

Idling Action Project – Phase 4

End of Year 1 Executive Summary (Oct 2019 – March 2020)



Whiteheath Junior School event, Hillingdon, 29th January 2020

A report by the Idling Action Project on behalf of City of London Corporation and the London Borough of Camden

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1. Introduction

The Idling Action Project is a London-wide behaviour change campaign which is helping to reduce localised air pollution caused by motorists leaving their engines running when parked.

The City of London Corporation pioneered Idling Action Days in 2015. In July/August 2016, funded by the Mayor of London's Air Quality Fund (MAQF), the Idling Action campaign was launched, which included City of London Corporation and 11 other local authorities.

Phase 2 of the campaign (also funded by MAQF) began in June 2017, initially with 15 local authorities, with London Borough of Richmond joining in December 2017. Phase 3 saw a total of 18 local authorities taking part.

Now in its fourth phase, running from October 2019 until March 2022, the project is jointly led by the City of London Corporation and the London Borough of Camden, and once again funded by the Mayor's Air Quality Fund. It involves 31 London local authorities:

- Barking and Dagenham
- Camden
- Ealing
- Hammersmith & Fulham
- Harrow
- Hounslow
- Kingston
- Lewisham
- Redbridge
- Tower Hamlets
- Westminster (affiliate member)
- Bexley
- City
- Enfield
- Hackney
- Havering
- Islington
- Sutton
- Merton
- Richmond
- Waltham Forest
- Brent
- Croydon
- Greenwich
- Haringey
- Hillingdon
- Kensington & Chelsea
- Lambeth
- Newham
- Southwark
- Wandsworth

The aims of the Campaign are to:

- Reduce unnecessary engine idling and raise the profile of air quality and idling engines as a source of air pollution;
- Get the support of local communities, schools, businesses and organisations to take part and change their behaviours;
- Speak to drivers to educate and encourage behaviour change; and
- Gain maximum publicity for the campaign across London

The project includes delivery of idling action events, in which teams of volunteers, local authority officers and project staff work to educate both motorists and pedestrians. The project is also delivering school anti-idling workshops, engaging with businesses and offering vehicle fleet training. In addition, all local authorities are ensuring idling regulations are enforced across London.

Specifically, the goals and objectives for the fourth phase of the project include the following:

- i. **Idling action events** (up to six per year per participating borough, except for 2019/2020 when the delivery target is up to two idling action events)
- ii. **School assemblies and anti-idling banner workshops** (up to five per borough per year, except for 2019/2020 when the delivery target is up to two assemblies/workshops)
- iii. **A communications strategy and advertising campaign** developed and implemented through participating borough communications channels and wider advertising mechanisms;
- iv. **Fleet engagement and training.**

Why an idling campaign?

Air pollution is a major environmental risk to health¹. Research by King's College London estimated it contributed to around 9,500 early deaths in 2010 in London², and it has been proven to cause illnesses ranging in severity from eczema and itchy eyes, through to cancer and lung disease.

Leaving engines running while stationary for longer than a minute is known as 'idling'. Idling is nearly always unnecessary and it's a source of pollution.

Encouraging people to switch off by educating them about the health impacts of air pollution, and explaining why it is good to switch your engine off, are simple ways to instantly reduce vehicle emissions in London.

It is especially important to tackle idling at schools because of the number of primary schools in London which are situated in areas that exceed the legal pollution limits, the vulnerability of children to the effects of air pollution, and instances of idling vehicles around the primary schools across the local authorities. Primary schools, and specifically Key Stage Two students, therefore, were the focus of the project's school air quality and anti-idling workshops, as well as the Idling Action events, for year 1. Schools were invited to take part based on these factors.

The traffic regulations

Since 2002, under Regulation 12 of [The Road Traffic \(Vehicle Emissions\) \(Fixed Penalty\) \(England\) Regulations 2002](#), Local Authorities have been given the powers to enforce the switching off of engines when vehicles are stationary on the road. This enables local authorities to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) to a driver who is committing an offense by idling their vehicle's engine.

Aside from enforcing idling by issuing FPNs, a council may choose to create a Traffic Management Order, under the [Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984](#), such that traffic enforcement officers within the local authority are able to issue Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) for idling vehicles.

As part of this current phase of the project, we are working with the participating 31 local authorities to support them in adopting idling enforcement.

¹ WHO 2014 <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs313/en/>

² King's College London 2015. Understanding the health impacts of Air Pollution. Available from: <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/lsm/research/divisions/aes/research/ERG/research-projects/HIAinLondonKingsReport14072015final.pdf>

2. Summary Findings and Activities

Key achievements for Year 1 included:

- Communications campaign planned;
- Delivery of two enforcement workshops for local authority partners;
- Development of an enforcement toolkit;
- Development and delivery of the school anti-idling programme (assembly and workshop);
- Delivery of Idling Action events

Summary findings / activities for Year 1 (October 2019 – March 2020):

Activities	Number	Comments	
i. School assemblies delivered <i>Students engaged</i>	18	Primary schools across 14 local authorities	
	5530	KS1 and KS2 students	
ii. School anti-idling and air pollution workshops <i>Number of banners produced</i>	42	Delivered to 1766 KS2 students	
	2	Delivered to 16 KS3 students	
	25	Students made posters with anti-idling messages, some on which were turned into a banner for each school	
iii. Idling Action Events	35	At primary and secondary schools, community centre, city centre with businesses, level crossings	
	a) <i>Interactions over all events</i>	701	Vehicles
		31	Pedestrians
	b) <i>Volunteers taking part in events</i>	151	Included parents, teachers, Council-trained air quality champions, as well as Junior Travel Ambassadors or School Student Council from participating schools. Volunteers that had previously taken part in an Idling Action event and primary school students were not trained as part of the events
	c) <i>Key Statistics and findings during the events</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 51% of drivers spoken to already had their engines switched off, 49% of drivers were idling; • 85% of idling drivers switched off when asked, 15% did not switch off / did not engage with; • 79% of idling vehicles were cars, 15% were vans; • 82% of idling drivers spoken to pledged to switch off in the future, the rest did not pledge
iv. Fleet engagement and training	1	Delivered to 2 Fleet Managers for Newham Council. The main activity is planned for launch specifically in Year 2.	
v. Enforcement	2	Enforcement workshops delivered to 22 and 18 boroughs including overview of different enforcement approaches and training in Fixed Penalty Notices	

* Idling Action events and workshops had been planned for delivery in March and April; due to restrictions in place resulting from the current public health emergency, the planned activities for the period of March onwards have been postponed until it is safe to resume these.

a. School Workshops and Assemblies

The school assembly, delivered to KS2 student bodies at participating primary schools, gave students and teachers an introduction to the Idling Action project and what we were hoping to achieve at their schools. The assembly allowed the students to think about why clean air is important for them at the school. They were told about ways they can avoid and reduce their exposure to pollution, and encourage others – family, friends, and other students – not to contribute to pollution. The assembly highlighted to the school that speaking with drivers and asking them not to leave their engine on whilst outside the school was an effective way to make a difference and all students were asked to pass the message on.

The one and a half hour workshop to students, either to KS2 single or double classes, eco-groups, or student councils, involved learning about what air pollution is, the sources, and what can be done about it – centralising an anti-idling campaign as an effective way to reduce air pollution they may be exposed to at school. The workshop was also adapted for an older KS3 audience.

As part of the workshop, students conducted an experiment using a portable PM monitor to investigate how PM levels might change at different points around the school, both inside and out, and analysed what source of pollution around the school, if any, could affect the monitor. This allowed the students to reflect on the different sources of pollution and how these sources can affect the monitor, and what this could therefore mean for them.

Students then made posters with anti-idling messages, some on which were turned into a banner, to be displayed outside the school to help remind drivers not to idle their engines.

Conducting an experiment into air quality using a PM monitor at North Bridge House Prep, Camden, 2nd March 2020



Anti-Idling workshop and poster-making activity at Hilldene Primary School, Havering, January 2020



b. Idling Action Events

Participating schools were also invited to host an Idling Action event – to create a day of activities focussed around air pollution and spreading the anti-idling message. Having Idling Action events hosted at schools allowed us to utilise teachers, parents and student groups (such as Junior Travel Ambassadors and Student Council members) as volunteers to take part in the events. As well as being a great way of involving a range of stakeholders in the project, it allowed us to work to joint objectives. For example, the Idling Action event could contribute to the school’s STARS accreditation. After the event, the participating schools were also provided with a toolkit to host their own Idling Action campaign at a later date, as well as further lesson resources for students to conduct experiments and monitoring of air quality.

Idling action events were also hosted in the community in collaboration with community centres and local businesses, to target other idling hotspots such as level crossings and high streets.

Typically, an Idling Action event began with a training session to train the volunteers how to safely talk to people about idling, and an overview of air quality issues in London.

All adult volunteers who attended an event were:

- Provided with a volunteer pack;
- Required to sign a health & safety form before going out to volunteer; and
- Wore project-branded hi-vis vests whilst undertaking event activity

The trained volunteers, council staff, and Idling Action project staff members, working in small groups of 2 – 5, then walked the streets surrounding the school or identified idling hotspot, interacting with drivers and pedestrians, to educate about vehicle idling. School events took place just before and during the school finish time. Observations were recorded about the numbers of idling vehicles encountered, drivers were asked to turn their engines off if idling, and asked to pledge to switch their engines off in future. Event materials were also handed out, to educate those encountered about the effects of idling vehicles.

For the safety of the volunteers, drivers who did not switch off when asked, or did not pledge to switch off in future, were not challenged. The drivers were asked why they were idling, which was recorded, and the volunteers would then move on.

c. Fleet Training and Business Engagement

Year 1 saw the focus of activity on the development and implementation of the school workshops and idling action events, and planning for the project communications and advertising campaign. As such the fleet training and business engagement elements of the project will be launching in Year 2, subject to current social distancing restrictions being lifted by the government.

The main aim of the fleet training programme is to ensure fleet and business drivers do not contribute to unnecessary air pollution. Workshop objectives include:

- Introducing the importance of clean air;
- Explaining main pollutants and their sources in London;
- Connecting pollution exposure with health conditions;
- Explaining idling;
- Highlighting the legal basis of idling;
- Myth busting facts;
- Pledging to not idle

Business will also be asked to sign the Idling Action pledge and show their support for the project by committing to ensuring that their business and vehicles do not idle. Signatories will receive a Pledge Pack, which contains everything needed to run an anti-idling campaign including Pledge poster, driver training presentation and an information leaflet, as well as No Idling vehicle stickers.

d. Other Activities

There were opportunities in Year 1 to take part in community events in order to promote the project locally, educate residents, and encourage volunteer sign ups. The Idling Action Project team attended a community environmental sustainability event in Leytonstone on behalf of Waltham Forest Council. The team will be working with the participating local authorities to have a presence at any further relevant community events during Years 2 and 3.



In addition, training of civil enforcement officers for Newham Council took place over several adapted anti-idling workshop sessions – to provide them with an overview of the project, gain their support for implementing the campaign and outlining the roles they will play at borough events.

3. Case Studies

School case study – Sir John Heron Primary School

This was a fantastic event with a primary school in Newham. The project team began by delivering a workshop to the student council, where they learnt about air pollution and created posters to communicate what they had learnt and why drivers should not idle around their school. After lunch, a whole school assembly took place to introduce the project to all students and teachers, to talk about what the student council had done during the workshop that morning and why the school was taking part in an the Idling Action event, which was to take place at the end of the school day.



Following this, representatives from the student body were invited to take part in an air-quality themed giant snakes and ladders game. At the end of the sessions, children had a clear idea about what creates pollution, why it's especially important for children not to breathe in too much pollution, and why they should make sure their parents don't idle their engines.



Teachers, parents, air quality champions recruited from the Council's public health programme, Council enforcement officers, and council staff joined us for a volunteer training session, following which they went out to the streets surrounding the school where parents and those visiting the busy high street to shop, park and idle at school pick-up time. Our volunteers then put their learning from the training to good use when they spoke to drivers. The volunteers had a 100% success rate, with all idling drivers switching off when asked. This really gave the volunteers confidence to continue doing this in the future, which some taking materials so they could continue the idling action in the future, and some intending to return to volunteer at further Idling Action events.



School case study – Bethnal Primary School, Hackney

This event started with an assembly to the whole school up to year 5 – approximately 120 students. The Idling Action team gave the students and teachers an introduction to the project and why we were visiting the school that day. Discussing different sources of pollution and what can be done about it, the students suggested active travel as a way to reduce the production of pollution from vehicles bringing them to school, and said that they like to walk, cycle and skateboard to school. They also said that they have seen idling vehicles outside the school.



Following this, a two-hour workshop was delivered to 20 students made up of the school's Eco group and the student council. The workshop began with an investigation into air quality around the school grounds. Using a portable PM monitor, the group of students investigated whether the PM readings changed at different points around the school and why this might be – they tested the monitor in the playground by a road, and then in an internal garden area. Back in the classroom, the students learnt more about what air pollution is. They then finished by making anti-idling posters, to be turned into a banner for the school.



4. Enforcement

Year 1 saw the development and publication of an enforcement toolkit for use by local authorities. The toolkit contained guidance templates of enforcement documents – such as advertising of TMO or Fixed Penalty Notices – which local authorities could utilise. The toolkit also contained a training presentation which can be used to train council staff how to enforce.

Idling Action London also hosted two training sessions on enforcement. The first saw three boroughs who are already enforcing, through a variety of legal mechanisms (Hounslow using a PSPO, Camden on developing a TMO and Southwark on their experiencing of using a TMO), present to the group of approx. 25 local authority attendees. The second workshop, led by Croydon's Enforcement Team, focused on using the existing provisions in the Road Traffic Regulations to enforce using FPN's and was attended by representatives from 18 local authorities looking to train staff.

Enforcement Training Workshop, City of London office, 28th November



The project team will continue to support the participating boroughs as they develop and implement their enforcement of the anti-idling legislation through Years 2 and 3.

5. Best Practice Toolkits

Existing toolkits which had been produced in the previous project phase were updated, and an additional toolkit made available to local authorities on the subject of idling enforcement. The toolkits were specific to different audiences (schools, businesses, hospitals, local authorities) and they include best practice guidance for running events, volunteer packs, event host packs and campaign materials. Members of the public were also able to download the artwork for the campaign posters and leaflets too.

These are available on our website: <https://idlingaction.london/toolkits/>

6. Impact Evaluation

Headline Numbers and Analysis

The headline results for Idling Action events and School Workshops for Year 1 are as follows:

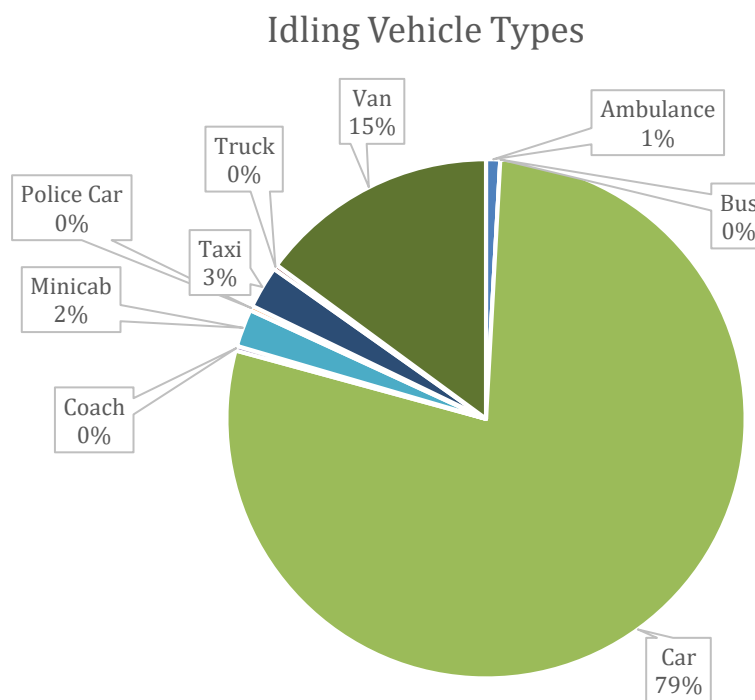
Metric	Total
Number of Idling Action events that have taken place	35
Number of volunteers taking part in events	151
Number of drivers that switched off during Idling Action events	289
Number of interactions with vehicles at events	701
Number of people (drivers and pedestrians) reached at events	1029
Number of schools taking part	40
Number of School activities (workshops and assemblies)	62
Number of banners produced for schools so far	25

Idling interactions analysis

The following tables and charts give an overview of activity at Year 1 Idling Action events.

Vehicles (idling and non-idling) interacted with at Idling Action events in Year 1

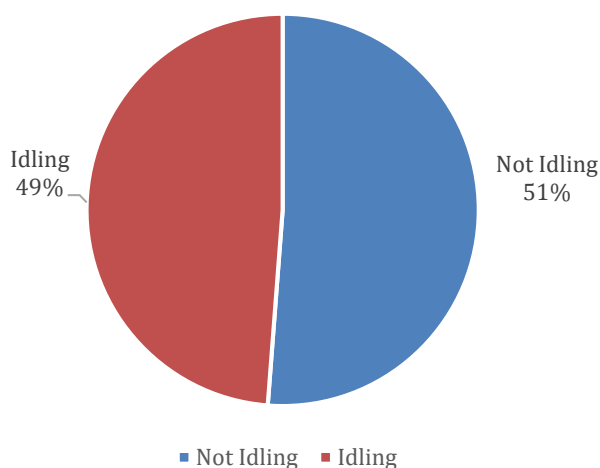
	Total	Idling
Ambulance	3	3
Bus	1	0
Car	590	268
Coach	2	1
Minicab	10	8
Pedestrian	31	N/A
Police Car	1	1
Taxi	18	9
Truck	1	1
Van	75	51
Total	732	342



% drivers idling and % not idling

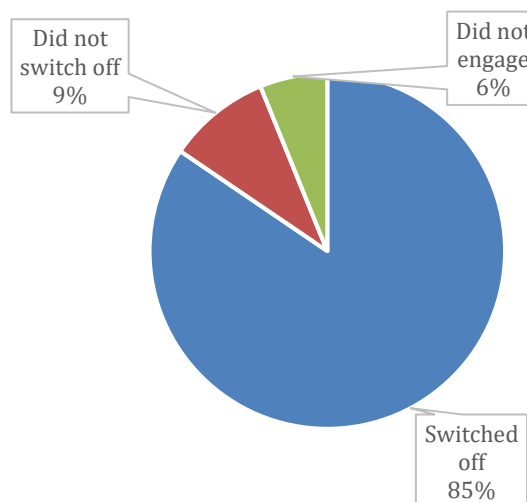
At Idling Action events we encourage volunteers to engage with idling and non-idling drivers alike. In the case of the latter, we thank the driver for not idling and give them a leaflet. In Year 1 the engagements broke down as follows:

	Vehicles
Idling	342
Not idling	359
Total	701



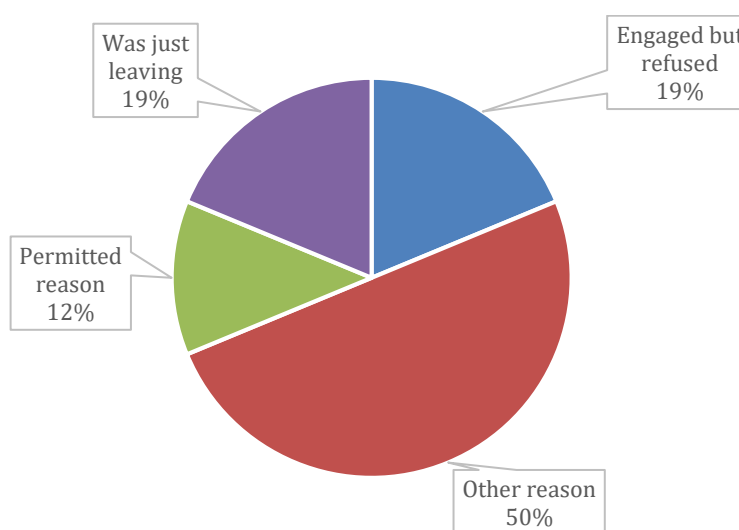
Of the idling drivers, the response to the engagement was:

	Vehicles
Switched off	289
Did not switch off	32
Did not engage	21
Total	342



Of the idling drivers who did not switch off, the reasons given for not switching off were as follows:

Engaged but refused	6
Other reason	16
Permitted reason	4
Was just leaving	6
Total	32



Permitted reasons include refrigerated vehicles, emergency service vehicles, taxi on rank etc. Other reasons include not speaking English and excuses such as using their heating or air conditioning, charging their phone etc.

The number of drivers who either refused to switch off or gave a non-permitted reason for not switching off was 22, which represents 6% of the total number of idling vehicles.

7. Next Steps and Recommendations for Year 2

- We will continue to engage schools and deliver workshop sessions to students;
- We will continue to deliver Idling Action events in partnership with schools, businesses and community groups;
- We have produced virtual learning resources so that the workshops can be offered to schools whilst closures are preventing physical workshops taking place. In addition, resources will be made available so that when schools are back, they can carry out their own anti-idling campaign if it is not appropriate for us to run a larger scale event.
- Year 2 will see the launch of the fleet training programme and therefore fleet drivers will be engaged to take part, either through fleet training sessions or fleet training toolkit that is delivered by managers to their drivers;
- The fleet training programme will also be offered out wider to business fleet operators based in the participating boroughs including delivery firms, taxis and coach companies;
- Continued communication and advertising of the training and event opportunities is crucial, as well as encouraging businesses to engage with the programme and host their own Idling Action events;
- The out of home and digital advertising campaign will launch – subject to the current Covid-19 public health emergency;
- Continue with a volunteer recruitment campaign utilising local authority staff, school groups, local campaigning and community groups and local businesses. The volunteers would support Idling Action events in their borough