Welsh local authority guidance on implementing measures for tackling unnecessary vehicle engine idling

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Glossary

Term	Meaning
Active travel	Walking, wheeling or cycling for everyday journeys.
Air Quality Management Area (AQMA)	An area declared by a local authority where air pollution levels exceed, or are likely to exceed, national air quality objectives set to protect human health.
Authorised officer	A person authorised by a local authority to carry out enforcement activity, including requesting a driver to switch off an idling engine and, where appropriate, issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice.
Battery electric vehicle	A vehicle powered only by electricity and not fitted with an internal combustion engine.
Behaviour change	Activity designed to encourage people to adopt different habits or actions, such as switching off an engine when stationary.

Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN)	A notice giving a person the opportunity to discharge liability for an offence by paying a fixed penalty within a specified period.
Hybrid vehicle	A vehicle that uses both an internal combustion engine and an electric motor. Emissions may still be produced when the engine is running.
Internal combustion engine (ICE)	An engine that burns fuel, such as petrol or diesel, to power a vehicle.
Local authority	A county council or county borough council in Wales responsible for delivering local functions, including relevant environmental health and enforcement activity.
NO_x	Oxides of nitrogen, a group of air pollutants produced by combustion, including vehicle engines.
Particulate matter (PM)	Tiny particles in the air that can be inhaled and may affect health.
$PM_{2.5}$	Fine particulate matter with a diameter of 2.5 micrometres or less.
PM_{10}	Particulate matter with a diameter of 10 micrometres or less.
Public highway	A road or other highway to which the public has access.
Stationary idling	When a vehicle is not moving but the engine is left running.
Stationary idling offence	An offence relating to a stationary vehicle engine being left running where the legal requirements for the prevention of emissions apply.
Traffic-related air pollution (TRAP)	Air pollution associated with road traffic, including emissions from vehicle exhausts and other traffic-related sources.
Vulnerable groups	People who may be more affected by air pollution, including children, older people, pregnant women and people with existing health conditions.
Welsh Language Standards	Legal standards requiring certain organisations to treat the Welsh language no less favourably than English when providing services and communications.

Foreword

Wales continues to take action to improve air quality and reduce emissions and noise levels. This is essential to protect human health and wellbeing, support the economy, and safeguard biodiversity, and the natural environment.

Despite legislation to strengthen monitoring and controls on emissions having led to improvements over time, there are still improvements to be made, for example air pollution remains a serious risk to health and the environment. Stationary Idling is one such source of air pollution.

Rule 123 of the Highway Code advises drivers to switch off their engine when their vehicle is stationary on a public road.[1] In certain circumstances leaving a vehicle's engine running whilst stationary is an offence which could lead to either a criminal conviction, or a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN).

This guidance has been developed in response to growing awareness of the harms caused by Stationary Idling, and increased interest in practical action to reduce avoidable emissions and noise.

It supports local authorities in Wales to take a clear, proportionate and practical approach to reducing Stationary Idling. It follows the introduction of a new penalty range (**£75-£150**) for Stationary Idling Offences from **30 September 2026.**

Reducing unnecessary idling is particularly important in locations where people are most exposed, including around schools, hospitals and other areas with vulnerable populations.

Local authorities are encouraged to consider integrating Stationary Idling enforcement activities into its wider local strategies for tackling air pollution and noise impacts. But if an authority chooses to do so it is reminded that under the 2003 Regulations FPNs may only be issued for Stationary Idling Offences related to emissions and not noise. Wider strategies could include baseline monitoring, awareness campaigns, signage, partnership work with schools, healthcare settings and fleet operators, and a clear communications plan before active enforcement begins.

Introduction and purpose of the guidance

How to use this guidance

This document is designed to help local authorities take a practical, proportionate approach to reducing Stationary Idling. This guidance is designed for you to be able to navigate to the sections most relevant to your local circumstances.

- If you need to understand the issue – start with the section on what Stationary Idling is, why it matters, and where it commonly happens.

[1] Highway Code Rule 123 - Highway Code

- If you are planning a local campaign – go to the section on available tools, campaign approaches and messaging, and the annexes.
- If you are considering enforcement – go to the section on the law and fixed penalty notices.
- If you are interested in ready-to-use examples, templates or ideas, refer to the annexes.

Quick start for local authorities

If you are considering tackling Stationary Idling in your area here are a number of things you might want to consider:

- Identifying your likely hotspot locations such as schools, healthcare settings, or known complaint areas.
- Deciding your initial focus – raising awareness, behaviour change, targeted action, enforcement, or a combination of these.
- Prioritising where action could have the greatest public health benefit.
- Communicating – including signage, school or community engagement, and consistent public messaging.
- Enforcing - ensure local processes, penalty levels and publication requirements are in place.
- Reviewing – consider what works, adapt and refine your approach over time.

Introduction

Air pollution remains one of the most significant environmental public health challenges of our time. While air quality in Wales is improving overall, inequalities in exposure risk continue to persist at a local level.

Although often invisible, air pollution has profound and far-reaching impacts on health and wellbeing. It contributes to premature death and reduces quality of life with effects linked to low birth weight, childhood asthma, heart disease, stroke, dementia, and mental health conditions.[2] These impacts are not felt equally. Older people, disabled people, young children, and those with existing health conditions are especially vulnerable and are often disproportionately affected.

[2] Health matters: air pollution - GOV.UK; COMEAP: reports and statements - GOV.UK

Air pollution also damages the natural environment, including ecosystems and biodiversity.[3]

One practical way to protect public health and the environment is to take simple, easy-to-implement action. Tackling Stationary Idling can reduce avoidable emissions at the point of exposure and help protect the most vulnerable and affected groups and communities - particularly around schools, care homes, and other areas where people are most at risk.

In 2024, the Welsh Government commissioned a survey of public awareness and views on Stationary Idling. The survey, involving a representative sample of 1,000 adults, indicated that the majority of respondents viewed idling as unacceptable in a range of locations, including near schools, colleges and shops. Over 80% of respondents agreed that idling exposes people outside the vehicle to emissions harmful to health, while only around one third were aware that idling is an offence.

Actions to reduce Stationary Idling are important and could be considered as part of a wider package of complementary measures designed to reduce air pollution and increase sustainability. Cutting avoidable emissions at source either through enforcement of Stationary Idling offences and/or encouraging behaviour change can complement local air quality management, active travel initiatives, and public health objectives forming part of an effective local response to pollution hotspots.

In issuing this guidance the Welsh Ministers are doing so in reliance on section 88 of the Environment Act 1995 and section 60 of the Government of Wales Act 2006.

Section 88(2) of the 1995 Act places a duty on local authorities in Wales to have regard to guidance issued under section 88. This is indicated in this guidance where we say ‘local authorities must’ / ‘local authorities should’ or similar.

Section 60 of the Government of Wales Act does not place a duty on local authorities in Wales to have regard to guidance issued under it. This is indicated in this guidance where we say ‘local authorities may’ / ‘local authorities could’ or similar.

Welsh Language Standards

Local authorities are required to comply with the Welsh Language Standards under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and the Welsh Language Standards (No. 1) Regulations 2015 (“the 2015 Regulations”). In delivering anti-idling activity, including enforcement activities, authorities should ensure that Welsh is treated no less favourably than English, including through the provision of bilingual communications, equal prominence and quality of Welsh-language materials, and consideration of impacts on the Welsh language when developing and implementing policy and enforcement approaches. This includes ensuring that fixed penalty notices, enforcement-related correspondence, and other public facing communications are available in Welsh and English. Where enforcement functions or related activities are undertaken by a contractor or other third party on behalf of a

[3] Natural Resources Wales / SoNaRR 2025: Pollution; Air Pollution | Advisor to Government on Nature Conservation | JNCC

local authority, authorities should ensure that Welsh language requirements continue to be met.

Tackling stationary engine idling, particularly in identified hotspots, creates opportunities to promote bilingual communication, integrate Welsh language educational and awareness materials, and normalise the use of Welsh in environmental initiatives. It can support greater visibility and accessibility of Welsh in public communications, and enable delivery approaches tailored to local communities, including Welsh-speaking areas.

When a local authority exercises its powers under the 2003 Regulations to issue fixed penalty notices for Stationary Idling Offences, it engages with members of the public through notices that must contain specified information including particulars of the circumstances of the offence, the amount of the penalty, payment methods, and procedural information. An authorised person who considers that a Stationary Idling Offence has been committed may issue a fixed penalty notice to the driver of the vehicle. The interpretative provisions in the 2015 Regulations do not contain any exemption for enforcement activities or fixed penalty notices relating to vehicle emissions offences. The 2015 Regulations require that any form produced for public use must be produced in Welsh, and the Welsh language version must be treated no less favourably than the English language version.

Local authorities are reminded to ensure all public facing materials are available in Welsh, are easy to access, clearly visible and proactively offered.

Purpose of guidance

The purpose of this guidance is to encourage and support local authorities in Wales to develop and implement local approaches to reducing Stationary Idling, ideally in known hotspots. It explains the issue, sets out the legal and policy context, and provides practical advice on awareness raising, behaviour change, partnership working and enforcement.

Tackling Stationary Idling is a public health measure that can help reduce exposure to vehicle emissions and traffic noise. Informing people about the impacts of vehicle emissions and encouraging drivers to switch off their engines can also act as a catalyst for more sustainable travel decisions. Recent amendments to the Road Traffic (Vehicle Emissions) (Fixed Penalty) (Wales) Regulations 2003 give local authorities greater flexibility in how they respond to Stationary Idling Offences.

Reducing Stationary Idling could help support key policies and legislation including:

- Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
- Clean Air Plan for Wales: Healthy Air, Healthy Wales
- Environment (Air Quality and Soundscapes) (Wales) Act 2024
- Promoting Awareness of Air Pollution Delivery Plan 2025-2028

- Local air quality and soundscapes management in Wales 2025[4]

Our intention is that this guidance will help inform the approach undertaken by local authorities to improve air quality. This includes, for example, measures to raise awareness of air pollution harms, and support for Active Travel and safer streets. The guidance also provides a reference for enforcement activities.

While we recognise that enforcement lies with local authorities, we anticipate that various sections of this document may be of interest to other bodies associated with air quality management, as well as organisations whose activities may impact on air quality. This includes those working in planning and transport, schools and other educational institutions, health organisations and professionals, and community groups. While these sections may provide useful insight and tools for tackling Stationary Idling, the activities described would not amount to enforcement action.

What is stationary idling?

Stationary Idling occurs when a vehicle with an internal combustion engine (ICE) is not moving but its engine remains running.

Stationary Idling is a harmful practice that creates avoidable air pollution and noise, and contributes to the formation of smog. It also wastes fuel, increasing costs for drivers. When a vehicle is idling, pollutants are released into a single location for an extended period, increasing exposure for people nearby and for vehicle occupants. It also contributes to increased noise levels in that location at that time.

Rule 123 of the Highway Code says that drivers, when their vehicle is stationary on a public road and likely to remain so for more than a couple of minutes, should apply the parking brake and switch off the engine.[5]

Under section 42 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 a person committing a Stationary Idling Offence is liable, upon summary conviction to a fine. Under the 2003 Regulations an authorised person may issue a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) for a Stationary Idling Offence. The same offence cannot attract both a summary conviction and an FPN.

Types of vehicles it applies to

Petrol, diesel and hybrid vehicles

A Stationary Idling Offence only applies to vehicles with machinery that produce exhaust emissions when stationary. Therefore, petrol, diesel, and hybrid vehicles are all included when we discuss Stationary Idling.

Hybrid vehicles may still produce emissions when their ICE operates while the vehicle is stationary, even if the vehicle is capable of operating in electric mode.[6]

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[4] The Local Air Environment Local air quality and soundscapes management in Wales 2025

[5] Highway Code Rule 123 - Highway Code

[6] Cars and Fuel Options | Vehicle Certification Agency

Drivers of hybrid vehicles should therefore avoid Stationery Idling in the same way as drivers of petrol and diesel vehicles should.

Manufacturers of ICE vehicles commonly advise drivers to avoid Stationary Idling to achieve the most efficient and economical engine performance. Engines and exhaust systems reach optimum operating temperature much faster through driving than idling.[7] Catalytic converters, which reduce exhaust pollutants, need to reach operating temperature to work effectively. When they do not, fuel may be only partially burned. This leads to increased emissions and residue build-up, reducing fuel efficiency and contributing to engine wear.[8]

Electric vehicles

Battery electric vehicles do not have an ICE and therefore do not produce exhaust emissions while stationary.

Taxi and private hire vehicles

Drivers may spend extended periods waiting at taxi ranks or pick up locations. However, booking, dispatch and metering systems do not generally require the engine to be running. Modern taxi dispatch systems may also operate via mobile data terminals, smartphones or dedicated communications equipment powered independently of the engine. Taxi and private hire vehicles are subject to the same legal requirements relating to Stationary Idling as other vehicles when on a public road.

Turbocharged vehicles

Turbocharged engines use exhaust gases to increase engine efficiency and power. These systems operate at very high temperatures and may require specific operating procedures regarding warm-up and cool-down. There is a range of advice which encourages drivers to idle for varying time periods after prolonged high-speed or high-load driving. However, for most everyday journeys, and for modern vehicles including those equipped with systems that circulate coolant after the engine has been switched off, such Stationary Idling is not necessary.

Stationary Idling Offences apply equally to all drivers and all vehicles with an ICE, except where a specific exemption applies in law.

Typical locations where people idle their vehicles

Stationary Idling commonly occurs in a range of places, but not all instances will constitute a Stationary Idling Offence. Local authorities should ensure that enforcement officers are aware of what constitutes a Stationary Idling Offence and when enforcement is appropriate. In order to protect public health and the environment, local authorities may want to undertake work to discourage Stationary Idling in all cases.

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[7] which_is_greener.pdf
[8] Idling your car - the myths

It is useful to consider that Stationary Idling may be more problematic in certain circumstances or locations. Common hotspots include (not all of these examples would amount to a Stationary Idling Offence):

- Outside **educational facilities** such as schools and colleges where car (including taxi/private/hire vehicles) and bus drivers are more likely to be waiting for long periods of time and where large numbers of children and young people may be exposed to vehicle emissions.
- **Nurseries –** where parents, carers, taxis and delivery vehicles may be stopping, or waiting at drop-off and collection times, and where young children can be particularly vulnerable to the health impacts of exposure to vehicle emissions.
- **Day care** centres**,** residential **care homes, nursing homes** and **supported-living facilities** particularly during drop-off, pick-up and visiting times. When private cars, community transport, minibuses and service vehicles leave engines running while waiting, increasing risk of exposure to older people, individuals with underlying health conditions, staff and visitors.
- Outside **medical facilities** such as **clinics, GP surgeries** and **hospitals** where drivers may be waiting for extended periods of time and are more likely to impact staff, visitors and people with health conditions that could be worsened by air pollution.
- At **level crossings,** where stationary traffic can build up while vehicles wait to cross train tracks, sometimes for extended periods. Drivers may leave engines idling during these waits, contributing to increased noise and air pollutant levels in the surrounding area, impacting on pedestrians, residents and other waiting vehicle occupants at regular intervals throughout the day.
- At **drive-through** food and drink outlets where customers and staff may be exposed to vehicle emissions. In the case of staff this may be for long periods at a time across their shifts.
- At **shopping areas** including high streets, supermarkets, car parks and retail parks, impacting customers entering and leaving stores.
- At **bus stops** and **bus stations** during lengthy waits, and when drivers are changing over, impacting queuing customers and nearby residents.
- At **train stations** and other transport interchanges where vehicles wait for arriving passengers, particularly at pick-up/drop-off points and adjacent waiting areas.
- At **taxi ranks** where drivers may leave their engines running for lengthy periods whilst waiting for customers, exposing other drivers and passersby.

- At **coach parks** where drivers of multiple coaches may leave their engines running whilst waiting for their departure timeslot, exposing queuing customers.
- At **car parks**, impacting on other drivers in their vehicles and those entering and exiting the site, and also on residents in the vicinity.
- At **fuel stations** whilst waiting to access a pump, exposing other customers to exhaust emissions.
- **Loading bays and depots**, where vehicles may remain stationary with engines running.

High risk locations

The following are examples of locations where disproportionately high numbers of vulnerable people may be exposed to pollution from stationary engine idling.

Schools

Schools can play a unique role in raising awareness of air pollution and actions to reduce environmental impacts. Stationary engine idling is commonly reported outside schools, particularly at drop-off and pick-up times. Young children are especially vulnerable because their lungs are still developing.[9] Traffic related air pollution has been linked to slower response times and reduced attention performance among school children.[10]

Vehicle emissions can contribute to outdoor pollution around schools and to indoor particulate pollution in school buildings. Research has found correlations between outdoor traffic-related pollution and indoor particulate levels.

Since Stationary Idling is a significant local emission source, evidence from school-based anti-idling initiatives indicates that idling can contribute substantially to local pollution levels. Successful activity aimed at reducing idling has shown measurable improvements in air quality around schools.[11]

Reducing air pollution around schools by 20% could improve children's working memory by around 6% — equivalent to up to four additional weeks of learning time each year.[12]

Including air pollution within the curriculum provides an opportunity to educate children and to reach adults through school communities.

This guidance includes resources to support school-based anti-idling activity, including an example of: a leaflet for parents, a school observations template and

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[9] Early life risks to your child's lungs | Asthma + Lung UK

[10] Association between traffic-related air pollution in schools and cognitive development in primary school children: a prospective cohort study. – DOAJ; Traffic-related Air Pollution and Attention in Primary School Children: Short-term Association - PMC

[11] Air Quality and Behavioural Impacts of Anti-Idling Campaigns in School Drop-Off Zones, Reducing car idling at primary schools: An intervention study of parent behaviour change in Perth, Western Australia - PubMed

[12] Prediction of changes in working memory and associated changes in educational attainment

sample newsletter notices. The resources provided in the annexes can be used alongside awareness-raising activities, monitoring and school-led campaigns. Additional toolkits, case studies and materials can be found under Links to further resources. Many of these resources describe activities such as classroom learning and awareness raising, hands-on monitoring and observations, development of campaign materials (e.g. posters/banners), and follow-up assessment, with findings shared across the school community.

These activities may also help pupils develop skills in data collection, evaluation and effective communication.

Hospitals and Care Homes

Hospitals, GP practices, care homes and other healthcare settings can play an important role in reducing exposure to harmful emissions. Stationary Idling is commonly reported at healthcare sites, particularly around emergency departments, ambulance bays, patient drop-off points and car parks.

Patients, residents and service users at these locations are often particularly vulnerable to the effects of poor air quality, including older people, pregnant women, infants, and individuals with existing respiratory, cardiovascular or other long-term health conditions. Exposure can exacerbate existing illness and increase health risks for both patients and staff.

Vehicle emissions can accumulate where vehicles queue or wait, increasing exposure for people entering or leaving buildings. Outdoor traffic related pollution can also infiltrate indoor environments, meaning idling may affect both outdoor and indoor air quality.

Healthcare settings can also lead by example. Practical measures can include anti-idling signage, staff awareness campaigns, engagement with ambulance services and care providers, and infrastructure such as external electrical power connections to reduce the need for Stationary Idling.

Common reasons for idling

There are many reasons why drivers may leave their ICEs running. Understanding these can help inform approaches to reducing Stationary Idling.

Convenience and habit

- Drivers may believe that switching off the engine is unnecessary when stopped for short periods.
- Force of habit, particularly in queues or while waiting to pick someone up.

Passenger comfort

- Keeping the vehicle warm or cool for comfort.

Waiting situations

- School pick-ups and drop-offs.

- Taxi ranks.
- Loading or unloading goods or passengers.
- Waiting at level-crossings or outside shops, services.

Misinformed beliefs about vehicle maintenance/usage

- Believing that that an engine needs to "warm up" by idling before driving.
- Believing that it is better for engine and battery life not to turn an engine off and re-start it.
- Thinking that idling is essential to recharge the vehicle battery.
- Believing that restarting the engine uses more fuel or causes wear.

Work-related or operational reasons

- Emergency vehicles keeping their engines engaged to power and operate onboard equipment.
- Commercial vehicles powering ancillary equipment.
- Drivers remaining in vehicles during work breaks.

Situational factors and personal views

- Congestion and slow-moving traffic.
- Running equipment powered by the vehicle, such as heating/cooling systems, radio, or phone charging, etc.
- Belief and potential worry, when in traffic, that the vehicle will not re-start or that traffic will be delayed by the time it takes for the engine to be re-started.
- Not knowing or not believing that turning the engine off is beneficial in any way.
- Belief that it is right to idle an engine because other people do so.

Why tackling idling matters?

Regardless of why people do it, Stationary Idling is a source of avoidable emissions. Reducing Stationary Idling is a simple action that can deliver both immediate and long-term improvements in air quality, public health, and local environments.

Stationary Idling facts

- Every minute a car engine is left idling, it produces enough exhaust to fill up to 150 balloons with harmful pollutants, including cyanide, nitrogen oxides (NO_x) and fine particulate matter ($PM_{2.5}$).[13]

[13] Engine off every stop — Idling Action

- Short term exposure to elevated air pollution can cause immediate health effects, while long term exposure is linked to reduced life expectancy.[14]
- Idling for 30 seconds produces nearly twice as much pollution as switching off then restarting an engine.[15]
- Air quality inside a vehicle can be as poor as, or worse than, outside, particularly when stationary near other idling vehicles.[16]
- Idling for an hour can waste half a gallon (two and a quarter litres) of fuel or more.[17]
- Idling for long periods can increase engine wear and may lead to higher maintenance costs over time.[18]
- Vehicle engines burn fuel less efficiently when idling than when driving, leading to unnecessary emissions and fuel waste.[19]
- Because emissions are released in one location, idling can significantly increase localised air pollution.[20]
- Excessive idling can cause damage to your vehicle over time.[21]
- Switching off an engine and restarting typically results in less pollution than leaving it running.[22]
- Modern engines only need a short period to warm up before driving, even in cold weather.[23]
- Vehicles fitted with stop–start technology are designed to cope with frequent restarts – it is not necessary to disable this to avoid disproportionate wear.[24]

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[14] Air-pollution-fact-sheet-Feb-2020.pdf; Health matters: air pollution - GOV.UK; Air pollution linked to 30,000 UK deaths in 2025 and costs the economy and NHS billions, warns Royal College of Physicians | RCP

[15] TRL-Executive-Summary.pdf

[16] Anti-idling | Cheshire West and Chester Council

[17] Tackling vehicle idling | Merton Council

[18] A review on idling reduction strategies to improve fuel economy and reduce exhaust emissions of transport vehicles - ScienceDirect; Impact of idling on fuel consumption and exhaust emissions and available idle-reduction technologies for diesel vehicles – A review - ScienceDirect; d0bd25_0225bb7a5ff64341b5d0657472e36a7c.pdf

[19] Consumer Guide to Reducing Vehicle Idling; which_is_greener.pdf

[20] Full article: Reduction of atmospheric fine particle level by restricting the idling vehicles around a sensitive area; A multi-site analysis of the association between black carbon concentrations and vehicular idling, traffic, background pollution, and meteorology during school dismissals - ScienceDirect

[21] See 18

[22] See 18 and 19

[23] which_is_greener.pdf; Should You Warm Up Your Car Before Driving? - Consumer Reports; Idling your car - the myths

[24] See 18 and 19

- Idling to recharge a vehicle battery is inefficient. It results in unnecessary fuel consumption and emissions.[25]

Health and Environmental impacts

Air quality

Clean air is essential to everyday life and long-term public health.

Air pollution is one of the most serious environmental threats to public health in Wales. It affects the air we breathe every day – at home, at work and in our communities.[26]

It affects everyone, but children, older people and people with certain health conditions are particularly vulnerable.

Road transport is one of the largest contributors to harmful air pollutants and noise in Wales, particularly in urban and roadside locations.[27]

Vehicle emissions contribute to a mixture of harmful pollutants collectively known as traffic-related air pollution (TRAP). Concentrations are often highest in areas of congestion, where vehicles may be idling or moving slowly.[28]

Research has shown that pollutant concentrations are often higher near ground level.[29] Babies in pushchairs, young children, people using wheelchairs or mobility scooters, and other vulnerable groups may therefore face increased exposure in areas where engines are left idling.[30]

Research into the specific impacts of stationary idling on public exposure is limited. However, idling increases the volume of pollution in the air and frequently occurs in areas where the public may be directly exposed.

Therefore, action to tackle Stationary Idling can be used as part of any package to reduce the effects of TRAP on public health.

Health impacts

Exposure to air pollution is linked to a variety of illnesses, e.g.:

- eczema
- itchy eyes
- respiratory disease

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[25] Stop-start engines and idling – common myths revealed | RAC Drive
[26] Promoting awareness of air pollution in Wales: delivery plan 2025 to 2028 [HTML] | GOV.WALES
[27] Natural Resources Wales / SoNaRR2020: Transforming the transport system
[28] Domestic air pollution emissions from transport in 2023 - GOV.UK; Near-road Vehicle Emissions Air Quality Monitoring for Exposure Modeling - PMC; How idling and maneuvering affect air quality: Case study of school commutes - ScienceDirect; Chemistry, street canyon geometry, and emissions effects on NO2 “hotspots” and regulatory “wiggle room” | npj Climate and Atmospheric Science
[29] Redalyc.Maximum ground level cencentration of air pollutant
[30] A review of factors surrounding the air pollution exposure to in-pram babies and mitigation strategies - ScienceDirect

- cardiovascular disease
- cancer
- impaired child development
- cognitive effects
- adverse pregnancy outcomes
- premature death

Impacts occur across the life course but children, older people and those with existing health conditions are at greater risk.

Exposure during pregnancy can affect physical and cognitive development, with impact extending into childhood and adulthood (e.g. lower language abilities or lower motor abilities).[31]

Children's lungs are still developing, making them more susceptible to the harmful effects of air pollution. Lung growth and capacity can be significantly affected. Children are also typically closer to the ground, nearer to exhaust emissions, and breathe more rapidly relative to their body weight, often breathing through the mouth rather than the nose, which reduces natural filtration and can increase pollutant intake.[32]

Older people and individuals with chronic respiratory or cardiovascular conditions (for example asthma, heart disease and diabetes) are also more vulnerable to adverse effects.

Long-term exposure has been associated with cognitive decline and increased mortality, among other outcomes.[33]

These impacts reduce quality of life, contribute to widening health inequalities (especially in deprived, high traffic areas and pollution hotspots), and increase pressure on health services through higher hospital admissions and GP visits. This can also lead to lost productivity and reduced workforce participation.

There is no clear safe threshold below which exposure poses no risk to human health. Evidence suggests health impacts occur even at low levels, including from routine short-term exposure.

The Royal College of Physicians estimates that air pollution could be linked the equivalent of 30,000 deaths in 2025 in the UK.

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[31] Prenatal air pollution exposure is associated with altered neurodevelopmental outcomes in early childhood - Bonthrone - The Journal of Physiology - Wiley Online Library

[32] Air pollution: A threat to children's rights | UNICEF; How air pollution affects your child's lungs | Asthma + Lung UK

[33] Long-term exposure to outdoor air pollution linked to increased risk of dementia | University of Cambridge; Air pollution and older people - Reports - Impact on Urban Health

At an individual level, exposure to air pollution shortens the average person's lifespan by 1.8 years, an impact comparable to other major causes of death and disease, such as cancer (2.5 years) and tobacco smoking (2.1 years).[34]

Around 33,000 healthy life-years were estimated to be lost in Wales in 2023 due to air pollution[35] .

Environmental and Climate impacts

Air pollution also damages wildlife, natural habitats and biodiversity. It is estimated that up to 88% of Welsh habitats are at risk.[36]

Road transport emissions, particularly carbon dioxide (CO_2), contribute to climate change by trapping heat in the atmosphere. Black carbon (commonly known as soot) can further amplify climate impacts by absorbing sunlight and accelerating melting when deposited on snow and ice.

Other pollutants associated with vehicle emissions including particulate matter ($PM_{2.5}$), volatile organic compounds (VOCs), carbon monoxide (CO) and oxides of nitrogen (NO_X) contribute to poor air quality, smog formation, ground-level ozone formation and acid deposition, with wider impacts on ecosystems, soil and vegetation.

Wales has a legally binding commitment to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050[37], requiring sustained reductions across sectors and improvements in wider environmental outcomes, including air quality.[38] The Net Zero Wales framework is underpinned by statutory targets and carbon budgets approved by Senedd Cymru.

While delivery priorities may evolve over time, local action to reduce emissions from road transport remains aligned with Wales's long-term legal commitments and public health goals.[39]

Noise

In Wales, it is estimated that around 25% of the population live in homes exposed to road traffic noise above the Environmental Noise Directive's threshold for noise-mapping of 55 dB L_{den}.[40] While Stationary Idling may not contribute significantly to overall road traffic noise[41], the Environment (Air Quality & Soundscapes) (Wales) Act 2024 recognises that sound impacts are not determined by decibel level alone.

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[34] a-breath-of-fresh-air-responding-to-the-health-challenges-of-modern-air-pollution.pdf
[35] Global Burden of Disease (GBD)
[36] Natural Resources Wales / SoNaRR2020: Air quality
[37] Enabling the People of Wales to Deliver and Benefit from the Net Zero Transition in 2026-2030 and beyond
[38] Climate change targets and carbon budgets | GOV.WALES
[39] Wellbeing of Wales 2025: a globally responsible Wales [HTML] | GOV.WALES; Cars, cows, and coal: Welsh emissions from 1990 to 2023
[40] Noise and soundscape plan for Wales 2023 to 2028 | GOV.WALES; Environmental Noise Mapping 2022 | DataMapWales; Deprivation | Stats Wales
[41] Cars & Noise | Vehicle Certification Agency

Persistent or repetitive noise can significantly affect the quality of the sound environment and can contribute to annoyance, particularly in otherwise quiet settings or during evening or night-time hours.

According to a World Health Organization (WHO) report, one in three individuals is annoyed during the daytime, and one in five experiences disturbed sleep at night because of traffic noise. Noise pollution is not just disturbing, it also has implications for health, increasing the risk factors for ischemic heart disease and hypertension, hearing and cognitive impairment, and other health burdens.[42]

Noise impacts can be cumulative where multiple vehicles are idling, idling is prolonged or background noise levels are low. Persistent low-to-moderate noise can be more disruptive than short, louder events.

According to the Wales National Travel Survey[43] for March to August 2025, 800 respondents (26%) said they were regularly bothered by noise outside of their home. 80 of these included idling vehicles as a source of this noise.

Traffic related noise can also disturb wildlife and affect environmental quality.

Against this background reducing Stationary Idling may have the added benefit of reducing traffic noise and can benefit the environment and people's physical and mental wellbeing.

Summary

Air pollution can occur in many settings and affects all members of society. Road transport is a significant contributor to carbon emissions and local air pollution.

Although overall air quality has been improving, exposure to vehicle emissions remains highly localised in established pollution hotspots.

Stationary Idling is a source of often avoidable emissions. Targeted action to reduce Stationary Idling is a simple and effective measure that can deliver immediate reductions in pollution, lower public exposure to harmful pollutants, and support climate objectives.

Reduced Stationary Idling may contribute to improved soundscape quality by reducing intrusive engine noise and enabling more positive sounds to be perceived, with wider benefits for physical and mental wellbeing.

Local authorities can play a critical role through their influence over:

- environmental health improvement
- local transport systems
- traffic management and enforcement
- air quality management areas (AQMAs)
- planning and place-based decision making

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[42] Burden of disease from environmental noise: quantification of healthy life years lost in Europe; (PDF) Burden of Disease from Environmental Noise. Quantification of Healthy Life Years Lost in Europe

[43] Headline results: preliminary, six-month results | Transport for Wales

- public sector fleet and operational practices

Stationary idling and the law

Highway Code Rule 123 - states that drivers '**must not** leave a parked vehicle unattended with the engine running or leave a vehicle engine running unnecessarily while that vehicle is stationary on a public road[44]. Whilst the Highway Code is not, in itself, a legally binding document, the inclusion of the words **'must not'** indicates that the rule is supported by law. The rule communicates the legal requirement clearly to drivers and supports consistent interpretation of the legislation.

Legislation

Under certain circumstances Stationary Idling may be an offence enforced by the police under section 42 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 or under the 2003 Regulations it may be enforced by an authorised person (a person authorised by a local authority) through civil sanctions (an FPN).

A person cannot receive both a fine following summary conviction and an FPN for the same offence.

The power for local authorities to issue penalties under the Road Traffic (Vehicle Emissions) (Fixed Penalty) (Wales) Regulations 2003 is strictly limited to doing so in connection with vehicle exhaust emissions and does not extend to noise.

The law governing Stationary Idling Offences is largely set out in the following legislation:

- **Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986 – Regulation 98**

  Establishes the core legal requirement for drivers to switch off engines when a vehicle is stationary, unless a specific exemption applies.[45]

- **Road Traffic Act 1988 – section 42**

  Provides the legal enforcement basis for Regulation 98 and makes it an offence to use a vehicle on a road in contravention of the Construction and Use Regulations.[46]

- **Road Traffic (Vehicle Emissions) (Fixed Penalty) (Wales) Regulations 2003 (as amended) by the 2026 Regulations (the 2003 Regulations)**

  Sets out the practical enforcement framework in Wales and gives authorised local authority officers the power to require drivers to switch off their engine where they reasonably believe a Stationary Idling Offence is being committed.

  The 2003 Regulations define a Stationary Idling Offence as a contravention of regulation 98 of the Construction and Use Regulations in relation to the

[44] Highway Code Rule 123 - Highway Code
[45] The Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986
[46] Road Traffic Act 1988

prevention of exhaust emissions. Regulation 12 of the 2003 Regulations provides that an offence is only committed if a driver refuses to switch of their vehicle's engine after being requested to do so. Regulation 13 of the 2003 Regulations provides that an FPN may be issued to drivers that refuse to comply, the penalty range is £75-£150.[47]

Exemptions

There are limited circumstances where Stationary Idling does not constitute an offence and therefore local authorities do not have the power to issue an FPN.

These include:

- when stationary due to traffic conditions (for example at traffic lights, in queues, waiting at level crossings or roadworks, or in congestion).
- when powering essential equipment (for example, on-board systems in emergency vehicles, and hydraulic doors or refrigeration units on lorries and vans).
- when the vehicle is on private land (where public access is restricted).
- to diagnose or repair a vehicle fault, when the engine needs to be running for maintenance or diagnostic purposes.

Local enforcement officers should familiarise themselves with these exceptions.

There is no specific exemption permitting Stationary Idling for the purpose of de-misting and de-icing windscreens. However, Rule 229 of the Highway Code requires that windscreens must be clear of ice, snow and mist before driving.[48] Therefore, local authorities are reminded that relying on their enforcement powers is optional. It may be in cases such as this they decide to exercise pragmatism, for example choosing to advise on alternative ways of clearing windows before commencing a journey rather than proceeding to issue an FPN. This is a matter for each local authority.

Penalty range

From **30 September 2026**, the penalty range for a Stationary Idling Offence increased to **£75-£150**.

Local authorities may now **choose**:

- to set **different fixed penalty amounts**, from within that range, that are linked to the circumstances of the offence, or
- set a **single penalty amount** from that range for all stationary idling offences committed in its area.

Before issuing an FPN, local authorities must set and publish the penalty amount(s) for its area. Where local authorities choose to set different penalty amounts linked to

[47] The Road Traffic (Vehicle Emissions) (Fixed Penalty) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2026
[48] Highway Code Rule 229 - Highway Code

the circumstances of the offence, they must also set and publish a scale that states each fixed penalty amount and the circumstances in which it applies.

Local authorities must publish this information on their website. Local authorities may choose to publish this information elsewhere, but this can only be in addition to publishing it on their website.

Revenues raised through fines can only be used for specific purposes as outlined in the use of net proceed section below.

Use of net proceeds

Any revenues must be only used for specific circumstances. These are:

- the enforcement and administration of stationary idling offences
- measures that support and encourage air quality improvements in the authority's area
- and/or reducing public exposure to transport emissions in the authority's area.

Setting fixed penalty amounts

Local authorities have the flexibility to apply penalties from within the amended range, either by establishing a single penalty amount for all Stationary Idling Offences in their area, or by identifying different penalty amounts that apply in specified circumstances.

Single Fixed Penalty Amount

A local authority may decide to apply a single penalty amount to all instances of stationary idling in its area.

Where a local authority decides to use a single penalty amount, this must be from the range provided for under regulation 8 of the 2003 Regulations (£75-£150).

Different fixed penalty amounts

A local authority may decide to apply different penalty amounts (from the £75-£150 range), these are to be linked to the circumstances of the offence.

The ability to set differing penalty rates that are linked to the circumstances of the offence provides an opportunity to establish a hierarchy, where Stationary Idling Offences may be considered more or less concerning, depending on the circumstances. A local authority must set and publish, on its website, a scale that states each fixed penalty amount and the circumstances when that amount applies. The same penalty amount must apply to all offences of the same type. An FPN issued for the wrong amount / not in compliance with a local authority's published scale would likely be invalid.

When deciding to link penalty amount to circumstance this could include:

- the proximity of the offence to a particular premises or type of premises, such as schools, hospitals, care homes
- time of the day, such as peak pedestrian time, school pick-up/ drop-off times
- location, such as confined or canyon streets, areas with poor air quality or within an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA)
- vehicle type, such as larger or higher emitting vehicles (buses, HGVs)

Example:

- infrequent instances of Stationary Idling on residential streets may occasionally expose residents to emissions. However, only a small number of people will be impacted in such case, and a local authority may decide to reflect this through applying a lower penalty amount in these locations

- in contrast, Stationary Idling may be a long-standing issue and source of complaints on a main road outside a local health clinic, where staff and vulnerable patients are frequently exposed. In such case, local authorities may wish to consider whether a penalty amount at the higher end of the range would be more appropriate

- similarly, Stationary Idling may be a concern outside or in close proximity to schools, where children, parents, staff and other pedestrians may be repeatedly exposed at certain times of the day

When deciding whether to apply a single penalty or a locally differentiated scale, authorities may wish to consider:

- the extent of the local problem
- known idling hotspots
- public complaints
- expected enforcement costs
- vulnerable locations, such as schools and hospitals
- the likely level of public exposure
- whether the offence occurs within an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA); and
- alignment with wider local air quality, transport and soundscape policies

The legal provisions do not limit what local authorities can consider as relevant circumstances when determining penalty structures. For example, if Stationary Idling is occurring within the boundaries of an AQMA, the scope of the 2003 Regulations means that local authorities may make this a relevant circumstance and they could link the penalty amount to these circumstances, implementing a higher penalty amount in these areas.

Local authorities may also wish to consider the issue of repeat offences, and whether penalties should be subject to an uplift in such cases. Consideration may need to be given as to how to ensure that they can accurately determine when drivers have previously received an FPN for a Stationary Idling Offence.

In all cases a local authority cannot exceed the maximum permitted penalty amount as provided for under the 2003 Regulations (as amended), currently this is £150.

The following list of matters, although not exhaustive, is likely to be relevant when determining penalty structures:

- the extent to which Stationary Idling is an issue locally
- the expected cost of enforcement
- repeat offences
- the extent to which the public, particularly vulnerable groups, may be exposed
- vulnerable locations, such as public roads surrounding schools and hospitals
- knowledge of problem hotspots, such as taxi ranks on public roads
- local sustainable transport policies
- public complaints
- how easy or challenging it may be to inform drivers of the circumstances/ what the penalty amount will be should they refuse to switch of their engine
- the approximate number of people impacted by Stationary Idling in specific locations
- proximity to green spaces e.g. parks
- the presence of an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA)
- the ability of drivers to pay
- Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation

When enforcing in a new area for the first time, it is recommended that no penalties be imposed during the first day(s) of enforcement. Instead, the opportunity may be taken to introduce and explain the local authority's anti-idling policy, and the fact that idling is an offence which the authority will be enforcing. Local authorities may wish to consider supporting its enforcement activities with information leaflets that motorists can take away to read, or by directing drivers to a website address.

An offence is only committed should a driver refuse to switch of their engine when required to do so by an enforcement officer and they continue to be stationary i.e. if they drive away or switch off their engine no offence has been committed.

A determining factor whether to switch off their engine or drive away for some people may be how much the penalty amount will be. Therefore, in order for drivers to make an informed decision, when an enforcement officer requests that a driver switches off their vehicle's engine, local authorities may wish to consider if enforcement officers should notify the driver of the penalty amount as part of the request or warning.

Setting circumstances / locations

The 2003 Regulations provide local authorities with a broad power to align circumstances with penalty amount (within the prescribed range). Welsh Government's expectation is that local authorities who choose to exercise this power will do so to target hotspot areas.

If a local authority chooses to link penalty amounts to circumstances, it must set and publish a scale showing each fixed penalty amount and the circumstances that apply

to it before a Stationary Idling Offence takes place. If it does not do this it is likely that any FPN issued would not be enforceable, equally if a FPN is issued for the wrong amount it is likely to be invalid also.

Where a local authority decides to take this approach, it will need to consider how to clearly define the applicable circumstances (this could include the areas to which it applies if that is a relevant circumstance).

Example:

Where local authority decides to target areas outside schools, it will need to consider how to define that area, whether it is only to apply at certain times of day, and how drivers will be informed (e.g. information published on the local authority website, which is the statutory minimum, but it may be that local authorities will wish to also use location-based notices where appropriate).

The simplest solution may be to designate certain roads around the premises where drivers are known to stop. These roads should then be stipulated in the published scales and may also be published in any other methods of public notification the local authority considers appropriate.

Publishing local penalty scales

Under regulation 13 of the 2003 Regulations where a local authority chooses to apply different penalty amounts to different circumstances or areas, it must publish a scale setting out each fixed penalty amount and the circumstances in which it applies.

For the purposes of the 2003 Regulations, “publish” means publish on the authority’s website. This is a minimum requirement, and local authorities may wish to also rely on additional means of publication. For example, this could take the form of: including notices fixed to street furniture / lamp posts along roads that fall within specified penalty locations, leaflets, official letters to residents, and letters to parents of school children, etc.

Local authorities must also ensure compliance with applicable Welsh Language Standards. This includes ensuring that information relating to enforcement activities, fixed penalty notices, signage, and supporting materials is available bilingually (in Welsh and English), and that neither language is treated less favourably than the other.

It is for local authorities to ensure they meet their statutory obligations to ensure that drivers are aware of the applicable penalty amounts and the situations in which they apply.

The Welsh Government is making funding available through the Local Air Quality Management Support Fund to help support the costs of developing and publishing penalty scales.

Reporting an idling problem

Authorities may also wish to provide a simple reporting route for residents to raise concerns about recurring idling problems. Reports from the public can help identify

priority locations for engagement, monitoring and, where necessary, targeted enforcement.

Local authorities can provide a platform for enabling the public to raise concerns about recurring idling problems. This information can be helpful to authorities in identifying hotspots for possible enforcement action.

Online forms are an effective way of enabling the public to raise issues and ensure that essential information is recorded, including exact location, frequency and duration of idling problems. However, authorities may also consider providing alternative reporting routes, including email, telephone, existing reporting platforms, and feedback gathered through community engagement or partnership working.

Local authorities may wish to map the locations where Stationary Idling is a recurring issue and consider the extent to which populations are being exposed. Where both frequency of Stationary Idling, and regular public exposure, including vulnerable groups, is occurring, these locations could be prioritised for action.

Fixed penalty enforcement of stationary idling offences

Enforcement team

The 2003 Regulations provide local authorities with the power to authorise any officers of the authority, or other persons, to issue FPNs for Stationary Idling Offences.

Stationary Idling Offences occur on the public highway, therefore, FPNs may not be issued for Stationary Idling on private property such as carparks (this includes supermarket, hospital, GP and fast-food restaurant carparks), coach stations or taxi ranks on private land, and ambulance bays on hospital grounds etc.

Local authorities are responsible for determining the necessary resources to their enforcement activities and ensuring that their enforcement officers are aware of, and comply with, the statutory requirements as provided for under the 2003 Regulations. A short lead-in period focused on information and warnings may be helpful when introducing enforcement in a new area for the first time.

Where an authorised officer has reasonable cause to believe that a driver is committing a Stationary Idling Offence, enforcement should follow a clear sequence as described in section Issuing FPNs.

Fixed penalty notices (FPNs)

FPNs provide the recipient with an opportunity to discharge any liability to conviction for an offence by paying a fixed sum of money within a specified period. They are typically used for low-level offences and provide an alternative to prosecution.

Issuing FPNs

Where an authorised person has reasonable cause to believe that a driver is committing a Stationary Idling Offence they should proceed to speak to the driver.

They should:

1. identify themselves
2. explain that an idling offence is believed to be taking place
3. request that the driver switches off the engine.

If the driver complies, or simply drives away, then no offence has taken place and an FPN cannot be issued.

If the driver fails to comply, an FPN may be issued by the authorised person as an alternative to prosecution.

Therefore, before issuing an FPN the driver must be driving an ICE Vehicle (this includes hybrids where the ICE is idling i.e. it's not only operating on battery). The driver must have been requested to turn off their vehicle's engine and they must either have refused to do so or have remained in the same location with their vehicle's engine running.

It is not defined in law how long a vehicle must remain stationary with its engine running for an offence to be committed. Therefore, local authorities may want to take a pragmatic approach to enforcement. It may be useful to note that Highway Code Rule 123 advises that, where a vehicle is stationary and likely to remain so for more than a couple of minutes, drivers should switch off their engines. However, the Highway Code guidance itself is not law. Local Authorities may want to consider whether their enforcement officers should time how long a vehicle has been Stationary Idling. Local Authorities may also want to issue guidance on this matter and include it in the information they publish regarding penalty amounts.

As a practical approach, local authorities could adopt a **two-minute** threshold to support consistent observation and enforcement of idling behaviour which is reflective of the highway code. The setting of a threshold may help support proportionate and consistent enforcement throughout an area.

Should local authorities wish to collect video evidence, whilst this isn't prohibited in the 2003 Regulations, local authorities should seek their own legal advice on this matter.

On issuing a penalty to a driver, the enforcement officer should explain the reasons for the specific penalty amount applying in this instance, with reference to the published scale of the local authority.

The driver should be requested to provide:

- Their name and address
- Their date of birth
- The name of the vehicle owner (where not the driver)

Failure to provide the required information to the enforcement officer when requested is itself an offence.

What the FPN should include

An FPN must be issued as soon as reasonably practicable, and not later than 24 hours after the commission of the offence. Where an FPN is not issued at the time of the offence, it must be posted within the 24-hour period. If this time period is not complied with, the FPN is not valid.

An FPN must provide the following information, and must be issued bilingually:

- the name and address of the person to whom the notice is issued
- the vehicle registration number
- the date of the offence
- the amount of the penalty
- details of where payment, and any correspondence, must be sent
- information on requesting a hearing, including timescales for doing so
- the acceptable method(s) for payment
- the period for payment of the penalty
- the consequences of non-payment

Keeping records

Enforcement authorities must keep records of all FPNs issued and any evidence in case the FPN goes to court.

This will include:

• All FPNs issued and decisions taken at each stage from issue through to payment or prosecution;

• Any representations received against each FPN;

• The evidence on which each FPN is based, in case the case goes to court.

This is in line with the Welsh Government Guidance on the use of Fixed Penalty Notices for Environmental Offences.[49]

Effective record-keeping supports transparency, consistency in enforcement, and the monitoring and evaluation of local enforcement activity. It may also help to evaluate the effectiveness of the amended Regulations.

A template has been provided at Annex 7, to support the collection and reporting of annual data on FPNs on Stationary Idling Offences issued within each local authority area.

[49] Guidance on the use of Fixed Penalty Notices for Environmental Offences

Non-payment

A driver may not be prosecuted for a Stationary Idling Offence during the period of payment unless they have given notice requesting a hearing (in which case the FPN would no longer be payable). Where the fixed penalty is not paid within the specified period, and a driver has not requested a hearing, the penalty amount increases by 50% of the original penalty amount. For example, a fixed penalty issued for the amount of £125 would increase to £187.50 on non-payment of the original FPN.

Should a fixed penalty remain unpaid at this stage, a local authority may proceed to recovery of the debt through the County Court system.

Withdrawal of fixed penalty notice

An FPN may be withdrawn if the local authority determines that it should not have been issued. Where this is the case, notice must be given to the recipient and any payment made must be reimbursed.

Support available to local authorities

The Welsh Government provides a range of grant funding schemes which may be able to support local anti-idling activity, or related measures to improve health and safety, to encourage active travel, and reduce car reliance. The below list, whilst not exhaustive, contains a range of Welsh Government funding schemes which local authorities are able to apply to. Schemes are subject to change - please check the Welsh Government website for current funding availability, scheme requirements, and application deadlines.

Local Air Quality Management Support Fund

Supports the Welsh Government's long-term ambitions for cleaner air, healthier communities and more resilient environments. Capital and revenue funding is available for local action to reduce exposure to air pollution and improve the quality of the sound environment.

Safe Routes in Communities Grant

Designed to improve accessibility and safety within communities, particularly to schools, and to encourage walking and cycling for short journeys. The grant can support enhancements that contribute to place-making and liveability.

Regional Transport Fund

Supports the delivery of policies and priorities set out in Regional Transport Plans (RTPs) and Regional Transport Delivery Plan (RTDPs). Funded schemes must contribute to Llwybr Newydd, the Wales Transport Strategy (WTS). Funding can support road safety and active travel investments, and measures to support behaviour change.

Active Travel Fund

This scheme provides funding to improve local walking, cycling and wheeling routes. The grant contributes to the development of new active travel routes as well as providing capital funding to deliver the schemes.

Road Safety Fund

Supports community safety through capital and revenue funding for measures that strive to eliminate people killed and seriously injured on roads in Wales. Measures may include education and training initiatives.

Available tools to tackle the problem

Efforts to tackle Stationary Idling have been steadily growing, and commonly involve a combination of education, behaviour change, preventative measures, and enforcement powers. In Wales, and across the UK, efforts to tackle Stationary Idling focus primarily on awareness-raising and behaviour change encouraging voluntary compliance, as well preventative measures. Targeted enforcement may also be used where known issues have not been satisfactorily addressed through other means.

This section outlines examples of key tools available to local authorities to help reduce Stationary Idling. The list is not exhaustive, and local authorities may identify additional tools or approaches suited to local circumstances.

The examples provided are intended to illustrate good practice and highlight resources that may support local action.

National and local initiatives and campaigns

- **Transport for Wales – Promoting Active Travel: Guidance for local authorities**

Supports reduction in Stationary Idling by promoting walking, wheeling and cycling for short journeys as well as behaviour change around everyday travel choices and reduce car use in high-risk locations. Intended for use alongside Transport for Wales Promotional Toolkit.[50]

- **Transport for Wales Promotional Toolkit**

Provides ready-to-use and adaptable materials, as well as practical guidance to support local behaviour-change initiatives encouraging active travel.[51]

- **Clean Air Day** and **Clean Air Night** (annual, June and January)

UK-wide awareness campaigns coordinated by Global Action Plan which encourage practical actions to reduce air pollution, including reducing Stationary Idling. Resources are available for local authorities, schools, communities and employers (e.g. anti-idling toolkits, school lesson plans, and campaign materials).[52]

- **Idling Action London** – **"Engine Off, Every Stop"**

A partnership initiative led by London boroughs, with campaign materials and toolkits that have been widely referenced beyond London. The approach focuses on education, health messaging and engagement in known idling hotspots before enforcement is considered.[53]

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[50] Promoting active travel: guidance for local authorities | GOV.WALES

[51] Active travel promotional toolkit | Transport for Wales

[52] Clean Air Day | Action for Clean Air; Clean Air Night | Global Action Plan; Reducing emissions from transport - Energy Saving Trust; Action for clean air | Build Back Cleaner Air; Cleaner air for communities | Action for Clean Air

[53] Idling Action

- **Travel for Life toolkits**

An education-focused behaviour-change programme supporting active and sustainable travel for children and young people. While delivered in London, it may provide useful examples for school-based initiatives.[54]

- **Green Growth Pledge**

A voluntary sustainability pledge for businesses (including fleet actions). Can provide toolkit and logos to publicise commitments to lower emission transport.[55]

- **Noise Action Week**

An annual week focused on raising awareness about noise as an environmental and public health issue, promoting practical actions to reduce noise and encouraging people to think about how their actions affect others. Can be useful in linking idling to both emissions and noise impacts.[56]

Physical solutions

- **School Streets Schemes**

Temporarily restrict motor vehicle access around schools during drop-off and pick-up times. These schemes have been used by several local authorities, including in Wales, to reduce traffic, emissions and idling outside schools. Welsh Government guidance for local authorities on improving road safety around schools can be found here.[57]

- **Air quality monitors (e.g. SAMHE)**

School-based monitoring projects can support awareness, education and engagement by making air quality data visible and relevant to pupils, parents and staff (e.g. guide for teachers, worksheets for pupils and data packs).[58]

- **Targeted signage at problem locations**

Bespoke signage has been used at predictable idling locations such as level crossings, taxi ranks, hospitals and schools to prompt drivers to switch off engines while waiting.[59]

Campaign groups and support organisations

- **Fleet Operator Recognition Scheme (FORS)**

Provides guidance and toolkits for fleet operators, including anti-idling policies and driver behaviour-change, myth-busting resources.[60]

- **Mums for Lungs**

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[54] TfL Travel for Life - Travel for Life
[55] Green Growth Pledge | Business Wales
[56] Noise Action Week | The Institution of Environmental Sciences: The IES
[57] School Streets | Hackney Council
[58] SAMHE
[59] Using behavioural insights to improve air quality in the London Borough of Merton
[60] Anti-Idling and Congestion-Cutting toolkit and driver guide - FORS - Fleet Operator Recognition Scheme

A parent-led campaign group raising awareness of the impacts of air pollution on children's health, particularly outside schools. Materials include posters, flyers and template letters.[61]

- **Global Action Plan**

An environmental charity supporting behaviour-change initiatives that address health impacts of air pollution, including stationary engine idling, often working with local authorities, schools and communities. Materials include posters, videos, leaflet templates and downloadable assets [62]

- **Asthma + Lung UK**

A health charity highlighting links between traffic related air pollution and respiratory conditions. Their evidence-based messaging may support education-led engagement and awareness activity.[63]

- **British Heart Foundation**

A UK charity that funds research into heart and circulatory diseases and supports people understand and reduce health risks. Provides clear public health messaging on air pollution with a strong focus on cardiovascular impacts, which can be used for campaign materials or school engagement.[64]

[61] Idling — Mums for Lungs
[62] Global Action Plan | Our lives our planet
[63] Resources + projects for schools | Asthma + Lung UK
[64] Air pollution and your heart - BHF

Annex 1. Examples of anti-idling initiatives from around the UK

This section illustrates some of the positive work taking place across the UK to tackle emissions and improve air quality. It provides a range of real-life examples of initiatives and activities that may offer inspiration for local authorities when developing or refining their own anti-idling or behaviour change initiatives, highlighting good practice from both Wales and across the UK.

Pembrokeshire County Council

Public Protection Service of Pembrokeshire County Council led an initiative aimed at addressing vehicle idling, in which a non-enforcement approach was trialled. Their "no idling" schemes were trialled at two schools within the county.

At Neyland Community School, a pupil led project was organised to encourage parents to switch off their engines at the school gates at drop-off or pick-up times, or to leave the car at home where possible. The school's Eco Warriors Group working in collaboration with the Pembrokeshire County Council Pollution Control Officer, played a key role in delivering the project, which included the installation of signage advising parents and other visitors to switch off their engines while waiting, as well as direct engagement with parents to support the success of the scheme. The Public Protection Service contributed to both the development of the initiative and the design and production of the signage.[65]

Cardiff Council

In January 2020, Cardiff Council launched five School Streets as pilot projects at Ysgol Gynradd Melin Gruffydd, Ysgol Gynradd Pencaerau, Peter Lea Primary School, Llandaff Church in Wales Primary School and Lansdowne Primary School.

The initiative has since expanded to 19 School Streets, reducing traffic at 22 schools across the city. School Streets were a key component of the council's broader active travel schools programme, which supports schools in developing and implementing Active Travel Plans. This programme included interventions such as cycle training, cycle shelters, the Living Streets WOW travel tracker, and school bike/ scooter fleets. The active travel schools team collaborated closely with the education department to ensure that new schools funded through Welsh Government Band B have integrated active travel provisions.

Cardiff Council's School Streets were implemented through timed vehicle access restrictions enforced by automatic number-plate recognition (ANPR) cameras using Moving Traffic Offences powers. Residents, blue badge holders, carers, and businesses/community premises could apply for free School Street permits. These permits were linked to residents' parking permits, where applicable, to streamline the

[65] Pupils lead project to get parents to switch off engines at the school gates – The Pembrokeshire Herald; Saundersfoot councillor commends 'positive response' to switch-off engines outside school | tenby-today.co.uk

application process. Collaboration with the Council's enforcement and parking services teams was crucial in delivering School Streets.[66]

Vale of Glamorgan Council

Vale of Glamorgan Council launched a School Street project at Fairfield Primary School in 2023, following collaboration between Walk Wheel Cycle Trust in Wales, the Council, the school, and local stakeholders.

Dryden Road in Penarth has experienced longstanding traffic congestion and safety concerns during school drop-off and pick-up times, affecting residents and the school community.

To address these challenges, a School Street was introduced outside Fairfield Primary School, closing the road to motor vehicle traffic at school start and finish times while maintaining access for residents and people travelling actively. The School Street was delivered as part of the wider Fairfield Street Design Project, with a strong emphasis on community involvement and co-design and input from pupils, parents, residents and local stakeholders.

A series of engagement sessions and workshops were held to understand local concerns and priorities. Pupils from Fairfield Primary School also played an active role, undertaking a street audit to identify barriers to walking, wheeling and cycling, and to inform the final design.

The aim of the project was not only to reduce traffic at peak times, but also to create a safer and healthier environment around the school, encourage active travel, and build local support for change.

Feedback from the school and local community following implementation indicated that children, parents and carers felt safer at the beginning and end of the school day and were positive about the improvements to the street environment. School leadership highlighted the benefits in terms of safety and wellbeing for pupils accessing the school site.[67]

Saffron Walden

The Saffron Walden Clean Air Project aimed to raise awareness and reduce levels of air pollution among students, staff and parents. Schools have been running events with parents, delivering assemblies, monitoring air quality, and creating sustainable travel plans. There has also been a focus on tackling unnecessary engine idling with the message that this saves fuel and money and reduces emissions both inside and outside the car.[68]

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[66] School Streets: Cardiff Council [HTML] | GOV.WALES; School Streets; More School Streets in place for start of new school term | Road Safety Wales

[67] Traffic troubled road in Penarth sees launch of new School Street - Walk Wheel Cycle Trust; First school road closure to promote active travel starts off with success

[68] School Engagement & Education - Uttlesford District Council; Uttlesford District Council: Saffron Walden Clean Air Project | Local Government Association

Bath & North East Somerset Council – "Kick the Habit"

"Kick the Habit" campaign is an awareness-raising initiative designed to reduce unnecessary vehicle idling by highlighting the associated health risks. The campaign is primarily targeted at known idling hotspots, including schools, nurseries, clinics and hospitals.

Through the installation of anti-idling signage and visible prompts at site entrances and stopping points, the campaign highlights the impacts of idling on children, pregnant women, and people with existing heart and lung conditions. The council's website also provides downloadable resource packs to support consistent messaging across different settings.[69]

Portsmouth City Council – "When You Stop, Engine Stops"

The campaign focused on education and awareness-raising, encouraging drivers to switch off engines when stationary and safe to do so, promoting voluntary behaviour change rather than immediate enforcement. The campaign consisted of clear, simple public message, supported by the use of visual materials highlighting the pollution produced by idling, as well as outdoor advertising and posters positioned in areas with high exposure to traffic pollution. The council also introduced an online reporting tool, allowing residents to flag locations where engine idling frequently occurs, to help identify priority locations for further action.

The public engagement and survey activity undertaken by the council to understand attitudes to engine idling and awareness of the campaign demonstrated that the awareness of the campaign had increased following launch and that many drivers recognised that switching off engines while stationary can help reduce air pollution, though not all drivers routinely turned engines off in all situations.[70]

Norwich (University of East Anglia, Norwich City Council, Transport for Norwich)

A five-week trial was carried out by the University of East Anglia (UEA), in collaboration with Norwich City Council and Norfolk County Council, to test how behaviourally informed signage could influence driver behaviour and reduce engine idling.

Signage was installed at a traffic light-controlled junction in an area exceeding nitrogen dioxide limit, using messages based on psychological theories of social influence. Tested messages included: "Join other responsible drivers", "Think about your actions", "You will improve air quality".

Key findings showed that the proportion of drivers switching off their engines increased from 9.6% at baseline to 17% when signage was in place. Social norm

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[69] Anti-idling campaign: Kick the Habit | Bath and North East Somerset Council; Anti Idling Team | The HUB

[70] When you stop, engine stops – new anti-engine idling campaign launches - Cleaner Air Portsmouth; Engine Idling Wave Two - Your City, Your Say survey research; Campaign awareness of advertisement - Your City, Your Say survey research

messaging (highlighting what others were doing) was particularly effective, and some behaviour change persisted even after the signage was removed, indicating a potential lasting impact.

The trial also demonstrated that drivers were more likely to change behaviour when messages referred to collective behaviour or appealed to social responsibility and norms, rather than simply instructing[71]

Nottinghamshire County Council – No Idling Campaign

Nottinghamshire County Council developed a "No Idling" campaign to address unnecessary vehicle idling, with a particular focus on schools. The campaign consists of an education-led approach, offering no idling toolkit for schools, which provides step-by-step guidance, template letters, pledge material and activity ideas.

Active involvement of pupils is encouraged through assemblies, poster and banner design, and engagement activities at school drop-off and pick-up times. The campaign also promotes a "No Idling Pledge" for parents and carers, supported by template letters and vehicle stickers, to reinforce behaviour change at school gates.[72]

Warwickshire County Council

Warwickshire County Council's Cars Idling campaign forms part of the wider Safe and Active Schools programme. The programme provides schools with road safety education, digital resources and campaigns aimed at promoting safer and more sustainable travel behaviours, including reducing vehicle idling and car use at school gates.

As part of this the 'Kids Need Clean Air' campaign aims to educate drivers of the benefits of switching off their engines when stationary. Participating schools received banners displayed on school railings, encouraging people waiting outside to turn off their engines to support cleaner air. Supporting materials also included a digital animation offering advice to parents and carers, and content for school newsletters.[73]

Welsh Ambulance Services University NHS Trust

The Welsh Ambulance Services University NHS Trust (WAST) has been taking steps to reduce emissions across its operations. This has included measures to limit idling times at emergency departments in order to protect the health of colleagues and patients.

Portable fan systems have been made available for some vehicles where delays at emergency departments are prolonged. The bladeless multi-functional fans are capable of heating and cooling, as well as capturing airborne dust, allergens, odours,

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[71] 'Social influence' deters engine idling, researchers suggest – AirQualityNews
[72] No Idling Campaign;
[73] Kids need clean air! Drivers asked to switch off their engines when parked, waiting or stationary - Warwickshire County Council; Safe and Active Schools Programme: The Safe and Active Schools Programme - Warwickshire County Council

bacteria and other pollutants. These units are intended to maintain thermal comfort without the need to idle engines, thereby reducing diesel emissions.

The Trust has also introduced Shorelines at some hospitals. These are external electrical power connections that allow ambulances to draw power while parked. This has been helping to reduce idling, maintain vehicle battery life, and ensure essential equipment can continue to be powered.

WAST recognises the important personal and professional responsibility of its staff when using shorelines and bladeless fans to protect their own health and safety and that of patients, colleagues and others working in these environments. [74]

Northumbria Healthcare No Idling

A number of NHS organisations across the North East of England have taken a collaborative approach to reducing unnecessary vehicle and ambulance engine idling outside emergency departments, recognising these areas as locations where vulnerable patients, staff and visitors may be exposed to higher levels of air pollution.

In summer 2024, Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, Newcastle Upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (NUTH) and the North East Ambulance Service (NEAS) committed to reducing idling where it is not clinically necessary. This commitment was formally supported by the Chief Executives of Northumbria Healthcare and NUTH, alongside the former Chief Executive of NEAS, with a shared request for ambulance crews to switch off engines, where safe to do so, while waiting outside emergency departments. The commitment was subsequently reaffirmed by the ambulance service's new Chief Executive.

Unnecessary idling by ambulances and other vehicles can result in the build-up of pollutants, such as nitrogen dioxide, in areas immediately outside emergency departments. These emissions may negatively affect air quality and pose health risks, particularly for children, pregnant women, older people, and those with existing respiratory or cardiovascular conditions, as well as staff working in these environments. Similar impacts can arise from patient, staff and visitor vehicles that remain stationary with engines running on hospital sites.

Following the initial commitment, the approach was expanded. A year later, five additional NHS trusts, together with the NHS North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board (ICB), formally committed to reducing vehicle idling across their sites.

Reducing unnecessary idling has been identified as an action within the Royal College of Emergency Medicine's Green ED initiative, which aims to reduce the

[74] Keeping warm in the cold snap and reducing diesel emissions - Welsh Ambulance Services University NHS Trust

environmental impact of emergency medicine while maintaining high standards of patient care.[75]

GreenED

An initiative led by the Royal College of Emergency Medicine (RCEM) to support Emergency Departments (EDs) in measuring and reducing their environmental impact, while maintaining or improving the quality and safety of patient care.

Emergency Departments can progress through three levels of a sustainability framework at their own pace, implementing actions appropriate to their local context. Successful completion of all actions at a given level results in formal accreditation by RCEM.

GreenED places strong emphasis on practical, clinically appropriate changes that can reduce carbon emissions and environmental impact without compromising patient care. Reducing unnecessary vehicle and ambulance idling forms part of their broader sustainability agenda particularly in relation to reducing local air pollution around emergency departments and protecting the health of patients, staff and visitors in high-exposure areas.

GreenED is open to Emergency Departments across the UK and Ireland, including NHS organisations in Wales. Emergency Departments within Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board (Wales) have been formally recognised through the programme: including Royal Glamorgan Hospital, Prince Charles Hospital, and Princess of Wales Hospital.

These departments have been awarded Bronze GreenED status, demonstrating that Welsh sites are eligible for, and actively engaged in, the programme.[76]

Choked Up

Is a youth-led clean air and social justice campaign, founded in 2020 by sixth form students from diverse ethnic backgrounds living near some of London's most polluted roads. The campaign aims to raise awareness of toxic air pollution and highlight the disproportionate health impacts of traffic-related pollution on deprived and minority communities.

The campaign is best known for its use of road-style signs in pollution hotspots, featuring messages such as "Pollution Zone" and "Breathing Kills". These signs, alongside a coordinated social media campaign, successfully raised awareness of the disproportionate impacts of air pollution. The initiative attracted national media attention and helped to bring wider political and public focus to the issue.[77]

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[75] NHS trusts join forces to sign no idling commitment outside of emergency departments :: Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust; Introducing No Idling to Northumbria Healthcare

[76] greened.rcem.ac.uk

[77] Choked Up | Join the Ultimate Youth Sports Camp

Annex 2. Campaign approaches and messaging

Behaviour change

Personal awareness of a problem does not necessarily lead to behaviour change. Whilst motorists may understand that Stationary Idling is harmful, this alone may not be sufficient to influence their actions. People commonly need to be incentivised to change their behaviour. Therefore, any anti-idling campaign should go beyond awareness-raising and demonstrate clear, personal and immediate benefits of switching off engines.

People are more likely to change behaviour when:

- they understand how their actions make a difference
- the requested action is simple and achievable
- there is a clear personal or social benefit (for example, saving money, reducing exposure to pollution, or protecting children's health)

People usually try to achieve consistency between their beliefs and their actions. Encouraging individuals to make a public or personal commitment, such as signing a pledge, can help reinforce behaviour change. It can be a good way to motivate people to turn off their engines as it draws a clear line between their beliefs and the specific action they can take in support of their beliefs.

This can be more challenging in terms of environmental attitudes and behaviour, particularly when individuals perceive actions as inconvenient or of limited impact. Support for reducing emissions doesn't always translate into action that is less environmentally harmful, e.g. flying. One of the reasons for this could be conflicting or unclear environmental information and the fact that it's not always easy to understand what actions we can take that will make a difference without radical life changes. Campaign messaging should therefore be clear, consistent and practical, avoiding overly technical or complex language.

Research has shown that anti-idling activity is most effective when delivered as part of a coordinated package of education, engagement and (where necessary) enforcement

Local authorities may wish to consider:

- building awareness and understanding before enforcement is introduced
- maintaining consistent messaging across all channels
- reinforcing messages through visible, repeated interventions (e.g. signage, school campaigns, media)
- supporting sustained behaviour change

Messaging:

Consider messaging that is:

- positive and non-confrontational

e.g. “Turn off your engine and improve air quality around you”, “Turn it off and save money”, “Please Turn Off Your Engine for cleaner air”
- clear and action-oriented
  e.g. “Switch off your engine when stationary”
- locally relevant, particularly near idling hotspots, such as schools or healthcare settings
- avoid negative messaging (e.g. “no idling allowed”) where possible. Instead, use positive language such as: “idle-free zone”, “idle-less zone”, or “responsible drivers turn their engines off when stopped”

When enforcement powers are in use, messaging can also highlight that:

- idling is an offence
- but the focus remains on encouragement and behaviour change first

Education and awareness raising

Local authorities may wish to implement a range of complementary approaches.

Public engagement:

- hold an anti-idling awareness day and hand out educational materials
- distribute leaflets or educational materials to drivers, particularly in known hotspots
- make campaign materials available in libraries and other public areas, at petrol pumps or bus stops
- consider providing a simple reporting route for the public to raise concerns about recurring idling problems. Reports from the public can help identify priority locations for engagement, monitoring and, where necessary, targeted enforcement
- consider creating a dedicated webpage with helpful resources and factual information and statements
- prior to enforcement, information leaflets could be handed to stationary drivers
- enforcement activity is more likely to be effective when undertaken as part of a campaign to inform and educate the public

Targeted engagement

- work with schools to encourage parent/carer pledges and pupil-led campaigns
- publish articles in school newsletters or local media
- consider installing signs on posts in areas where idling is a known problem.

Research undertaken by Colchester Borough Council revealed that roadside signage is a low maintenance and cost-effective way to influence driver behaviour, and can generate immediate results.

Business engagement and internal leadership

- engage with local businesses such as drive-through restaurants, taxi ranks, delivery services to seek their support in tackling unnecessary idling

- encourage businesses to put up signs/stickers/posters and adopt anti-idling practices
- promote the development of anti-idling policy for local authority owned vehicles and vehicles used under contract by suppliers of services to the authority

Supporting information for campaigns

When designing your campaign materials think about including clear, factual and accessible information to support behaviour change.

Example:

- idling reduces your vehicle's fuel efficiency
- idling costs you money
- idling creates unnecessary air pollution and noise
- idling for more than 10 seconds uses more fuel and produces more emissions than stopping and restarting your engine
- turning engines off and on does not damage modern vehicles
- engines reach optimum operating temperature more effectively when driven rather than idled
- catalytic converters operate efficiently only when up to temperature – idling a stationary vehicle may not achieve optimum temperature and, therefore, more pollution will be emitted from the exhaust
- modern vehicle batteries are designed to withstand frequent restarting
- in-vehicle heating will operate more effectively when a vehicle is driven to get up to temperature compared to idling
- vehicle occupants are not protected from air pollution – research shows that people inside vehicles may experience high exposure to pollution, meaning idling can affect drivers and passengers as well as pedestrians

Examples of simple summary messages that can be effective:

- stationary idling gets you nowhere
- reduce pollution
- idling wastes fuel, money and harms health
- idling is an offence
- make our streets a more pleasant place to walk, wheel, cycle and play

Link to enforcement

Where enforcement is being introduced, consider it as part of a graduated approach:

- begin with education and awareness-raising
- build up to enforcement by clearly publicising the commencement date and issuing timed announcements in the run-up
- provide clear information about legal requirements and penalties
- continue to reinforce messages alongside enforcement to maintain behaviour change

Annex 3. Anti-idling policy statement for business use

Anti-idling policy

[insert business name] recognises the potential environmental impacts arising from fleet operations and commits to take reasonable action to limit vehicle emissions. It is further recognised that, under certain circumstances, stationary engine idling is an offence.

We will require all staff driving on behalf of the company to avoid unnecessary engine idling when vehicles in their operation are stationary (except when stationary due to traffic conditions). When a vehicle is not expected to be in use for periods greater than two minutes, staff should turn the engine off.

This rule does not apply where engine operation is required for safety reasons, for servicing and maintenance, or the use of equipment powered by the engine.

This policy extends to all staff who undertake driving on company business using either fleet vehicles or privately owned vehicles used for work purposes.

This policy is expected to bring several key benefits to the company, including:

- Reduced fuel consumption and operating costs
- Reduced environmental impact through lower emissions and unnecessary vehicle noise
- Compliance with the Highway Code and relevant legislation
- Avoidance of engine idling penalties
- Reduced in-cabin air pollution exposure
- Improved safety
- Enhanced public image

Annex 4. Leaflet to parents and carers of school children

(This space can be used to reproduce a PDF version of the leaflet)

Leaflet to include:

- QR code with link to campaign website
- Very basic reference to emissions and health impacts
- Appeal for support to the children who are working hard to make the campaign a success
- Switch engines off if likely to be stopped for two minutes or more.
- Air quality inside vehicles can be worse than outside.
- Save fuel and money
- Reduce children's exposure to harmful vehicle emissions.
- Quieter streets.

Colourful leaflets that include a small number of short, clear messages presented in a large, informal font are more likely to capture people's attention.

Example:

- When you stop, switch off
- Turn off your engine – cleaner air for our children
- Let's keep our school gates idle-free

Annex 5. School observations template

School:

Pupil name(s):

Teacher name(s):

Date:

Vehicle type (see list below)	**Time spotted idling** (time the idling first observed)	**Time idling ended**	**Noise levels** (see list below)	**Total time idling**

Vehicle type:

A – Small car

B – Medium car

C – Sports Utility Vehicle (SUV)

D – Van

E – Lorry

Noise levels:

1 – Extremely noisy

2 – Noisy but not too loud

3 – Fairly quiet

Annex 6. Sample school newsletter notices

Article 1 Pre-campaign

We are pleased to be launching an exciting new project exploring vehicle emissions, and how these can be reduced for the benefit of everyone's health and wellbeing.

Our partners, **[insert name]**, will be joining our Year x pupils to deliver a series of lessons on the importance of clean air and what this means for our health and wellbeing. The lessons will include a practical exercise focused on the collection of real-life data and the delivery of a campaign to help reduce air pollution. Pupils will subsequently assess the extent to which their efforts have delivered improvements in air quality and how this benefits us all.

More information will follow as the project progresses.

Article 2 - Mid-campaign

In our newsletter of **[insert date]** we notified parents and guardians of an exciting new project that aimed to engage pupils in understanding the impacts of vehicle emissions and how these may be reduced.

Our Years x pupils have been undertaking real-time observations outside school, recording instances where vehicles have been parked with their engines running. This is known as 'stationary engine idling' and contributes to unnecessary noise and air pollution impacting others on the street, including schoolchildren and the occupants of the vehicles themselves.

Pupils have been taking anonymised notes (no information which could identify individual drivers) of instances where idling has been happening, including the type of vehicle idling, the length of time engines are left running while vehicles are parked, and how much noise the vehicles were making. This information has formed a 'baseline', allowing pupils to develop a picture of the extent to which vehicles are idling outside school during afternoon pick-up time.

For the next phase of the project, pupils are developing campaign materials to alert drivers to the harms of unnecessary engine idling and to encourage them to turn their engines off.

Watch this space for more on the campaign soon!

Article 3 – Mid-campaign

We are delighted to provide a further update on our vehicle emissions campaign which our Years x pupils have been delivering with support from our partners at **[insert name]**. Hopefully you will already have noticed our new 'anti-idling' banner which has been installed outside school.

Pupils have been learning about the impacts of stationary engine idling emissions, including noise, on our health and wellbeing, and how we can influence drivers to

turn their engines off when parked. This can instantly reduce noise and air pollution around our school (and elsewhere) and can also save fuel and money.

A series of colourful designs have been prepared by our pupils to help get the message out to drivers. Parents and guardians will shortly receive a copy of the information leaflet and a pledge card inviting them to commit to turn engines off when parked. The teaching staff, and children, would be really grateful to receive pledges from parents and guardians, and we will be running a mini competition to see which school collects the most.

A further update will follow soon.

Article 4 – End of campaign

We have now reached the end of our engine idling project and are really pleased with the enthusiasm with which the campaign has engaged pupils and the support that parents and guardians have also given.

Pupils collected **[insert number]** of pledge cards from parents and guardians committing to turn engines off when parked.

A follow-up series of observations has been undertaken by our Years x pupils and the data has been compared to the situation prior to the campaign. Pupils have recorded fewer instances of engine idling outside school and have identified reductions in emissions, learning what this means for our health and our environment.

A huge thank you to all parents and guardians for their support with this project, and to our pupils for taking part so enthusiastically!

Local authorities may wish to ensure that messaging clearly explains what constitutes idling as an offence and distinguishes between lawful and unlawful situations.

You may also want to ensure that campaign materials reflect the specific local context, focusing on addressing the most common sources of Stationary Idling.

Annex 7. Welsh Government return template

Air Quality, Noise & Soundscapes Branch
Environmental Protection Division
Welsh Government
Cathays Park
Cardiff
CF10 3NQ

Stationary Idling Offences Fixed Penalty Returns for the period 1 April 20__ to 31 March 20__

Request for information relating to fixed penalties

Local authority details

Local authority	
Post address	
Contact name and post title	
Contact email address	
Contact telephone number	

Please return to AirQualityPolicy@gov.wales

The figures below should include fixed penalties issued by authorised officers of the local authority.

1. No. of fixed penalties issued	
2. No. of fixed penalties paid	
3. No. of cases of non-payment taken to court	
4. No. of cases of non-payment awaiting court action	
5. No. of cases not paid where no further court action is being taken	
6. Amount Collected (£)	
7. No. of warning letters issued (optional)	

1. In this row enter the total number of fixed penalties issued against the relevant offence for the period 1 April 20XX to 31 March 20XX.

2. In this row enter the total number of fixed penalties paid against the number issued in row 1.

3. In this row enter the number of cases that have been taken to court to pursue the non-payment of fixed penalties issued in row 1.

4. In this row enter the number of cases awaiting court action against non-payment of fixed penalties issued in row 1.

5. In this row enter the number of cases where no further action is to be taken against fixed penalties issued in row 1, where the fixed penalty has not been paid.

6. In this row enter the total amount of fixed penalty income generated from fixed penalties issued in row 1. This should only include fixed penalty income and not any court costs. If the number of fixed penalty notices issued (row 1) is not accounted for by the other rows (2, 3, 4 or 5) please provide an explanation in the space below the table.

7. This is optional.

Please Return Forms by 31 August 20xx to: in the subject line: (the name of your Local Authority) Fixed Penalty Return 20XX/XX

Annex 8. Links to further resources (UK and international)

Welsh Government

Air Quality In Wales Environment and climate change GOV.WALES

Noise and soundscape plan for Wales 2023 to 2028 | GOV.WALES

Walking and cycling GOV.WALES

Evidence and behavioural research

Cleaning up our acts: Psychological interventions to reduce engine idling and improve air quality

Consumer Guide to Reducing Vehicle Idling

Idling Action Research – Review of Emissions Data, Tim Barlow and Olivia Cairns, TRL Limited, 2020

Using behavioural insight to improve air quality in the London Borough of Merton

The invisible threat: how we can protect people from air pollution and create a fairer, healthier society

What traffic fumes do to your children – Infographic

10 Reasons to Turn Off an Idling Car | Sustainable America

Local campaigns and practice examples (UK)

Wales

Living Streets Cymru

Motorists near schools asked to switch off engines to help air quality - Swansea

Welsh Government calls upon schools across Wales called to create school travel plans | tenby-today.co.uk

England

Anti-idling | Cheshire West and Chester Council

City of York Council Kick the Habit campaign

FACT-Leaflet.pdf

Engine idling leaflet (Westminster City Council).pdf

Scotland

School Streets | Dundee City Council

Mountfleurie Primary School's active travel success | Fife Council

Campaign continues to urge everyone to stop engine idling - South Lanarkshire View

East Central Scotland Vehicle Emissions Partnership: Switch off and breathe campaign

Home 2026 - Switch off and Breathe

Northen Ireland

Clean Air Primary School Campaign

Air Quality Baseline survey

Air quality and idling school project - lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk

Engine Off, Prevent the Cough

Turn your engine off, prevent the cough! — Holywood Primary School

Engine off! Prevent the Cough!

Multi-region

PEACE-Air Partnership for Evidence and Action on Clean Air

Transform Our World: Anti-idling campaign resource

Your guide to putting a stop to idling engines in your neighbourhood

Campaign groups, health charities and organisations

Air quality - Public Health Wales

British Heart

Friends of the Earth

Walk Wheel Cycle Trust formerly Sustrans

Flight Free UK

International examples and resources

Idle free Schools – Implementing an idling reduction campaign

Idle free Schools - Making it a student project

Idle free Schools - Campaign schedule

Idle free Schools - Toolkit for a Healthy Environment

Green Schools – Sustainable Future

No idling: Middle years/Secondary toolkit

Regional District of Central Okanagan: Idling Reduction Behavioural Insights

Sacramento County California – Idle-free Schools

Tools for reducing idling – Turn It Off

Idle Free Schools Presentation (US EPA)