

Air Quality around Heathrow Airport

Q1 2018 Briefing

Background

Heathrow Airport Ltd (HAL) began an air quality monitoring programme in 1993. Today HAL owns and operates one on-airport monitor and funds three other monitors around the airport. Data from these four continuous monitoring stations, as well as eight other continuous monitors operated by local authorities and DEFRA within 2km of the Airport, are shared and summarised on heathrowairwatch.org.uk.

Air quality management is a key priority for HAL and we continue to work in partnership with our key stakeholders – especially local authorities and national Government – to reduce emissions from all sources in the area in order to meet the EU & UK limit values. The main pollutants of concern around Heathrow are measured at all stations – nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and particles (measured as PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}).

Headlines

Key information for this quarter is:

- There was no exceedance of the hourly mean NO₂ limit value of 200µg/m³ recorded at any HAL-funded continuous monitoring station. At relevant locations, 18 exceedances are allowed per year before the limit value is breached for a given location.
- There was one daily exceedance of the PM₁₀ mean of 50µg/m³ at Heathrow LHR2, Oaks Road and Green Gate continuous monitoring stations. At relevant locations, 35 exceedances are allowed per year before the limit value is breached for a given location.
- The number of aircraft movements made by the newest aircraft (CAEP8) has increased to 26.2% in the first quarter of 2018 and the percentage continues to rise (see Fig.1).

Year-to-date monitoring

NO₂, PM₁₀, and PM_{2.5} are measured at HAL-funded monitoring sites. In addition, ozone is measured at the Harlington station. For a strict comparison against air quality objectives, data capture should be >90% over a calendar year. The hourly mean limit value for NO₂ is 200µg/m³, not to be exceeded more than 18 times per calendar year. The daily mean limit value for PM₁₀ is 50µg/m³, not to be exceeded on more than 35 days per calendar year. Table 1 provides a summary of measured data capture from HAL's four monitoring sites as well as year-to-date exceedances of the hourly NO₂ and daily PM₁₀ limits.

Data capture for all pollutants at all HAL-funded monitoring sites has been >90%

Table 1. Year-to-date data capture and exceedances of hourly NO₂ and daily PM₁₀ at HAL-funded monitoring sites

Monitoring station	NO ₂ data capture	PM ₁₀ data capture	PM _{2.5} data capture	Hourly NO ₂ exceedances in Q (ytd)	Daily PM ₁₀ exceedances in Q (ytd)
Heathrow LHR2	95.6%	99.9%	99.9%	0 (0)	1 (1)
Harlington	99.7%	*	*	0 (0)	0 (0)
Green Gates	99.6%	100.0%	100.0%	0 (0)	1 (1)
Oaks Road	99.8%	100.0%	100.0%	0 (0)	1 (1)

*Data not available at time of report.

Emission Reduction Efforts

Heathrow has successfully reduced annual ground-based nitrogen oxides (NO_x) emissions by 430 tonnes (16%) between 2009 and 2013¹ as part of our commitment to playing our part in improving local air quality. These reductions have been achieved through a combination of efforts to reduce emissions from every major source, including aircraft, vehicles, and heating.

CAEP standard of aircraft movements

Through its Committee on Aviation Environmental Protection (CAEP), the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) sets new emission standards for aircraft engines – including for NO_x. Engine models which were certified on or after 1 January 2014 must meet CAEP8, the latest standard for NO_x.

Fig.1 shows the proportion of aircraft movements at Heathrow based by CAEP standards. The proportion of flights made by newer, cleaner CAEP8 aircraft increased from 20.8% in 2016 to 26.2% at the end of Q1 2018. The trend is expected to continue as airlines proceed in replacing their older, higher emission aircraft and Heathrow's NO_x emission landing charges and engagement encourages the use of best-in-class aircraft.

¹http://www.heathrowairwatch.org.uk/documents/Heathrow_Airport_2013_Air_Quality_Assessment_Detailed_Emissions_Inventory.pdf

Fig.1. Total aircraft movements since 2010 by CAEP standard

