

The case for ULEZ expansion

TfL claim that, as a result of the ULEZ expansion, in Bromley there will be a reduction in harmful Nitrogen Oxides (NOx) emissions of 11% from cars and 7% from vans.

- Bromley currently has the highest number of air pollution related deaths of any London borough (204 per year) owing to its elderly population. [1]
- This information comes from a study by researchers from Imperial College London which found that London's toxic air contributed to the deaths of more than 4,000 Londoners in 2019. The greatest number of deaths attributable to air pollution were in outer London boroughs. [2]
- There is ample evidence that ULEZ has had a major impact on air quality. [3]
- 82% of vehicles in outer London are already compliant. [4]
- The poorest households in Bromley don't own a car. [5]

These facts suggest that, at the very least, it might be worthwhile for Bromley Council to keep an open mind on ULEZ at this time.

People often assume they will have to pay and then realise their car is already exempt (more on this below). Given the health and economic benefits of lower air pollution are many, and if it's only a small percentage of people who need to change, perhaps it's a small price to pay for the health of Bromley's most vulnerable, and in fact, all residents?

Some drivers and vehicles would qualify for at least a temporary discount and others entirely exempt.

- * Disabled & disabled passenger vehicles (until 24 Oct 2027)
- * Wheelchair accessible private hire vehicles (until 24 Oct 2027)
- * NHS patient reimbursement scheme
- * Minibuses for community transport (until 26 Oct 2025)
- * Taxis (black cabs)
- * Historic vehicles
- * Specialist non-road going vehicles
- * Showman's vehicles

Furthermore, people can have a petrol car that is roughly 16/17 years old by the time the ULEZ is expanded (if it is taken forward). As before, the Mayor of London is also proposing a vehicle scrappage scheme for low income Londoners and small businesses.

Bromley Council's statement talks about cost but the fact is that the health benefits of the Mayor's policies, including the ULEZ and its expansion, will save the NHS and social care system almost £5 billion and prevent more than one million air pollution related hospital admissions over the next 30 years. [6]

There is a very important equality and social justice angle to the whole debate too, given that what we are really talking about here is weighing up/balancing the wellbeing of people driving through a neighbourhood in polluting vehicles vs the wellbeing of the people who live in that neighbourhood and breathe in the fumes. If you are less well off, from a BAME background, or both, you are more likely to live in the places with the worst air pollution, despite being less likely to own a car. The ULEZ expansion, in combination with the Mayor's other air quality policies, will reduce the exposure gap between the most and least deprived areas by 71 per cent and the gap between areas with the highest and lowest proportion of BAME residents by 81 percent. [7]

[1] Source: <https://www.thisislondon.co.uk/youngreporter/19056984.new-study-finds-bromley-one-highest-air-pollution-deaths-london---measures-undertaken---william-gaisford-st-lawrence-newstead-wood/>

[2] Source: <https://www.london.gov.uk/WHAT-WE-DO/environment/environment-publications/health-burden-air-pollution-london>

[3] The following info is from TfL's briefing note for the October 2021 expansion: "In its first 10 months (pre Covid), the inner ULEZ contributed to a 44 per cent reduction in harmful roadside NO2 concentration, a 27 per cent reduction in PM2.5 and a 6% reduction in CO2 emissions."

[4] We are currently waiting for TfL to provide us with precise figures for Bromley Borough.

[5] Source: DfT figures show approximately 25% of Bromley households don't own a car.

[6] Source: <https://www.london.gov.uk/WHAT-WE-DO/environment/environment-publications/modelling-long-term-health-impacts-air-pollution-london>

[7] Source: <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/environment/environment-publications/air-pollution-london-impact-environment-strategy>