nitrogen dioxide or PM_{10}. Road transport is specified as the main source in 96% of the AQMAs declared for NO_2. Just under 2% of NO_2 AQMAs result from road transport mixed with either domestic or industrial sources, with the remaining 2% made up of non-traffic and unspecified sources.

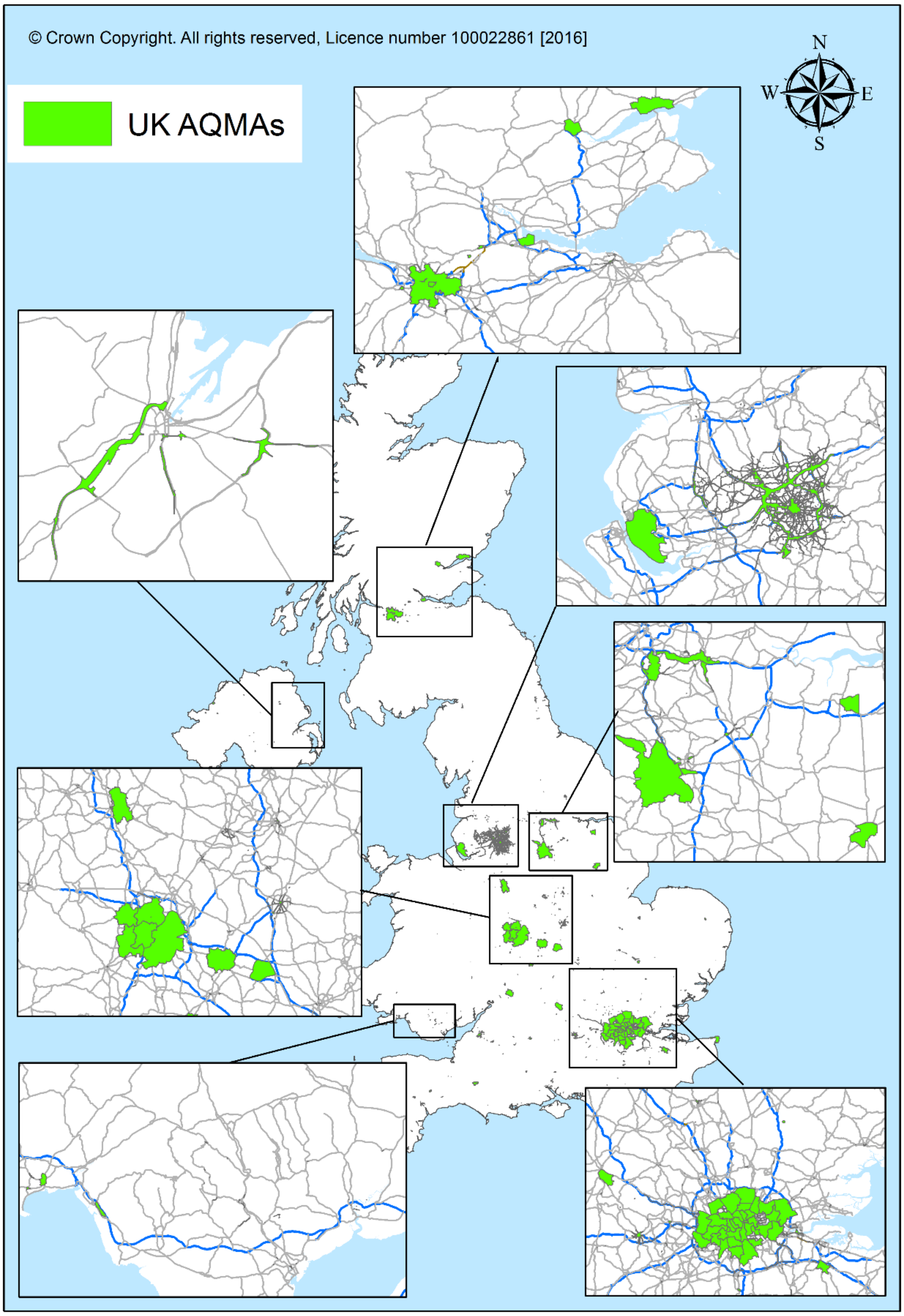
Figure 2-1 shows the numbers of AQMAs in the UK declared as a result of various sources of pollutant emissions.

Figure 2-1 Number of Air Quality Management Areas Resulting from Various Sources



The locations of the UK's AQMAs are shown in **Figure 2-2**. Information on the UK's Air Quality Management Areas is published on the Defra LAQM web pages (link above). Information is provided on each AQMA, together with a map of the area, where available.

Figure 2-2 Air Quality Management Areas in the UK, as of the end of 2015



3 The Evidence Base

A programme of air quality assessment and research is in place in the UK which delivers the evidential needs of Defra, associated with compliance with a range of European Directives, as well as the means to assess the effectiveness of air pollution mitigation policies.

This section explains Defra and the Devolved Administrations' evidence base for the annual assessment of compliance with the EU Directives on ambient air quality. It describes the air pollutants which are of concern and how these are monitored and modelled in the UK.

3.1 Pollutants of Concern

Table 3-1 below summarises the sources, effects and typical UK concentrations of the pollutants being assessed in relation to the Air Quality Directive and 4th Daughter Directive.

The information on sources has largely been summarised from the National Atmospheric Emission Inventory (NAEI) pollutant information pages[30] together with Table 1 of the Air Quality Strategy[31].

Information on health effects is summarised (and further information can be sought) from the following sources:

- The World Health Organization's Air Quality Guidelines Global Update (2005)[32] (which covers particulate matter, sulphur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide and ozone).
- The World Health Organization's *'Air Quality and Health*' factsheet (factsheet 313) at http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs313/en/index.html.
- Committee on the Medical Effects of Air Pollution – COMEAP's "Statement on the Evidence for the Effects of Nitrogen Dioxide on Health" (COMEAP 2015)[33] (referred to in the table as COMEAP 2015a).
- Reports by the Committee on the Medical Effects of Air Pollution (COMEAP):
    - COMEAP's 2011 review of the air quality index[34],
    - COMEAP's 2009 report on long-term exposure to air pollution and its effect on mortality[35] (referred to in the table below as COMEAP 2009),
    - COMEAP's 2010 report on the mortality effects of long-term exposure to particulate air pollution in the United Kingdom[36] (referred to in the table as COMEAP 2010),

- COMEAP's 2015 report on quantification of effects associated with ozone[37] (referred to in the table as COMEAP 2015b)
    - Expert Panel on Air Quality Standards (EPAQS) report 'Metals and Metalloids[38] (referred to as EPAQS 2009 in the table below).
- Public Health England's Compendium of Chemical Hazards web pages at http://www.hpa.org.uk/Topics/ChemicalsAndPoisons/CompendiumOfChemicalHazards/
- World Health Organization's 2013 'Review of Evidence on Health Aspects of Air Pollution' (REVIHAAP) report[39].
- The Air Quality Strategy.

Information on typical ambient concentrations in the UK has been summarised from the Defra online air information resource, UK-AIR at http://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/ , and a 2011 study by King's College London, the University of Leeds and AEA (now Ricardo Energy & Environment), which investigated the reasons why ambient concentrations of NO_x and NO_2 have decreased less than predicted on the basis of emissions estimates[40].

Table 3-1 Sources, Effects and Typical UK Concentrations

Pollutant and Sources	Health Effects	Environmental Effects	Typical Ambient Concentrations in the UK
Sulphur Dioxide (SO_2): an acid gas formed when fuels containing sulphur impurities are burned. The largest UK source is currently power generation. Other important sources include industry, commercial fuel use, and residential fuel use in some areas.	A respiratory irritant that can cause constriction of the airways. People with asthma are considered to be particularly sensitive. Health effects can occur very rapidly, making short-term exposure to peak concentrations important. (Source: WHO AQG 2005)	Harmful to plants at high concentrations. Contributes to acidification of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems, damaging habitats and leading to biodiversity loss. SO_2 is also a precursor to the formation of secondary sulphate particles in the atmosphere.	Annual mean concentrations are typically less than 5 µg m^{-3} except at sites in industrial locations or in residential areas with high use of solid fuel for heating.
Nitrogen Oxides (NOx): NOx, which comprises nitric oxide (NO) and nitrogen dioxide (NO_2), is emitted from combustion processes. Main sources include power generation, industrial combustion and road transport. According to the NAEI, road transport is now the largest single UK source of NOx, accounting for almost one third of UK emissions.	Short-term exposure to concentrations of NO_2 higher than 200 µg m^{-3} can cause inflammation of the airways. NO_2 can also increase susceptibility to respiratory infections and to allergens. It has been difficult to identify the direct health effects of NO_2 at ambient concentrations because it is emitted from the same sources as other pollutants such as particulate matter (PM). Studies have found that both day-to-day variations and long-term exposure to NO_2 are associated with mortality and morbidity. Evidence from studies that have corrected for the effects of PM is suggestive of a causal	In the presence of sunlight, nitrogen oxides can react with Volatile Organic Compounds to produce photochemical pollutants including ozone. NO_X contributes to the formation of secondary nitrate particles in the atmosphere. High levels of NO_x can harm plants. NO_x also contributes to acidification and eutrophication of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems, damaging habitats and leading to biodiversity loss.	Annual mean concentrations of NO_2 beside busy roads frequently exceed 40 µg m^{-3}. This is not a UK-specific problem and is common in many other European countries. The main reasons why roadside NO_2 concentrations have not decreased as expected is believed to be the failure of Euro vehicle emission standards for diesel vehicles to deliver the anticipated reductions in NO_x emissions in real world driving conditions. At urban background locations, annual mean NO_2

Pollutant and Sources	Health Effects	Environmental Effects	Typical Ambient Concentrations in the UK
	relationship, particularly for respiratory outcomes (Source: WHO 2013 REVIHAAP report, COMEAP 2015).		concentrations are lower, typically 15-40 µg m^{-3}. Peak hourly mean concentrations exceed 100 µg m^{-3} at most urban locations, and occasionally exceed 300 µg m^{-3} at congested urban roadside sites.
Particulate Matter: PM_{10}. This can be primary (emitted directly to the atmosphere) or secondary (formed by the chemical reaction of other pollutants in the air such as SO_2 or NO_2). The main source is combustion, e.g. vehicles, domestic burning and power stations. Other man-made sources include quarrying and mining, industrial processes and tyre and brake wear. Natural sources include wind-blown dust, sea salt, pollens and soil particles.	Research shows a range of health effects (including respiratory and cardiovascular illness and mortality) associated with PM_{10}. No threshold has been identified below which no adverse health effects occur. (Source: WHO AQG 2000)	Black carbon in PM is implicated in climate change. Secondary PM includes sulphate, nitrate and ammonium, formed from SO_2, NO_x and NH_3 which are the main drivers for acidification and eutrophication.	Annual mean PM_{10} concentrations for urban AURN monitoring sites have been typically in the range 10-30 µg m^{-3} in recent years.
Particulate Matter: $PM_{2.5}$. Like PM_{10}, the finer size fraction $PM_{2.5}$ can be primary or secondary, and has the same sources. Road transport	Fine particulate matter can penetrate deep into the lungs and research in recent years has strengthened the evidence that both short-term and long-term exposure to $PM_{2.5}$ are linked with a range of health outcomes	Secondary PM includes sulphate, nitrate and ammonium, formed from SO_2, NO_x and NH_3 which are the main drivers for acidification and eutrophication.	Annual mean urban $PM_{2.5}$ concentrations in the UK are typically in the low teens of µg m^{-3} but exceed 20 µg m^{-3} at a few urban roadside locations.

Pollutant and Sources	Health Effects	Environmental Effects	Typical Ambient Concentrations in the UK
becomes an increasingly important sector as the particle size decreases.	including (but not restricted to) respiratory and cardiovascular effects. COMEAP estimated that the burden of anthropogenic particulate air pollution in the UK in 2008 was an effect on mortality equivalent to nearly 29,000 deaths at typical ages and an associated loss of life across the population of 340,000 years. The burden can also be represented as a loss of life expectancy from birth of approximately six months. (Source: COMEAP 2010.)		
Benzene: (C_6 H_6) is an organic chemical compound. Ambient benzene concentrations arise from domestic and industrial combustion processes, in addition to road transport. (Source: Air Quality Strategy).	Benzene is a recognised human carcinogen which causes changes in the genetic material (mutagenic effect) of the circulatory and immune systems. No absolutely safe level can be specified in ambient air. Acute exposure to high concentrations affects the central nervous system. (Source: WHO AQG 2000, PHE Compendium of Chemical Hazards)	Can also pollute soil and water, leading to exposure via these routes.	Annual mean concentrations of benzene are now low (consistently below 2 µg m^{-3}) due to the introduction of catalytic converters on car exhausts. The UK meets the benzene limit value of 5 µg m^{-3}.
Carbon Monoxide (CO) is produced when fuels containing carbon are burned with insufficient oxygen to convert all carbon inputs to carbon dioxide (CO_2). Although CO emissions	CO affects the ability of the blood to take up oxygen from the lungs, and can lead to a range of symptoms. People are more likely to be exposed to dangerous concentrations of CO indoors, due to faulty or poorly ventilated	Can contribute to the formation of ground-level ozone.	The UK is compliant with the European limit value for CO, with the 8-hour running mean concentration consistently below

Pollutant and Sources	Health Effects	Environmental Effects	Typical Ambient Concentrations in the UK
from petrol-engine road vehicles have been greatly reduced by the introduction of catalytic converters, road transport is still the most significant source of this pollutant (Source: NAEI).	cooking and heating appliances. Cigarette smoke is also a major source of exposure. (Source: NAEI, PHE Compendium of Chemical Hazards.)		10 mg m^{-3} at all monitoring sites in recent years.
Ozone (O_3) is a secondary pollutant produced by the effect of sunlight on NO_x and VOCs from vehicles and industry. Ozone concentrations are greatest in the summer on hot, sunny, windless days. O_3 can travel long distances, accumulate and reach high concentrations far away from the original sources.	A respiratory irritant: short-term exposure to high ambient concentrations can cause inflammation of the respiratory tract and irritation of the eyes, nose, and throat. High levels may exacerbate asthma or trigger asthma attacks in susceptible people and some non-asthmatic individuals may also experience chest discomfort whilst breathing. Evidence is also emerging of effects due to long-term exposure (WHO AQG 2000, WHO 2013 - REVIHAAP).	Ground level ozone can also cause damage to many plant species leading to loss of yield and quality of crops, damage to forests and impacts on biodiversity. Ozone is also a greenhouse gas implicated in climate change. In the upper atmosphere the ozone layer has a beneficial effect, absorbing harmful ultraviolet radiation from the sun.	In recent years, the annual mean daily maximum 8-hour running mean measured at AURN sites has been typically in the range 30-80 µg m^{-3}. NO_X emitted in cities reduces local O_3 concentrations as NO reacts with O_3 to form NO_2 and levels of O_3 are often higher in rural areas than urban areas.
Lead (Pb): a very toxic metallic element. Historically, lead was used as an additive in petrol, and road vehicles were the main source Lead's use in petrol was phased out in 1999, resulting in a 98% reduction of pre-1999 UK emissions. Today, the main	Lead inhalation can affect red blood cell formation and have effects on the kidneys, circulatory system, gastrointestinal tract, the joints, reproductive systems, and can cause acute or chronic damage to the central nervous system (CNS). Long term low level exposure has been shown to affect intellectual	Can also pollute soil and surface waters. Exposure to contaminated soil and water may then become a health risk. Lead may accumulate in other organisms such as fish, and be passed up the food chain.	In recent years, UK annual mean concentrations of lead have typically ranged from less than 5 ng m^{-3} at rural monitoring sites, to nearly 90 ng m^{-3} at urban industrial sites. The EU limit value

Pollutant and Sources	Health Effects	Environmental Effects	Typical Ambient Concentrations in the UK
sources are metal production and industrial combustion of lubricants containing small amounts of lead. (Source: NAEI.)	development in young children (Source: EPAQS 2009). A threshold, below which the adverse effects of lead are not anticipated, has not been established (source: WHO AQG 2000, PHE Compendium of Chemical Hazards).		for Pb (0.5 µg m^{-3} or 500 ng m^{-3}) is met throughout the UK.
Nickel (Ni) is a toxic metallic element found in ambient air as a result of releases from oil and coal combustion, metal processes, manufacturing and other sources. Currently the main source is the combustion of heavy fuel oil, the use of coal having declined. (Source: NAEI.)	Nickel compounds are human carcinogens by inhalation exposure. Can cause irritation to the nose and sinuses and allergic responses and can lead to the loss of the sense of smell. Long-term exposure may lead to respiratory diseases and cancers. (Source: WHO AQG 2000, EPAQS 2009, PHE Compendium of Chemical Hazards.)	Can also pollute soil and water, leading to exposure via these routes.	Annual mean ambient particulate phase concentrations in the urban environment are typically of the order of 1 ng m^{-3} with the exception of a few industrial areas, where higher annual means may occur, in some locations exceeding the 4th Daughter Directive target value of 20 ng m^{-3}.
Arsenic (As) is a toxic element emitted into the atmosphere in the form of particulate matter. Historically the largest source was coal combustion, but as this has declined, the use of wood treated with preservatives containing As has become the most	Acute inhalation exposure to high levels of arsenic primarily affects the respiratory system and can cause coughs, sore throat, breathlessness and wheezing. Long term inhalation exposure is associated with toxic effects on the respiratory tract and can cause lung cancer. (Source: WHO AQG 2000,	Can also pollute soil and water, leading to exposure via these routes. Arsenic in water or soil can be taken up by plants or fish.	Measured UK annual mean concentrations in the particulate phase are now typically less than 1 ng m^{-3}, meeting the 4th Daughter Directive target value of 6 ng m^{-3}.

Pollutant and Sources	Health Effects	Environmental Effects	Typical Ambient Concentrations in the UK
significant component of As emissions. (Source: NAEI.)	EPAQS 2009, PHE Compendium of Chemical Hazards.)		
Cadmium (Cd): a toxic metallic element whose main sources are energy production, non-ferrous metal production, iron and steel manufacture (as well as other forms of industrial combustion). (Source: NAEI.)	Acute inhalation exposure to cadmium causes effects on the lung such as pulmonary irritation. Chronic effects via inhalation can cause a build-up of cadmium in the kidneys that can lead to kidney disease and long term inhalation can lead to lung cancer. (Source: WHO AQG 2000, EPAQS 2009, PHE Compendium of Chemical Hazards.)	Can also pollute soil and water, leading to exposure via these routes.	Annual mean particulate phase concentrations in the UK in recent years are now typically < 2 ng m^{-3}, and meet the 4th Daughter Directive target value of 5 ng m^{-3}.
Mercury (Hg): released to the air by human activities, such as fossil fuel combustion, iron and steel production processes, waste incineration, the manufacture of chlorine in mercury cells, and coal combustion. Emissions have declined in recent years as a result of improved controls on mercury cells, the reduction in coal use, and improved controls on waste incineration processes from 1997 onwards. (Source: NAEI.)	Acute exposure to high levels of Hg can cause chest pain and shortness of breath, and affect the central nervous system (CNS) and kidneys. Chronic exposure leads to CNS disorders, kidney damage and stomach upsets. (Source: WHO AQG 2000, PHE Compendium of Chemical Hazards.)	Can also pollute soil, fresh water and sea water. Exposure to contaminated soil and water may then become a health risk. Mercury may accumulate in other organisms such as fish, and be passed up the food chain.	There is no target value for mercury. Annual mean ambient concentrations (total of vapour and particulate phases) are typically in the range 1-3 ng m^{-3}, although higher concentrations (over 20 ng m^{-3}) have been measured at industrial sites in recent years.
Benzo[a]pyrene (B[a]P) is used as a ‘marker’ for a group of compounds	PAHs are a large group of persistent, bio-accumulative, organic compounds with toxic	PAHs can bio-accumulate and be passed up the food chain.	Annual mean concentrations in most urban areas are below the

Pollutant and Sources	Health Effects	Environmental Effects	Typical Ambient Concentrations in the UK
known as polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs). The main sources of B[a]P in the UK are domestic coal and wood burning, fires (e.g. accidental fires, bonfires, forest fires, etc.), and industrial processes such as coke production. (Source: Air Quality Strategy).	and carcinogenic effects. Lung cancer is most obviously linked to exposure to PAHs through inhaled air. (Source: WHO AQG 2000, PHE Compendium of Chemical Hazards)		EU target value of 1 ng m^{-3}: the only exceptions are areas with specific local sources – such as industrial installations or domestic solid fuel burning.

3.2 Assessment of Air Quality in the UK

The evidence base for the annual assessment of compliance is based on a combination of information from the UK national monitoring networks and the results of modelling assessments. The use of models reduces the number of monitoring stations required. It has the added benefits of enabling air quality to be assessed at locations without monitoring sites and providing additional information on source apportionment and projections required for the development and implementation of air quality plans.

UK compliance assessment modelling is undertaken using national models known as the Pollution Climate Mapping (PCM) models. The PCM models have been designed to assess compliance with the limit values at locations defined within the Directives. Modelled compliance assessments are undertaken for 11 air pollutants each year. This assessment needs to be completed each year in the relatively short period between the time when the input data (including ratified monitoring data and emission inventories) become available and the reporting deadline at the end of September.

It is important to understand the differences between modelling carried out for compliance assessment purposes, and that carried out for Local Air Quality Management. National air quality modelling for the UK focuses on two components: pollutant concentrations at background locations, on a 1x1km grid square basis, and roadside pollutant concentrations, at four metres from the kerb of urban major road links. By contrast, Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) modelling is different in scope, purpose and methodology from the national modelling and will usually output contour plots showing dispersion away from the source, on a fine resolution grid. The level of detail and resolution of LAQM modelling is therefore much greater in order to focus on local exposure and hotspots. See Section 3.5 for more details on the modelling carried out for compliance assessment.

3.3 Current UK Air Quality Monitoring

During 2015 there were 267 national air quality monitoring sites across the UK, comprising several networks, each with different objectives, scope and coverage. This section provides a brief description of those used to monitor compliance with the Air Quality Directive and the 4th Daughter Directive. A summary of the UK national networks is provided in **Table 3-2** (the numbers of sites shown in this table add up to considerably more than 267 because some sites belong to more than one network). This table shows the numbers of sites in operation during part or all of 2015.

Table 3-2 The UK's Air Quality Monitoring Networks in 2015

Network	Pollutants	Number of Sites operating in 2015
Automatic Urban and Rural Network (AURN)	CO, NO_x, NO_2, SO_2, O_3, PM_{10}, $PM_{2.5}$.	147
UK Metals Network	Metals in $PM_{10.}$ Including: As, Cd, Co, Cr, Cu, Fe, Mn, Ni, Pb, Se, V, Zn. Measured deposition. Including: Al, As, Ba, Be, Cd, Co, Cr, Cs, Cu, Fe, Li, Mn, Mo, Ni, Pb, Rb, Sb, Sc, Se, Sn, Sr, Ti, U, V, W, Zn. Hg deposition Total gaseous mercury	24 5 4 2
Non-Automatic Hydrocarbon	Benzene	34
Automatic Hydrocarbon	Range of volatile organic compounds (VOCs)	4
Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAH).	21 PAH species including benzo[a]pyrene	31
European Monitoring and Evaluation Programme (EMEP)	Wide range of parameters relating to air quality, precipitation, meteorology and composition of aerosol in PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$.	2
Particle Concentrations and Numbers	Total particle number, concentration, size distribution, anions, EC/OC, speciation of PM_{10}, $PM_{2.5}$ and PM_1.	5
Toxic Organic Micropollutants	Range of toxic organics including dioxins and dibenzofurans.	6
UK Eutrophying and Acidifying Pollutants: NO_2Net (rural diffusion tubes)	NO_2 (rural)	24
UK Eutrophying and Acidifying Pollutants: AGANet	NO_3, HCl, HNO_3, HONO, SO_2, SO_4	32
UK Eutrophying and Acidifying Pollutants: NAMN	NH_3 and/or NH_4	88
UK Eutrophying and Acidifying Pollutants: PrecipNet	Major ions in rain water	39
Black Carbon	Black Carbon	14
Upland Waters Monitoring Network	Chemical and biological species in water	24
Rural Mercury Network	Tekran analyser used to measure mercury in $PM_{2.5}$, reactive mercury and elemental mercury at Auchencorth Moss, and total gaseous mercury at Harwell.	2

3.3.1 The Automatic Urban and Rural Network (AURN)

The AURN is currently the largest automatic monitoring network in the UK and forms the bulk of the UK's statutory compliance monitoring evidence base. Data from the AURN are available on Defra's online UK Air Information Resource, UK-AIR at http://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/.

The techniques used for monitoring gaseous pollutants within the AURN are the reference measurement methods defined in the relevant EU Directives. For particulate matter the AURN uses methods which have demonstrated equivalence to the reference method, but which (unlike the reference method) allow continuous on-line monitoring. Details are provided in **Table 3-3**.

Table 3-3 AURN Measurement Techniques

Pollutant	Method used, including details of CEN Standard Methods
O_3	EN 14625:2012 'Ambient air quality – standard method for the measurement of the concentration of ozone by ultraviolet photometry'[41]
NO_2/NO_x	EN 14211:2012 'Ambient air quality - Standard method for the measurement of the concentration of nitrogen dioxide and nitrogen monoxide by chemiluminescence'[42]
SO_2	EN 14212:2012 'Ambient air quality – Standard method for the measurement of the concentration of sulphur dioxide by UV fluorescence'[43]
CO	EN 14626:2012 'Ambient air quality - Standard method for the measurement of the concentration of carbon monoxide by non-dispersive infrared spectroscopy'[44]
PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$	EN 12341:1998 'Air quality. Determination of the PM_{10} fraction of suspended particulate matter. Reference method and field test procedure to demonstrate reference equivalence of measurement methods.'[45] EN 14907:2005 'Ambient air quality - Standard gravimetric measurement method for the determination of the $PM_{2.5}$ mass fraction of suspended particulate matter'[46] The AURN uses three methods which are equivalent for one or both pollutants: the Filter Dynamic Measurement System (**FDMS**), which determines particulate concentration by continuously weighing particles deposited on a filter: the **Beta-Attenuation Monitor** (BAM) which measures the attenuation of beta rays passing through a paper filter on which particulate matter from sampled air has been collected, and the **Partisol –** a gravimetric sampler that collects daily samples onto a filter for subsequent weighing.

3.3.2 The UK Metals Network

The UK Metals Network forms the basis of the UK's compliance monitoring for:

- The Air Quality Directive (for lead).
- The 4th Daughter Directive (for arsenic, cadmium, nickel and mercury).

At the end of 2013 Defra merged the existing Urban and Industrial Network with the Rural Network to form the UK Metals Network. The merged network monitors a range of metallic elements at urban, industrial and rural sites, using a method equivalent to the CEN standard method[47]. Metals (As, Cd, Co, Cr, Cu, Fe, Mn, Ni, Pb, Se, V and Zn) in PM_{10} are measured at 24 sites. (The network stopped measuring mercury in PM_{10} as of 2014.)

Metal deposition (Al, As, Ba, Be, Cd, Co, Cr, Cs, Cu, Fe, Li, Mn, Mo, Ni, Pb, Rb, Sb, Sc, Se, Sn, Sr, Ti, U, V, W and Zn) was measured at the following sites: Auchencorth Moss, Harwell, Heigham Holmes, Lough Navar and Yarner Wood. Hg deposition was measured at Auchencorth Moss, Harwell, Heigham Holmes and Yarner Wood. (The Harwell monitoring station closed at the end of 2015 and was relocated to Chilbolton Observatory at the start of 2016.)

Within the Metals Network total gaseous mercury is measured at London Westminster and Runcorn Weston Point.

3.3.3 Non-Automatic Hydrocarbon Network

In this network of 34 sites, ambient concentrations of benzene are measured by the CEN standard method[48]. This involves pumping air through an adsorption tube to trap the compound, which is later analysed in a laboratory. There were no changes in terms of site closures or additional sites being added to the network during the year. This network monitors compliance with the Air Quality Directive's limit value for benzene. All sites in the Non-Automatic Hydrocarbon Network are co-located with AURN sites.

3.3.4 Automatic Hydrocarbon Network

The Air Quality Directive also requires measurement and reporting of ozone precursor substances (29 species), which include volatile organic compounds (VOCs). Annex X (ten) of the Directive provides a list of compounds recommended for measurement. Ozone precursor measurement is carried out by the Automatic Hydrocarbon Network.

Automatic hourly measurements of a range of hydrocarbon species (including all those specified in Annex X of the Directive except formaldehyde and total non-methane hydrocarbons), are made using automated pumped sampling with *in-situ* gas chromatography, at four sites in the UK. The VOCs monitored include benzene, which is covered by the Air Quality Directive as a pollutant in its own right.

3.3.5 PAH Network

The PAH Network monitors compliance with the 4th Daughter Directive, which includes a target value of 1 ng m^{-3} for the annual mean concentration of benzo[a]pyrene as a representative PAH, not to be exceeded after 31st December 2012. This network uses the PM_{10} ‘Digitel’ sampler. Ambient air is sampled through quartz micro-fibre filters, which capture the PAH compounds for later analysis in a laboratory. During 2015, there were 31 sites in this network measuring 22 PAH compounds.

3.3.6 EMEP

EMEP (European Monitoring and Evaluation Programme) is a programme set up to provide governments with qualified scientific information on air pollutants, under the UNECE Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution. In 2015 there were two EMEP ‘supersites’, at Auchencorth Moss in Lothian (representing the north of the UK) and at Harwell in Oxfordshire (representing the south). However, due to a proposed change in land use at the Harwell site it was necessary to relocate the site. After a review of possible alternatives, a decision was made to relocate the site to Chilbolton Laboratory, Stockbridge, Hampshire, some 31 miles to the south. A representativeness analyses was undertaken and showed that the site was considered a rural background similar to Harwell. The relocation happened at the beginning of 2016.

A very wide range of measurements are taken at EMEP sites, supplemented by data from other UK networks which are co-located.

Monitoring includes:

- Hourly meteorological data,
- Soil and vegetation measurements,
- Metallic elements in PM_{10} and precipitation,
- Deposition of inorganic ions,
- Major ions in $PM_{2.5}$ and PM_{10}, as well as HCl, HNO_2, HNO_3, NH_3 and SO_2,
- Trace gases (ozone, NO_x and SO_2),
- Black carbon, organic carbon (OC) and elemental carbon (EC),
- Ammonia (monthly),
- Daily and hourly PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$ mass,
- Volatile Organic Compounds,
- Carbonyls,
- CH_4 and N_2O fluxes.

3.3.7 Particle Concentrations and Numbers

The Air Quality Directive requires that the chemical composition of $PM_{2.5}$ is characterised at background locations in the United Kingdom. The Particle Concentrations and Numbers Network contribute to this statutory requirement. During 2015, the network consisted of five measurement sites; two rural sites at Auchencorth Moss and Harwell, two in London, and one in Birmingham. As discussed above the Harwell site was closed down at the end of 2015 and moved to Chilbolton at the start of 2016.

Among the parameters measured are:

- Total particle numbers per cubic centimetre of ambient air,
- Particle numbers in different particle size fractions,
- Major ions in PM_{10},
- Cl, NH_4, NO_3, OC, SO_4 and OC in PM_1
- Organic carbon (OC) and elemental carbon (EC) concentrations in $PM_{2.5}$.

As well as its statutory function, this network provides data on the chemical composition of particulate matter, primarily for the use of researchers of atmospheric processes, epidemiology and toxicology.

Monitoring of the major ions in $PM_{2.5}$ began in 2006 and 2009 at Auchencorth Moss and Harwell, respectively. Measurements of elemental carbon (EC) and organic carbon (OC) began at both stations at the start of 2011. At both stations EC and OC measurements were made in 2015 using a thermal/optical method involving both reflectance and transmission correction methods. Comparing both correction methods aims to provide valuable understanding of the measurement process for EC and OC.

3.3.8 TOMPs Network

This research-based network monitors a range of toxic organic micropollutants (compounds that are present in the environment at very low concentrations, but are highly toxic and persistent). These include dioxins, dibenzofurans and polychlorinated biphenyls. The TOMPs Network consists of six sites: Auchencorth Moss, Hazelrigg, High Muffles, London Nobel House, Manchester Law Courts and Weybourne.

The purpose of the TOMPs Network is to provide data on these air pollutants, and to support the development of policy to protect the environment and human health. Further information on the TOMPs Network can be found within UK-AIR at http://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/networks/network-info?view=tomps. However, it is not used for compliance monitoring and will not be discussed further in subsequent sections of the report.

3.3.9 UK Eutrophying and Acidifying Pollutants Network

The UK Eutrophying and Acidifying Atmospheric Pollutants (UKEAP) network provides information on deposition of eutrophying and acidifying compounds in the UK and assessment of their potential impacts on ecosystems. The UKEAP network is an ‘umbrella’ project covering four groups of sites:

- The UKEAP rural NO_2 diffusion tube network (NO_2Net), which measures NO_2 at 24 rural sites.
- In 2015, the Acid Gas and Aerosol Network (AGANet) comprised a total of 32 sites. However, the site at Halladale was replaced very early in the year by RSPB Forsinard, while the site at Rum was replaced by Pollach. The network measures a range of gases and aerosol components. Samples are collected monthly and are analysed by either Inductive coupled plasma optical emission spectrometry (ICP-OES) or ion chromatography.
- The National Ammonia Monitoring Network (NAMN) which characterizes ammonia and ammonium concentrations using both passive samplers (Alpha Samplers) and low volume denuders (Delta Samplers) at up to 88 locations in 2015.
- The Precipitation Network (PrecipNet) consisted of 39 sites in 2015 and monitors the chemical composition of rainwater. The network allows estimates of sulphur and nitrogen deposition. Samples are collected fortnightly at all sites and daily at 2 sites.

3.3.10 Black Carbon Network

Black carbon is fine, dark carbonaceous particulate matter produced from the incomplete combustion of materials containing carbon (such as coal, oil, and biomass such as wood). It is of concern due to health effects, and also as a suspected contributor to climate change.

In 2015, the Black Carbon Network measured black carbon at 14 sites using an automatic instrument called an Aethalometer™. New sites opened up at Cardiff Centre and Glasgow High Street during March 2015. The Aethalometer™ measures black carbon directly, using a real-time optical transmission technique. The objectives of the network as set out in the report reviewing the network are as follows:

- To maintain coverage of black carbon measurements across the whole UK;
- To maintain continuity of historic datasets;
- To gather data for epidemiological studies of black carbon and health effects
- To gather information about black carbon PM sources in the UK;

- To assess PM reductions from air quality management interventions;
- To quantify the contribution of wood burning to black carbon and ambient PM in the UK; and
- To gather data to address future policy considerations including black carbon and climate change.

3.3.11 UK Uplands Waters Monitoring Network (UKUWMN)

The UK Acid Waters Monitoring Network (AWMN) was set up in 1988 (then called the Acid Waters Network) to assess the chemical and biological response of acidified lakes and streams in the UK to the planned reduction in emissions. It provides chemical and biological data on the extent and degree of surface water acidification in the UK uplands, in particular to underpin the science linking acid deposition to water quality and to monitor the response of aquatic ecosystems to reductions in air pollution. The sites making up the network were selected on the basis of acid deposition inputs being the only major sources of pollution, i.e. with no point sources of pollution or direct catchment disturbances other than traditional upland land use practices such as sheep grazing or forestry. There are 24 primary monitoring sites including 11 lakes and 13 streams across the UK, and a series of secondary sites, monitoring a range of parameters including, water chemistry, algae and higher aquatic plants, invertebrates, fish, water temperature and sediment biology and chemistry.

3.3.12 Rural Mercury Monitoring

During 2015, in addition to the weekly monitoring of total gaseous mercury carried out London Westminster and Runcorn Weston Point, and the monthly mercury deposition measurements at Auchencorth Moss, Harwell, Heigham Holmes and Yarner Wood as described in Section 3.3.2, speciated mercury monitoring is carried out using the Tekran automatic instrument. The Tekran instrument at Auchencorth Moss measures the mercury composition of $PM_{2.5}$ as well as mercury in its elemental and reactive forms, whereas at Harwell it measured just total gaseous mercury. The Harwell monitoring station closed at the end of 2015 and was relocated to Chilbolton Observatory at the start of 2016.

3.4 Quality Assurance and Quality Control

Air quality monitoring in the UK is subject to rigorous procedures of validation and ratification. The well-established monitoring networks each have a robust and documented Quality Assurance and Quality Control (QA/QC) programme designed to ensure that measurements meet the defined standards of quality with a stated level of confidence. Essentially, each programme serves to ensure that the data obtained are:

- Representative of ambient concentrations existing in the various areas under investigation.
- Sufficiently accurate and precise to meet specified monitoring objectives.
- Comparable and reproducible. Results must be internally consistent and comparable with international or other accepted standards, if these exist.
- Consistent over time. This is particularly important if long-term trend analysis of the data is to be undertaken.
- Representative over the period of measurement; for most purposes, a yearly data capture rate of not less than 90% is usually required for determining compliance with EU limit values where applicable. An allowance of 5% is made in some cases for planned maintenance.
- Consistent with Data Quality Objectives[49]. The uncertainty requirements of the EU Directives are specified as data quality objectives. In the UK, all air quality data meet the data quality requirements of the EU Directives in relation to uncertainty.
- Consistent with methodology guidance defined in EU Directives for relevant pollutants and measurement techniques. The use of tested and approved analysers that conform to Standard Method (or equivalent) requirements and harmonised on-going QA/QC procedures allows a reliable and consistent quantification of the uncertainties associated with measurements of air pollution.

Most UK networks use a system of regular detailed audits of all monitoring equipment at every site. These audits supplement more regular calibrations and filter changes and test all critical parameters of the measuring equipment including, where appropriate, linearity, converter efficiency (in the case of NO_x analysers) response time, flow rate etc.

Data ratification is the process of checking and validating the data. Data entered on the Defra Air Information Resource (UK-AIR at http://uk-air.defra.gov.uk) in near real time are provided as provisional data. All these data are then carefully screened and checked via the ratification process. The ratified data then overwrite the provisional data on the website. It should however be noted that there are occasionally circumstances where data which have been flagged as 'Ratified' could be subject to further revision. This may be for example where:

- A QA/QC audit has detected a problem which affects data back into an earlier ratification period.
- Long-term analysis has detected an anomaly between expected and measured trends which requires further investigation and possible data correction. This was the case with 2000-2008 particulate monitoring data in the UK national network.

- Further research comes to light which indicates that new or tighter QA/QC criteria are required to meet the data quality objectives. This may require review and revision of historical data by applying the new criteria.

Only ratified data are provided to the Commission in compliance with EU Directives.

Further details on the QA/QC procedures appropriate to each network can be obtained from the annual reports of the monitoring networks, and (in the case of the AURN) from the report '*QA/QC Procedures for the UK Automatic Urban and Rural Air Quality Monitoring Network (AURN)*'[50] available from Defra's air quality web pages.

3.5 Modelling

3.5.1 Why Do Modelling?

The UK's monitoring programmes are supplemented by air quality modelling. There are several benefits of using modelling to complement the monitoring data gathered across the UK national monitoring networks:

- A reduction in the number of fixed continuous monitoring locations required for compliance with European air quality Directives – freeing up resources and ensuring value for money.
- Coverage of the whole UK rather than specific locations where there is a monitoring site. A monitoring site might not fully represent the wider region in which it is located due to local characteristics such as buildings affecting dispersion, localised or temporary sources.
- Providing a framework within which to assess different air quality scenarios – for example projecting concentrations forward to assess levels in future years, representing potential changes to emissions in order to assess the impact of policy initiatives on air quality.

3.5.2 How the Models Work

The national modelling methodology varies between pollutants. The detailed methodology is explained in a technical report[51] (the latest versions of these can be found in the Library section of Defra's UK-AIR website[52]).

Defra's air quality national modelling assessment for the UK consists of two components:

- Background concentrations – on a 1x1km resolution, representing ambient air quality concentrations at background locations.

- Roadside concentrations – concentrations at the roadside of urban major road links throughout the UK (i.e. motorways and major A-roads). There are approximately 10,000 of these urban major road links.

Roadside concentrations are not modelled for CO, SO_2, ozone, benzo[a]pyrene and metals as these are deemed not to have significant traffic-related sources.

The models have been designed to assess compliance at locations defined by the Directives as relevant for air quality assessment.

3.5.3 Background Air Quality

The 1x1 km background maps are made up of several components which are modelled separately and then added together to make the final grid. These individual components (supplemented by some additional components for various pollutants) are:

- Large point sources (e.g. power stations, steel works and oil refineries),
- Small point sources (e.g. boilers in town halls, schools or hospitals and crematoria),
- Distant sources (characterised by the rural background concentration),
- Local area sources (e.g. road traffic, domestic and commercial combustion and agriculture).

In order to ensure that these ambient concentrations from area sources are representative of the real world situation, they are validated against measurements taken from the national networks (including the AURN). After the validation has been completed the large points, small points, distant sources and area source components are added together to provide the final background map.

3.5.4 Roadside Air Quality

Roadside concentrations are determined by using a roadside increment model which attempts to estimate the contribution from road traffic sources and adds this on top of the modelled background concentrations discussed above.

For each of the road links that are modelled, there are emission estimates from the National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory[53] (NAEI) for each pollutant and road traffic counts. A roadside increment is calculated for road links with a roadside monitoring station on them by taking the link's modelled background concentration (from the 1x1 km modelled maps) away from the relevant measured roadside concentration. The emission for the road link is scaled according to annual average daily traffic flow for that link and then this is compared to the roadside increment to establish a relationship. This relationship is then used to scale the link emission for different ranges of traffic flow and added to the modelled background concentration to calculate an estimated roadside concentration.

3.6 Access to Assessment Data

Data from the UK's air quality monitoring networks and annual compliance modelling is available under the Open Government Licence http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/2/ from UK-AIR.

Defra has produced a searchable online catalogue of air quality and emissions datasets which allows people to browse the extent of data available and access key metadata. This is available at http://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/data/data-catalogue.

Historical monitoring data can be accessed through the data selector tools in UK-AIR, at http://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/data/. Modelled data from the Pollution Climate Mapping model are available as .csv files for download from the modelled air quality data pages at http://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/data/modelling-data or can be accessed through the Ambient Air Quality Interactive Map at http://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/data/gis-mapping - a GIS tool which provides enhanced visualisation capability and access to roadside concentration data.

4 Assessment of Compliance

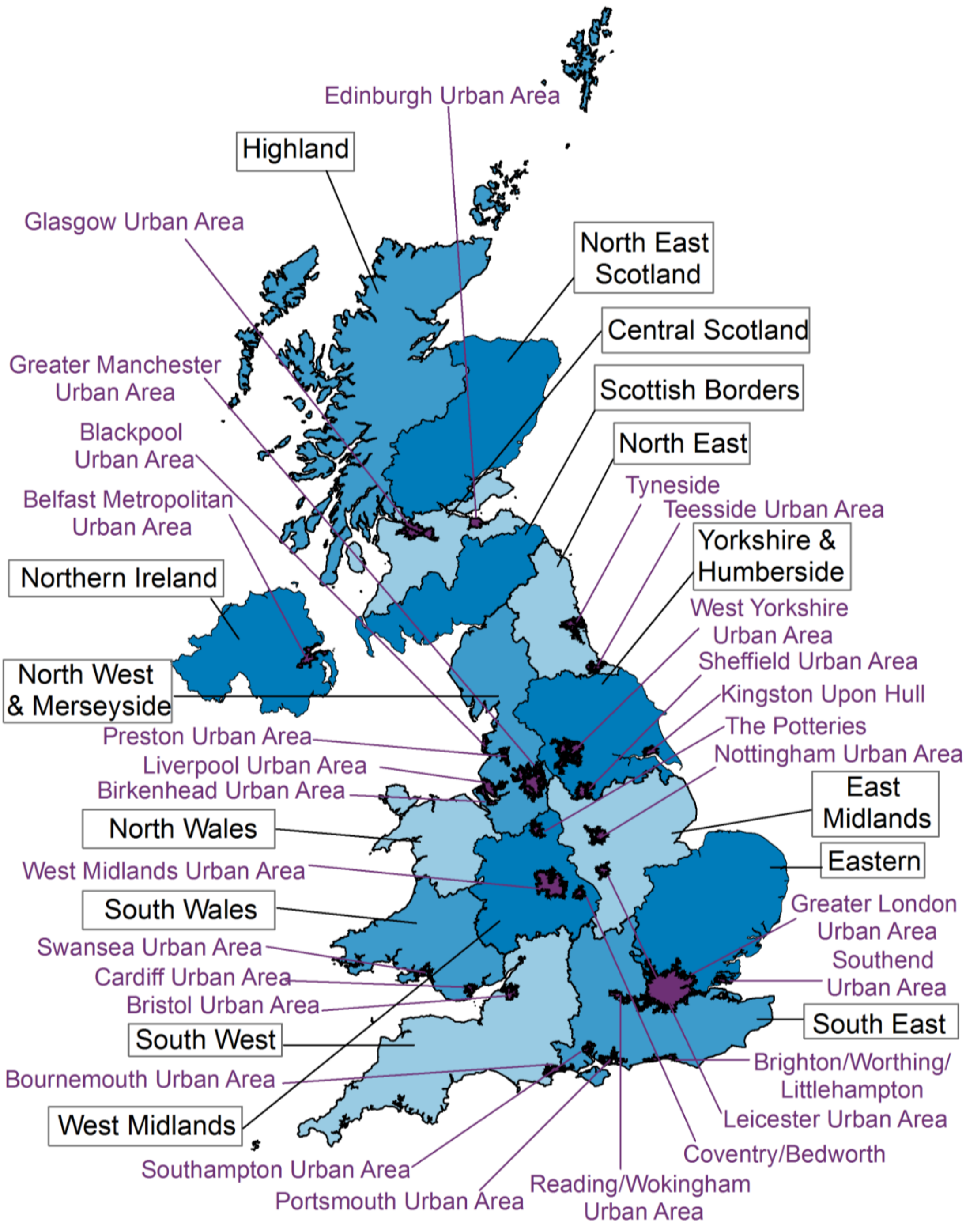
4.1 Definition of Zones

The UK is divided into 43 zones for air quality assessment. There are 28 agglomeration zones (large urban areas) and 15 non-agglomeration zones. Each zone has an identification code (**Table 4-1**). Zones are shown in **Figure 4-1**.

Table 4-1 UK Zones and Agglomerations for Ambient Air Quality Reporting 2015

Zone	Zone code	Zone type
Greater London Urban Area	UK0001	Agglomeration
West Midlands Urban Area	UK0002	Agglomeration
Greater Manchester Urban Area	UK0003	Agglomeration
West Yorkshire Urban Area	UK0004	Agglomeration
Tyneside	UK0005	Agglomeration
Liverpool Urban Area	UK0006	Agglomeration
Sheffield Urban Area	UK0007	Agglomeration
Nottingham Urban Area	UK0008	Agglomeration
Bristol Urban Area	UK0009	Agglomeration
Brighton/Worthing/Littlehampton	UK0010	Agglomeration
Leicester Urban Area	UK0011	Agglomeration
Portsmouth Urban Area	UK0012	Agglomeration
Teesside Urban Area	UK0013	Agglomeration
The Potteries	UK0014	Agglomeration
Bournemouth Urban Area	UK0015	Agglomeration
Reading/Wokingham Urban Area	UK0016	Agglomeration
Coventry/Bedworth	UK0017	Agglomeration
Kingston upon Hull	UK0018	Agglomeration
Southampton Urban Area	UK0019	Agglomeration
Birkenhead Urban Area	UK0020	Agglomeration
Southend Urban Area	UK0021	Agglomeration
Blackpool Urban Area	UK0022	Agglomeration
Preston Urban Area	UK0023	Agglomeration
Glasgow Urban Area	UK0024	Agglomeration
Edinburgh Urban Area	UK0025	Agglomeration
Cardiff Urban Area	UK0026	Agglomeration
Swansea Urban Area	UK0027	Agglomeration
Belfast Metropolitan Urban Area	UK0028	Agglomeration
Eastern	UK0029	Non-agglomeration
South West	UK0030	Non-agglomeration
South East	UK0031	Non-agglomeration
East Midlands	UK0032	Non-agglomeration
North West & Merseyside	UK0033	Non-agglomeration
Yorkshire & Humberside	UK0034	Non-agglomeration
West Midlands	UK0035	Non-agglomeration
North East	UK0036	Non-agglomeration
Central Scotland	UK0037	Non-agglomeration
North East Scotland	UK0038	Non-agglomeration
Highland	UK0039	Non-agglomeration
Scottish Borders	UK0040	Non-agglomeration
South Wales	UK0041	Non-agglomeration
North Wales	UK0042	Non-agglomeration
Northern Ireland	UK0043	Non-agglomeration

Figure 4-1 UK Zones and Agglomerations for Ambient Air Quality Reporting 2015



Agglomeration zones in purple; non-agglomeration zones in blue.

4.2 Air Quality Assessment for 2015

The air quality assessment for each pollutant is derived from a combination of measured and modelled concentrations. Where both measurements and model results are available the assessment of compliance for each zone is based on the higher concentration of the two.

The air quality compliance assessment is submitted to the European Commission via e-Reporting. All the compliance results come under 'Information on the Attainment of Environmental Objectives' in e-Reporting Data Flow G.

The results of the air quality assessment submitted to the European Commission for 2015 are summarised in the tables below. The tables have been completed as follows:

- Where all measurements were within the relevant limit values in 2015, the table shows this as 'OK'.
- In the above cases, where compliance was determined by modelling or supplementary assessment, this is indicated by '(m)' – i.e. 'OK (m)'.
- Where locations were identified as exceeding a limit value, target value or long-term objective, this is identified as '>LV', '>TV' or '>LTO' as applicable.
- Where a non-compliance was determined by modelling or supplementary assessment, this is indicated by (m), as above.
- The abbreviation 'n/a' (not applicable) means that an assessment is not relevant for this zone, such as for the NO_X vegetation critical level in agglomeration zones.
- Zones that complied with the relevant limit values, targets or long-term objectives are shaded blue, while those that did not are shaded red. For ozone, zones that met the relevant target value but not the long-term objective are shaded purple.

There are no longer any zones where margins of tolerance apply.

4.2.1 Directive 2008/50/EC on Ambient Air Quality and Cleaner Air for Europe

Sulphur dioxide (SO_2): In 2015, all zones and agglomerations within the UK complied with the limit values for 1-hour mean and 24-hour mean SO_2 concentration, set for protection of human health.

All non-agglomeration zones within the UK also complied with the critical levels for annual mean and winter mean SO_2 concentration, set for protection of ecosystems. (These are not applicable to built-up areas).

Carbon monoxide (CO), benzene and lead: all zones and agglomerations were compliant with the limit values for these three pollutants in 2015. The 2015 compliance assessment for CO has been based on objective estimation (explained in Defra's technical report on UK air quality assessment[54]), underpinned by NAEI emission trends, AURN measurement trends and historical modelling assessments.

Nitrogen dioxide (NO_2): In 2015 not all zones and agglomerations were compliant with the limit values. The results of the air quality assessment for nitrogen dioxide for each zone are summarised in **Table 4-2**.

Two zones had locations where the 1-hour limit value (200 µg m^{-3}) was exceeded on more than the permitted 18 occasions during 2015: Greater London Urban Area (UK0001) and South Wales (UK0041). The remaining 41 zones and agglomerations complied with the 1-hour mean NO_2 limit value.

Six zones ***met*** the annual mean limit value for NO_2 in 2015:

- Brighton/Worthing/Littlehampton (UK0010),
- Blackpool Urban Area (UK0022),
- Preston Urban Area (UK0023),
- Highland (UK0039)
- Scottish Borders (UK0040)
- Northern Ireland (UK0043).

The remaining 37 zones had locations with measured or modelled annual mean NO_2 concentrations higher than the annual mean limit value (40 µg m^{-3}).

The UK was originally granted a time extension for compliance with the NO_2 annual mean limit value in the following 13 zones and agglomerations; Nottingham Urban Area (UK0008), Leicester Urban Area (UK0011), Portsmouth Urban Area (UK0012), Reading/Wokingham Urban Area (UK0016), Birkenhead Urban Area (UK0020), Southend Urban Area (UK0021), Preston Urban Area (UK0023, Edinburgh Urban Area (UK0025), Cardiff Urban Area (UK0026), Swansea Urban Area (UK0027, Central Scotland zone (UK0037), North Wales zone (UK0042), and Northern Ireland zone (UK0043). All these time extensions ended on 1st January 2015.

Although the total number of legally non-compliant zones increased from 30 in 2014 to 37 in 2015 this apparent increase is a reflection of the time extensions ending. Comparison of the two years based on whether they ***met*** the limit value alone shows an improvement in 2015 with 6 compliant zones compared with only 5 in 2014 (Brighton/Worthing/Littlehampton (UK0010)).

All non-agglomeration zones within the UK complied with the critical level for annual mean NO_X concentration, set for protection of vegetation.

Table 4-2 Results of Air Quality Assessment for Nitrogen Dioxide in 2015

Zone	Zone code	NO_2 LV for health (1hr mean)	NO_2 LV for health (annual mean)	NO_x critical level for vegetation (annual mean)
Greater London Urban Area	UK0001	> LV	> LV	n/a
West Midlands Urban Area	UK0002	OK	> LV	n/a
Greater Manchester Urban Area	UK0003	OK	> LV (m)	n/a
West Yorkshire Urban Area	UK0004	OK	> LV (m)	n/a
Tyneside	UK0005	OK	> LV (m)	n/a
Liverpool Urban Area	UK0006	OK	> LV (m)	n/a
Sheffield Urban Area	UK0007	OK	> LV (m)	n/a
Nottingham Urban Area	UK0008	OK	> LV (m)	n/a
Bristol Urban Area	UK0009	OK	> LV (m)	n/a
Brighton/Worthing/Littlehampton	UK0010	OK	OK	n/a
Leicester Urban Area	UK0011	OK	> LV (m)	n/a
Portsmouth Urban Area	UK0012	OK	> LV (m)	n/a
Teesside Urban Area	UK0013	OK	> LV (m)	n/a
The Potteries	UK0014	OK	> LV (m)	n/a
Bournemouth Urban Area	UK0015	OK	> LV (m)	n/a
Reading/Wokingham Urban Area	UK0016	OK	> LV (m)	n/a
Coventry/Bedworth	UK0017	OK	> LV (m)	n/a
Kingston upon Hull	UK0018	OK	> LV (m)	n/a
Southampton Urban Area	UK0019	OK	> LV (m)	n/a
Birkenhead Urban Area	UK0020	OK	> LV (m)	n/a
Southend Urban Area	UK0021	OK	> LV (m)	n/a
Blackpool Urban Area	UK0022	OK	OK	n/a
Preston Urban Area	UK0023	OK	OK	n/a
Glasgow Urban Area	UK0024	OK	> LV	n/a
Edinburgh Urban Area	UK0025	OK (m)	> LV (m)	n/a
Cardiff Urban Area	UK0026	OK	> LV (m)	n/a
Swansea Urban Area	UK0027	OK	> LV (m)	n/a
Belfast Urban Area	UK0028	OK	> LV	n/a
Eastern	UK0029	OK	> LV	OK
South West	UK0030	OK	> LV	OK
South East	UK0031	OK	> LV	OK
East Midlands	UK0032	OK	> LV (m)	OK
North West & Merseyside	UK0033	OK	> LV (m)	OK (m)
Yorkshire & Humberside	UK0034	OK	> LV (m)	OK
West Midlands	UK0035	OK	> LV (m)	OK (m)
North East	UK0036	OK	> LV (m)	OK (m)
Central Scotland	UK0037	OK	> LV (m)	OK (m)
North East Scotland	UK0038	OK	> LV	OK (m)
Highland	UK0039	OK	OK	OK (m)
Scottish Borders	UK0040	OK	OK	OK
South Wales	UK0041	> LV	> LV	OK
North Wales	UK0042	OK	> LV (m)	OK
Northern Ireland	UK0043	OK	OK	OK (m)

LV = limit value, (m) indicates that the compliance or exceedance was determined by modelling.

PM_{10} Particulate matter: all zones and agglomerations were compliant with the annual mean limit value of 40 µg m^{-3} for PM_{10}. After subtraction of the natural source contribution, all zones and agglomerations were compliant with the daily mean limit value. The results of the air quality assessment for PM_{10} for each zone, with respect to the daily mean and annual mean limit values, are summarised in **Table 4-3**.

Under Section 20 of the Air Quality Directive, Member States are required to inform the Commission where exceedances of PM_{10} limit values are due to natural sources, and where this is the case, the exceedance does not count as non-compliance. Prior to subtraction of contributions from natural sources, Swansea Urban Area (UK0027) exceeded the daily limit value (50 µg m^{-3}) on more than the permitted 35 occasions in 2015 (as assessed by modelling). Following subtraction of the natural source contribution (sea salt), the number of exceedances was reduced from 38 to 26 days. Therefore, all zones were compliant with the daily mean limit value. *In **Table 4-3**, natural source contribution has only been subtracted for Swansea Urban Area (UK0027).*

Table 4-3 Results of Air Quality Assessment for PM_{10} in 2015 (after subtraction of contribution from natural sources where applicable*).

Zone	Zone code	PM_{10} LV (daily mean)	PM_{10} LV (annual mean)
Greater London Urban Area	UK0001	OK	OK
West Midlands Urban Area	UK0002	OK	OK
Greater Manchester Urban Area	UK0003	OK	OK
West Yorkshire Urban Area	UK0004	OK	OK
Tyneside	UK0005	OK	OK
Liverpool Urban Area	UK0006	OK	OK
Sheffield Urban Area	UK0007	OK (m)	OK (m)
Nottingham Urban Area	UK0008	OK	OK
Bristol Urban Area	UK0009	OK	OK
Brighton/Worthing/Littlehampton	UK0010	OK (m)	OK (m)
Leicester Urban Area	UK0011	OK (m)	OK (m)
Portsmouth Urban Area	UK0012	OK (m)	OK (m)
Teesside Urban Area	UK0013	OK	OK
The Potteries	UK0014	OK (m)	OK (m)
Bournemouth Urban Area	UK0015	OK (m)	OK (m)
Reading/Wokingham Urban Area	UK0016	OK	OK
Coventry/Bedworth	UK0017	OK (m)	OK (m)
Kingston upon Hull	UK0018	OK	OK
Southampton Urban Area	UK0019	OK	OK
Birkenhead Urban Area	UK0020	OK (m)	OK (m)
Southend Urban Area	UK0021	OK (m)	OK (m)
Blackpool Urban Area	UK0022	OK (m)	OK (m)
Preston Urban Area	UK0023	OK (m)	OK (m)
Glasgow Urban Area	UK0024	OK	OK
Edinburgh Urban Area	UK0025	OK	OK

Zone	Zone code	PM_{10} LV (daily mean)	PM_{10} LV (annual mean)
Cardiff Urban Area	UK0026	OK	OK
Swansea Urban Area	UK0027	OK	OK
Belfast Metropolitan Urban Area	UK0028	OK	OK
Eastern	UK0029	OK	OK
South West	UK0030	OK	OK
South East	UK0031	OK	OK
East Midlands	UK0032	OK	OK
North West & Merseyside	UK0033	OK	OK
Yorkshire & Humberside	UK0034	OK	OK
West Midlands	UK0035	OK	OK
North East	UK0036	OK	OK
Central Scotland	UK0037	OK	OK
North East Scotland	UK0038	OK	OK
Highland	UK0039	OK	OK
Scottish Borders	UK0040	OK (m)	OK (m)
South Wales	UK0041	OK	OK
North Wales	UK0042	OK	OK
Northern Ireland	UK0043	OK	OK

**Footnote to Table 4-3: Prior to the subtraction of natural source contribution Swansea Urban Area (UK0027) exceeded the daily mean limit value on more than the permitted 35 occasions (based upon the modelling assessment only). However, subtraction of the contribution from natural sources reduced the number of exceedances of this limit value from 38 to 26. Natural sources have only been subtracted for zone UK0027 in this table and only for the daily mean limit value.*

In Table 4-3, LV = limit value, (m) indicates that the compliance or exceedance was determined by modelling.

$PM_{2.5}$ Particulate matter: All zones met the target value for annual mean concentration of $PM_{2.5}$ particulate matter (25 µg m^{-3} to be achieved by 1st Jan 2010), the Stage 1 limit value (25 µg m^{-3} to be achieved by 1st Jan 2015), which came into force on 1st January 2015, and the Stage 2 limit value (20 µg m^{-3} to be achieved by 1st Jan 2020). All three apply to the calendar year mean.

The results of the air quality assessment for $PM_{2.5}$ for each zone are summarised in **Table 4-4**. Subtraction of $PM_{2.5}$ contributions due to natural events (1999/30/EC Article 5(4)) or natural contributions (2008/50/EC Article 20) was not necessary for any zone.

Under the Air Quality Directive, Member States will be required to achieve a national exposure reduction target for $PM_{2.5}$, over the period 2010 to 2020. This is based on the Average Exposure Indicator (AEI) statistic. The AEI for the UK is calculated as follows: the arithmetic mean $PM_{2.5}$ concentration at appropriate UK urban background sites only is calculated for three consecutive calendar years, and the mean of these values taken as the AEI.

The AEI for the reference year (2010) was used to determine the National Exposure Reduction Target (NERT), to be achieved by 2020 (see Annex XIV of the Air Quality Directive). The UK's reference year AEI was 13 µg m^{-3}; on this basis, the Air Quality Directive sets an exposure reduction target of 15%. This equates to reducing the AEI to 11 µg m^{-3} by 2020. (The detailed methodology and results of this calculation are presented in Defra's technical report on UK air quality assessment[54].)

The AEI for the reference year 2015 is set at 20 µg m^{-3} as an Exposure Concentration Obligation (ECO) in the Air Quality Directive. The UK already meets this obligation. There are no obligations or target values for the years *between* 2010, 2015 and 2020, but the running AEIs for these intervening years give an indication of progress towards the 2020 target. The running year AEI for 2015 was calculated as follows:

- 2013: 12 µg m^{-3}
- 2014: 12 µg m^{-3}
- 2015: 10 µg m^{-3}

The mean of these three values (to the nearest integer) is 11 µg m^{-3}.

Ozone: all zones and agglomerations met the target values but all exceeded the long-term objective for health, and one exceeded the long-term objective for vegetation. The results of the air quality assessment for ozone are summarised in **Table 4-5**.

For ozone, there is a target value based on the maximum daily 8-hour mean. All 43 zones and agglomerations were compliant with this target value. There is also a long-term objective for protection of human health, based on the maximum daily 8-hour mean. All of the 43 zones and agglomerations were *above* the long-term objective (LTO) for health in 2015. (This is more than in 2014: however, ozone concentrations – and hence the number of zones exceeding the LTO - fluctuate from year to year as ozone is a transboundary pollutant and its formation is influenced by meteorological factors).

There is also a target value based on the AOT40 statistic. The AOT40 statistic (expressed in µg m^{-3}.hours) is the sum of the difference between hourly concentrations greater than 80 µg m^{-3} (= 40 ppb) and 80 µg m^{-3} over a given period using only the hourly mean values measured between 08:00 and 20:00 Central European Time each day. All 43 zones and agglomerations met the target value based on the AOT40 statistic. There is also a long-term objective, for protection of vegetation, based on this statistic. One zone, Eastern (UK0029) was above the long-term objective for vegetation in 2015.

Table 4-4 Results of Air Quality Assessment for $PM_{2.5}$ in 2015.

Zone	Zone code	$PM_{2.5}$ target value (annual mean, for 1st Jan 2010)	$PM_{2.5}$ Stage 1 limit value (annual mean, for 1st Jan 2015)	$PM_{2.5}$ Stage 2 limit value (annual mean, for 1st Jan 2020)
Greater London Urban Area	UK0001	OK	OK	OK
West Midlands Urban Area	UK0002	OK	OK	OK
Greater Manchester Urban Area	UK0003	OK	OK	OK
West Yorkshire Urban Area	UK0004	OK	OK	OK
Tyneside	UK0005	OK (m)	OK (m)	OK (m)
Liverpool Urban Area	UK0006	OK	OK	OK
Sheffield Urban Area	UK0007	OK (m)	OK (m)	OK (m)
Nottingham Urban Area	UK0008	OK	OK	OK
Bristol Urban Area	UK0009	OK	OK	OK
Brighton/Worthing/Littlehampton	UK0010	OK	OK	OK
Leicester Urban Area	UK0011	OK	OK	OK
Portsmouth Urban Area	UK0012	OK	OK	OK
Teesside Urban Area	UK0013	OK	OK	OK
The Potteries	UK0014	OK	OK	OK
Bournemouth Urban Area	UK0015	OK	OK	OK
Reading/Wokingham Urban Area	UK0016	OK	OK	OK
Coventry/Bedworth	UK0017	OK	OK	OK
Kingston upon Hull	UK0018	OK	OK	OK
Southampton Urban Area	UK0019	OK	OK	OK
Birkenhead Urban Area	UK0020	OK	OK	OK
Southend Urban Area	UK0021	OK	OK	OK
Blackpool Urban Area	UK0022	OK	OK	OK
Preston Urban Area	UK0023	OK	OK	OK
Glasgow Urban Area	UK0024	OK	OK	OK
Edinburgh Urban Area	UK0025	OK	OK	OK
Cardiff Urban Area	UK0026	OK	OK	OK
Swansea Urban Area	UK0027	OK	OK	OK
Belfast Metropolitan Urban Area	UK0028	OK	OK	OK
Eastern	UK0029	OK	OK	OK
South West	UK0030	OK	OK	OK
South East	UK0031	OK	OK	OK
East Midlands	UK0032	OK	OK	OK
North West & Merseyside	UK0033	OK	OK	OK
Yorkshire & Humberside	UK0034	OK	OK	OK
West Midlands	UK0035	OK	OK	OK
North East	UK0036	OK	OK	OK
Central Scotland	UK0037	OK	OK	OK
North East Scotland	UK0038	OK	OK	OK
Highland	UK0039	OK	OK	OK
Scottish Borders	UK0040	OK (m)	OK (m)	OK (m)
South Wales	UK0041	OK	OK	OK
North Wales	UK0042	OK	OK	OK
Northern Ireland	UK0043	OK	OK	OK

Subtraction of natural source contribution was not carried out for any zones in 2015.

LV = limit value, (m) indicates that the compliance or exceedance was determined by modelling.

Table 4-5 Results of Air Quality Assessment for Ozone in 2015

Zone	Zone code	O_3 TV and LTO for health (8hr mean)	O_3 TV and LTO for vegetation (AOT40)
Greater London Urban Area	UK0001	Met TV, > LTO	OK
West Midlands Urban Area	UK0002	Met TV, > LTO	OK
Greater Manchester Urban Area	UK0003	Met TV, > LTO	OK
West Yorkshire Urban Area	UK0004	Met TV, > LTO	OK
Tyneside	UK0005	Met TV, > LTO	OK
Liverpool Urban Area	UK0006	Met TV, > LTO (m)	OK
Sheffield Urban Area	UK0007	Met TV, > LTO	OK (m)
Nottingham Urban Area	UK0008	Met TV, > LTO	OK
Bristol Urban Area	UK0009	Met TV, > LTO (m)	OK
Brighton/Worthing/Littlehampton	UK0010	Met TV, > LTO	OK
Leicester Urban Area	UK0011	Met TV, > LTO	OK
Portsmouth Urban Area	UK0012	Met TV, > LTO	OK
Teesside Urban Area	UK0013	Met TV, > LTO	OK
The Potteries	UK0014	Met TV, > LTO	OK
Bournemouth Urban Area	UK0015	Met TV, > LTO	OK
Reading/Wokingham Urban Area	UK0016	Met TV, > LTO	OK
Coventry/Bedworth	UK0017	Met TV, > LTO	OK
Kingston upon Hull	UK0018	Met TV, > LTO (m)	OK
Southampton Urban Area	UK0019	Met TV, > LTO (m)	OK
Birkenhead Urban Area	UK0020	Met TV, > LTO (m)	OK (m)
Southend Urban Area	UK0021	Met TV, > LTO	OK
Blackpool Urban Area	UK0022	Met TV, > LTO	OK
Preston Urban Area	UK0023	Met TV, > LTO	OK
Glasgow Urban Area	UK0024	Met TV, > LTO (m)	OK
Edinburgh Urban Area	UK0025	Met TV, > LTO (m)	OK
Cardiff Urban Area	UK0026	Met TV, > LTO (m)	OK
Swansea Urban Area	UK0027	Met TV, > LTO	OK
Belfast Metropolitan Urban Area	UK0028	Met TV, > LTO (m)	OK
Eastern	UK0029	Met TV, > LTO	Met TV, > LTO
South West	UK0030	Met TV, > LTO	OK
South East	UK0031	Met TV, > LTO	OK
East Midlands	UK0032	Met TV, > LTO	OK
North West & Merseyside	UK0033	Met TV, > LTO	OK
Yorkshire & Humberside	UK0034	Met TV, > LTO	OK
West Midlands	UK0035	Met TV, > LTO	OK
North East	UK0036	Met TV, > LTO	OK
Central Scotland	UK0037	Met TV, > LTO	OK
North East Scotland	UK0038	Met TV, > LTO (m)	OK
Highland	UK0039	Met TV, > LTO	OK
Scottish Borders	UK0040	Met TV, > LTO	OK
South Wales	UK0041	Met TV, > LTO	OK
North Wales	UK0042	Met TV, > LTO	OK
Northern Ireland	UK0043	Met TV, > LTO	OK

Footnote to Table 4-5: TV = target value, LTO = long-term objective, (m) indicates that the compliance or exceedance was determined by modelling.

In 2015 there were 35 measured exceedances of the ozone information thresholds (at 10 sites) but no exceedances of the alert threshold. The information threshold exceedances are detailed in **Table 4-6**. All occurred between 13:00 and 24:00 on the same day: 1st July 2015.

Table 4-6 Measured Exceedances of the Ozone Information Threshold Value in 2015

Site name	Zone code	Number of 1-hour exceedances of information threshold	Maximum 1-hour concentration (µg m^{-3})
Weybourne	UK0029	9	224
Sibton	UK0029	7	221
Wicken Fen	UK0029	5	207
High Muffles	UK0034	4	197
Northampton Kingsthorpe	UK0032	3	200
London Teddington	UK0001	2	185
Sheffield Devonshire Green	UK0007	2	185
Brighton Preston Park	UK0010	1	181
Canterbury	UK0031	1	185
Preston	UK0023	1	181

4.2.2 Fourth Daughter Directive 2004/107/EC

All zones met target values for arsenic and cadmium but some zones exceeded target values for nickel and benzo[a]pyrene. The results of the air quality assessment for arsenic (As), cadmium (Cd), nickel (Ni) and benzo[a]pyrene (B[a]P) for each zone are summarised in **Table 4-7**.

All zones and agglomerations met the target values for arsenic and cadmium. Two zones (Swansea Urban Area and South Wales) exceeded the target value for nickel. In these zones, the exceedance has been attributed to industrial sources.

Concentrations of B[a]P were above the target value in five zones; Teesside Urban Area, Swansea Urban Area, Yorkshire and Humberside, the North East, and South Wales. In Teesside, Swansea and the North East, the exceedances are attributed to emissions from industrial sources. In South Wales, the exceedance results from a combination of industrial sources and domestic solid fuel use, while in Yorkshire and Humberside it is predominantly due to industrial emissions with some contribution from domestic sources. The remaining 38 zones were compliant with the target value for B[a]P, as shown in **Table 4-7**.

Table 4-7 Results of Air Quality Assessment for As, Cd, Ni and B[a]P in 2015

Zone	Zone code	As TV	Cd TV	Ni TV	B[a]P TV
Greater London Urban Area	UK0001	OK	OK	OK	OK
West Midlands Urban Area	UK0002	OK (m)	OK (m)	OK (m)	OK
Greater Manchester Urban Area	UK0003	OK (m)	OK (m)	OK (m)	OK
West Yorkshire Urban Area	UK0004	OK (m)	OK (m)	OK (m)	OK
Tyneside	UK0005	OK (m)	OK (m)	OK (m)	OK
Liverpool Urban Area	UK0006	OK (m)	OK (m)	OK (m)	OK
Sheffield Urban Area	UK0007	OK	OK	OK	OK (m)
Nottingham Urban Area	UK0008	OK (m)	OK (m)	OK (m)	OK (m)
Bristol Urban Area	UK0009	OK (m)	OK (m)	OK (m)	OK (m)
Brighton/Worthing/Littlehampton	UK0010	OK (m)	OK (m)	OK (m)	OK
Leicester Urban Area	UK0011	OK (m)	OK (m)	OK (m)	OK (m)
Portsmouth Urban Area	UK0012	OK (m)	OK (m)	OK (m)	OK (m)
Teesside Urban Area	UK0013	OK (m)	OK (m)	OK (m)	> TV (m)
The Potteries	UK0014	OK (m)	OK (m)	OK (m)	OK (m)
Bournemouth Urban Area	UK0015	OK (m)	OK (m)	OK (m)	OK (m)
Reading/Wokingham Urban Area	UK0016	OK (m)	OK (m)	OK (m)	OK (m)
Coventry/Bedworth	UK0017	OK (m)	OK (m)	OK (m)	OK (m)
Kingston upon Hull	UK0018	OK (m)	OK (m)	OK (m)	OK (m)
Southampton Urban Area	UK0019	OK (m)	OK (m)	OK (m)	OK (m)
Birkenhead Urban Area	UK0020	OK (m)	OK (m)	OK (m)	OK (m)
Southend Urban Area	UK0021	OK (m)	OK (m)	OK (m)	OK (m)
Blackpool Urban Area	UK0022	OK (m)	OK (m)	OK (m)	OK (m)
Preston Urban Area	UK0023	OK (m)	OK (m)	OK (m)	OK (m)
Glasgow Urban Area	UK0024	OK (m)	OK (m)	OK (m)	OK
Edinburgh Urban Area	UK0025	OK (m)	OK (m)	OK (m)	OK
Cardiff Urban Area	UK0026	OK (m)	OK (m)	OK (m)	OK
Swansea Urban Area	UK0027	OK	OK	> TV	> TV (m)
Belfast Urban Area	UK0028	OK	OK	OK	OK
Eastern	UK0029	OK	OK	OK	OK
South West	UK0030	OK	OK	OK	OK (m)
South East	UK0031	OK	OK	OK	OK
East Midlands	UK0032	OK (m)	OK (m)	OK (m)	OK
North West & Merseyside	UK0033	OK	OK	OK	OK
Yorkshire & Humberside	UK0034	OK	OK	OK	> TV
West Midlands	UK0035	OK	OK	OK	OK (m)
North East	UK0036	OK (m)	OK (m)	OK (m)	> TV (m)
Central Scotland	UK0037	OK	OK	OK	OK
North East Scotland	UK0038	OK (m)	OK (m)	OK (m)	OK (m)
Highland	UK0039	OK (m)	OK (m)	OK (m)	OK
Scottish Borders	UK0040	OK	OK	OK	OK (m)
South Wales	UK0041	OK	OK	> TV (m)	> TV (m)
North Wales	UK0042	OK (m)	OK (m)	OK (m)	OK (m)
Northern Ireland	UK0043	OK (m)	OK (m)	OK (m)	OK

TV = target value, (m) indicates that the compliance or exceedance was determined by modelling.

4.3 Comparison with Previous Years

Table 4-8 to **Table 4-12** summarise the results of the air quality assessment for 2015 and provide a comparison with the results of the assessments carried out in previous years since 2008 (the year in which the Air Quality Directive came into force). For information on compliance with the 1st and 2nd Daughter Directives in earlier years, please see the 2012 or earlier reports in this series. **Table 4-8** shows the number of zones exceeding the limit value plus any agreed margin of tolerance applicable in the relevant year (i.e. the numbers of zones that were non-compliant). If any additional zones were within the limit value plus an agreed MOT (and therefore compliant), for example for NO_2, this is shown in the footnotes. As explained in section 4.2.1 above, there are no longer any margins of tolerance (MOT) in force for these or any other pollutants.

Table 4-8 Non-Compliances with the Limit Values of the Air Quality Directive

Pollutant	Avg. time	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
SO_2	1-hour	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None
SO_2	24-hour	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None
SO_2	Annual[i]	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None
SO_2	Winter[i]	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None
NO_2	1-hour[ii]	3 zones (London, Glasgow, NE Scotland)	2 zones (London, Glasgow)	3 zones (London, Teesside, Glasgow)	3 zones (London, Glasgow, South East)	2 zones (London, South East)	1 zone (London)	2 zones (London, South Wales)	2 zones (London, South Wales)
NO_2	Annual	40 zones	40 zones	40 zones	35 zones[iii]	34 zones[iv]	31 zones [v]	30 zones [vi]	37 zones [vii]
NO_x	Annual[i]	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None
PM_{10}	Daily	2 zones (1 zone after subtraction of natural contribution)	3 zones (1 zone after subtraction of natural contribution)	None (after subtraction of natural contribution)[viii]	None (after subtraction of natural contribution)[ix]	None (after subtraction of natural contribution. No time extension.)	None (after subtraction of natural contribution. No time extension.)	None (after subtraction of natural contribution. No time extension.)	None (after subtraction of natural contribution. No time extension.)

Pollutant	Avg. time	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
PM_{10}	Annual	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None
Lead	Annual	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None
Benzene	Annual	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None
CO	8-hour	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None

Footnotes to Table 4-8:

[i] *Applies to vegetation and ecosystem areas only. Critical Levels are already in force, no MOT.*

[ii] *No modelling for 1-hour LV.*

[iii] *A further five zones exceeded the annual mean NO_2 LV in 2011 but were covered by time extensions and within the LV+ MOT, therefore compliant.*

[iv] *A further four zones exceeded the annual mean NO_2 LV in 2012 but were covered by time extensions and within the LV+ MOT, therefore compliant.*

[v] *A further seven zones exceeded the annual mean NO_2 LV in 2013 but were covered by time extensions and within the LV+ MOT, therefore compliant.*

[vi] *A further eight zones exceeded the annual mean NO_2 LV in 2014 but were covered by time extensions and within the LV+ MOT, therefore compliant.*

[vii] *2015 was the first year with no time extensions for NO_2: this is the reason for the apparent increase in zones exceeding between 2014 and 2015.In 2014, 5 zones met the limit value and a further 8 zones were legally compliant due to the time extension. The time extensions ended on 1 January 2015. In 2015, 6 zones met the limit value, but the remaining zones were no longer covered by the time extension, bringing the total number of non-compliant zones from 30 in 2014 to 37 in 2015*

[viii] *One zone exceeded the daily mean PM_{10} limit value more than the permitted 35 times in 2010, after subtraction of natural contribution. This zone was covered by a time extension, and was within the LV+MOT so was therefore compliant.*

[ix] *One zone exceeded the daily mean PM_{10} limit value more than the permitted 35 times in 2011, after subtraction of natural contribution. This zone was covered by a time extension, and was within the LV+MOT so was therefore compliant.*

The UK has been compliant with the limit values for both lead and CO since 2003, and for benzene since 2007: these limit values are the same as those contained in the 1st and 2nd Daughter Directives, which the Air Quality Directive superseded.

Table 4-9 Exceedances of Air Quality Directive Target Values for Ozone (Health)

Pollutant	Averaging time	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
O_3	8-hour	1 zone measured (Eastern)	None	None	None	None	None	None	None
O_3	AOT40	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None

Table 4-10 Exceedances of Air Quality Directive Long Term Objectives for Ozone

Pollutant	Averaging time	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
O_3	8-hour	43 zones	39 zones	41 zones	43 zones	41 zones	33 zones	32 zones	43 zones
O_3	AOT40	41 zones	10 zones	6 zones	3 zones	3 zones	8 zones	3 zones	1 zone

Table 4-11 Exceedances of 4th Daughter Directive Target Values

Pollu-tant	Averaging time	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
As	Annual	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None
Cd	Annual	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None
Ni	Annual	1 zone (Swansea Urban area)	2 zones (Swansea, S Wales)	2 zones (Swansea, S Wales)	2 zones (Swansea, S Wales)	2 zones, (Swansea, S Wales)	2 zones, (Swansea, S Wales)	2 zones, (Swansea, S Wales)	3 zones, (Sheffield, Swansea, S Wales)	2 zones, (Swansea, S Wales)
B[a]P	Annual	1 zone (Yorkshire & Humberside)	6 zones (Yorkshire & Humberside, Teesside, N Ireland, Swansea, S Wales, Belfast)	6 zones (Yorkshire & Humberside, N Ireland, Teesside, Swansea, North East, S Wales)	8 zones, (Yorkshire & Humberside, N Ireland, Teesside, Belfast, W Midlands, North East, S Wales, N Wales.)	7 zones (Yorkshire & Humberside, N Ireland, Teesside, Swansea, Belfast, North East, South Wales)	8 zones (Yorkshire & Humberside, Teesside, Swansea, Belfast, the North East, South Wales, North Wales, Northern Ireland.)	6 zones (Yorkshire & Humberside, Teesside, Swansea, the East Midlands, the North East, South Wales.)	6 zones (Yorkshire & Humberside, Teesside, Swansea, the East Midlands, the North East and South Wales).	5 zones (Yorkshire & Humber-side, Teesside, Swansea, the North East and South Wales).

Table 4-12 Exceedances of Ambient Air Quality Directive Target Value for $PM_{2.5}$

Pollutant	Ave. time	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
$PM_{2.5}$	Annual	None	None	None	None	None	None	None

5 Spatial Variation and Changes Over Time

This section looks at the spatial distribution of pollutants across the UK, based upon the modelled maps of ambient pollutant concentration discussed in Section 3.5 of this report, “Modelling”. In the case of traffic-related pollutants such as NO_2, roadside and background concentrations are discussed separately.

For each pollutant, this section also discusses how ambient concentrations have changed over time, using data from the relevant ambient air quality monitoring networks: the Automatic Urban and Rural Network (AURN), the Automatic Hydrocarbon Network, the Non-Automatic Hydrocarbon Network, the UK Metals Network, and the PAH Network.

The AURN has been in operation since 1992. Since that time it has grown considerably in size, and the proportion of urban traffic (‘roadside’) monitoring sites has increased. Therefore, we have in some cases based our investigation of trends on data from sub-sets of long-running AURN monitoring sites, rather than the whole network. This is intended to show changes over time, without introducing any spurious effects due to changes in the number and distribution of the sites.

For pollutants monitored using continuous automatic techniques, trend analysis has been carried out using Openair: a free, open-source software package of tools for analysis of air pollution data. Openair was developed by King’s College London with the University of Leeds. The Openair project is currently led by Dr David Carslaw, of Ricardo Energy & Environment and the University of York. A range of Openair tools are available on UK-AIR: for more information on the tools and how to use them, please refer to: https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/data/openair.

The Openair ‘TheilSen’ tool has been used here. This uses the Theil-Sen statistical method to determine trends in pollutant concentrations over several years. The trend analysis is based on monthly mean pollutant concentrations. (At least 75% data capture is required for a valid monthly mean.) Openair includes an option to ‘de-seasonalise’ the data (i.e. statistically modify the plotted data to remove the influence of seasonal cycles, thus providing a clearer indication of the overall trend). The de-seasonalise option has been used for some strongly seasonal pollutants; SO_2, particulate matter and CO - but not the generally traffic-related ones or ozone. Where the ‘de-seasonalise’ option has been used here, this is indicated in the graph title. In these trend graphs, the trend line is shown by a solid red line, with 95% confidence intervals for the trend shown by dotted red lines. The trend is given at the top of the graph in green, with confidence intervals shown in square brackets. The trend is given as units (e.g. $\mu g\ m^{-3}$) per year, over the period shown. This may be followed by a number of symbols, with + indicating that the trend is significant at the

0.1 level, * indicating that the trend is statistically significant at the 0.05 level, ** indicating significance at the 0.01 level and *** indicating significance at the 0.001 level.

These changes over time are compared to changes in estimated total UK emissions where appropriate. Estimated UK emissions data are taken from the National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory (NAEI) website[29] at http://naei.defra.gov.uk/index.php. (The most recent year for which NAEI emission estimates are available is 2014). For some pollutants, the NAEI website allows bar charts to be created, showing emissions over a selected period of years, split between various emission source categories.

Please note that this section only aims to provide a general indication of changes in pollutant concentration over time, based in most cases on averages from groups of long-running sites. Patterns in specific regions or individual sites may be different.

5.1 Sulphur Dioxide

5.1.1 SO_2: Spatial Distribution in the UK

Figure 5-1 shows how the modelled 99.73rd percentile[a] of hourly mean sulphur dioxide concentration varied across the UK during 2015. This statistic corresponds approximately to the 25th highest hourly mean (in the case of a full year's data); if greater than the hourly mean limit value it indicates that the limit value was exceeded on more than the 24 permitted occasions. There were no areas in which this statistic exceeded the limit value of 350 µg m^{-3}.

Figure 5-2 shows the modelled 99.18th percentile of 24-hour means (which corresponds to the 4th highest day in a full year). If greater than the 24-hourly mean limit value of 125 µg m^{-3}, this would indicate that there were more than the permitted three exceedances in the year. There were no areas of the UK where this was the case in 2015.

5.1.2 SO_2: Changes Over Time

Figure 5-3 shows how ambient concentrations have changed over the period 1992 to 2015, at the seven AURN monitoring stations that have monitored this pollutant for the longest time, and have remained in operation in 2015. All seven stations show a downward trend that is statistically significant at the 0.001 level - highly significant – as denoted by the three asterisks (***) on the plots.

[a] Where the Directive allows exceedances on a number of occasions (i.e. limit value not to be exceeded more than a specified number of times per year), percentiles are used to illustrate this. These are simply the x^{th} highest hourly mean divided by the number of hours in a year, or y^{th} highest daily mean divided by the days in a year, expressed as a percentage.

However, the decrease has not been linear. At most of these sites, the downward trend is steepest for the 1990s and early 2000s: there is a clear flattening-off in more recent years from around 2010.

The pattern observed in ambient SO_2 concentrations appears to reflect changes in national emissions. **Figure 5-4** is taken from the NAEI and shows the UK's estimated annual emissions of sulphur dioxide from 1992 (the first year of operation of the AURN) to 2014. The main source of this pollutant is fossil fuel combustion. SO_2 emissions in the UK have decreased substantially since 1992, due to reductions in the use of coal, gas and oil, and also to reductions in the sulphur content of fuel oils and DERV (diesel fuel used for road vehicles). The decrease in emissions over time shown here is the continuation of an on-going trend observed by the NAEI throughout the 1970s and 1980s, partly due to the decline of the UK's heavy industry.

However, around 2009, the graph flattens off, and shows a slight upturn in total SO_2 emissions in 2012. The NAEI pollutant information page for SO_2 (at http://naei.defra.gov.uk/overview/pollutants?pollutant_id=8) explains this as follows: "*As a result of the economic downturn the drive to cut energy costs has resulted in an increase in solid fuel use, particularly in 2012 some coal-sensitive pollutants have seen a significant rise in coal burning emissions*."

Figure 5-1 99.73rd percentile of 1-hour mean SO_2 concentration, 2015 ($\mu g\ m^{-3}$)

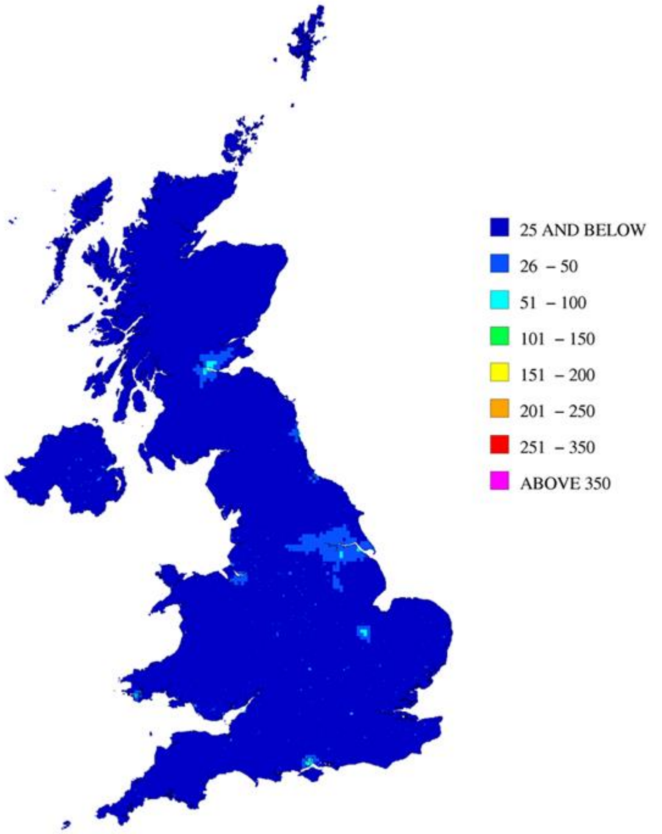


Figure 5-2 99.18th percentile of 24-hour mean SO_2 concentration, 2015 ($\mu g\ m^{-3}$)

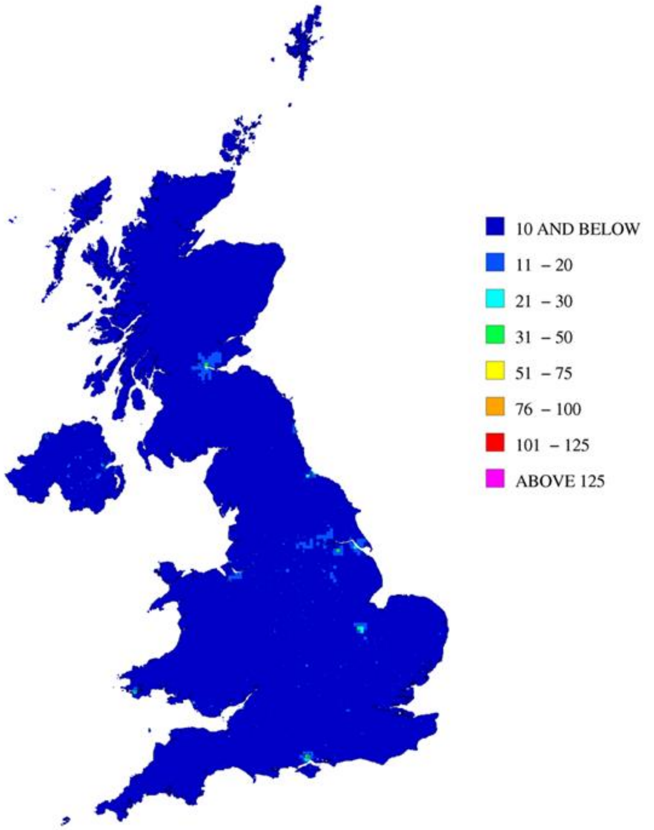


Figure 5-3 De-seasonalised trends in SO_2 concentration, 1992-2015 at 7 Long-running AURN Sites

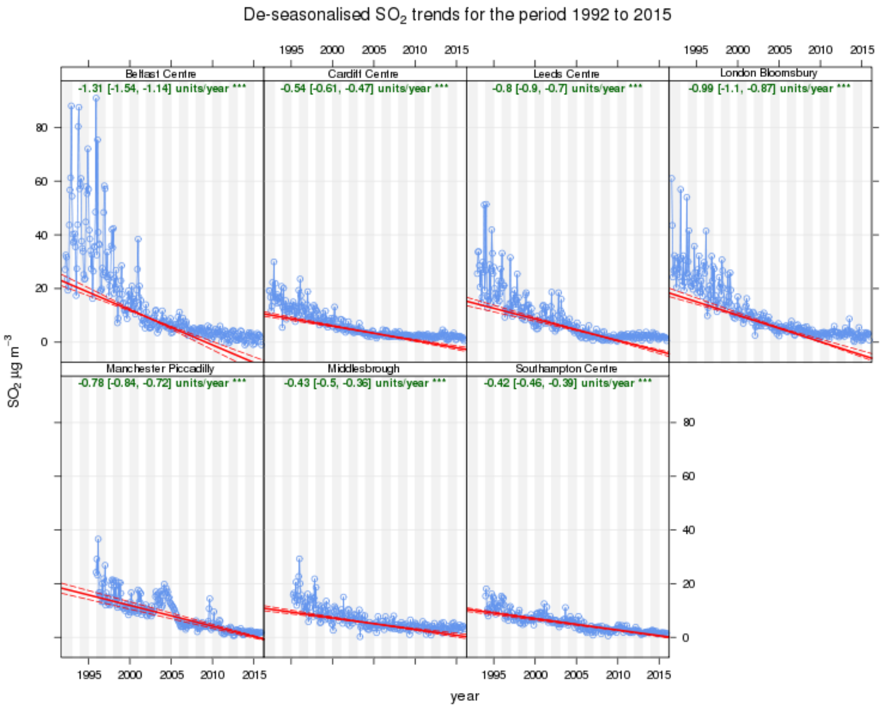
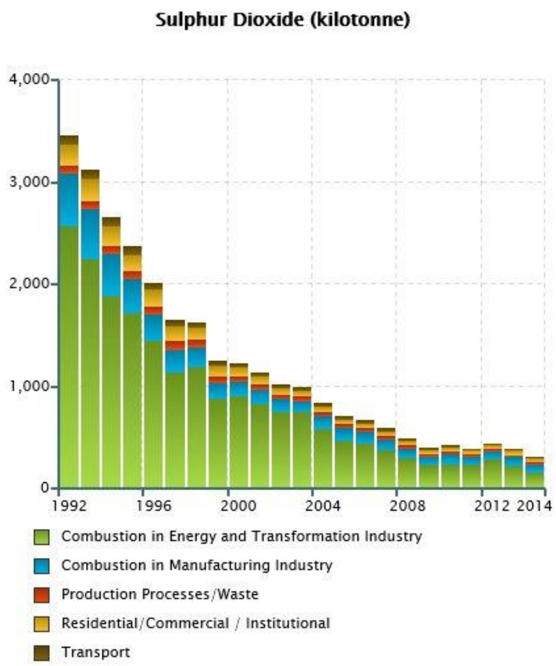


Figure 5-4 Estimated Annual UK Emissions of SO_2 (kt), 1992 – 2014 Source: NAEI



5.2 Nitrogen Dioxide

5.2.1 NO_2: Spatial Distribution in the UK

Figure 5-5 shows the modelled annual mean NO_2 concentrations for 2015, at *urban roadside* locations only. Although not every road link is clearly visible, it is possible to see that many are shaded yellow, orange and red - indicating that they had annual mean NO_2 concentrations above the limit value of 40 µg m^{-3}. These locations are widespread in London and also visible in urban areas elsewhere in the UK.

Figure 5-6 shows the modelled annual mean *background* NO_2 concentrations for 2015. Most background locations were within the limit value of 40 µg m^{-3}, but some small areas were not. These are shaded yellow, orange and red. These were largely confined to the major urban areas, and principal road links.

5.2.2 NO_2: Changes Over Time

Figure 5-7 and **Figure 5-8** show how ambient concentrations of nitrogen dioxide (as measured by the AURN) have decreased since 1992 (the Network's first year of operation). Time series of annual mean NO_2 concentrations are shown for the following sub-sets of long-running sites:

- Eight urban background sites operating since 1995 or earlier (**Figure 5-7**); Belfast Centre, Cardiff Centre, Leeds Centre, London Bloomsbury, Middlesbrough, Newcastle Centre, Sheffield Tinsley and Southampton Centre.
- Eight urban traffic sites operating since 1998 or earlier (**Figure 5-8**); Camden Kerbside, Exeter Roadside, Bath Roadside, Haringey Roadside, Glasgow Kerbside, Tower Hamlets Roadside, London Marylebone Road and Oxford Centre Roadside.

(As explained above, the use of sub-sets of long-running monitoring sites is intended to show changes over time, without introducing any spurious effects due to changes in the number and distribution of the sites.)

Figure 5-5 Urban major roads, annual mean roadside NO_2 concentration, 2015 ($\mu g\ m^{-3}$)

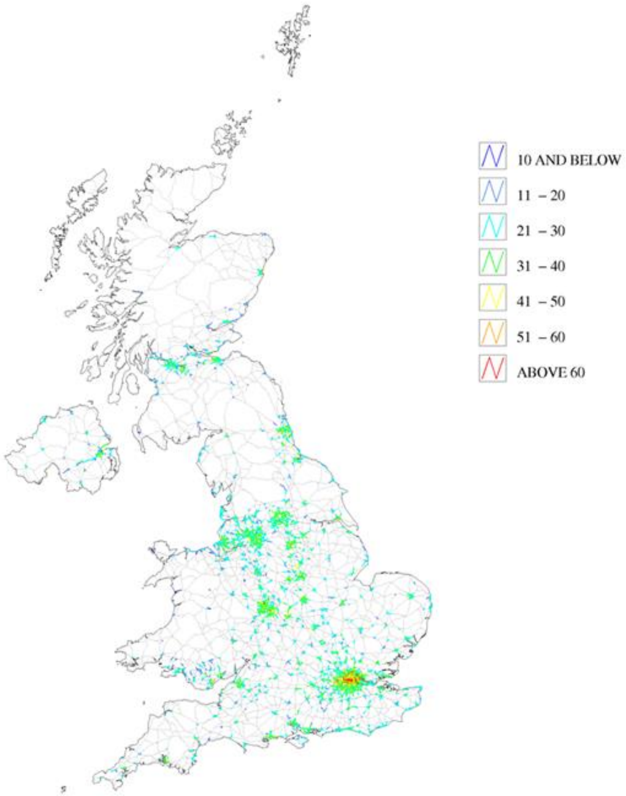


Figure 5-6 Annual mean background NO_2 concentration, 2015 ($\mu g\ m^{-3}$)

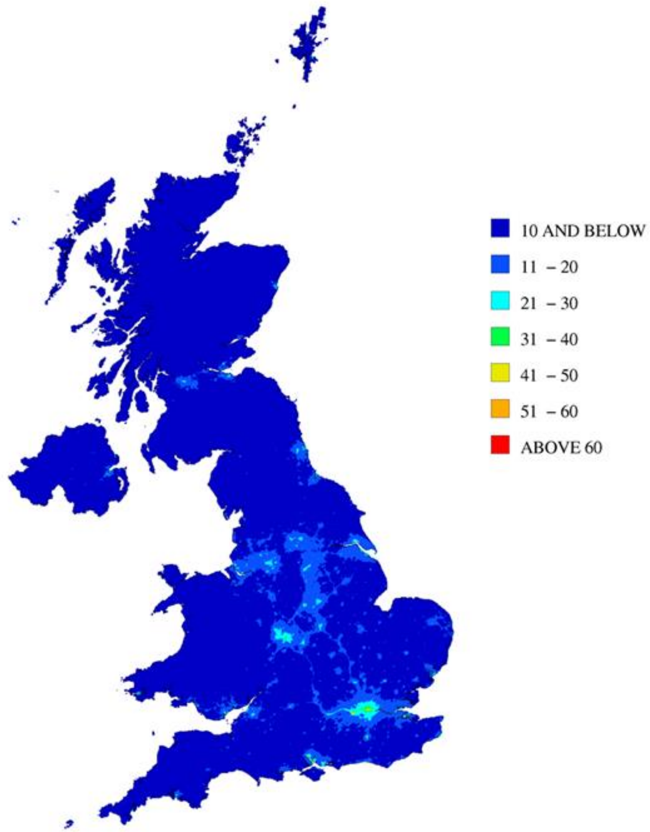
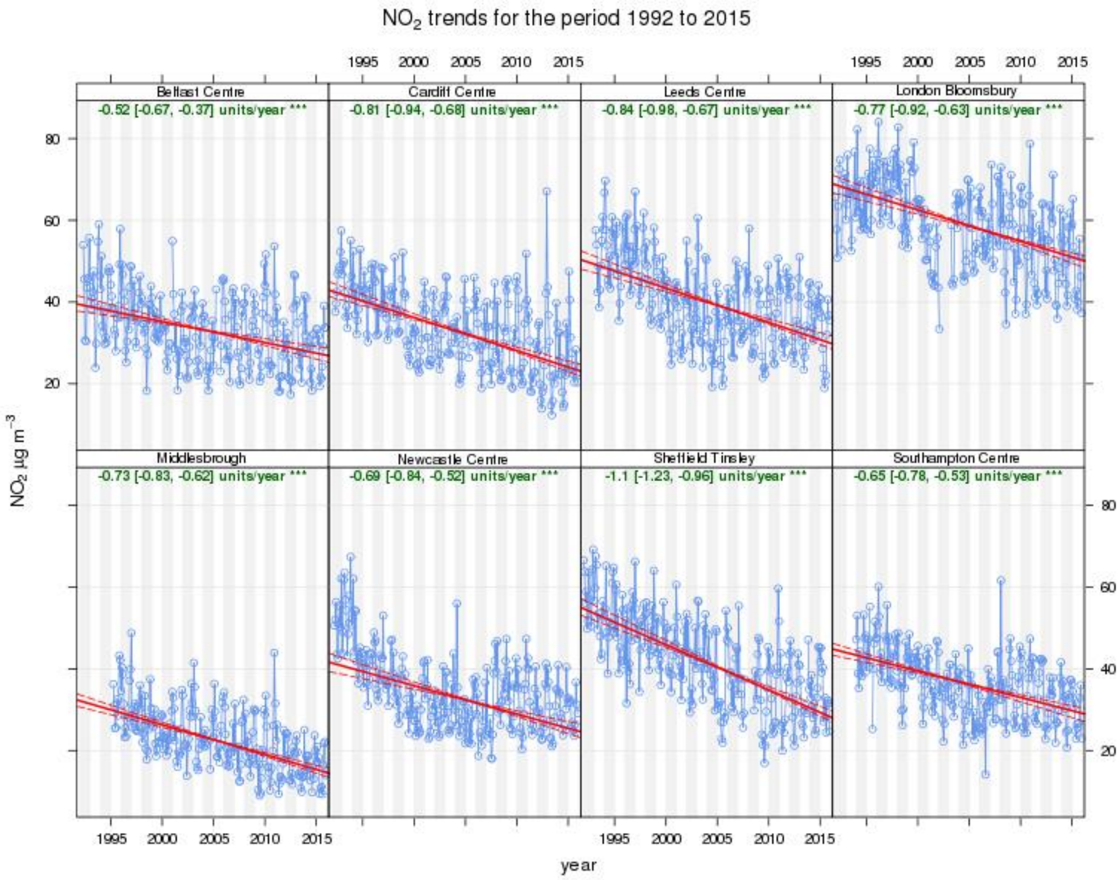


Figure 5-7 NO_2 concentration: Trend Analysis for 8 Long-Running Urban Background AURN sites 1992 – 2015 (not de-seasonalised)



All eight long-running urban non-roadside sites in **Figure 5-7** above show a decreasing trend in NO_2; while the magnitude of the year-on year decrease varies (ranging from -0.5 µg m^{-3} to -1.1 µg m^{-3} per year), the trend is statistically significant at the 0.001 level for all eight sites.

For the urban traffic sites in **Figure 5-8** below, (for which the dataset is slightly shorter), the pattern of trends is less consistent. Only four of the eight sites show a statistically significant downward trend, and the others show *no* significant trend.

Figure 5-8 NO_2 concentration: Trend Analysis for 8 Long-Running Urban Traffic AURN sites 1998 – 2015 (not de-seasonalised)

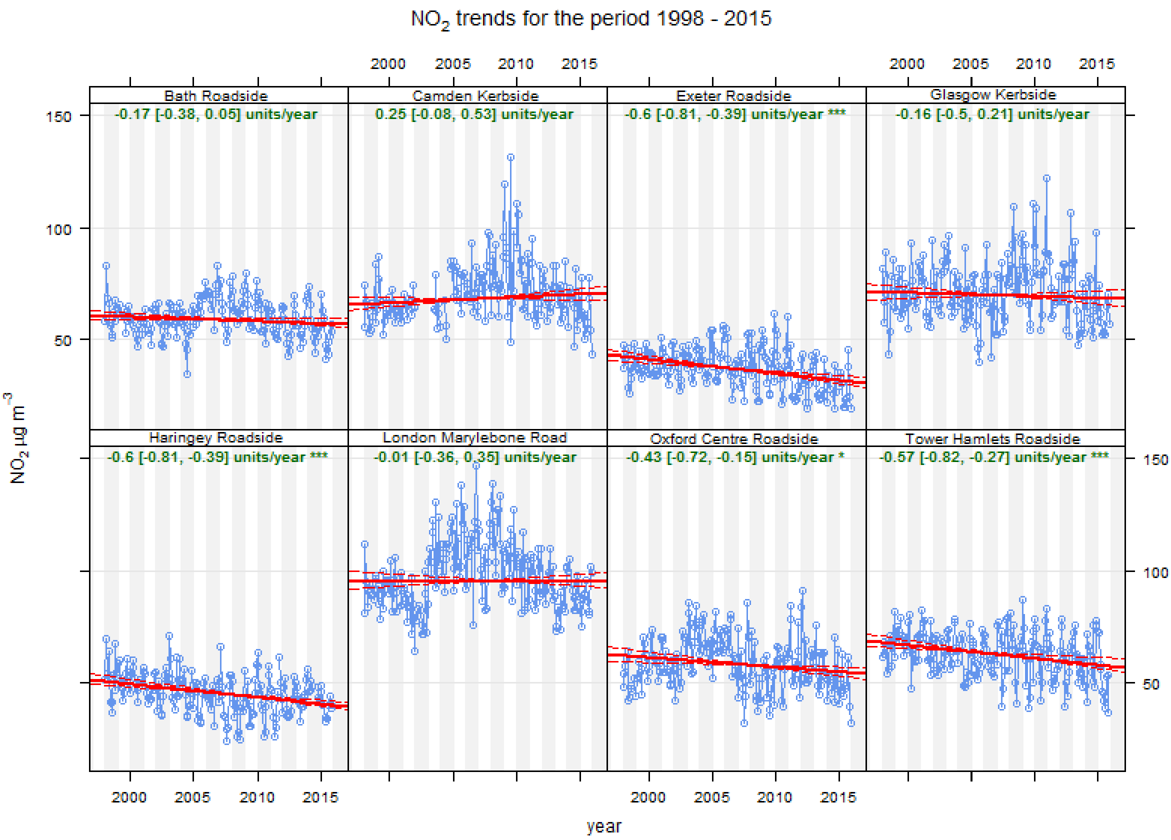
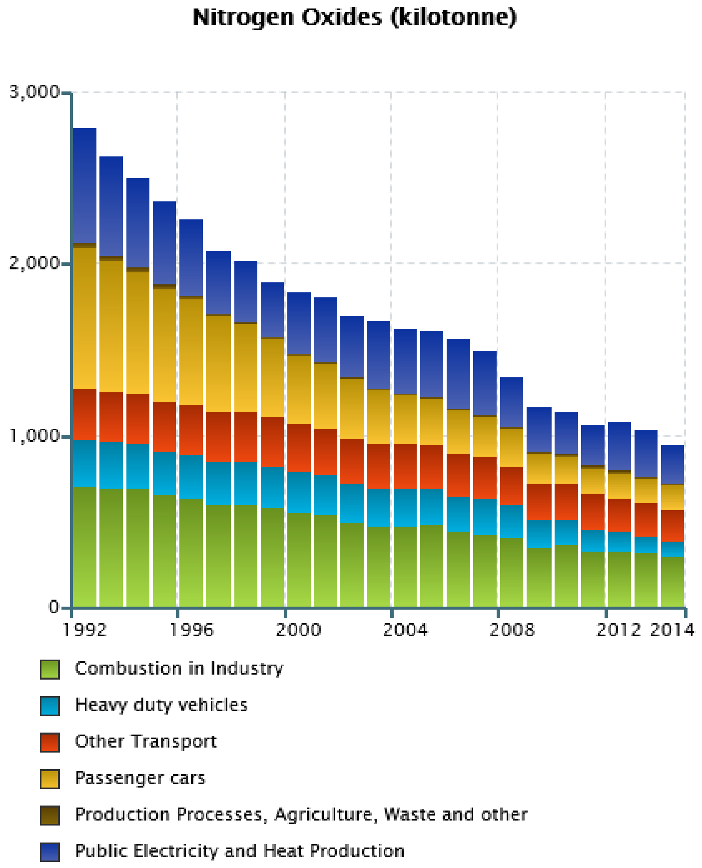


Figure 5-9 shows the estimated total UK annual emission of oxides of nitrogen, from the NAEI, in kilotonnes. Total NO_x emissions have decreased substantially over the period shown. While long-running urban background sites show a general decrease in NO_2 concentration as might be expected from the national emissions estimates, the same is not consistently true of urban traffic sites. It is likely that the trend in ambient NO_2 concentration at each individual site depends, at least in part, on the quantity and type of traffic on the adjacent road.

In December 2015 the Government published its national air quality plan for nitrogen dioxide which sets out how the UK will achieve compliance with EU limit values for NO_2. (See section 2.2.5 for more information on this.) The UK's draft Air Quality Plans are available at https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/library/no2-consultation-documents-2015 .

Figure 5-9 Estimated Annual UK Emissions of Nitrogen Oxides (kt), 1992 – 2014 Source: NAEI



5.3 PM_{10} Particulate Matter

5.3.1 PM_{10}: Spatial Distribution

Figure 5-10 shows modelled annual mean urban roadside PM_{10} concentrations in 2015. No roadside locations had an annual mean concentration greater than 40 µg m^{-3}. This is consistent with the compliance assessment reported in Section 4.

Figure 5-11 shows annual mean background PM_{10} concentrations in 2015. Background concentrations are higher in the southern and eastern parts of the country, because these regions receive a larger transboundary contribution of particulate pollution from mainland Europe. The elevated levels of PM_{10} associated with urban areas and major roads can also be seen. Natural source contribution has *not* been subtracted from these maps.

The concentration bands used in the above figures include the ranges >30.1-30.5 µg m^{-3}, and >30.6-40 µg m^{-3}. The significance of the division at 30.5 µg m^{-3} is that where the annual mean PM_{10} concentration exceeds this value, it is likely also that the 24-hour mean has exceeded the daily mean limit value of 50 µg m^{-3} on more than the permitted 35 occasions. (Note: this value is calculated each year on the basis of the measured data. It may therefore change from year to year.)

Road links with annual mean concentrations greater than 30.5 µg m^{-3} would be shaded red in **Figure 5-10**. No red shaded road links are visible on the map; although as reported in Section 4, Swansea Urban Area exceeded the 24-hour limit value (before subtraction of natural source contribution) this was a *measured* exceedance at a *non-traffic-related* monitoring site, rather than a modelled roadside exceedance.

Figure 5-10 Urban major roads, annual mean roadside PM_{10} concentration, 2015 (µg m^{-3})

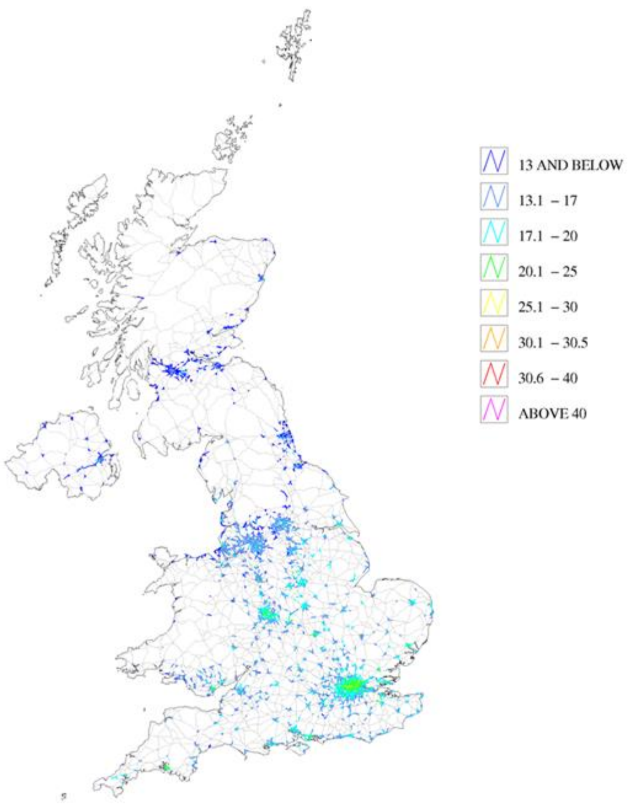
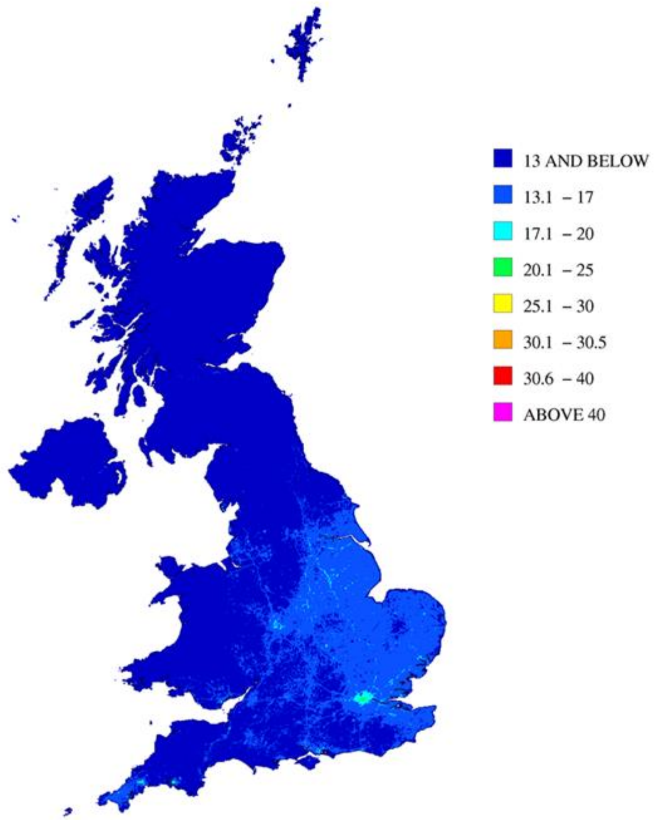


Figure 5-11 Annual mean background PM_{10} concentration, 2015 (µg m^{-3})



5.3.2 PM_{10} Changes Over Time

Figure 5-12 shows de-seasonalised trends in ambient PM_{10} concentration, based on 11 urban background AURN sites, all of which have been operating since at least 1996. The sites are; Belfast Centre, Cardiff Centre, Leamington Spa, Leeds Centre, London Bloomsbury, London North Kensington, Middlesbrough, Newcastle Centre, Nottingham Centre, Southampton Centre and Thurrock. All 11 sites show a downward trend for PM_{10} over their period of operation, highly statistically significant (at the 0.001 confidence level).

Figure 5-13 shows de-seasonalised trends in ambient PM_{10} concentration, based on 11 urban traffic AURN sites. There are fewer very long-running urban traffic sites than urban background sites: only three began operation before 2008. The sites shown here are the 11 that have been operating since the start of 2009 or earlier. The sites are; Armagh Roadside, Camden Kerbside, Carlisle Roadside, Chepstow A48, Leeds Headingley Kerbside, London Marylebone Road, Sandy Roadside, Stanford-le-Hope Roadside, Stockton-on-Tees Eaglescliffe, Swansea Roadside and York Fishergate.

Although most of these sites show a statistically significant downward trend in PM_{10} concentration over this period, not all do: Stockton-on-Tees Eaglescliffe shows no significant trend, and Swansea Roadside shows a statistically significant increase. As in the case of NO_2, it is possible that trends at urban traffic sites are influenced by changes in the volume and type of traffic on the adjacent road.

Figure 5-14 shows how the UK's total emissions of PM_{10} have decreased over the years in which the AURN has been in operation. Total PM_{10} emissions have steadily decreased over all this period, although in more recent years the rate of decrease has slowed, flattening off after around 2009. However, estimated emissions from road traffic alone have continued to decrease (**Figure 5-15**).

Figure 5-12 Trends in ambient PM_{10}, 11 Long-Running Urban Background Sites

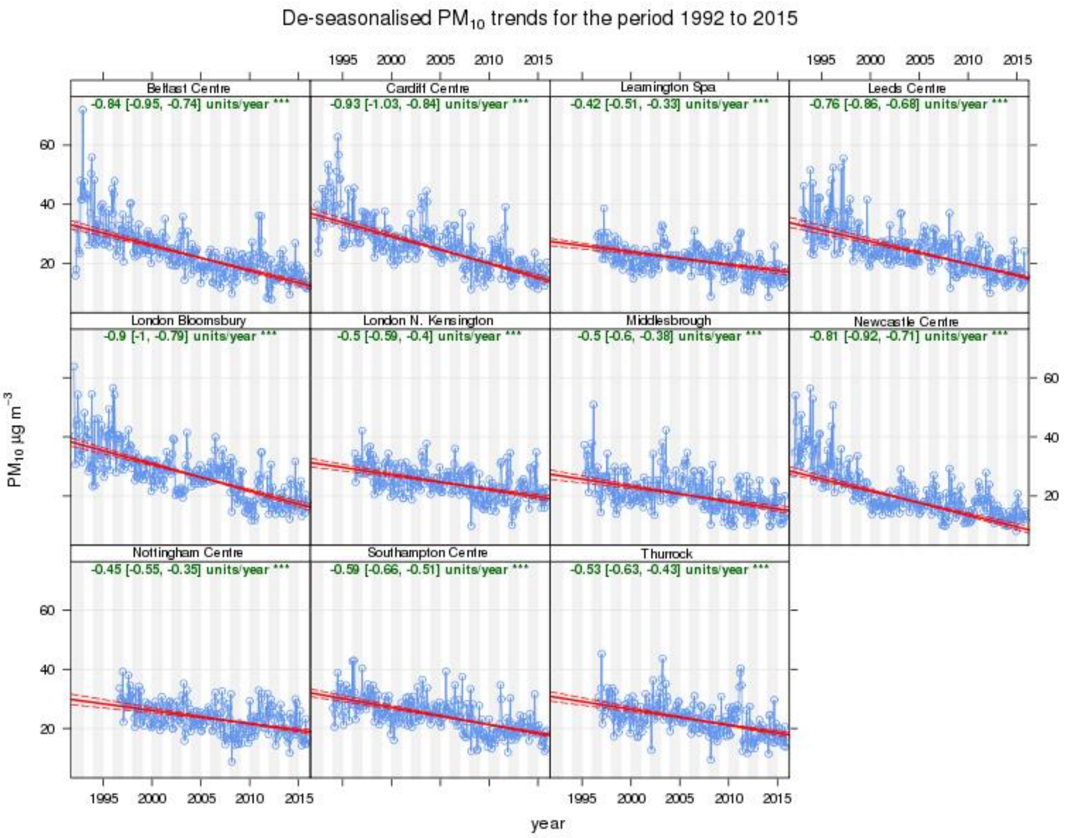


Figure 5-13 Trends in ambient PM_{10}, 11 Urban Traffic Sites 2009 - 2015

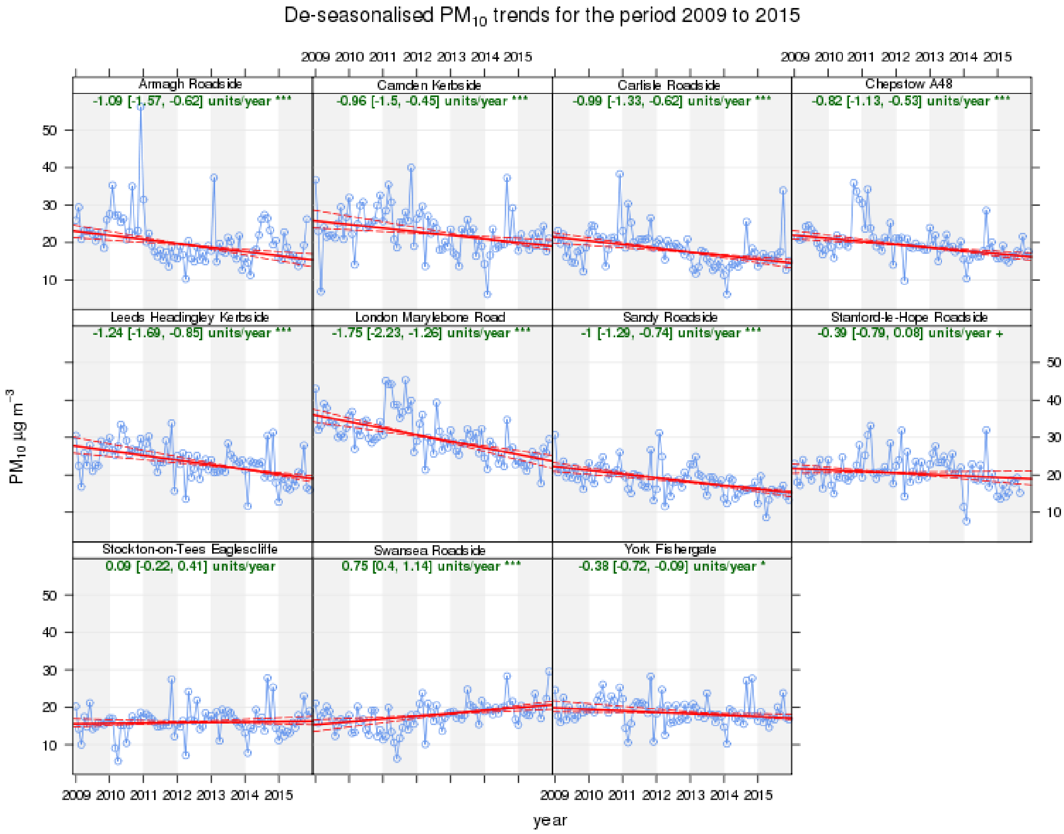


Figure 5-14 Estimated Annual UK Emissions of PM_{10} (kt), 1992 – 2014 Source: NAEI

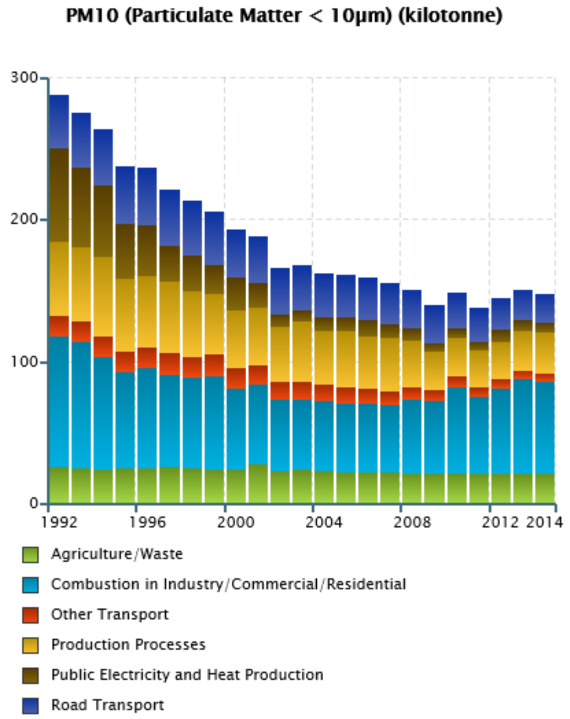
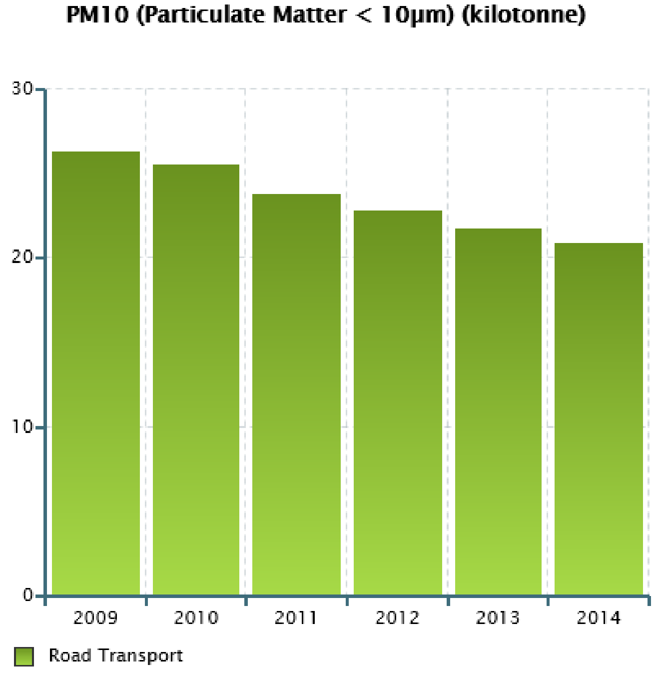


Figure 5-15 Estimated Annual UK Emissions of PM_{10} from Road Transport (kt), 2009 – 2014 Source: NAEI



(Please note, the colours used in these bar charts are selected automatically and the colour used for road transport here is different from that in the previous graph).

5.4 $PM_{2.5}$ Particulate Matter

5.4.1 $PM_{2.5}$: Spatial Distribution

Figure 5-16 shows the modelled annual mean urban roadside $PM_{2.5}$ concentrations in 2015. No roadside locations had annual means greater than the target value of 25 µg m^{-3}; even in London, the highest were in the range 15 - 20 µg m^{-3}.

Figure 5-17 shows modelled annual mean background $PM_{2.5}$ concentrations in 2015. The pattern shows some similarities to that observed for PM_{10}, in that levels are higher in the southern and eastern areas, due to the contribution of particulate matter from mainland Europe. Whilst the 2014 map showed a substantial part of eastern England as having modelled background annual mean $PM_{2.5}$ concentrations greater than 10 µg m^{-3}, in 2015 this was not the case. Only major urban areas and locations near major routes have modelled background $PM_{2.5}$ concentrations above this level: this reflects primary emissions from these sources.

Figure 5-16 Urban major roads, annual mean roadside $PM_{2.5}$ concentration, 2015 (µg m^{-3})

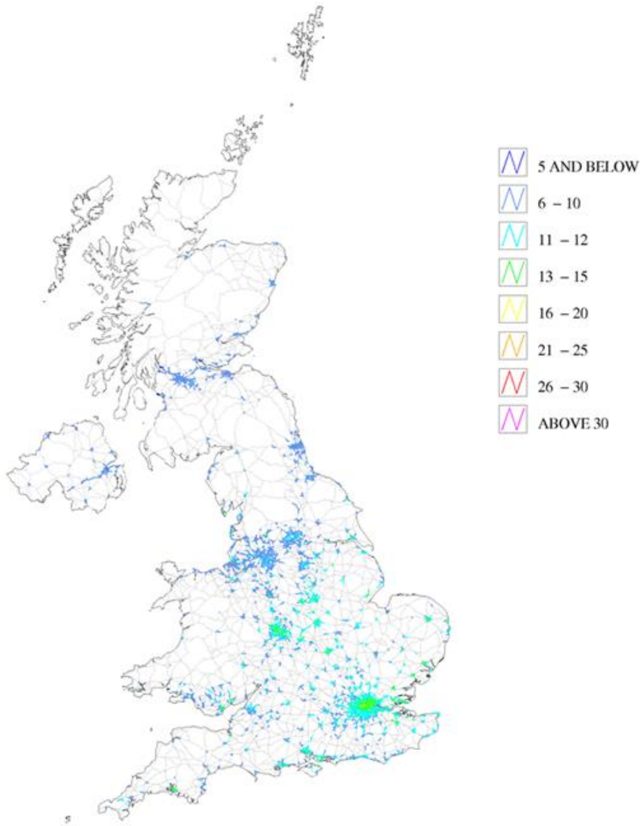
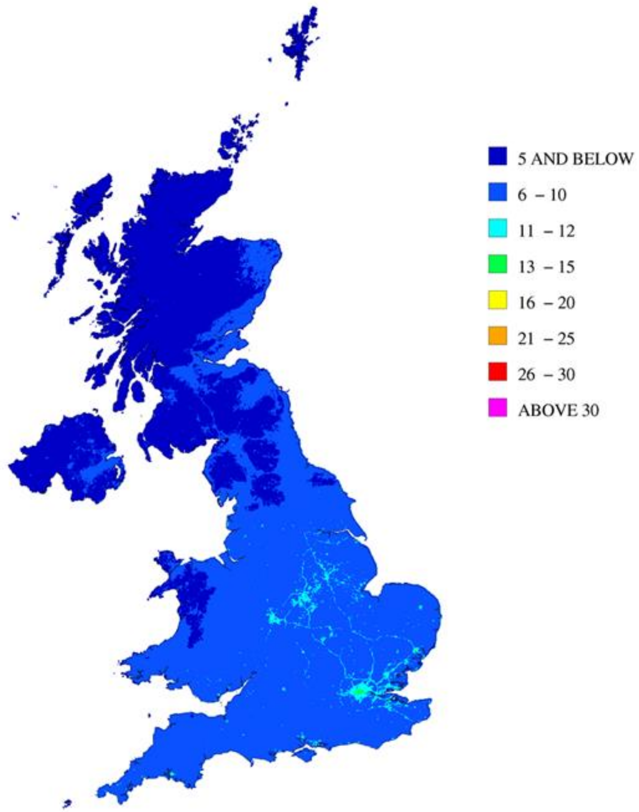


Figure 5-17 Annual mean background $PM_{2.5}$ concentration, 2015 (µg m^{-3})



5.4.2 $PM_{2.5}$: Changes Over Time

Until 2008, routine monitoring of $PM_{2.5}$ within the AURN was confined to a small number of sites in London. Therefore, in this report, trend analysis for $PM_{2.5}$ concentrates on years 2009 onwards, during which $PM_{2.5}$ monitoring has been widespread.

Figure 5-18 shows trends in $PM_{2.5}$ concentration at 12 long-running urban background AURN sites, 2009-2015. While the majority (eight out of the 12) show a statistically significant downward trend, the other four do not show any significant trend.

Figure 5-18 Trends in ambient $PM_{2.5}$ concentration, 12 Long-Running Urban Background AURN Sites 2009-2015

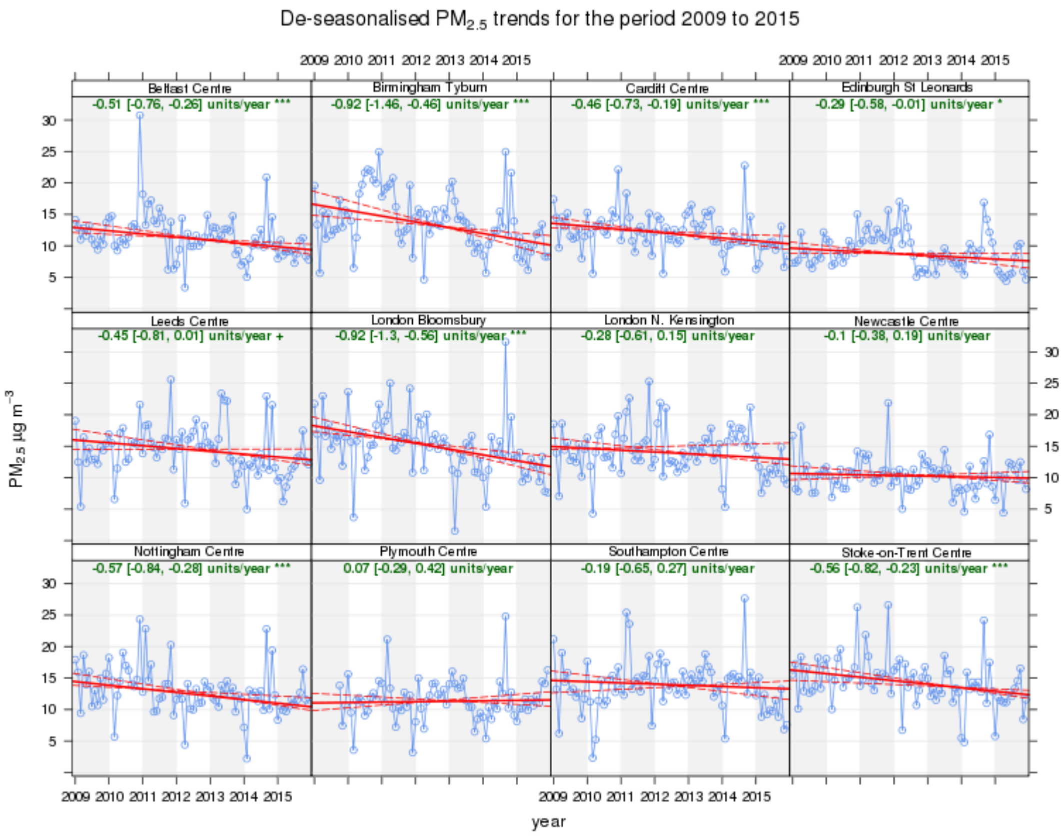
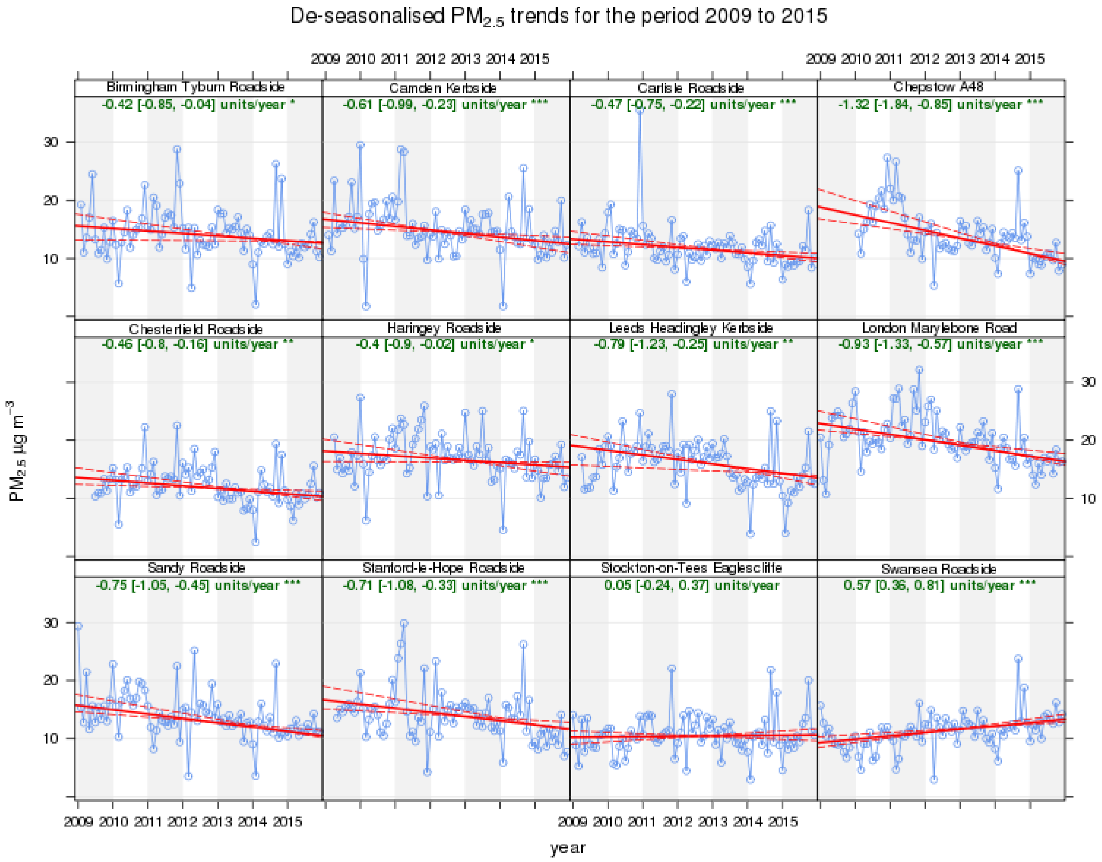


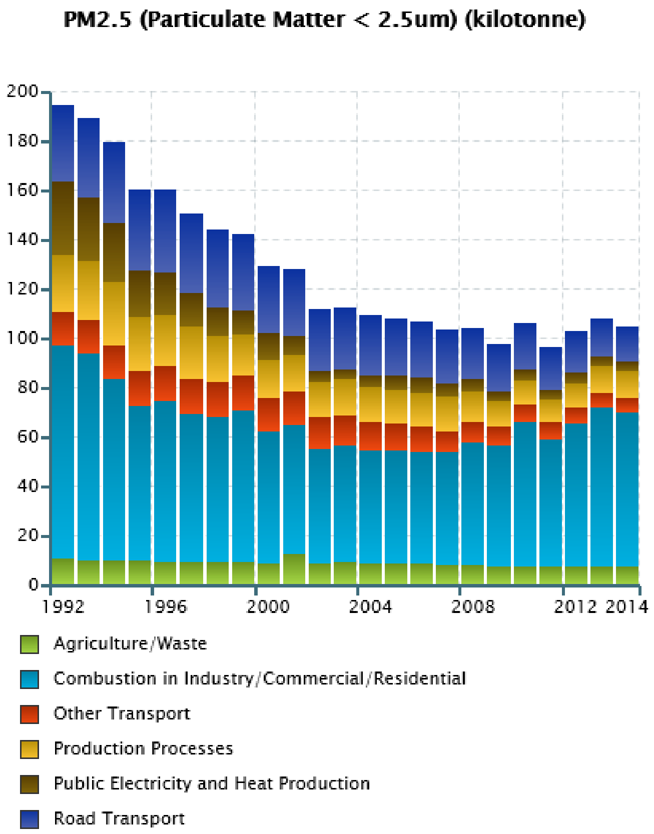
Figure 5-19 shows trends over the same period for $PM_{2.5}$ at 12 urban traffic AURN sites. While the majority (nine out of the 12 sites) show a significant decreasing trend over the period, three do not. Swansea Roadside is notable as it has a highly significant *increasing* trend in $PM_{2.5}$ concentration.

Figure 5-19 Trends in ambient $PM_{2.5}$ concentration, 12 Long-Running Urban Traffic AURN Sites 2009-2015



Finally, **Figure 5-20** shows the estimated annual emission of $PM_{2.5}$, from 1992 to 2014. The graph shows that emissions have decreased in a similar manner to emissions of PM_{10}, with a steady decrease from the early 1990s, a clear levelling off, and no further consistent decrease after around 2009.

Figure 5-20 Estimated Annual UK Emissions of $PM_{2.5}$ (kt), 1992 – 2014. Source: NAEI



5.5 Benzene

5.5.1 Benzene: Spatial Distribution

Benzene is found in petrol and in vehicle emissions, therefore elevated levels may be expected at roadside locations.

Figure 5-21 shows modelled annual mean benzene concentrations at roadside locations in 2015. **Figure 5-22** shows the modelled annual mean background concentrations of benzene in 2015. Modelled background concentrations were below 0.5 µg m^{-3} over most of the UK, with marginally higher concentrations for most urban areas. A few small areas, for example in the Midlands and Humberside, had concentrations in excess of 1 µg m^{-3}. However, background concentrations everywhere are well below the limit value of 5 µg m^{-3} for benzene.

Figure 5-21 Urban major roads, annual mean roadside benzene concentration, 2015 (µg m^{-3})

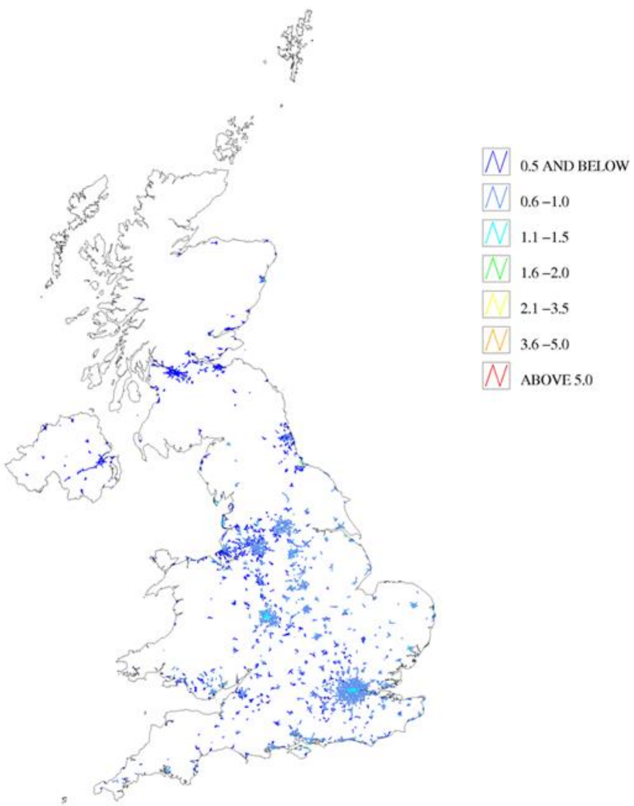
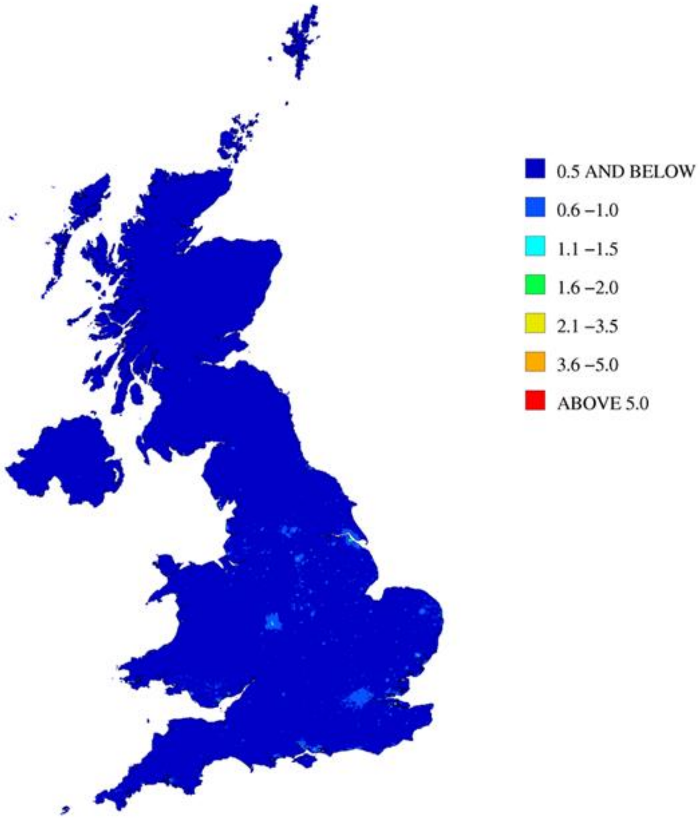


Figure 5-22 Annual mean background benzene concentration, 2015 (µg m^{-3})



5.5.2 Benzene: Changes Over Time

Figure 5-23 shows a smoothed trend plot based on the combined dataset from 15 long-running sites in the Non-Automatic Hydrocarbon Network, which have operated since 2002. These are: Barnsley Gawber, Belfast Centre, Grangemouth, Haringey Roadside, Leamington Spa, Leeds Centre, Liverpool Speke, London Bloomsbury, Manchester Piccadilly, Middlesbrough, Newcastle Centre, Nottingham Centre, Oxford Centre Roadside, Southampton Centre and Stoke on Trent Centre.

The smoothed trend plot for these 15 sites shows a slight increase from 2002 to 2004, followed by a steep decrease between 2004 and 2008. From then on, the graph is much flatter, showing little further fall in ambient concentrations of benzene until 2014. In the past two years there is some indication of a further decrease.

Figure 5-23 Smoothed Trend Plot of Ambient Benzene Concentration, 15 Long-Running Non-Automatic Sites

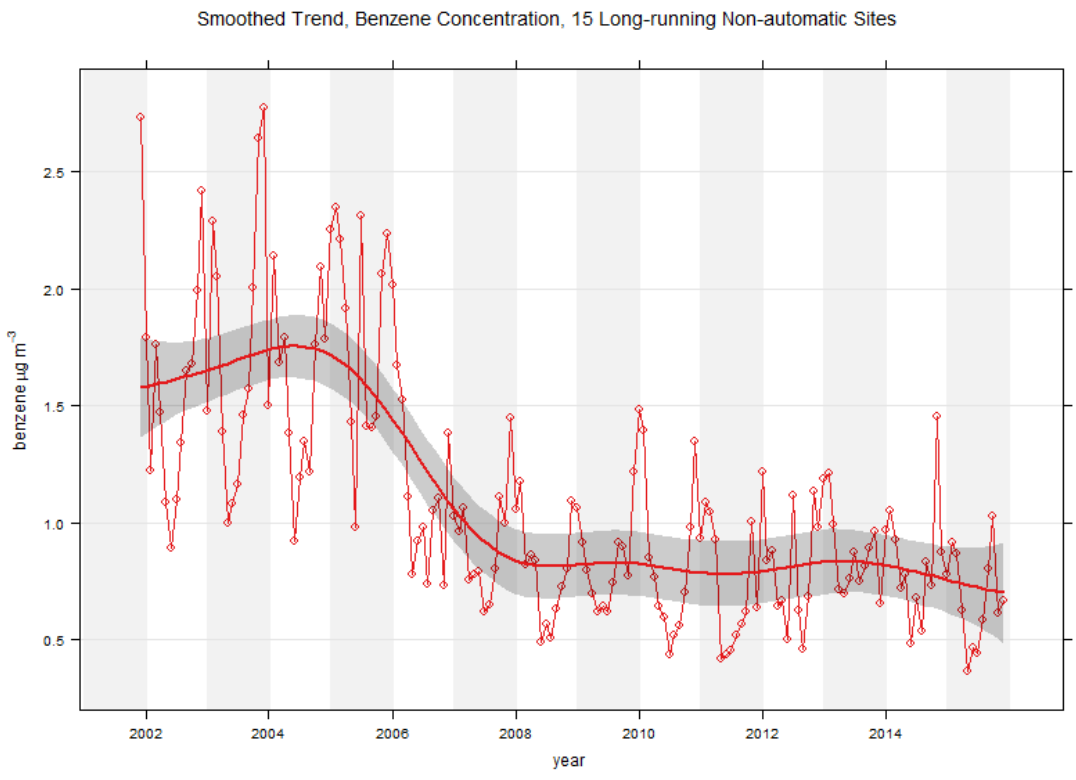
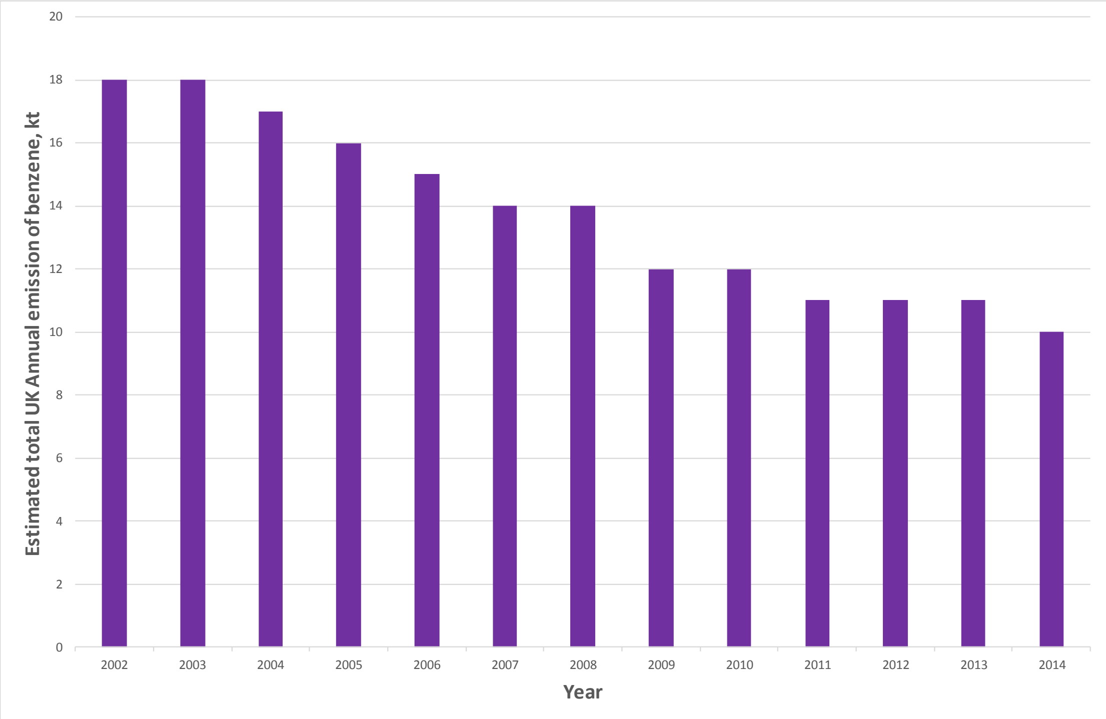


Figure 5-24 shows the estimated total annual UK emission of benzene (in kilotonnes). The data have been taken from the NAEI (which does not provide a bar chart for benzene). The estimated annual emissions also appear to have decreased over period shown – although more steadily than the average measured ambient concentration.

Figure 5-24 Estimated Annual UK Emissions of Benzene (kt), 2002 – 2014 (data from NAEI)



5.6 1,3-Butadiene

5.6.1 1,3-Butadiene: Compliance with AQS Objective

The ambient concentration of 1,3-butadiene is not covered by any EU Directives so modelled maps are not routinely produced for this pollutant. However, it is the subject of a UK Air Quality Strategy objective of 2.25 µg m^{-3}, as a maximum running annual mean, to have been achieved by 31st December 2003. This objective was met throughout the UK by the due date.

The Automatic Hydrocarbon Network monitors ambient concentrations of 1,3-butadiene at its four sites. There are two rural sites (Auchencorth Moss and

Harwell), one urban background site (London Eltham) and one urban traffic site (London Marylebone Road). At the two rural sites, concentrations are low: annual means from 2012 onwards have been less than 0.1 µg m^{-3}, and individual measurements are frequently close to, or less than, the detection limit of 0.02 µg m^{-3}. The running annual means at all four sites were within the Air Quality Strategy objective in 2015.

5.6.2 1,3-Butadiene: Changes Over Time

Figure 5-25 shows trends in ambient 1,3-butadiene concentration at the two London sites only, between 2000 and 2015. Concentrations are higher at London Marylebone Road, reflecting its roadside location. Both the London sites show a highly significant downward trend in this pollutant. (The two rural sites – not plotted – do not show any significant trend).

Figure 5-25 Trends in Urban 1,3-butadiene concentration, 2000-2015

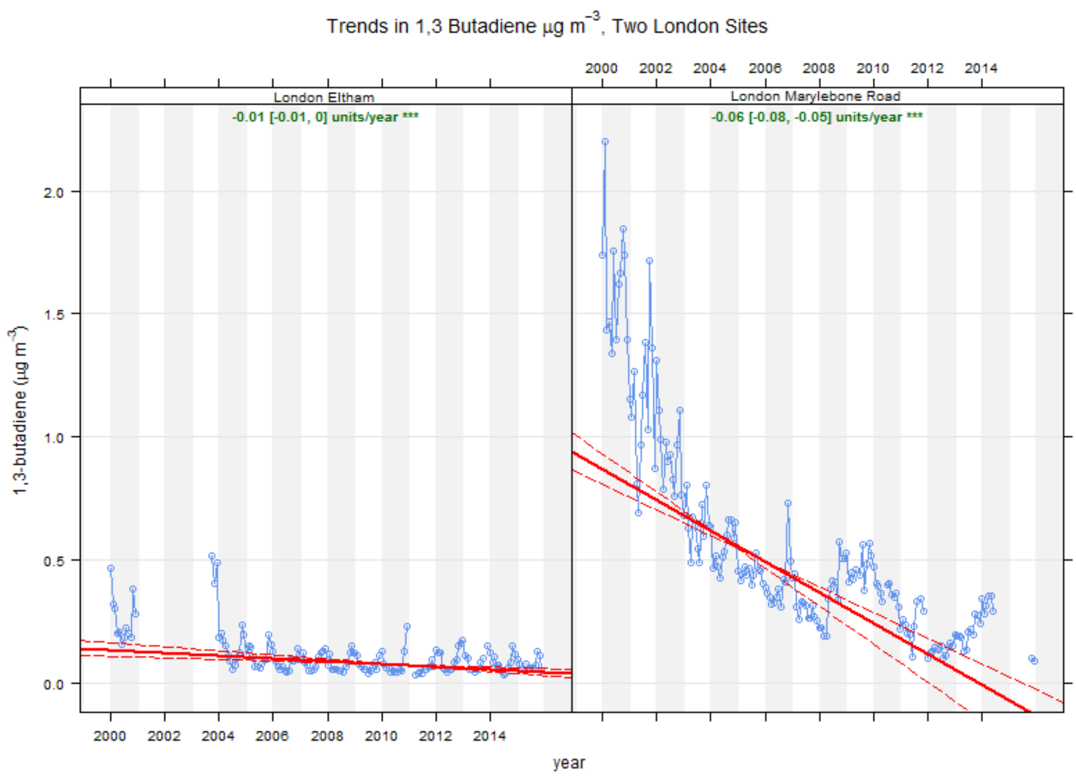
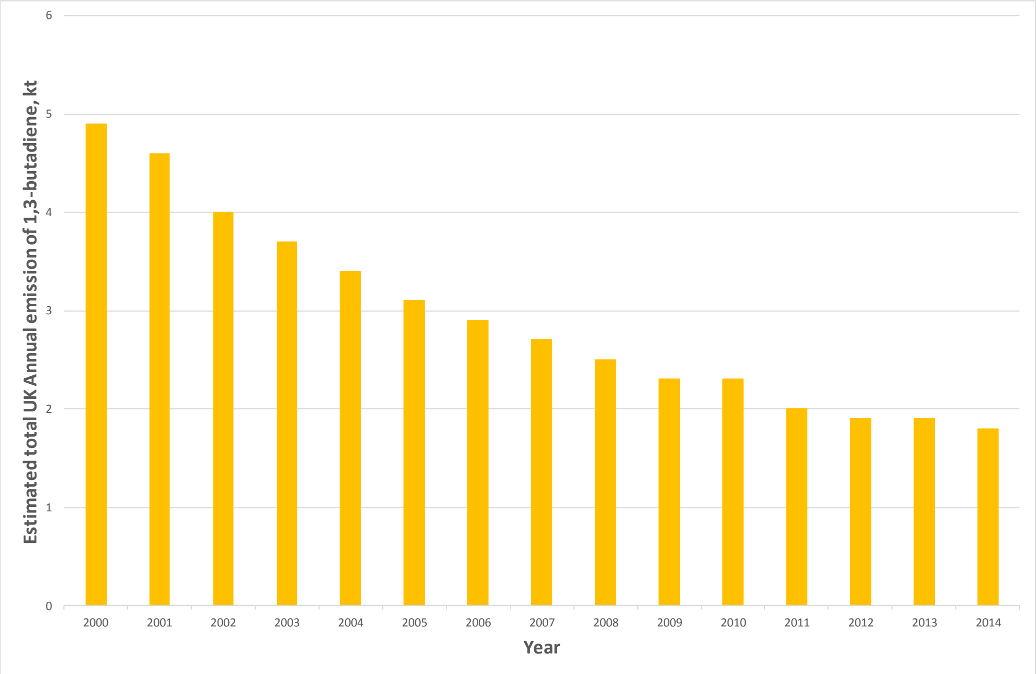


Figure 5-26 shows the total estimated UK annual emission of this compound, in kilotonnes. This appears to have decreased steadily since 2000. The main source of 1,3-butadiene is vehicle emissions, and the use of catalytic

converters since the early 1990s has substantially reduced emissions from this source.

Figure 5-26 Estimated Annual UK Emissions of 1,3-Butadiene (kt), 2000 – 2014 (data from NAEI)



5.7 Carbon Monoxide

5.7.1 CO: Spatial Distribution

Ambient concentrations of CO throughout the UK have been well within the limit value for many years, Therefore, since 2010, maps have no longer been routinely produced for CO.

5.7.2 CO: Changes over time

Because concentrations of CO are well within the limit value, relatively few monitoring sites are required. Seven urban AURN sites currently monitor this pollutant, of which six (Belfast Centre, Cardiff Centre, Edinburgh St Leonards, Leeds Centre, London Marylebone Road and London North Kensington) have operated for at least 10 years.

Figure 5-27 shows de-seasonalised trends at these six long-running AURN sites, from 1992 to 2015. All six show a highly significant downward trend over the period. **Figure 5-28** shows the estimated annual emissions of CO over the same period: a steady, almost linear year-on-year decrease to 2011 is followed by three years in which estimated emissions increased very slightly. The decreasing ambient concentrations reflect declining emissions over the last two decades. UK emissions of this pollutant have decreased substantially over recent decades. The NAEI attributes this decrease to *"significant reductions in emissions from road transport, iron and steel production and the domestic sector"*.[55]

Figure 5-27 Trends in CO concentration, 1992-2015, AURN Sites

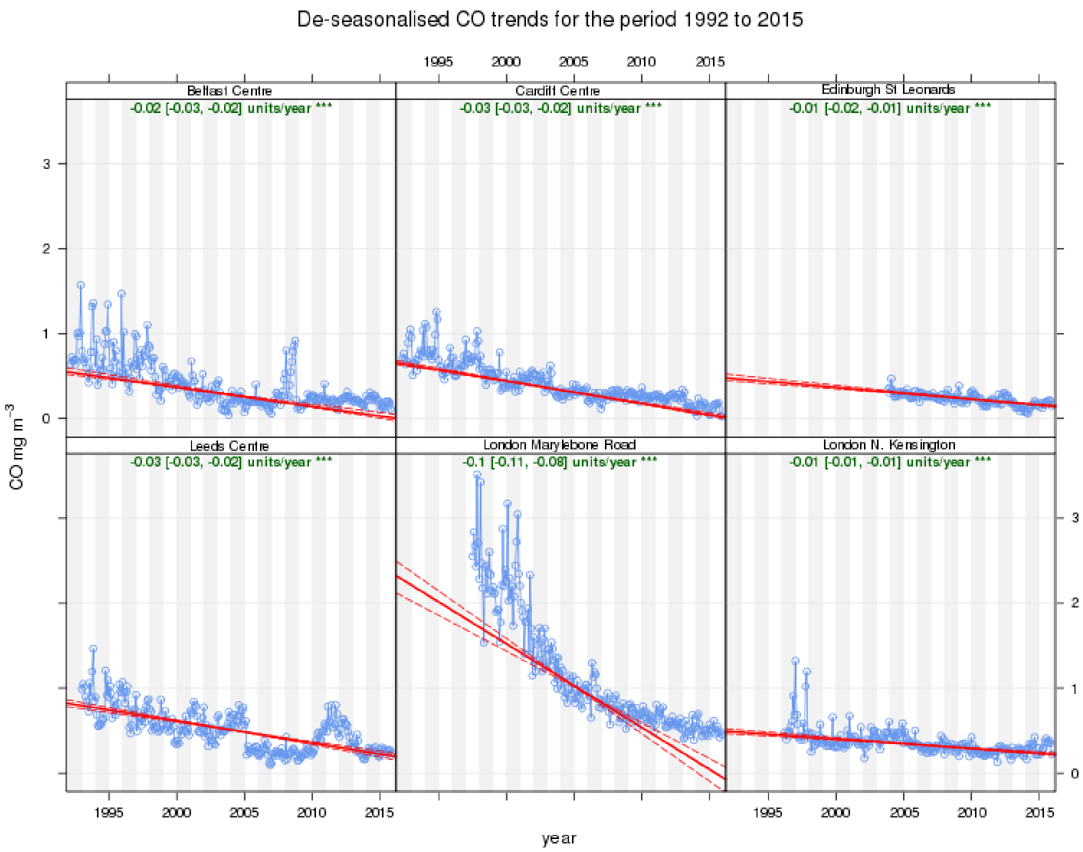
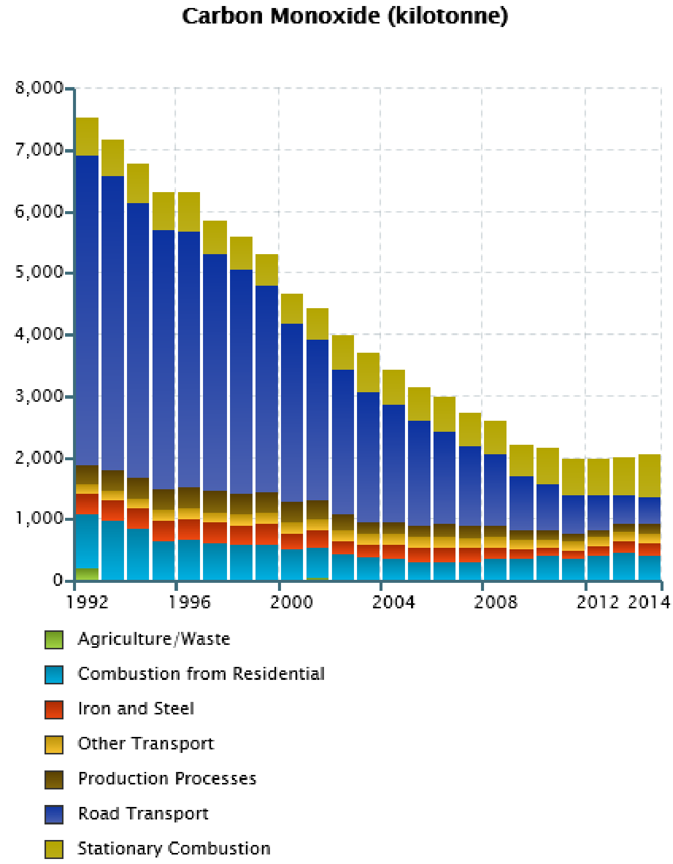


Figure 5-28 Estimated Annual UK Emissions of CO (kt), 1992 – 2014
Source: NAEI



5.8 Ozone

5.8.1 O_3: Spatial Distribution

Figure 5-29 shows the average number of days per year with ozone concentration > 120 µg m^{-3}, over the **three** years 2013-2015. This was less than five days everywhere apart from a small area of East Anglia. **Figure 5-30** shows the same statistic, for 2015 only (i.e. not averaged over three years). Most of the UK had less than five days above 120 µg m^{-3} in 2015, apart from part of East Anglia.

Figure 5-31 shows the AOT40 statistic, averaged over the past **five** complete years, 2011-2015. The AOT40 statistic (expressed in µg m^{-3}.hours) is the sum of the difference between hourly concentrations greater than 80 µg m^{-3} (= 40 ppb) and 80 µg m^{-3} over a given period using only the one-hour values measured between 0800 and 2000 Central European Time each day. Highest AOT40 values are seen in the east of England (a typical pattern in many years) and the South West (the latter reflects the fact that the highest concentrations in 2013 were mainly in the South West).

Figure 5-32 shows the same statistic, for 2015 only. The pattern for 2015 shows the highest concentrations in two areas: East Anglia and the South West.

Figure 5-29 Average no. of days with ozone concentration > 120 µg m^{-3} 2013-2015

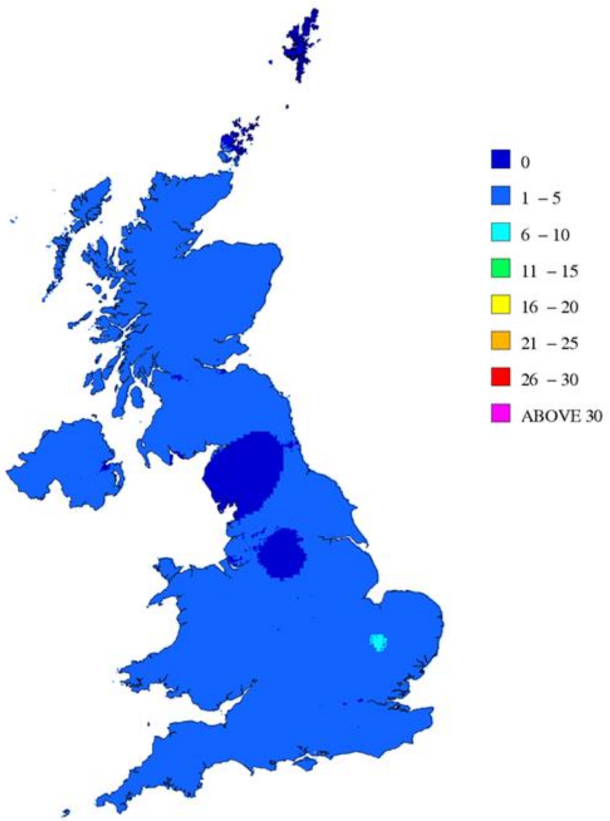


Figure 5-30 Days with ozone concentration > 120 µg m^{-3} in 2015

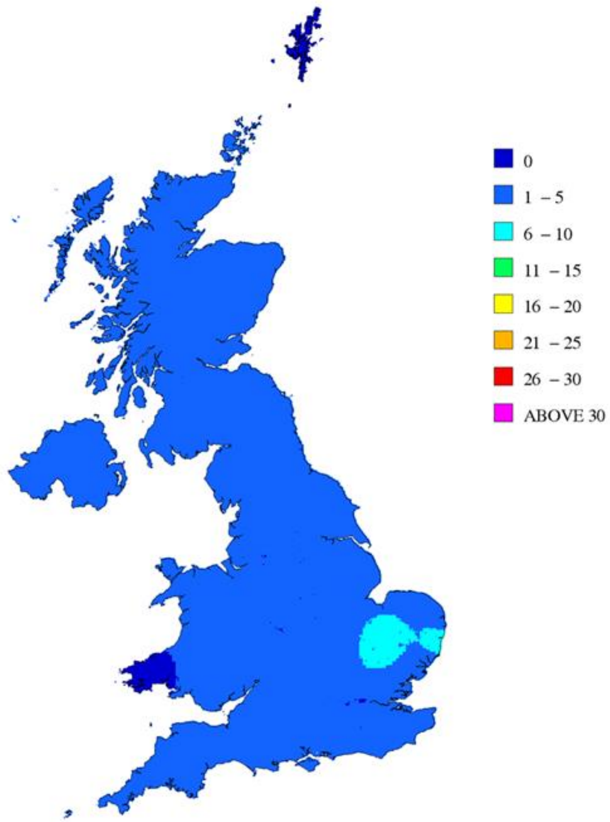


Figure 5-31 Average AOT40, 2011-2015 (µg m^{-3}.hours)

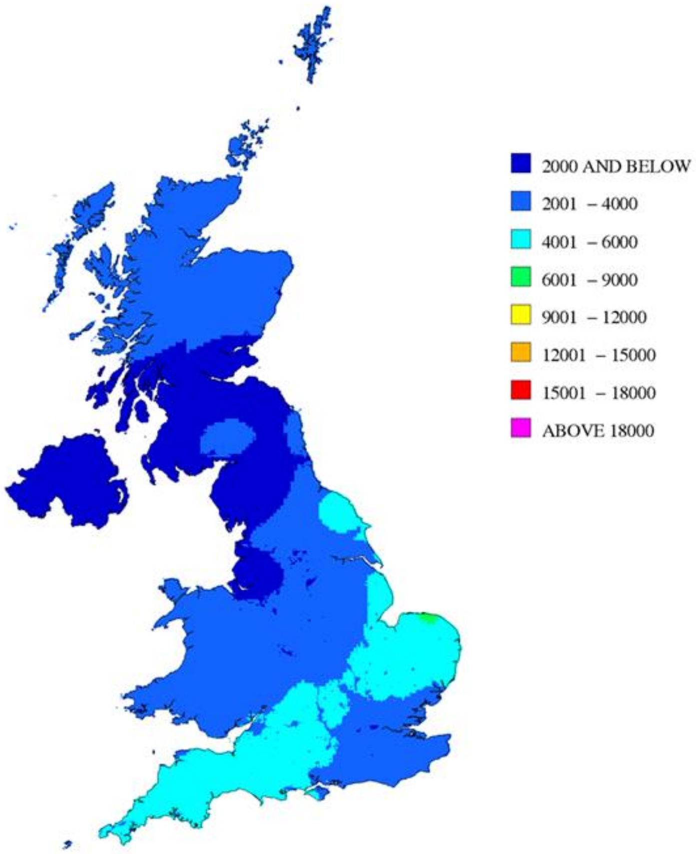
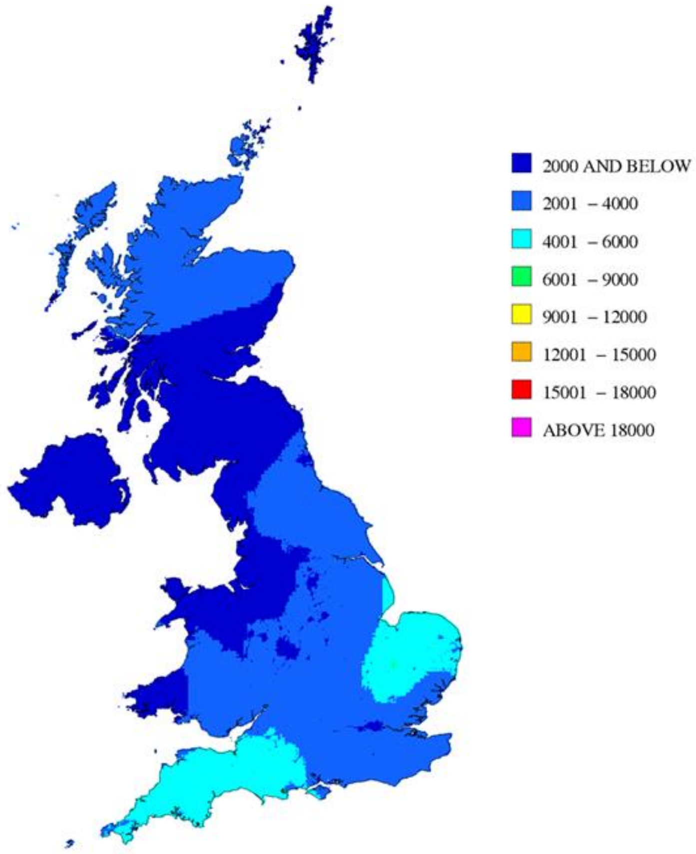


Figure 5-32 Average AOT40, 2015 (µg m^{-3}.hours)

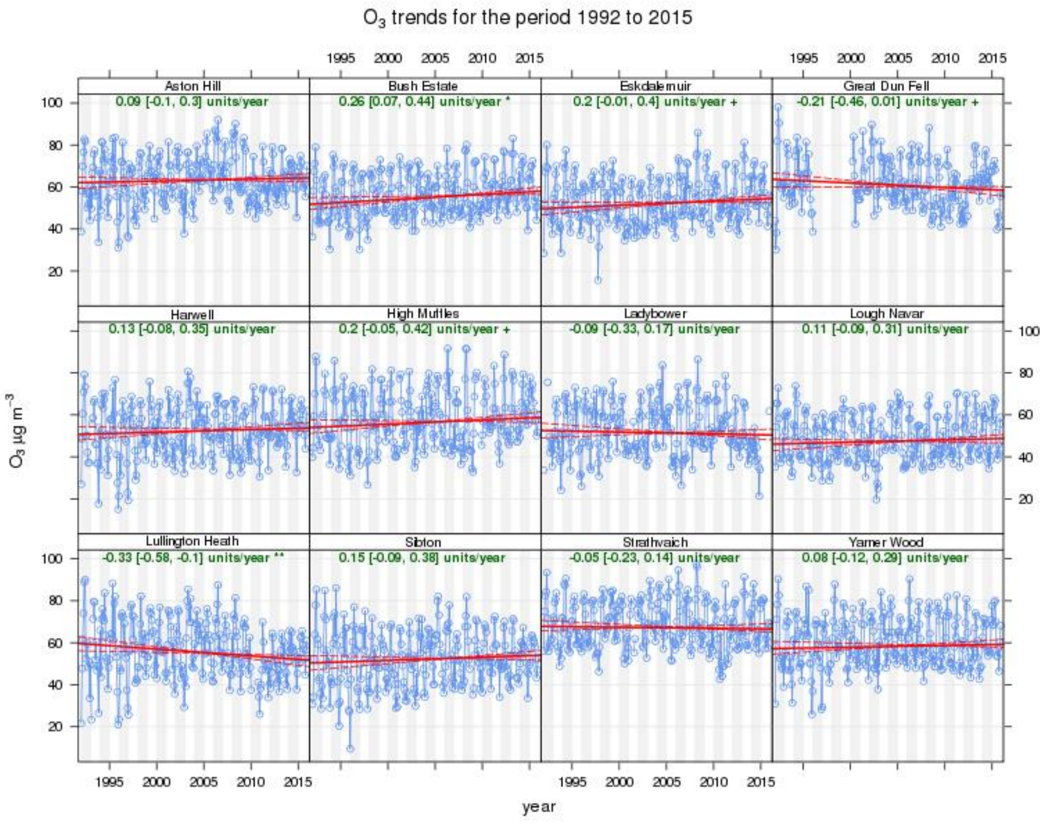


5.8.2 O_3: Changes Over Time

Figure 5-33 shows a trend plot of ozone concentrations at 12 long-running rural AURN sites (Aston Hill, Bush Estate, Eskdalemuir, Great Dun Fell, Harwell, High Muffles, Ladybower, Lough Navar, Lullington Heath, Sibton, Strathvaich and Yarner Wood). Rural sites have been chosen because concentrations of ozone are typically highest in rural areas.

Three sites show a positive trend over this period, two show a negative trend, and the remaining seven show no trend. There is therefore no consistent pattern of upward or downward trends at these rural sites.

Figure 5-33 Trends in ozone concentration at 12 Long-Running Rural AURN sites, 1992 - 2015.



Ozone is not emitted in significant quantities directly from any source in the UK (instead, it is formed from reactions involving other pollutants). Ozone is therefore not included in the NAEI, and trends in ozone emissions are not covered by this report.

5.9 Metallic Elements

5.9.1 Metallic Elements: Spatial Distribution

Figure 5-34, **Figure 5-35**, **Figure 5-36** and **Figure 5-37** show modelled annual mean concentrations of lead (Pb), arsenic (As), cadmium (Cd) and nickel (Ni) respectively in 2015. The spatial distribution patterns are discussed below.

Pb: background concentrations were less than 10 ng m^{-3} (0.01 µg m^{-3}) over most of the UK. Higher levels are visible in urban areas (particularly industrial areas). Higher concentrations are also clearly visible along major routes; this is not caused by vehicle emissions (leaded petrol having been banned within the EU from January 2000), but by re-suspended road dust.

As: this is not strictly a metal but is measured by the UK Metals Network. Background concentrations were less than 6.0 ng m^{-3} over the whole UK, and less than 1.8 ng m^{-3} over most of the country. However, concentrations of 1.8 ng m^{-3} and above occurred in some areas – particularly the north eastern part of England, Yorkshire and Humberside. This pattern reflects the natural sources of airborne arsenic, particularly wind-blown dust. Modelled concentrations are therefore highest in areas where agricultural practices give rise to wind-blown dust (such as parts of eastern England) and where the natural arsenic content of the soil is relatively high (such as parts of Cornwall).

Cd: background concentrations were less than 0.2 ng m^{-3} over almost all of the UK. Some major road routes are visible: this is due to re-suspended road dust. Also there are some small areas with concentrations in the range 0.5 – 5.0 ng m^{-3}, relating to specific point sources. Please note that the scale used for Cd concentrations was changed in the 2010 report in this series, reflecting the decrease observed in ambient concentrations over recent years.

Ni: background concentrations of Ni were typically less than 2 ng m^{-3} (well away from urban areas, usually less than 1 ng m^{-3}). Some major road routes are visible in the map; like lead, nickel is found in suspended road dust. There are also some small areas with higher concentrations due to industrial activity. One monitoring site (in Swansea Urban Area) reported an annual mean higher than the target value of 20 ng m^{-3} in 2015 but this is not captured in this background modelling.

Figure 5-34 Annual mean background Lead concentration, 2015 (µg m^{-3})

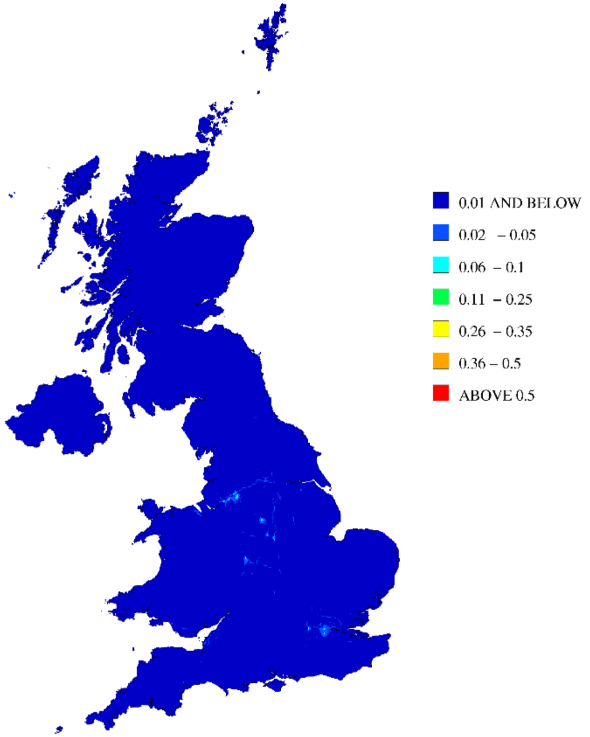


Figure 5-35 Annual mean background Arsenic concentration, 2015 (ng m^{-3})

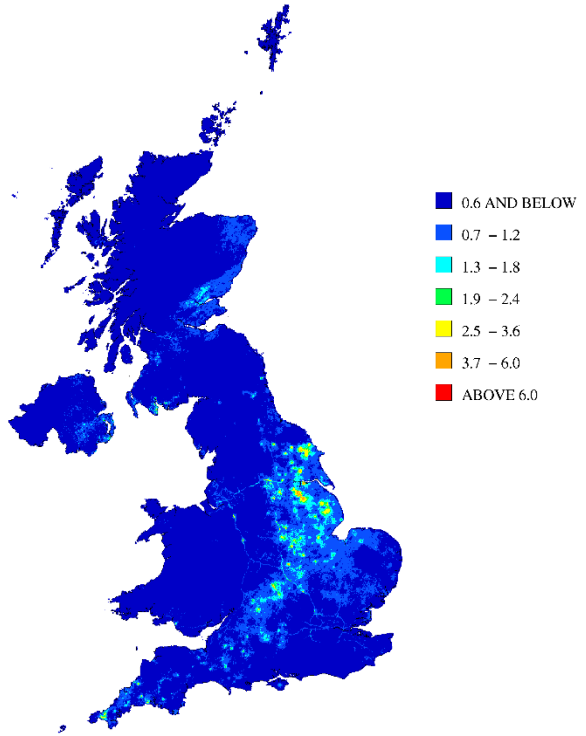


Figure 5-36 Annual mean background Cadmium concentration, 2015 (ng m^{-3})

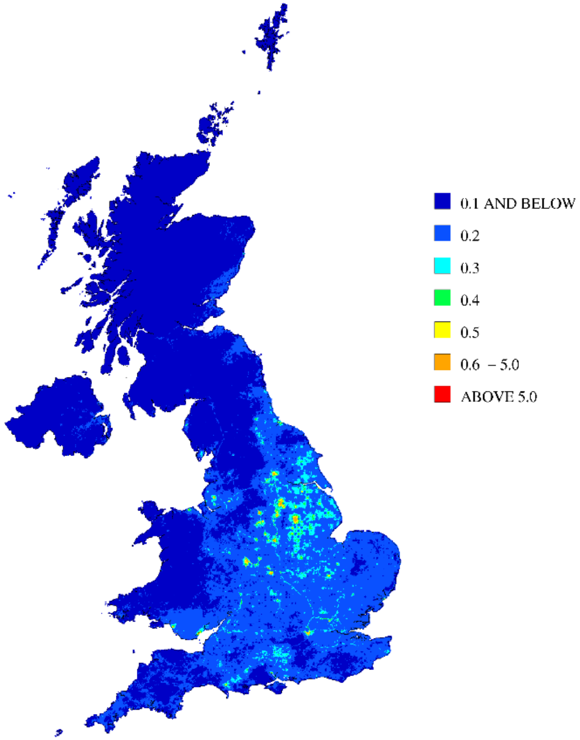
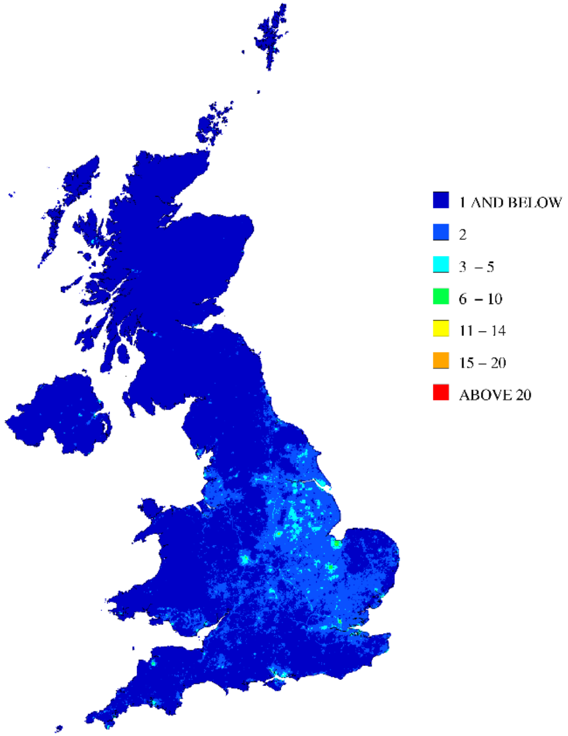


Figure 5-37 Annual mean background Nickel concentration, 2015 (ng m^{-3})



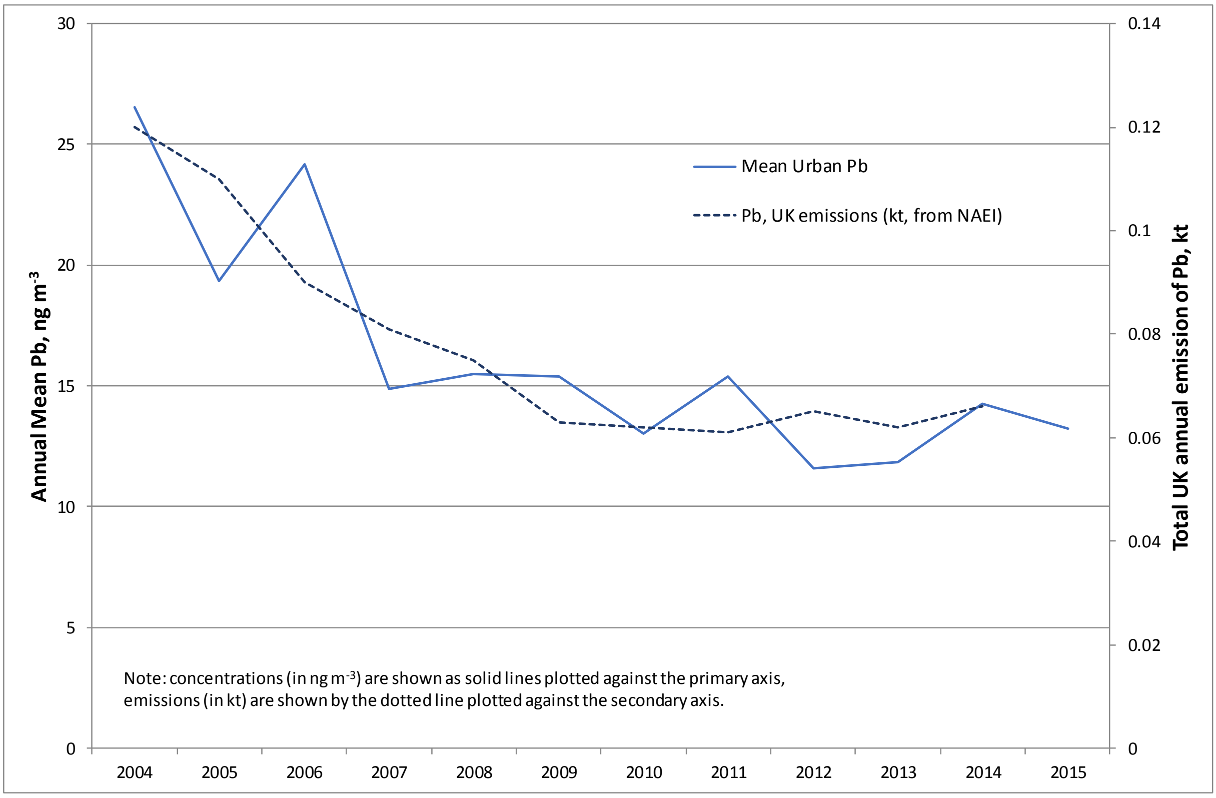
5.9.2 Lead: Changes Over Time

Figure 5-38 shows a time series of annual mean concentration of Pb in the PM_{10} particulate fraction, as measured from 2004 by urban sites in the UK Metals Network and its predecessors, as described in Section 3.3.2. (Prior to 2004, Pb in the particulate phase was measured by the six sites comprising the former Multi-Element Network. For further information on this, please see earlier reports in this series. However please note that the sampling method used by the Multi-Element Network was not size-selective).

The annual mean of all urban sites in the UK Metals Network is shown: rural sites are not included. In 2015 there were 16 urban sites. The mean for all sites is well below the Air Quality Directive limit value for annual mean Pb, of 500 ng m^{-3}.

Figure 5-38 also shows NAEI estimated total annual UK emissions of this metal (plotted as a dotted line, against the right-hand y-axis). Measured ambient concentrations follow the same pattern, generally decreasing (though there is some year-to-year variation) until around 2012 when there appears to be some levelling off of the downward slope.

Figure 5-38 Ambient Urban Concentrations of Pb in PM_{10}, and Total Estimated UK Emissions

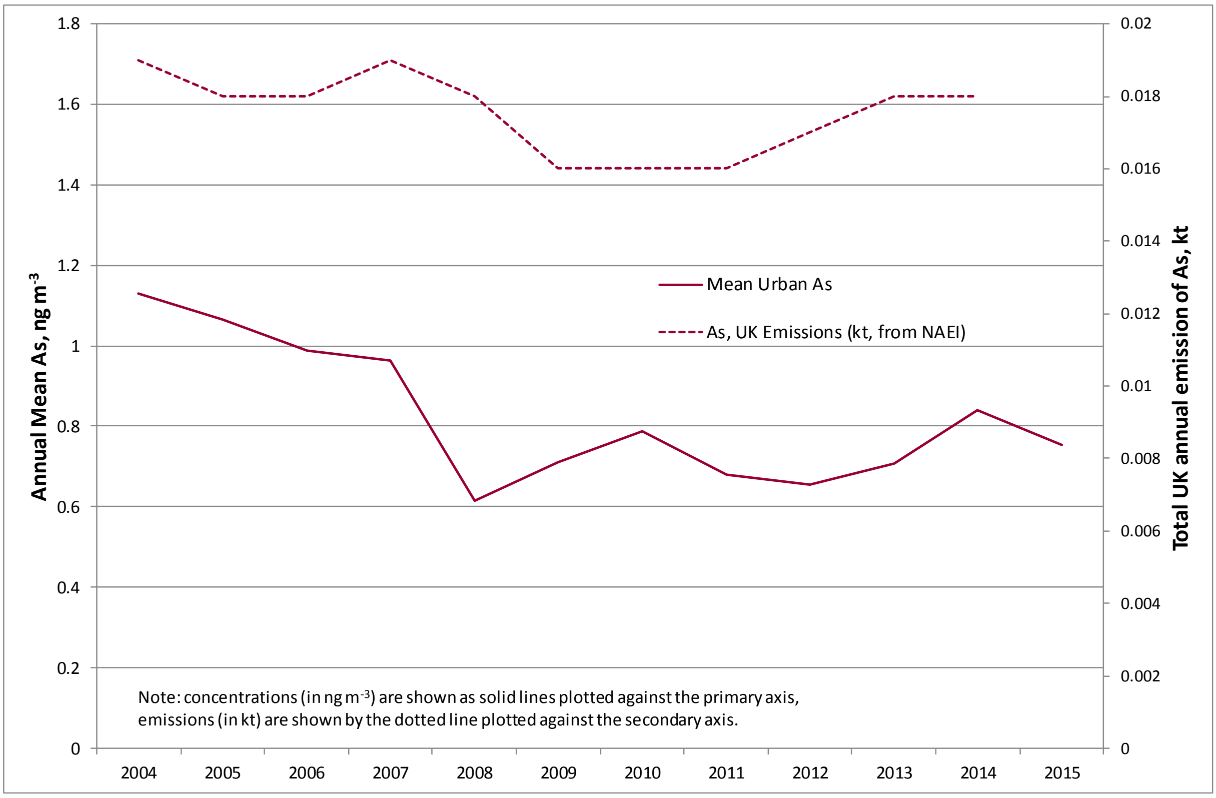


5.9.3 Arsenic: Changes Over Time

Figure 5-39 shows a time series of annual mean concentrations of arsenic (As) in the PM_{10} fraction, as measured by the urban sites in UK Metals Network and its predecessors, described in Section 3.3.2. (For earlier, non-size selective measurements by the smaller Multi-Element Network, please see previous reports in this series.) The annual mean of all urban sites (of which there were 16 in 2015) is shown – rural sites are not included. This parameter is well within the Fourth Daughter Directive target value of 6 ng m^{-3}.

Also shown is the UK's estimated total annual emission of As (from the NAEI), in kilotonnes. This is plotted as a dotted line, against the right-hand y-axis. There appears to have been a slight increase in As emissions in 2012 and 2013, which may be reflected in measured ambient concentrations.

Figure 5-39 Ambient Urban Concentrations of As in PM_{10}, and Total Estimated UK Emissions

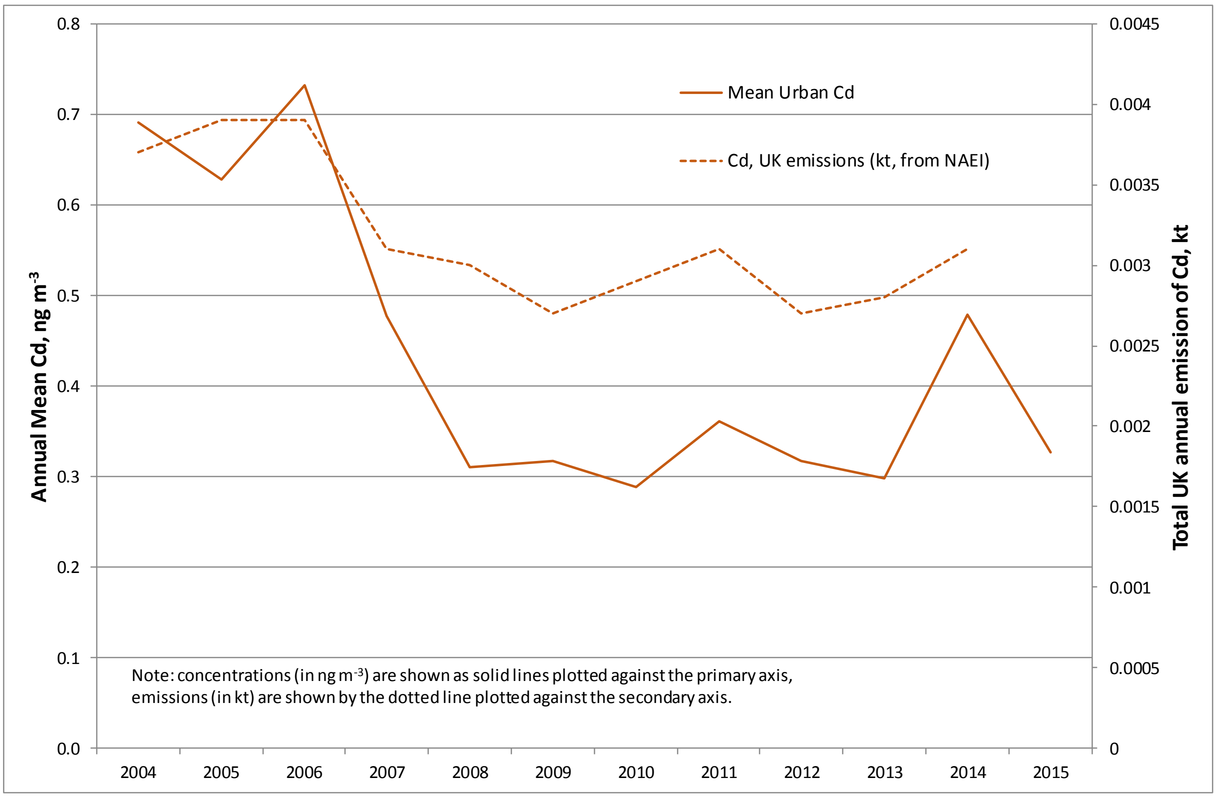


5.9.4 Cadmium: Changes Over Time

Figure 5-40 shows a time series of annual mean concentration of cadmium (Cd) in the PM_{10} fraction as measured by the UK Metals Network and its predecessors, described in Section 3.3.2. (For earlier, non-size selective measurements from the

Multi-Element Network, please see previous reports in this series.) The annual mean of all 16 urban sites only is shown.

Figure 5-40 Ambient Urban Concentrations of Cd in PM_{10}, and Total Estimated UK Emissions



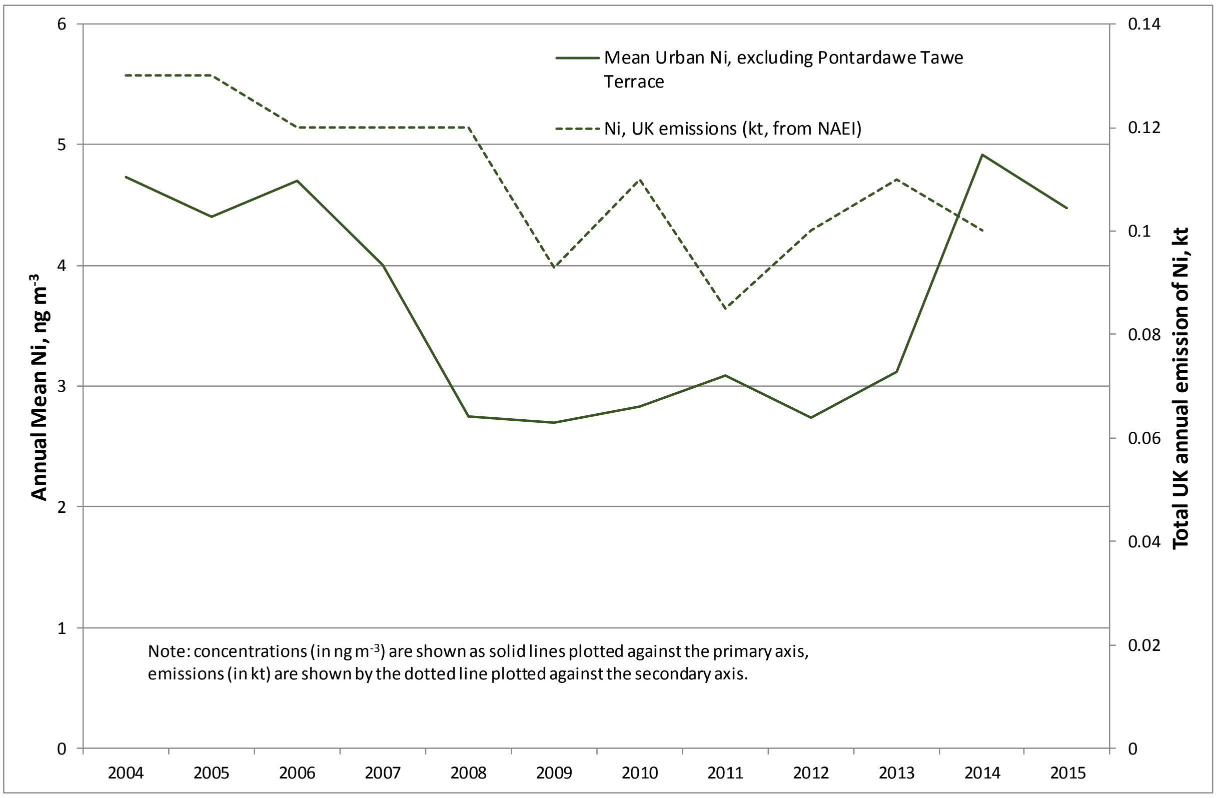
Also shown (plotted as a dotted line, against the right-hand y-axis) is the UK's estimated total annual emission of Cd (in kilotonnes), from the NAEI. The variation in emissions appears to be reflected in the variation in measured ambient concentrations from year to year. In 2011, there was an increase in both the estimated total emission and in the average ambient Cd concentration. The ambient concentration also shows an even larger peak in 2014: although the emission estimates for that year do show some increase, it does not appear to be large enough to be consistent with the peak in ambient Cd.

However, despite the 2014 peak, ambient cadmium concentrations are very low, and well within the Fourth Daughter Directive target value of 5 ng m^{-3} at all sites.

5.9.5 Nickel: Changes Over Time

Figure 5-41 shows a time series of annual mean concentrations of nickel (Ni) in PM_{10}, as measured by urban sites in the UK Metals Network (15 such sites in 2015). As with the other metals, information on non-size selective measurements from the older Multi-Element Network can be found in previous reports in this series.

Figure 5-41 Ambient Urban Concentrations of Ni in PM_{10}, and Total Estimated UK Emissions



The graph is based on the average annual mean for all urban sites measuring Ni, except one. Pontardawe Tawe Terrace (which began operation in 2011) has been excluded, as it measures ambient nickel concentrations very much higher than the other sites, and if included will dominate the mean for years 2011 onwards. (This site has measured exceedances of the Fourth Daughter Directive target value of 20 ng m^{-3} each year since it started up, in 2011.) Pontardawe Tawe Terrace was the source of the measured exceedance in the Swansea Urban Area, highlighted in Table 4-7: the measured annual mean Ni concentration at this site was 28 ng m^{-3}. There was also a modelled exceedance reported for the South Wales zone.

Figure 5-41 also shows total estimated annual UK emissions of Ni, from the NAEI (as a dotted line, plotted against the right-hand axis). The average measured ambient concentrations appear to generally reflect the year to year variation in estimated total emissions, though 2014 and 2015 show a substantial increase in the measured average.

5.9.6 Mercury: Changes Over Time

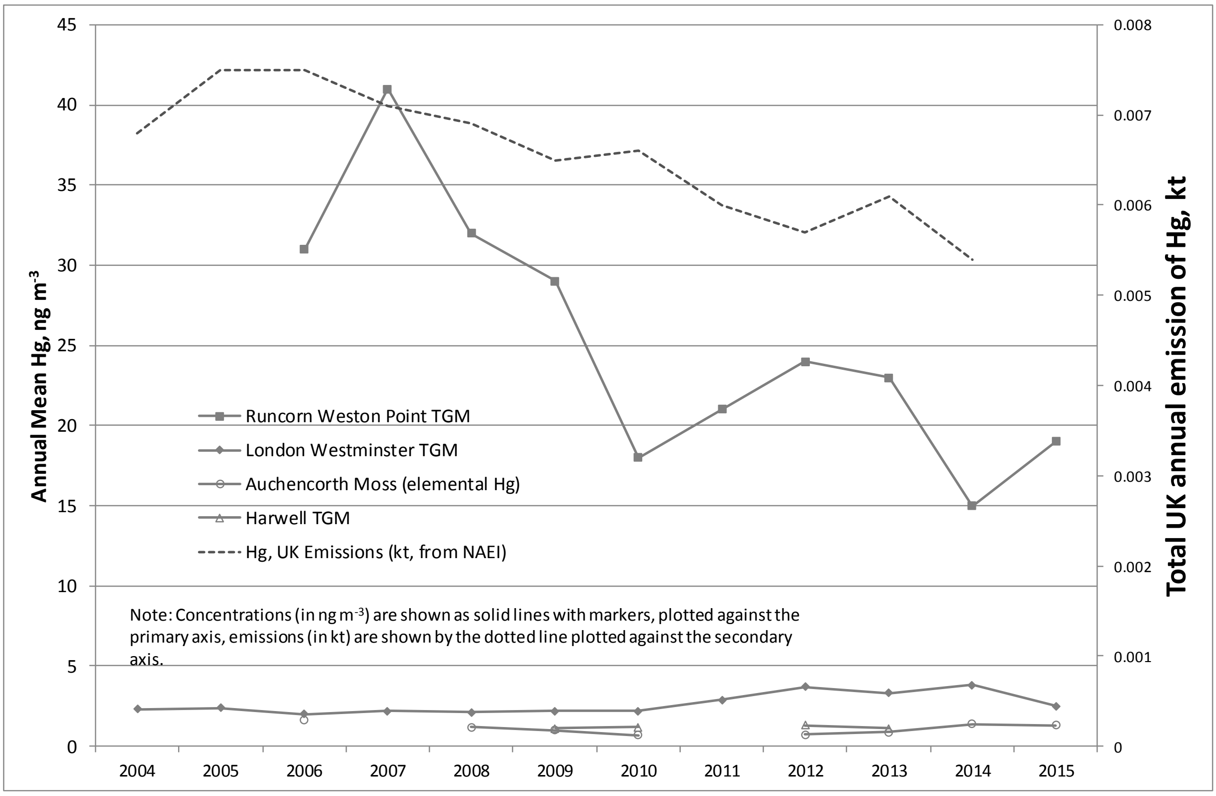
At the end of 2013, the UK Metals Network ceased measurement of mercury in PM_{10} particulate matter at all sites. This decision was taken because the majority of ambient Hg is in the vapour phase. Monitoring of Total Gaseous Mercury (TGM) was also scaled down, continuing at just two of the original sites: Runcorn Weston Point and London Westminster. Runcorn Weston Point is near an industrial installation (a chlor-alkali plant) that used mercury in the past, and measures ambient Hg concentrations an order of magnitude greater than any other sites in the network. London Westminster is an urban background site in central London. Mercury in the vapour phase was also measured during 2015 using the Tekran instrument (see section 3) at two rural sites: Harwell in Oxfordshire and Auchencorth Moss in Lothian.

Measurement of TGM therefore continued at four sites: two where it is likely to be highest (Runcorn Weston Point and London Westminster) and two rural background sites (Harwell and Auchencorth Moss), for the purpose of understanding transboundary contribution to ambient Hg concentration.

For information on the measurements of total mercury (TGM plus particulate phase) taken at urban sites in the UK Metals Network and its predecessors from 2004 to 2013, please refer to “Air Pollution in the UK 2014” and earlier reports in this series. The present report, and future reports in this series, will focus only on TGM, and on the four sites which have continued monitoring this element through 2015 and beyond: Auchencorth Moss, Harwell, London Westminster and Runcorn Weston Point. (Harwell closed at the end of 2015 and the monitoring station was relocated to Chilbolton Observatory in Hampshire.)

Figure 5-42 shows annual mean concentrations of TGM at the four monitoring sites, from 2004 (when the UK Metals Network began operation) to 2015. It can clearly be seen that the measured annual mean concentrations of Hg at Runcorn Weston Point are an order of magnitude higher than those measured at the two rural sites. However, Hg concentrations at this industrial site appear to have decreased over the past 10 years (though not consistently or steadily). Mercury concentrations at London Westminster do not appear to have decreased: by contrast, they have been slightly higher in recent years than they were a decade ago. Neither of the two rural sites show any consistent pattern of increase or decrease.

Figure 5-42 Measured Urban Concentrations of Total Gaseous Hg, and Total Estimated UK Emissions



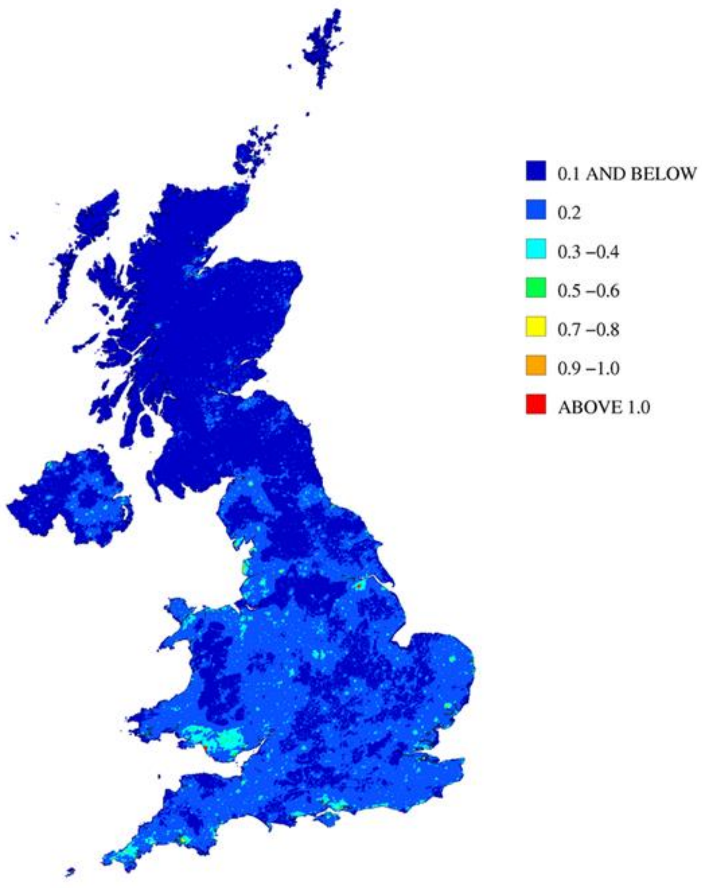
5.10 Benzo [a] Pyrene

5.10.1 B[a]P: Spatial Distribution

Figure 5-43 shows the modelled annual mean background concentration of B[a]P. The areas of highest concentration reflect the distribution of industrial sources, and also areas where there is widespread domestic use of oil and solid fuels for heating. This has previously included the Belfast area and other urban parts of Northern Ireland: also parts of Yorkshire, Humberside and South Wales.

However, these areas have reduced in recent years, and the 2015 map indicates further reductions. The areas with modelled annual mean concentrations greater than 0.2 ng m^{-3} have been greatly reduced since 2014, and for the second consecutive year there are no longer any areas in Northern Ireland with modelled annual mean B[a]P concentrations in excess of 1 ng m^{-3}.

Figure 5-43 Annual mean background B[a]P concentration, 2015 (ng m^{-3})



5.10.2 B[a]P: Changes Over Time

The PAH monitoring network began operation in 1991, comprising a small number of sites, and was increased to over 20 in the late 1990s. However, during the years 2007-2008, the network underwent a further major expansion and re-organisation, including a change of sampling technique.

The newer sampling technique used at most sites from 2008 onwards (the “Digitel” PM_{10} sampler) has been found to give higher results than the older method. The reason for this is likely to be due to a number of factors, predominantly the fact that the new samplers have a shorter collection period. The shorter collection period is likely to decrease the degradation of the PAHs by ozone or other oxidative species[56].

Because of these changes in the composition of the network, and in particular the techniques used, temporal variation in PAH concentrations has only been analysed from 2008 in this report.

Figure 5-44 shows how the average annual mean B[a]P concentration has changed in the years since 2008. This graph is based on the average of all sites in the PAH Network: the composition of this network has changed little since 2008 so it is considered appropriate here to use the average of all sites. Following a marked drop in average measured concentrations of B[a]P between 2008 and 2009, average B[a]P concentrations then appear to have remained generally stable until 2014. However, the average for 2015 appears to show a further large drop, and is the lowest reported so far for this network. Further years' data will be needed to determine whether this represents a sustained reduction in B[a]P concentration.

Figure 5-44 Ambient Concentrations of Particulate Phase Benzo[a]pyrene, and Total UK Emissions

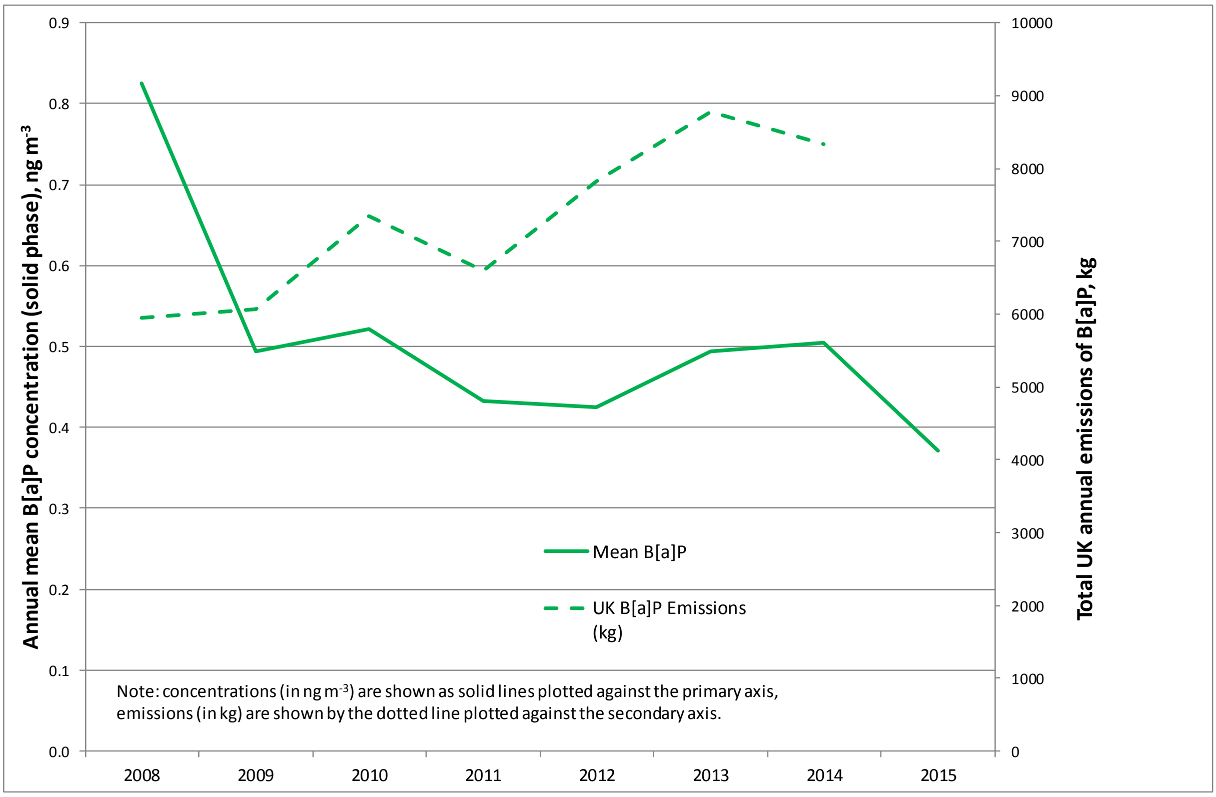
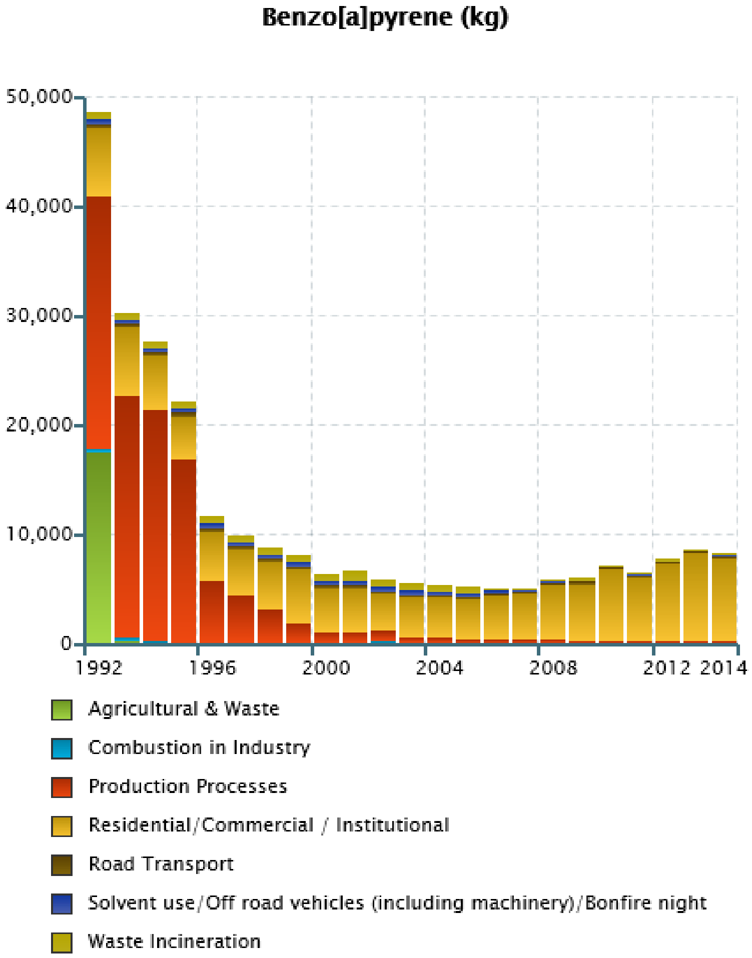


Figure 5-44 also shows the estimated total annual UK emission of B[a]P (in kg), from the NAEI (shown as a dotted line and plotted against the y-axis on the right). This indicates that emissions have increased since 2008. Emissions of B[a]P at the present time are dominated by domestic combustion of coal, and the NAEI data indicate that it is this source (residential/commercial/institutional) that is increasing.

However, to put this into context, estimated total UK emissions of B[a]P have decreased substantially in recent decades and are an order of magnitude lower than in the early 1990s (**Figure 5-45**). According to the NAEI, most of this reduction is due to decreasing emissions from industry, and the banning of stubble burning in 1993.

Figure 5-45 Estimated Annual UK Emissions of Benzo[a]Pyrene (kg), 1992 – 2014 Source: NAEI



6 Pollution Events in 2015

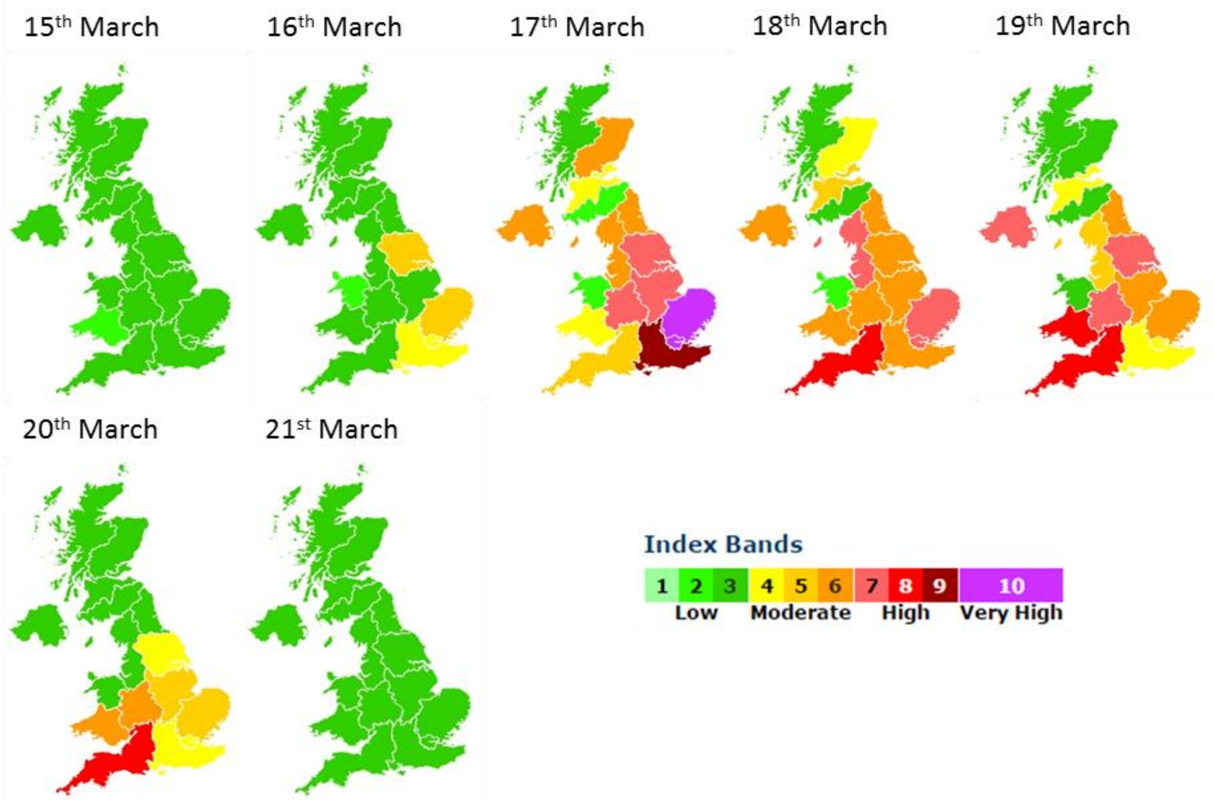
6.1 Spring Particulate Pollution Episodes

Particulate pollution episodes are common during spring in the UK. In 2015, there were two spring particulate episodes; the first during mid- to late March and the second in early April.

6.1.1 Mid to late March 2015

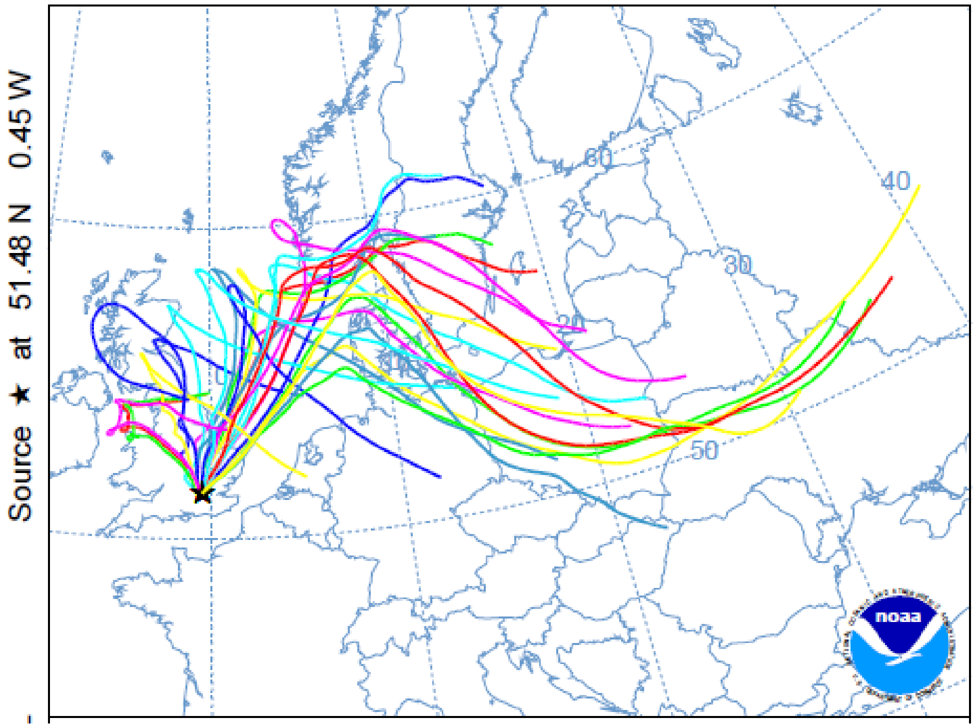
Between 16th until 20th March 2015, there was widespread poor air quality measured by the Automatic Urban and Rural Monitoring Network (AURN) throughout the UK. This affected the south-east of England most severely, but also spread throughout the rest of England and South Wales, as shown in **Figure 6-1**.

Figure 6-1 Maps showing the Daily Air Quality Index (DAQI) between 15th and 21st March 2015 (Source: UK-AIR)



Between Tuesday 17th and Friday 20th March, a high pressure system centred over Scandinavia resulted in settled conditions throughout south-east England along with light easterly to south-easterly winds. Consequently, air arriving from the north of continental Europe mixed with local emissions to produce a widespread particulate episode across the south of England and Wales (London Air[57]). Using air mass tracking techniques, it is possible to model the paths taken by air masses arriving over the UK at a particular time; these are known as 'back trajectories' and are shown on a map. **Figure 6-2** shows 96-hour back trajectories for 20th March when the path of air arriving in the UK can clearly be tracked back to the north of continental Europe. The data for **Figure 6-2** are sourced from the NOAA website; http://ready.arl.noaa.gov/HYSPLIT.php .

Figure 6-2 Back trajectories showing air masses arriving in the UK on 20th March 2015



The peak of this pollution event was the first day, Tuesday 17th March; this is evident in **Figure 6-1** (which shows that the highest DAQI value occurred on this day), also **Figure 6-3** and **Figure 6-4**, which show peaks on 17th March. On 19th March, a change in wind direction, bringing 'cleaner' air from over the North Sea, combined with slightly increased wind speeds, weakening and dispersing the episode.

Figure 6-3 Daily Mean PM_{10} Concentrations in the UK between 12th March and 26th March 2015

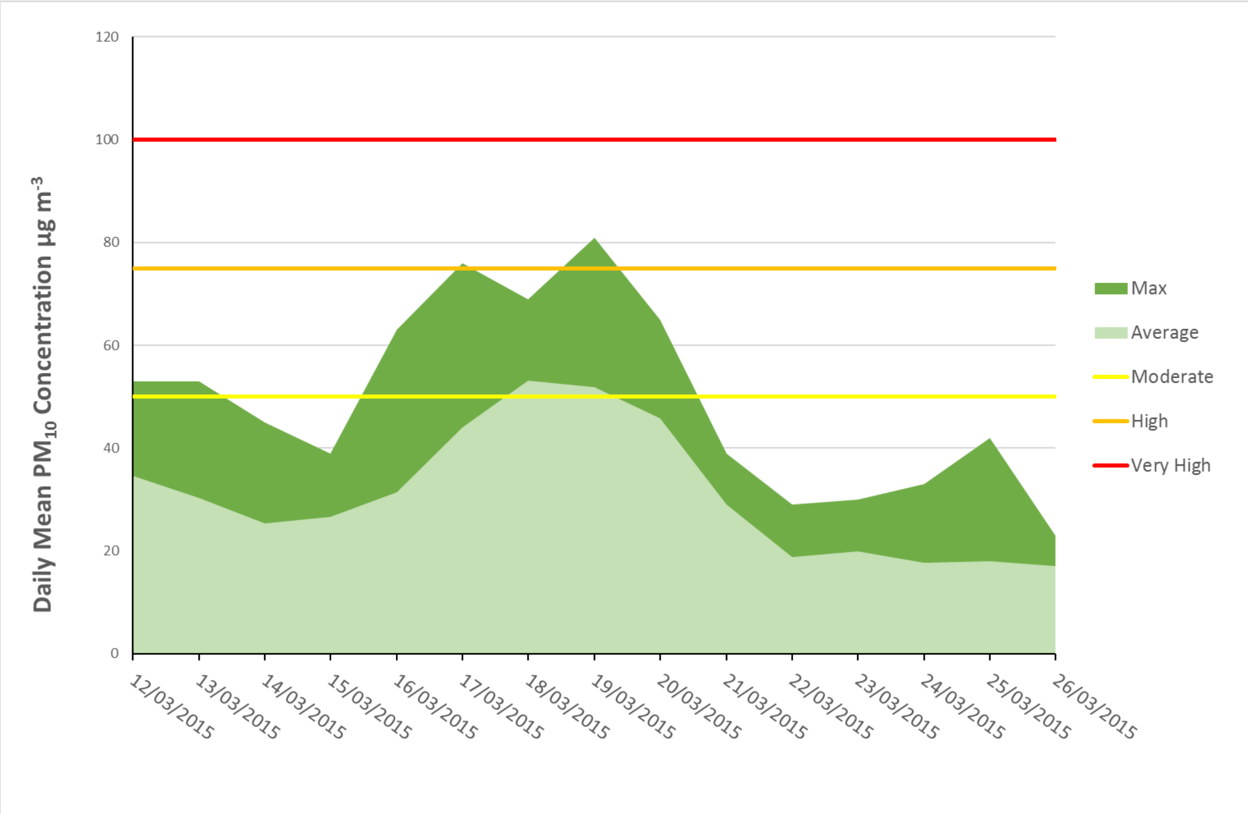
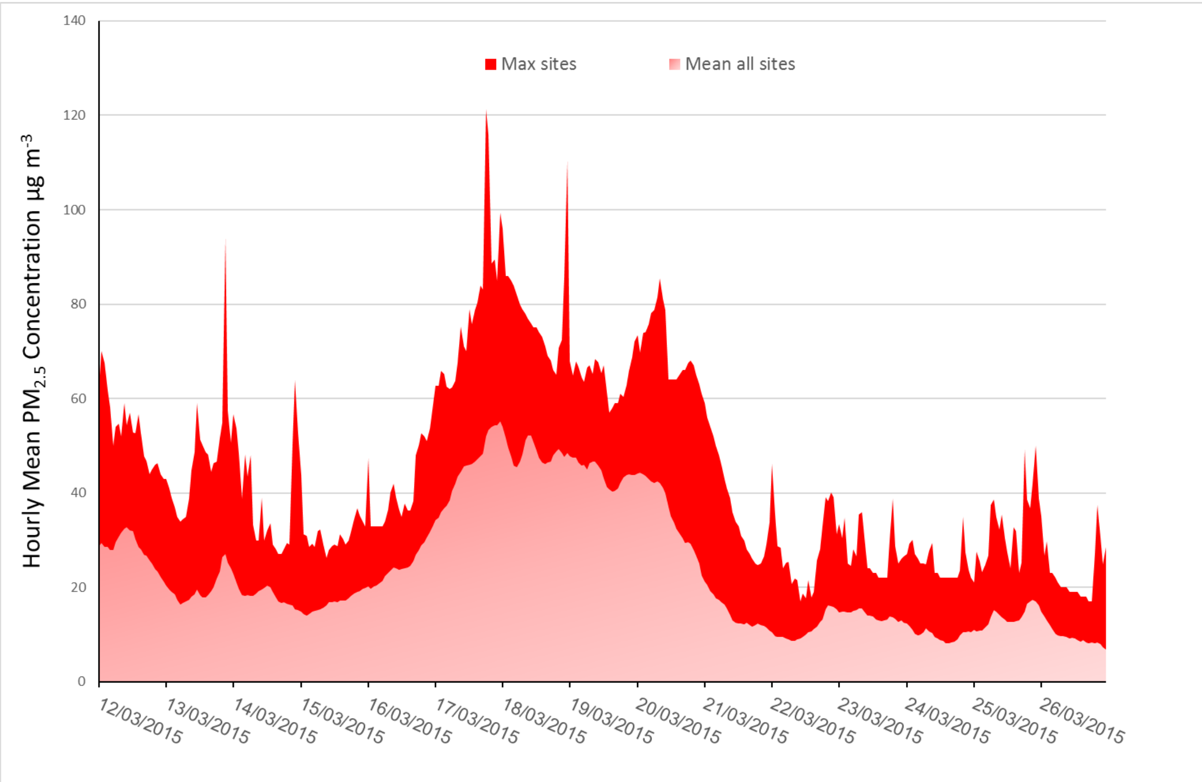


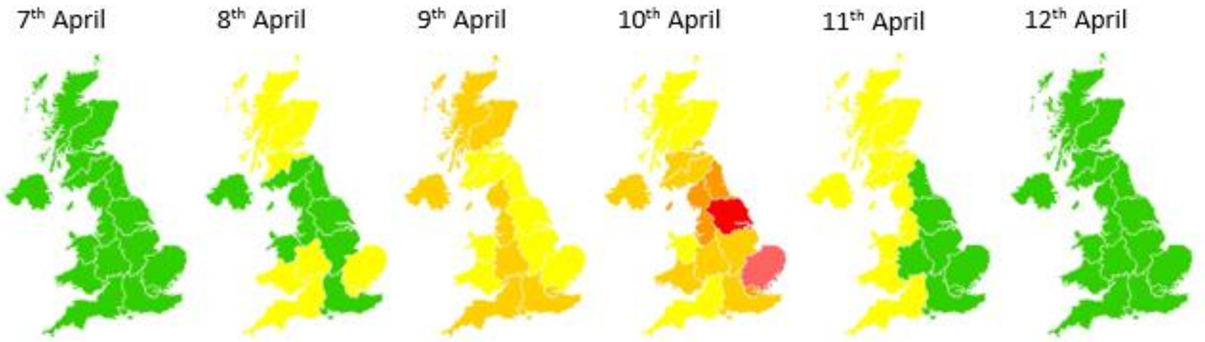
Figure 6-4 Hourly Mean $PM_{2.5}$ Concentrations in the UK between 12th March and 26th March 2015



6.1.2 Early April 2015

A particulate pollution episode was also measured by the AURN during early April 2015, specifically between the 8th and 11th April. Pollution levels reached 'moderate' throughout the UK, with some areas, specifically Yorkshire & Humberside and Eastern England, reaching 'High' levels of pollution (**Figure 6-5**). This episode was cause by a high pressure system over southern England and the northern part of continental Europe, on the 8th and 9th April, which resulted in low wind speeds and led to the accumulation of pollutants. By 11th April, pollution began to clear with a change to cooler conditions and stronger south-westerly winds.

Figure 6-5 Maps showing the Daily Air Quality Index (DAQI) between 7th and 12th April 2015 (Source: UK-AIR) (See Figure 6-1 for Index Bands)



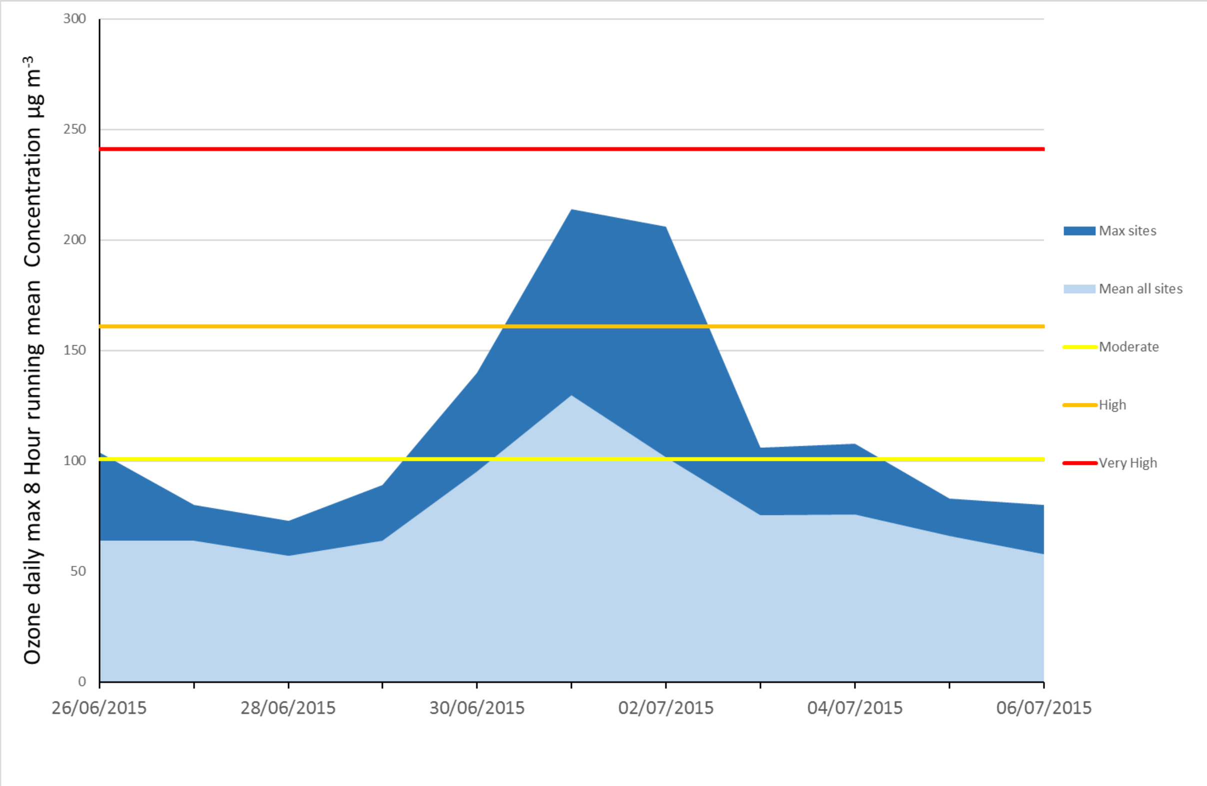
6.2 Summer Ozone Events

Air pollution episodes due to ozone commonly occur in the UK during late spring and summer. In 2015, such ozone pollution episodes occurred from the end of June to beginning of July, and at the beginning of August.

6.2.1 Late June / Early July 2015

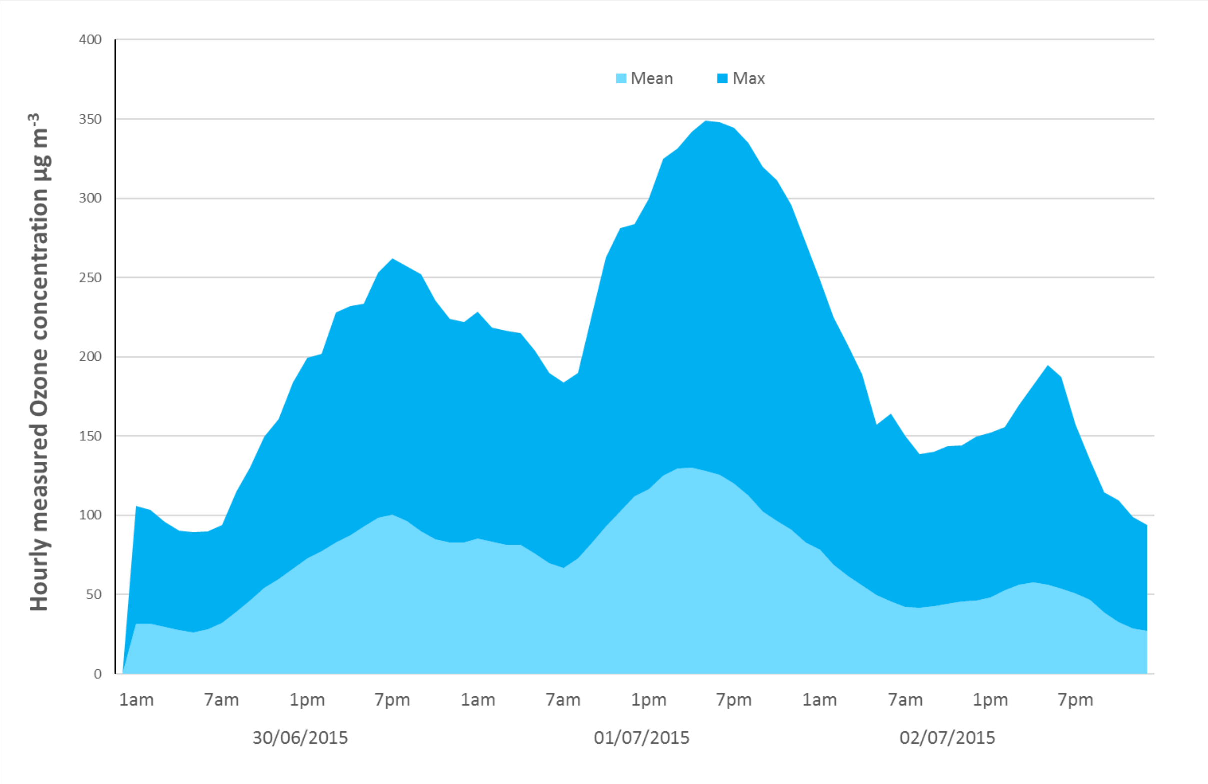
Elevated ozone levels were measured by the AURN between the 30th June and the 2nd July 2015 (**Figure 6-6**). This ozone episode was caused by a combination of strong sunshine which lasted throughout the day, high ambient temperatures, and air arriving in the UK from continental Europe; this air had passed over industrialised areas and therefore contained the 'precursor pollutants' required for the photochemical reaction to produce ozone.

Figure 6-6 Ozone daily max 8-hour running mean concentrations from 26th June to 6th July 2015



This event proved interesting and unusual in that ozone levels at many sites peaked during the mid-evening (**Figure 6-7**); this is unusual as at this time of the day temperatures and solar radiation are decreasing, so the reaction to produce ozone would usually be slowing.

Figure 6-7 Ozone concentration variation throughout the day from 30th June to 2nd July 2015



6.2.2 Early August 2015

A similar ozone event occurred, predominantly in London, around 2nd August. This was caused again by warm temperatures and high solar radiation. The episode subsided on 3rd August as air from the Atlantic increased cloud cover and therefore conditions for producing ozone became less favourable.

An animation of this event, based on monitoring data in London during the episode on August 2nd 2015, is available here: https://vimeo.com/135335742 (Source: London Air[58])

6.3 Bonfire Night Particulate Pollution

Bonfire Night can often produce a significant short term particulate pollution episode as a result of bonfires and firework displays. These pollution episodes critically depend on weather conditions, and whether Bonfire Night falls on a weekday or a weekend. Therefore, they vary significantly from year to year. Wet, windy or unsettled conditions are more likely to result in low concentrations; cold and still weather are more likely to result in elevated levels of PM_{10} particles and other pollutants as emissions are not effectively dispersed. In recent years, Bonfire Night particulate episodes have been noticeable but small (the exception being 2014, when the UK had its most significant Bonfire Night episode since 2006). The 2015 Bonfire Night particulate episode was again noticeable but small (**Figure 6-8** and **Figure 6-9**). Much of the UK experienced rain on 5th November which meant that conditions were good for dispersing emissions, and hence concentrations were kept low.

Figure 6-8 Hourly PM_{10} concentrations in the UK between 1st and 9th November 2015

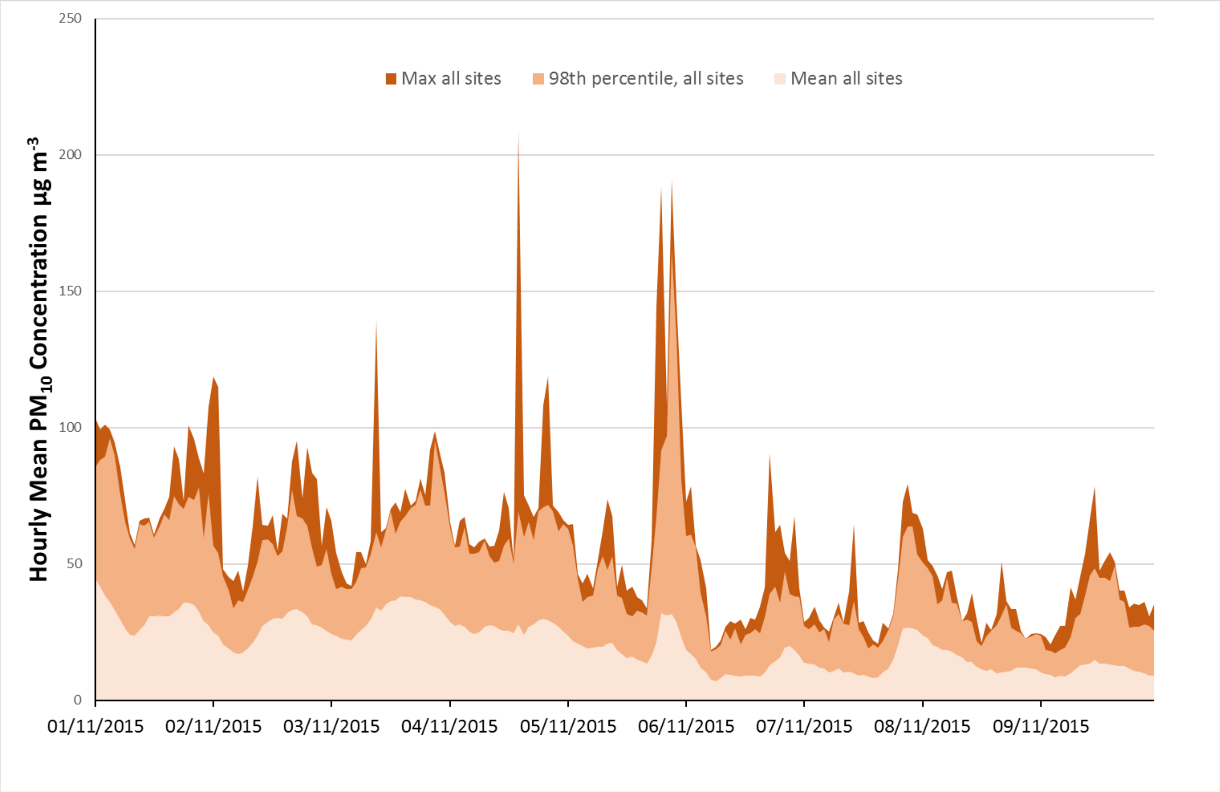
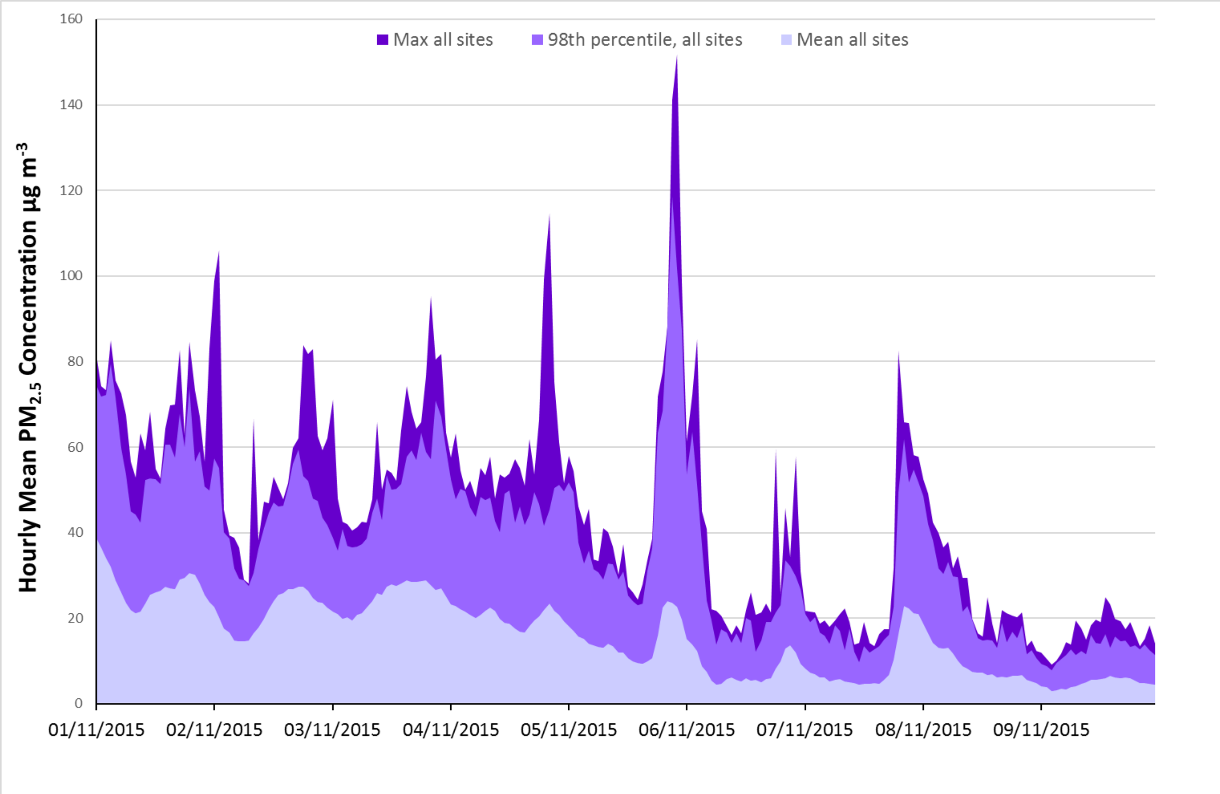


Figure 6-9 Hourly PM2.5 concentrations in the UK between 1st and 9th November 2015



6.4 Winter Saharan Dust Episodes

6.4.1 Mid-December 2015

The UK experienced ‘moderate’ levels of particulate pollution on 17th December 2015 (**Figure 6-10**). This was attributed to a dust storm that travelled to the UK from the Sahara. Using air mass tracking techniques to track the paths of air masses, it is likely that air arriving in the UK on 17th December came from the African continent (**Figure 6-11**, which shows 24-hour back trajectories for 17th December 2015 using data sourced from the NOAA website).

Figure 6-10 Hourly PM_{10} concentrations in the UK between 15th and 29th December 2015

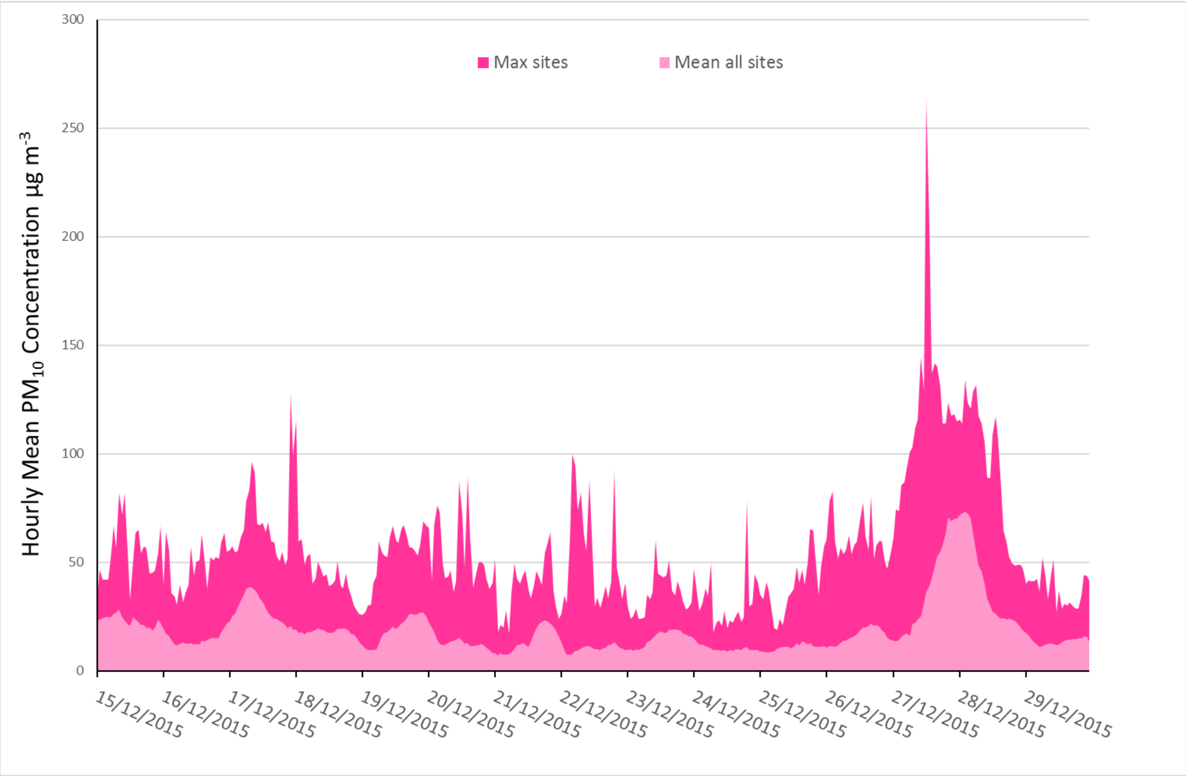
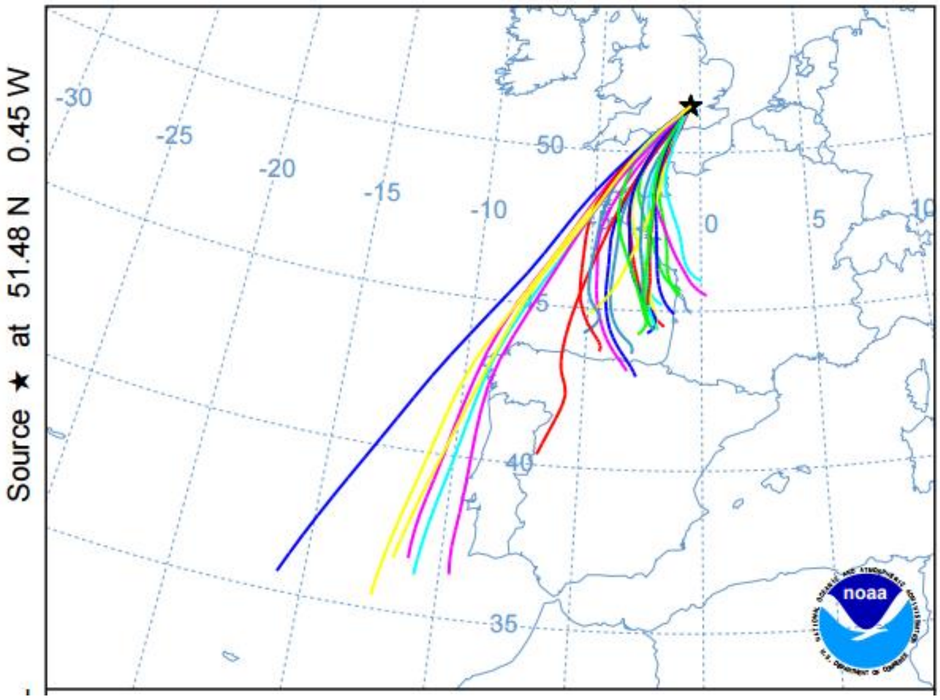


Figure 6-11 Back trajectories showing air masses arriving in the UK on 17th December 2015



6.4.2 Late December 2015

Between Christmas and New Year, air pollution is usually lower than normal due to there being less traffic on the roads; however, in recent years, there have been pollution problems during this period due to increased domestic wood burning in open fires. On 27th December 2015, this pattern was observed, with a peak in PM_{10} concentrations (clearly visible in **Figure 6-10**), for several reasons. Analysis of particle size and composition of air measured in London (by King's College London, the managers of the London Air Quality Network) showed it was not dominated by pollution from London nor from European traffic or industrial sources. The analysis suggested that the episode was "*most likely due to an influx in Saharan dust*", similar to the mid-December episode, but with additional pollution from local wood burning[59].

7 Where to Find Out More

Defra's web pages relating to air quality can be found at

https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/protecting-and-enhancing-our-urban-and-natural-environment-to-improve-public-health-and-wellbeing/supporting-pages/international-european-and-national-standards-for-air-quality

These provide details of what the UK is doing to tackle air pollution, and the science and research programmes in place.

Also, Defra has published a Guide to Air Pollution Information Resources, detailing the types of information that are made available and this can be found at http://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/reports/cat14/1307241318_Guide_to_UK_Air_Pollution_Information_Resources.pdf.

Information on the UK's air quality, now and in the past, is available on UK-AIR, the Defra online air quality resource at http://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/. UK-AIR is the national repository for historical ambient air quality data. It contains measurements from automatic measurement programmes, some dating back to 1972, together with non-automatic sampler measurements dating back to the 1960s. The data archive brings together into one coherent database both data and information from all the UK's measurement networks. New tools recently added to UK-AIR include the UK Ambient Air Quality Interactive Map at http://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/data/gis-mapping that allows you to look at outputs for the national modelling conducted for compliance assessment, based on pollutant, background or roadside and geographical location.

Similar national online air quality resources have also been developed for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland:

- The Welsh Air Quality Archive at www.welshairquality.co.uk
- The Scottish Air Quality Archive at www.scottishairquality.co.uk
- The Northern Ireland Archive at www.airqualityni.co.uk

Together, these four national websites provide a comprehensive resource for data and analyses covering all aspects of air quality throughout the UK and all its regions.

The Devolved Administrations each produce their own short annual report, providing more specific information on air quality in their regions. These reports are available from the above websites.

UK-AIR also provides a daily air quality forecast, which is further disseminated via e-mail, RSS feeds and Twitter (see http://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/twitter). Latest forecasts are issued daily, at http://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/forecasting/.

Detailed pollutant emission data for the UK are available from the National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory (NAEI) at www.naei.org.uk.

Additional information from the Devolved Administrations of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland can be found at:

- The Scottish Government Air Quality web page at http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Environment/waste-and-pollution/Pollution-1/16215
- The Welsh Government Environment Air Quality web page at http://gov.wales/topics/environmentcountryside/epq/airqualitypollution/airquality/?lang=en
- The Northern Ireland Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) web page at https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/

References

Section 1

[1] European Parliament and Council of the European Union (2008) '*Council Directive on ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe (2008/50/EC)'.* [online]. Available at http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32008L0050:EN:NOT (Accessed 05 Sep 2016).

[2] European Parliament and Council of the European Union (2004) '*Directive 2004/107/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 December 2004 relating to arsenic, cadmium, mercury, nickel and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons in ambient air*'. [online]. Available at http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32004L0107:EN:NOT, (Accessed 05 Sep 2016).

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Section 7

None.