# Westminster Council launches free trial to tackle toxic emissions from commercial kitchens



Westminster Council has embarked on an ambitious initiative to combat air pollution stemming from commercial cooking, initiating a trial that aims to monitor and reduce emissions associated with frying and grilling food. The pilot, focusing on a select number of restaurants, will employ air purifiers and is currently operating at no cost to the businesses involved. This effort aligns with the council's broader commitment to improving air quality in the area.

Significantly, commercial cooking is responsible for approximately 60 per cent of PM2.5 particulate emissions in Westminster. These pollutants, generated from various fuel sources, including charcoal, wood, and gas, pose severe health risks, penetrating deep into the lungs, heart, and brain. Long-term exposure to PM2.5 has been linked to serious health conditions such as heart disease, respiratory illnesses, and cognitive decline.

Eve Seemann, head chef at Apricity in Mayfair, one of the pilot's participating restaurants, expressed her hopes regarding the trial’s potential impact. “Although our style of cooking may not be as polluting as others, it’s important to see what areas we could improve in. This data will allow us to see when there’s a peak, what caused that peak, and what we can do to try and remedy it. I’m glad we are part of finding a solution to reduce air pollution,” she stated.

Westminster Council is collaborating with Health and Wellbeing 360, a data science company, to monitor air quality throughout this initiative. Dr Philip Webb, the company’s CEO, elaborated on the project’s significance, noting that it seeks to provide crucial insights into pollution levels and their health implications, both within kitchens and in the broader community. "Not only will monitoring indoor and outdoor air quality provide important data on pollutants and toxins in real-world settings, it will also allow us to assess the effectiveness of interventions such as ventilation, filtration, and purification,” he explained.

Councillor Geoff Barraclough, who oversees planning and economic development, highlighted the pressing challenge that commercial cooking emissions pose to air quality and public health in Westminster. He stated, “We want this pilot to raise awareness of air quality issues within the industry, and I hope it encourages other businesses to sign up to participate in the trial.” This sentiment echoes the broader goals outlined in the council's Air Quality Action Plan, which aims to meet World Health Organisation (WHO) air quality guidelines.

Moreover, the hospitality sector has expressed its commitment to these environmental goals, with Kate Nicholls, chief executive of UKHospitality, noting that the industry is working diligently towards achieving its 2040 net zero target. She emphasised the importance of collaboration with local authorities to support the sector's emissions reduction efforts.

The initiative has the potential to set a standard for how commercial kitchens can mitigate their environmental impact. By focusing trials in prominent areas such as Mayfair, the West End, St John’s Wood, and Victoria, the council hopes to not only engage local businesses but also galvanise community support for cleaner air initiatives. As the trial progresses, Westminster City Council encourages more establishments to join, thereby contributing to a larger movement towards a healthier urban environment.

The results from this pilot will not only inform strategies and best practices within the restaurant industry but may also serve as a model for other urban areas grappling with similar air quality challenges. As part of their long-term vision, Westminster seeks to engage with community members and businesses in efforts to improve air quality and protect public health, ultimately fostering a cleaner, greener city for all its inhabitants.

As the council strives for a healthier future, the stakes are high; the fight against air pollution in Westminster is poised to become a significant aspect of urban sustainability strategies in the years to come.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraph 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
2. Paragraph 1, 2, 5, 6
3. Paragraph 3, 5
4. Paragraph 4, 7
5. Paragraph 5
6. Paragraph 1
7. Paragraph 6

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://fitzrovianews.com/2025/05/18/westminster-council-seeks-to-cut-pollution-from-commercial-cooking/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.westminster.gov.uk/planning-building-control-and-environmental-regulations/environmental-policies-regulations-and-guidance/action-air-quality/commercial-cooking-project> - Westminster City Council has launched a project aimed at reducing harmful emissions from commercial cooking. By installing air quality monitors and purifiers in local businesses, the council is testing whether these measures can help reduce PM2.5 levels and provide more information about air quality in commercial kitchens. The project will last for three months and is at no cost to businesses. Installation takes under an hour and will be done at a convenient time for your business to ensure minimal disruption. A qualified electrician is responsible for the installation and removal of the devices.
3. <https://www.westminster.gov.uk/air-quality/improving-air-quality/our-commitments> - Westminster City Council is committed to improving air quality and creating a healthier, fairer environment in Westminster. As part of their Fairer Westminster strategy, they have committed to reaching the World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines for air quality. They are now working on a new Air Quality Action Plan to meet the WHO guidelines, prioritising reducing particulate emissions as far as possible.
4. <https://opencouncil.network/meetings/26609> - A study by Imperial College London showed that industrial and commercial activity in Westminster is due to become a more significant source of NOx emissions than road transport by 2040. The Committee heard that commercial cooking is set to be the largest single source of PM2.5 emissions by 2040. The Committee discussed how residents perceive air quality, and heard that, according to a City Survey, St James’s (52.2%) and Maida Vale (47.5%) had the poorest perceived air quality amongst respondents.
5. <https://www.westminster.gov.uk/improving-air-quality> - Westminster City Council's draft Air Quality Action Plan 2025-2029 outlines their vision and commitment to improving air quality in Westminster over the next four years. The Plan describes the actions Westminster City Council and their partners will take to reduce air pollution, with a focus on public health protection. The council encourages residents, businesses, and visitors to participate in the consultation to help shape shared strategies and guidance on protecting health, reducing emissions, and contributing to a cleaner, healthier city for everyone.
6. <https://www.local.gov.uk/case-studies/air-quality-data-platform-westminster> - In July 2023, Westminster City Council launched the Westminster Air Quality Data Platform to provide accessible and transparent air quality information to residents and visitors. This initiative aligns with the council’s Fairer Westminster Strategy, aiming to share crucial data for informed decision-making. The platform offers accurate, up-to-date information on air quality throughout the borough, enabling users to view ongoing monitoring activities and explore longer-term trends. It empowers communities to understand local pollution levels and take proactive measures to reduce exposure.
7. <https://www.westminster.gov.uk/fairer-environment-hub/understand/climate-action-plan> - Westminster City Council has set an emissions target for the city to reach net zero by 2040. Their Climate Emergency Action Plan sets out comprehensive actions for reducing carbon emissions across the city, working in partnership with businesses, communities, and residents. The plan includes initiatives such as rolling out the UK’s largest electric refuse collection fleet, increasing electric vehicle charging points, and launching the Westminster Green Investment initiative to fund local sustainability projects. The council is also developing an Environmental Justice Measure to inform where and how they invest in the local environment.