

# Vehicle pollution zone to cover all of London

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London's mayor first introduced the ULEZ (ultra-low emission zone) in April 2019 and expanded it last year.

Older and more heavily polluting vehicles will have to pay to enter the entire metropolitan area of London from next August, the British capital's mayor said Friday.

Sadiq Khan said the ultra-low emission zone (ULEZ) would be expanded beyond its current confines from August 29, to encompass the entire nine million people of Greater London.

Announcing a parallel expansion of bus services in outer London, he argued that air pollution from older and heavier vehicles was making Londoners "sick from cradle to the grave".

The ULEZ had already proven "transformational", the mayor said, and its extension would mean "five million more people will be able to breathe cleaner air and live healthier lives".

But the plan has prompted a fierce backlash from political opponents and some residents in the capital, who point to a consultation held indicating that a majority of Londoners opposed extending the zone.

The two-month outreach exercise—held earlier this year by Transport for London (TfL), which runs the capital's various transport systems—heard from 57,913 people, including nearly 12,000 campaigners on either side of the issue.

Although it found 55 percent of respondents had "some concern" about their local air quality, the consultation also recorded 59 percent as opposed to the ULEZ being expanded at all.

That rose to 70 percent in the outer London areas set to be part of the enlargement.

"Sadiq Khan has broken his promise to listen to Londoners," the Conservative grouping in London's devolved lawmaking assembly said on Twitter.

"He must U-TURN on the ULEZ expansion."



The charge is applicable to cars, motorcycles, smaller vans and minibuses and is based on their declared emissions rather than age.

### **'An example'**

The zone has already been expanded once since it was introduced in April 2019, and today covers a large area within London's North and South Circular inner ring-roads and the city center.

Unless their vehicles are exempt, drivers entering the zone have to pay a daily charge of £12.50 (\$15).

Petrol cars first registered after 2005, and diesel cars after September

2015, typically meet the ULEZ standards for nitrous oxide emissions and are exempt.

Air pollution caused around 1,000 annual hospital admissions for asthma and serious lung conditions in London between 2014 and 2016, according to a 2019 report.

A coroner ruled in 2020 that air pollution made a "material contribution" to the death of a nine-year-old London girl in 2013—the first time in Britain that air pollution was officially listed as a cause of death.

Air pollution is "affecting children before they're even born, and giving them lifelong health issues", the campaign group Mums for Lungs tweeted.

"Good news for the health of all Londoners," it said in response to the ULEZ announcement.

Billionaire businessman Michael Bloomberg, a UN climate envoy and former mayor of New York, said Khan was "helping to clean London's air and set an example for cities around the world".

But opponents of the ULEZ argue it amounts to a "tax" on poorer drivers least able to afford to replace their polluting vehicles, and has hurt small businesses.

The announcement will be "a hammer-blow for desperate drivers and businesses already struggling with crippling fuel costs" during a cost-of-living crisis, said the head of roads policy for motoring body the RAC, Nicholas Lyes.

All cars and vans entering central London during the daytime also have to pay a "congestion charge" of £15, a measure first introduced in 2003.

Similar schemes have been set up in several other British towns and cities to reduce emission levels and improve air quality.

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