

# MAYOR OF LONDON

**To:**

All London General Practices  
All Chief Executives of NHS England (London)  
Acute Trusts with Emergency Departments

**Date:** 28 February 2024

Dear colleagues,

On 17 February 2022, government and health leaders met at the Clean Air and Health Summit in London for a single purpose – to tackle the triple dangers of toxic air pollution, the climate crisis and congestion. The summit followed the inquest into the death of 9-year-old Londoner Ella Adoo-Kissi-Debrah – who was the first person to have air pollution listed as a cause of death.

We came away from the summit with a renewed ambition and shared resolve to protect the health of Londoners and wider society by raising awareness of these dangers. And today we are delivering on our commitment, as we launch **the UK's first targeted air pollution alert for health professionals in London**.

Developed by the London Air Quality and Health Programme Office and the Mayor of London, the air quality alert for General Practice and Emergency Departments represents a multi-agency collaboration. It builds upon City Hall's existing system, which currently delivers air quality alerts to schools and other London stakeholders, ensuring that thousands of Londoners have the information they need to make better decisions for their own health and their families.

The World Health Organization has declared air pollution as the single biggest environmental threat to human health. It impairs children's lung growth, increases the risk of lung cancer and heart and lung disease, and causes premature death. In London, we know it's the poorest and most vulnerable who are hit hardest.

It's not just long-term exposure that poses a risk. Short-term exposure to high levels of pollution can trigger or worsen people's asthma and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) symptoms. In London, asthma is one of the top three causes of emergency admissions to hospital each year for children. We can't afford to ignore the threat of air pollution. That's why we're writing to you today.

As health professionals, you're trusted voices in your communities, so you have a powerful role to play in educating and protecting patients. The Coroner's Prevention of Future Deaths Report highlighted the need to support health professionals in communicating the adverse effects of air pollution to patients.

Using forecasts from experts at Imperial College London, this new alert will not only help to raise awareness of air pollution but also its associated health effects. The alert will be delivered directly to GPs and Emergency Departments the day before an episode of high or very high air pollution is

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forecast. **This will also include information to help you advise and support your patients and their carers – all of which is being elaborated on in a letter from Dr Chris Streater (Regional Medical Director and Chief Clinical Information Officer) and Professor Kevin Fenton CBE (Regional Director in the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities, Regional Director of Public Health, NHS London and Statutory Health Advisor to the Mayor of London, GLA and London Assembly), that has been sent today to London GPs and Emergency Departments.**

In December 2022, the Chief Medical Officer's annual report clearly laid out the life-long dangers of air pollution and the need to prioritise action on it. It's essential to making London a healthier place to live, work and grow for everyone. We're calling on you now to help us – lives in London depend on us working together.

Yours sincerely,



**Sadiq Khan**  
Mayor of London



**Dr Chris Streater**  
Regional Medical Director and Chief Clinical Information Officer, NHS England London



**Dr Edward Wynne-Evans**  
Director of Radiation, Chemical and Environmental Hazards, UK Health Security Agency




**Professor Kevin Fenton CBE**  
Regional Director, Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (London)  
Regional Director of Public Health, NHS London  
Statutory Health Advisor to the Mayor of London, GLA and London Assembly

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**Gordon Miles**

Chief Executive Officer of The Royal College of Emergency Medicine



**Professor Kamila Hawthorne MBE**

Chair of Council, Royal College of General Practitioners