

New detailed programme of air quality monitoring introduced across Britain's railways

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RSSB has launched the Stations Air Quality Monitoring Network (AQMN) a £4.5million programme, funded by the Department for Transport (DfT). The AQMN is the rail industry's first ambitious tangible project to better understand and report on the air quality at stations on a nationwide scale.

It comes as sustainable issues such as climate change, social sustainability and air quality, remain under the spotlight after the recent UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26).

RSSB is helping the rail industry proactively better understand and seek out solutions that are long-term and ultimately contribute towards maintaining a healthier mode of transport.

RSSB's independent analysis of AQMN data will help pinpoint air quality hotspots across the network. This will enable the rail industry to collaborate and take effective decisions on where 'air quality improvement plans' are required, as stated in DfT's Rail Environment Policy Statement (REPS).

Diffusion tubes are now being deployed at over 100 stations in England and Wales - the first of a three-stage equipment installation process. Other monitoring equipment, including reference monitors and low-

cost sensors, will be deployed in phases over the next two years.

RSSB Air Quality Specialist, Philbert Chan said: “We have to ensure air quality is at an acceptable level to protect passenger and workers health.

“This is the first large-scale organised air quality monitoring campaign on the railway network, using state-of-the-art equipment, to ensure data obtained is as robust and reliable as possible.

“RSSB’s analysis of the data collected will provide valuable information on air pollution, at stations across the country, allowing action to be taken to improve air quality where necessary.”

Rail Minister, Chris Heaton-Harris said: “Railways have long been the cornerstone of British travel and as the country continues to rapidly decarbonise, we’re committed to establishing rail as the backbone of a greener and modern public transport system.

“That’s why we’re investing £4.5 million to monitor air quality at stations across the UK with a view of using it as a basis to target air quality improvements ensuring cleaner and healthier travel for staff and passengers.”

Photo credit: Rail Delivery Group